
Theological Education

L E A D E R S H I P

The Study of the Seminary Presidency
in Catholic Theological Seminaries

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Joseph M. White and Robert J. Wister

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Introduction

Some years ago while serving as president of a theological school, I realized that very little research had been done on the origin and development of the office of the president in theological institutions. While studies of theological education had been made in the 1920s and 1930s as well as a study by Richard Niebuhr and his associates in the mid-1950s, none of them dealt with the president. The earlier studies pointed out that administrative structures and personnel were very weak and undeveloped. The Niebuhr study suggested that the schools' administrations, especially the presiding officers, had never been studied and given the consideration necessary for a balanced operation. So while acknowledging the need for such a study, no study was made.

This lack of consideration of the office led to imbalances of power and has contributed in our time to the confusion about what the president is supposed to do, what authority and power resides in that office, and how the president can function in the face of a multitude of societal and ecclesiastical demands as well as the reality of "shared governance."

After discussing these matters with Craig Dykstra of the Lilly Endowment, a request for monies to make a study of the presidency was submitted to the Endowment by the Graduate Theological Union.

As director of the three-year project which has involved some 50 to 60 persons in the study of the presidency of seminaries, I am happy to be able to share some of the fruits of the research. An earlier publication on the search process for the president is now joined by this contribution by two prominent Roman Catholic scholars. In the first section Joseph White discusses the development of the rectorship in Catholic diocesan seminaries from 1791 until 1965. In the following section Robert Wister picks up the story in 1965 and leads us to the current scene, taking us through a period of considerable change and innovation both in the institutions and especially in the role of the rector.

As a Protestant, I find two things of particular interest. First, both writers have assisted us with the terminology and organizational structure of the Catholic Church. Second, reading the material makes me conscious of the overarching importance of the Roman Catholic ecclesial structure and official documents, and their impact on the life of the rector and the theological institution. Many Protestant groups have no such framework to which to relate. Whether the Council of Trent

Introduction

or Vatican II, the Church's edicts and directives shape theological education and the rector's work in a quite different way than happens among Protestants. Both groups are, however, influenced by the currents of their sociocultural settings.

We are indebted to these two scholars for their research and writing. Their insights become a part of the growing literature that helps all of us understand theological institutions and the persons who lead them.

A companion volume dealing with the development of the office of the president among the Protestant freestanding seminaries will be forthcoming as an additional supplement to *Theological Education*.

I wish to thank Craig Dykstra, Fred Hofheinz, and the Lilly Endowment for their encouragement and support that enabled the research to be done and in making the publication of these supplements possible for the good of the theological enterprise. In addition, both James L. Waits and Nancy Merrill of the ATS staff have been crucial to the issuing of this publication.

Neely Dixon McCarter
President Emeritus
Pacific School of Religion

Leadership in the American Diocesan Seminary: Contexts, Institutions, and Personalities —1791-1965

Joseph M. White

Preface

At Baltimore in July of 1791, François Nagot with four fellow priests of the Society of St. Sulpice and five seminarians arrived from Paris to begin the first diocesan seminary in the United States. They settled at the “One Mile Tavern”—about a mile from Baltimore harbor—on the site where the Sulpicians developed the school of ministry that became known as St. Mary’s Seminary. As the *supérieur* of the undertaking, Nagot may be considered the country’s first Catholic seminary president. For such a distinction, his name is scarcely known outside the membership of the Society of St. Sulpice. But under his unobtrusive leadership, the diocesan seminary tradition was introduced to the American Catholic community.

That tradition dates from one of the milestones in the Catholic church’s history, the Council of Trent’s decree, *Cum Adolescentium Aetas*, of 1563 that laid the foundation for the idea that a formal program of training should precede ordination to the diocesan priesthood. This decree establishing the seminary addressed the training of diocesan priests only, and not the priests of religious orders, which had their own traditions of spirituality and learning. Despite such a limitation, the seminary as outlined in the decree launched the Counter-Reformation’s effort to create a renewed diocesan clergy.

In light of the discussion of the seminary presidency, it is appropriate to ask what the Tridentine seminary decree has to say about who is responsible for directing the seminary. The answer relates directly to the historic function of the bishop as head of the local or particular church, that is, the diocese, and its clergy. He was the official logically assigned responsibility for preparing candidates for ministry in his diocese. And just as responsibility for clerical training was assigned to an existing church official, the bishop, so too the location of the training program was placed in an existing institution, the cathedral. The decree enjoins bishops to establish a *seminarium* there, the bishop’s official church, though allowance is made for locating it elsewhere. In establishing his seminary, the bishop was to gather together poor boys—the sons of the well-born and the wealthy had other paths to the diocesan

priesthood—in a program of general education, leading to the study of “scripture and ecclesiastical books,” and rites and ceremonies. The seminarians were to assist in the rich liturgical life of the cathedral. The bishop was to delegate direction of the seminary to two canons or senior priests of the cathedral chapter. Apart from the bishop and two canons, no rector or president, or other type of executive is mentioned in the decree, though a separate group of clergy chosen by bishop, chapter, and diocesan clergy was placed in charge of finances.¹

The decree’s brevity allows the specifics concerning length of studies and content of learning to be left to the bishop’s determination. No Roman congregation or official is charged with devising a program and monitoring compliance with it. The primacy of the local stands out as a central characteristic of the diocesan seminary in the centuries before the promulgation of the Code of Canon Law in 1917. The latter’s canons outline the diocesan seminary’s operation so that the Catholic church at last had a universally applicable canonical blueprint for conducting the training of all diocesan priests. The Code also lists officials that the diocesan seminary was required to have including that of the “rector”—the office closest to the modern seminary president.

From Trent’s decree of 1563 until the Code of Canon Law of 1917, the diocesan seminary had no organizational plan with named officials as mandated from the church’s highest authority. Instead, between Trent and the Code, the diocesan seminary passed through 354 years in which its leaders’ work unfolded in a series of precedent-setting experiences. To come to terms with the American story of leadership for the diocesan major or theological seminary, this essay aims to profile the activities of its officials, either bishops or rectors and presidents, as they pursued their varied roles as founders, sponsors, administrators, or reformers until the era of the Second Vatican Council. The roles of seminary leadership, as exercised by bishops or rectors, have been largely unexplored in American Catholic historiography until recently. These leaders’ work took place in seminaries of varied institutional types. They directed their institutions’ development in many local settings within the context of successive stages of the Catholic community’s life at the national and international levels.²

ENDNOTES

1. Henry J. Schroeder, ed., *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent* (Rockford, IL: Tan Books, 1978), 175-176.
2. The following account of issues and personalities is drawn from Joseph M. White, *The Diocesan Seminary in the United States: A History from the 1780s to the Present* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989).

European Traditions

From Trent to the diocesan seminary's coming to the United States in 1791, practices emerging from local European settings contributed to the tradition of clerical formation. The practices first starting at Milan and Paris have a particular importance in defining leadership roles.

In the years immediately following the Tridentine seminary decree's enactment, Cardinal Charles Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan, founded several seminaries within his archdiocese for training diocesan clergy. This activist for clerical formation provided seminaries with a plan of organization, naming its officials including a rector who presided over a seminary community. The precedent for the rector's role under the bishop's authority spread elsewhere as seminaries were established.

Another influential tradition of clerical formation emerged from the figures associated with the 17th-century French School of Spirituality, who took up an issue that the Council of Trent had not addressed, that is, the spirituality of the priesthood. Centered in Paris, the school's founding figure, Pierre de Bérulle, articulated a Christocentric spirituality focusing on Christ's various "states" of birth, infancy, teaching, suffering, death, resurrection, and so forth as not just transitory life stages but as events always available to believers for meditation. Other figures under Bérulle's influence, such as Charles de Condren, Jean Jacques Olier, and Vincent de Paul, developed a spirituality for priests and seminarians based on his Christocentric model. Their spirituality stressed mental prayer through which the candidate for orders entered into the interior dispositions of Christ's states of victimhood and priesthood. By prayer and a life of self abnegation, the candidate for ordination appropriated to himself Christ's states of eternal priest and victim to prepare for the priest's ministry of imparting grace through dispensing sacraments. In the 1620s through the 1640s, several figures associated with the French School offered this kind of spiritual formation for priesthood candidates who had already pursued formal theological learning at universities by providing retreats lasting weeks or months. To carry on this work, Jean Jacques Olier founded a community of diocesan priests, the Society of St. Sulpice (Sulpicians), and Vincent de Paul started the Congregation of the Mission (Vincentians) that undertook this work along with evangelization of the rural poor. For the Catholic church generally, the legacy of the influential French School was that henceforth the diocesan seminary stressed spiritual formation of priesthood candidates often at the expense of formal learning.

European Traditions

Through the 17th and 18th centuries, the Sulpicians and Vincentians expanded their influence, as bishops throughout France engaged them to staff seminaries at sees where there was no university or no university-trained candidates for ordination. The hired faculty then had to supply theological instruction lasting one or a few years as the bishop determined. In such cases, the local bishop in effect delegated the seminary's direction to these communities, which implemented their distinctive traditions of clerical formation.

An important characteristic of the devoted work of these communities of priests is that in addition to the emphasis on the spiritual development of candidates for priesthood, they established the seminary model of a faculty of priests living a carefully defined community life with the seminarians. That life was marked by limitations on personal comforts, contact with outsiders, and free time. The faculty members by their constant presence and as confessors and counselors became the models of behavior and spirituality for seminarians. In the course of directing the life of the seminary community, the *supérieur* or rector might emerge as the foremost model of priestly conduct.

The French bishops' practice of engaging a faculty of seminary personnel who were not clergy of their own dioceses was a new direction to the tradition that the authors of the Tridentine decree could not have anticipated. In such cases the seminary faculty was subject to their community's governing structure in addition to the bishop's authority in seminary affairs.

The founding story of the first American diocesan seminary at Baltimore, as noted at the beginning of this essay, manifested two elements of the European leadership tradition. First, dependence on the bishop's authority was reflected in the permission that Sulpician superior general, Jacques André Emery, secured to open a seminary from Baltimore's Bishop-elect John Carroll, when the latter visited England in 1790 to receive episcopal ordination. The Sulpicians desired to open an American seminary as a possible place of refuge if their French seminaries closed as a result of revolution. Secondly, the first diocesan seminary in the United States, though dependent on the bishop's permission and encouragement, was conducted by a community of priests whose superior general lived outside the country. This model of bishops sharing responsibility with a community of priests in conducting diocesan seminaries would be influential in the subsequent history of American diocesan seminaries.

Era of Adaptation I: 1791 to the 1850s

Beginning in 1791, seminary leaders—bishops and superiors or rectors of seminaries—began implementing the received tradition of clerical formation for a developing Catholic church in the United States. Not only European traditions but a variety of creative approaches to priestly training reflected the primacy of the local in an era when seminary leaders struggled to sustain viable seminary institutions. From the first seminary at Baltimore to those subsequently founded across the country, seminary leaders showed that they were artists of the possible in adapting inherited traditions to challenging circumstances during the first century of diocesan seminaries. The Third Plenary Council of Baltimore of 1884, at which the American bishops legislated more detailed direction to aspects of diocesan seminary life, marks the end of this era of adaptation.

From the 1790s through the first half of the 19th century, seminary leaders struggled with the twin problems of a scarcity of priesthood candidates and limited financial resources to sustain seminaries. Few American-born Catholic young men aspired to the priesthood, and seminarians recruited from Europe did not arrive in steady numbers. How could a seminary remain open for a few students? The Sulpicians at Baltimore faced these problems as early as 1797 when their seminary's enrollment fell to just one student and in other years numbered a mere handful. To keep their enterprise going, they responded to suggestions from the local community to open a college for lay boys and men. In 1805, the Sulpicians obtained a university charter from the State of Maryland to open St. Mary's College at their Baltimore seminary. For the next half century, the flourishing college that enjoyed local community support sustained the smaller seminary program.

While the college existed, the Sulpician superiors at Baltimore were responsible not only for training priesthood candidates but also developing a faculty suitable for a lay college. This dual purpose stimulated much soul-searching among the Sulpicians who were deviating from their Society's exclusive purpose of training diocesan priests. During the long superiorship of Louis Deluol at St. Mary's (1829-1849), they had to justify this arrangement repeatedly to a superior general in Paris who disapproved of this innovation.

Other seminary leaders followed the institutional model of combining clerical formation with lay education. For instance, Mount Saint Mary's College at Emmitsburg, Maryland, started in 1808 under the leadership of Sulpicians

Jean Dubois and Louis William DuBourg as a *petit* or minor seminary to supply boys trained in the classics and thus ready for the philosophical and theological studies at the *grand* or major seminary at Baltimore. When this aim could not be worked out in practice, Dubois, the school's longtime president, began to enroll boys who did not intend to be priests in order to sustain the institution. By 1820, Archbishop Ambrose Maréchal of Baltimore permitted Dubois to offer theological instruction to a small number of major seminarians part-time so that they could take part in teaching and directing the young lay boys whose tuition sustained the institution. By 1823, the Sulpician superior general in Paris disclaimed authority for the seminary, and Mount Saint Mary's operated thereafter as an independent institution under control of a board of diocesan priests.

After a difficult founding period, Mount Saint Mary's College reached its heyday during the long presidency of John McCaffrey (1838-1872) whose authoritarian style kept together a multidimensional institution consisting of elementary school, high school, college, and theological seminary along with a parish and a farm. Without his iron rule, the centripetal forces within the school's complex mixture of activities would not have survived financial crises, student rebellions, and the Civil War. It flourished as a uniquely complex institution training seminarians for a score or more dioceses.

The leaders of the "mixed" seminary-lay colleges depended on the contributed services of seminarians as teachers of younger students. The departure of seminarians on the occasion of their ordinations could imperil an institution. McCaffrey, for instance, regularly begged sponsoring bishops to delay ordination of their most capable seminarians attending Mount Saint Mary's because the latter were needed for teaching. He often converted necessity into a positive virtue by arguing that the young candidate for orders, if kept working at the seminary-college another year, would make an even better priest.

The work of the Baltimore and Emmitsburg seminaries in eventually training seminarians of many dioceses did not preclude the expectations of bishops of new dioceses of starting their own seminaries as the Tridentine seminary decree proposed. Such was the case when the diocese of Bardstown (Kentucky) was created for the Western part of the United States in 1808. Its first bishop, the Sulpician Benedict Flaget, arrived in his diocese in 1811 with a fellow Sulpician Jean Baptist David and three seminarians. On a donated farm near Bardstown, the bishop set up St. Thomas Seminary. David directed it and taught all the subjects, which, in its early years, might range from elementary Latin for younger boys, to humanities and classics for others, and theology for

the advanced students. Flaget lived at the seminary himself when not absent on long travels and came to know the seminarians personally. Necessity demanded that the seminarians devote as much as three hours a day to manual labor consisting of farm work and care of property. In justifying this deviation from seminary traditions to the Sulpician superior general, Flaget converted necessity to virtue in defense of manual labor: "The result of this work is extremely advantageous for the seminary and very useful for the physical and moral well-being of the young men."¹ The seminary operated in this rustic fashion until it was relocated in 1819 next to the new St. Joseph Cathedral in Bardstown.

A similar pattern of adapting lay and clerical education took place at the Catholic settlement of Perryville, Missouri, where Vincentians under the leadership of Felix de Andreis and Joseph Rosati opened St. Mary of the Barrens Seminary in 1818. The local bishop, William DuBourg, when visiting Rome, had recruited them to open a seminary for his diocese. Like the Sulpicians, the Vincentians had no tradition of conducting lay education but expanded the seminary to include a lay college by 1820 to sustain clerical formation. Rosati directed the college and seminary while fulfilling such tasks as local pastor, itinerant missionary and, after 1825, auxiliary bishop.

As some 20 dioceses were formed across the country from the 1820s to the 1840s, their bishops took the episcopal responsibility for clerical formation seriously. After appointment, a new bishop often aimed to start a diocesan seminary. He thereby honored the Tridentine ideal of each diocese having a seminary in which to develop a locally trained clergy. So great was the American bishops' respect for that tradition that when they met in their Second Provincial Council of Baltimore in 1833, their legislation endorsed the Tridentine principle that each diocese should found a seminary.

A crucial first step for a bishop in founding a seminary was to obtain a grant of funds from one of the European mission societies. By the 1840s there were three to choose from: the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in France, the *Leopoldinen Stiftung* in Vienna, and the *Ludwigmissions-Verein* of Munich. A series of grants from the societies enabled a bishop to buy property and build a house or acquire a small church for use as a cathedral along with a residence and maybe a school. The location of a small cathedral, residence, and school building close together enabled the bishop to provide living arrangements for seminarians, most of whom were recruited from Europe because few came from the local Catholic community. The immigrant seminarians usually arrived in their adopted diocese close to the end of seminary training. They

resided either with the bishop or at the nearby school where they may have taught part-time while receiving the final stages of their instruction, usually in pastoral theology and, if needed, the English language. They may also have assisted priests in pastoral ministry.

These seminaries combined the practical wisdom of preparing immigrant seminarians under the bishop's eye with minimal outlay of scarce cash. They complied literally with the Tridentine ideal of episcopal direction in clerical formation near the cathedral in an urban setting. For seminary leaders, clerical training in the context of the local church had other practical advantages. It kept seminarians rooted in the community of faith that they would serve after ordination. They could then interact with the community and thereby learn its needs and the kind of ministry they could expect as priests.

By 1842, bishops' enthusiasm for local clerical training had produced 22 seminaries with a collective enrollment of 277 students or an average of about 13 students per seminary. Though the internal life of most such small schools is not known, it is fair to conclude that those in charge could not provide a formal program of sequential years of study for a small number of students. It appears that seminary learning required informal arrangements tantamount to tutoring. The latter was easily done as studies at the theological level then consisted of studying the so-called "tracts"—topical treatises on specific issues in dogmatic and moral theology. At these small seminaries, the officials directing the community of students often consisted of only one or two priests. In the 1840s when Vincentian priests conducted many such schools for bishops, they usually supplied a three-priest faculty. The faculty usually had pastoral duties in the local area that supplemented seminary duties. The bishop's personal attention was often engaged as in the case of Bishop Flaget of Bardstown who resided at his rural seminary when not traveling. Another example of episcopal supervision took place at Charleston, South Carolina, where Bishop John England personally conducted a small seminary at his cathedral. Unless traveling throughout his diocese, he taught theology to his seminarians, sometimes ordaining candidates to the priesthood before completing a full course of studies. He then sent them out on missionary travels and later recalled them to the seminary for periods of continued studies under his direction. Such adaptations of Bishop England and other leaders to many different local circumstances of the time all reflect the flexibility of the diocesan seminary tradition.

ENDNOTE

1. Quoted in Charles Lemarié, *A Biography of Benedict Joseph Flaget* (Bardstown, KY: Flaget-Lamarie Group, 1991), Vol. II, 77.

Era of Adaptation II: Freestanding Seminaries

By the middle of the 19th century, Catholic bishops responded to significant changes in the American Catholic community as they exercised their responsibilities for seminaries. Under the impact of some two million Irish and German immigrants arriving in the United States between 1845 and 1855, 20 additional dioceses were created across the country by 1860 to care for the increased number of Catholics. The European mission societies whose grants had stimulated seminary foundings could not sustain their practice of making a grant of funds to each new diocese. Moreover, by the 1850s, the societies found greater need to support Catholic missions in Asia and Africa. They greatly diminished their contributions to Catholic activities in the United States—a country that Europeans now perceived as wealthy. Thus the ideal of each diocese having its own seminary declined, and the modest seminaries that had been started in the 1830s and 1840s began to close.

The creation of new dioceses is one side of the Catholic community's changing organizational patterns. The other side is the transition from having the country's dioceses organized as *one* ecclesiastical province headed by the archbishop of Baltimore as metropolitan, to a regrouping of dioceses into new ecclesiastical provinces each headed by an archbishop. Thus larger dioceses were elevated to the status of archdioceses such as St. Louis in 1847 and New York, Cincinnati, and New Orleans in 1850. With the new provinces formed under four additional archbishops, the bishops embraced the idea that instead of each diocese having a seminary—an idea proving to be unrealistic—then at least each province should have a theological or major seminary. When the American bishops met at their First Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1852, they framed legislation proposing that each province have a seminary. This new ideal is reflected in the trend of founding seminaries with regional importance.

As support from mission societies declined, the American Catholic community developed new financial strength that created a favorable context for seminary foundings. The wave of immigrants built up several large urban Catholic communities capable of producing funds not only to sustain parish life but to support diocesan institutions. Bishops of several urban dioceses were then able to plan and found substantial seminaries through such fundraising efforts as societies and annual collections in parishes. This financial strength in turn yielded a major characteristic of the new type of diocesan seminary, which

Freestanding Seminaries

is freestanding; that is, it did not depend upon a related institutional enterprise such as a lay college to produce revenue. In addition to providing adequate funds, these urban Catholic communities began to supply to seminaries the sons raised in local Catholic culture who aspired to the priesthood.

Archbishop John B. Purcell of Cincinnati led his archdiocese in founding the country's first substantial freestanding diocesan seminary, Mount Saint Mary's of the West, in 1851. The seminary, with an imposing new building on spacious grounds in Cincinnati's Price Hill area and staff of diocesan priests, was a far cry from the diocese's earlier seminary efforts located in the bishop's downtown home or at a rural farmhouse. The building's construction was underwritten by substantial donations from several wealthy Catholics and general fundraising in city parishes. Thereafter, annual collections in local parishes maintained the seminary's operations. In addition to Cincinnati's own seminarians, Mount Saint Mary's of the West enrolled students sent by other dioceses in the region. The bishops of the Cincinnati province designated the institution as their official provincial seminary.

In 1847, the St. Louis diocese had likewise been elevated to the status of an archdiocese. Its ordinary, Peter Kenrick, as archbishop and metropolitan, then sought to provide a seminary for the dioceses of his ecclesiastical province that extended across the upper Mississippi Valley. He opened the St. Louis Ecclesiastical Seminary at the suburb of Carondelet in 1848. Unlike the gregarious Purcell, Kenrick, remote in personal relations, was not capable of gathering a coterie of wealthy donors to sponsor his projects. Also diffident in financial affairs he did not promote the kind of fundraising seminary society among the laity within St. Louis's substantial Catholic population that had marked the Cincinnati seminary's ongoing success. He recruited some able young diocesan priests from abroad to staff the seminary and to serve as rectors. However, in his position as metropolitan, Kenrick arranged for their promotions to vacant bishoprics within the ecclesiastical province (four within 10 years). Without stable financing and continuity of a rector's leadership within the institution, the seminary closed by 1859.

By contrast, a see within the St. Louis ecclesiastical province, the diocese of Milwaukee, enjoyed a conspicuous success in founding and operating a seminary. This diocese, founded in 1843, embraced a substantial and growing German Catholic population. Its first bishop, Swiss-born John Martin Henni, had the idea of founding a national seminary for Germans, dating from his years as a Cincinnati pastor. When he came to Milwaukee, he brought along his dream. To bring it to fulfillment, he had two talented priests to organize this

undertaking. The first, Francis Salzmänn, a University of Vienna graduate, launched fundraising tours to German Catholic communities throughout the region appealing to their national pride and fears of advancing influence of Protestant and freethinking Germans. Supported with adequate funds, St. Francis de Sales Seminary opened near Milwaukee in 1856 with a staff of diocesan priests. Salzmänn continued strenuous fundraising tours until his death in 1874, having raised some \$100,000 for the seminary. The second priest, Michael Heiss, a bright University of Munich graduate, effectively governed the seminary community's internal life as rector and set a high standard of learning until his own appointment to the episcopate in 1868. St. Francis Seminary flourished under the patronage of a score of dioceses in the Upper Mississippi Valley—most within the St. Louis province. Its founding story illustrates the success of a bishop in delegating seminary responsibilities to talented subordinates.

Also in the period, Sulpician leaders made their Baltimore seminary a freestanding institution by closing the affiliated lay college in 1855. The growing enrollment of seminarians drawn from dioceses across the country, and especially from the Baltimore ecclesiastical province, made this transition successful. The French Sulpicians assigned to Baltimore under the superiorships of François Lhomme (1850-1860) and Joseph-Paul Debruel (1860-1878) created a classic seminary environment isolated from contacts with the local community and adhering to rigid French clerical traditions.

The Philadelphia diocese, a suffragan see of the Baltimore ecclesiastical province until its elevation to an archdiocese in 1875, had conducted its modest St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in downtown Philadelphia near its cathedral since 1838. After the Civil War, Bishop James Wood, a former Unitarian and banker of patrician tastes, began planning a new seminary building on spacious grounds in the suburb of Overbrook. There, he opened the new St. Charles Seminary in 1871 in a grand building providing every middle-class comfort available in the era. As the country's most elaborate Catholic seminary yet built, it cost an unheard of \$484,665. Its construction and ongoing support reflect the size and financial strength of Philadelphia's Catholic community that was also sending its sons in large numbers to study there. Unlike the other great diocesan seminaries established in the era, St. Charles Seminary with its staff of diocesan priests served only the local diocese.

Other new freestanding seminaries demonstrate the possibilities and successes for the era's leaders. St. Joseph Provincial Seminary, opening in 1864 at Troy, New York, represents the collaboration of eight of the 11 bishops of the

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New York ecclesiastical province—then including dioceses in New England, New York, and New Jersey—in sharing responsibility for founding, funding, and operating a diocesan seminary. Archbishop John Hughes of New York, as the leader with the greatest financial resources, initiated this project by buying at a bargain price the buildings of a new but bankrupt Methodist college. Through contacts with the Belgian hierarchy, Hughes secured a faculty of University of Louvain-educated priests of the diocese of Ghent (Belgium) to staff the seminary. The series of Belgian rectors and faculty looked to the province's bishops for leadership and funds. The bishops met regularly to make policy decisions for the seminary. This model of collective leadership lasted until the seminary closed in 1896, superseded by newer seminaries founded in the region.

The diocese of Newark, New Jersey, though part of the New York province, had not participated in the founding of St. Joseph Provincial Seminary. In 1859, its bishop, James Roosevelt Bayley had already opened Seton Hall College for lay students with the affiliated Immaculate Conception Seminary for clerical formation at South Orange, New Jersey. The successful founding of this combined institution under the direction of diocesan priests went against the prevailing pattern of dioceses forming freestanding seminaries.

Era of Adaptation III: Priests' Communities and Religious Orders

Bishops shared leadership of diocesan seminaries not only with the rectors they appointed but also with communities of priests. The foremost of these was the Society of St. Sulpice, a loosely constituted community of diocesan priests not bound by vows, hence not a religious order. With their center of activities at the historic Baltimore seminary and at St. Charles College, the country's first successful freestanding minor seminary opening in 1849 at nearby Catonsville, the Sulpicians maintained close ties with the archbishops of Baltimore, the 19th-century *de facto* heads of the American Catholic community. The Sulpicians' constitution and the directives of their superior general in Paris gave them a guide to seminary duties, but they also accommodated themselves to the archbishop's wishes whenever he raised specific issues related to the internal conduct of the seminaries. In the daily regulation of their seminaries' internal life, the Sulpicians made collective decisions at regular meetings in which each member had equal say and vote. In other words, the superior or rector was not an authority figure to whom his Sulpician colleagues owed obedience.

The Congregation of the Mission (Vincentians), a religious institute or order whose members are bound by vows, were prominent in staffing small seminaries for dioceses by the 1840s, but this aspect of their work declined as those schools closed. They continued training diocesan seminarians at their college at Perryville, Missouri, until it was transferred to Cape Girardeau, Missouri, as St. Vincent College for lay students only. After St. Louis's provincial seminary closed in 1859, the Vincentians opened a diocesan seminary at St. Vincent College that served as a school of ministry for many western and southern dioceses until closing in 1894. The Vincentians also opened for the Buffalo diocese, Our Lady of Angels Seminary in Niagara, New York, in 1857 as part of their Niagara College for lay students. In the internal governance of seminaries, the Vincentians were guided by their order's traditions as found in their official *Directoire* that outlined responsibilities of members serving in a seminary.

One of the Catholic church's oldest religious orders, the Order of St. Benedict (Benedictines), likewise participated in training diocesan priests in the missionary circumstances of the American Catholic community. In this effort the Benedictine leader, Boniface Wimmer, played the role of visionary founder. In the 1840s, from his home base of Metten Abbey, Bavaria, he

Priests' Communities and Religious Orders

developed the idea that Benedictine monks should organize an effort to minister to German Catholics then coming in droves to the United States. His dream was to establish monasteries that would play a comprehensive role in Catholic life as centers combining liturgical prayer, ecclesiastical learning, lay education, book publishing, headquarters for priests to minister to surrounding Catholic parishes, a flourishing agricultural life, and finally a seminary for training diocesan priests.

Wimmer gave reality to this vision with the founding in 1846 of a monastery at Latrobe, Pennsylvania, now known as St. Vincent Archabbey, and its daughter monastery founded in 1856 in Stearns County, Minnesota, now known as St. John's Abbey. These two monasteries became noted for many religious activities including diocesan seminaries serving their respective regions.

Other Benedictines such as those from Switzerland had a similar idea of providing a range of religious services under the auspices of a monastic community. In 1854 Swiss monks founded in Spencer County, Indiana, a monastery dedicated to St. Meinrad and opened a seminary there in 1861. And in 1887, another Swiss Benedictine monastery with seminary now known as Mount Angel Abbey was formed in the Willamette Valley of Oregon.

A Benedictine monastic community engaged in several activities provides a rich setting for the diocesan seminary. Once a monastery had achieved the autonomous status of an abbey, those responsible for its direction were the abbot and his council. The Benedictine order did not have a superior general in Europe that the more recently founded communities such as the Sulpicians and Vincentians had. An abbey and its activities, instead, were deeply rooted in its local context. In the work of keeping up a range of commitments, each abbey had to balance its seminary's needs for resources and personnel with the claims of its other activities. The rector and faculty in day-to-day charge of the seminary were naturally subject to the abbey's authority structure.

Era of Adaptation IV: Accomplishments from 1791 to 1884

On the occasion of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore of 1884—the American bishops’ last national legislative meeting of the 19th century—the American Catholic community would look back on more than nine decades of diocesan seminary activity. Through the period, bishops and seminary rectors had freely adapted the Tridentine seminary tradition to the American context. In doing so, they cultivated the entrepreneurial skills necessary in creating and sustaining several types of institutions. The freestanding seminary, usually located at a major archdiocese or diocese, would be the most influential institutional model to emerge from the period. Though seminary leaders would follow this model in 20th-century seminary foundings, the several “mixed” models of diocesan seminary with associated lay colleges or monasteries dating from the period would likewise flourish in the next century.

The American adaptation of the diocesan seminary differed from the model proposed in the Tridentine seminary decree. In the United States, for instance, each diocese could not sustain a seminary as is assumed in Trent’s decree. Except for Philadelphia’s seminary, freestanding and most other types of seminaries served a number of dioceses. Thus the seminary and its rector operated in a more or less open market for their services. The seminary had to develop a relationship of trust with client bishops who patronized seminaries by sending their seminarians. The rector-client bishop relationship, for instance, was important to the success of a truly national institution such as Baltimore’s St. Mary’s Seminary that served some 25 dioceses by the period’s ending.

If the American diocesan seminary differed from the model proposed in Trent’s decree, its officials still practiced ecclesiastical rather than American forms of governance. The seminary and its rector were either subject to the authority of the bishops or, if the seminary was owned and operated by a religious order exempt from episcopal jurisdiction (such as the Benedictines or Vincentians), then the religious-order superior was responsible. The diocesan seminary, even though incorporated under state law with a board of trustees, rarely had use of a board as a means of actual governance. It therefore diverged markedly from the ordinary practices of governance found in institutions of higher education in the United States during the same period.

Accomplishments from 1791 to 1884

One function common to rectors was to preside over the internal life of the seminary community, that is, administering temporalities, coordinating activities of a faculty of priests, and giving direction to student life in a moral and spiritual sense. In defining the areas of studies and student life, rectors, subject to the local bishop's authority, were the day-to-day interpreters of received traditions of clerical formation. Their role developed through the period as seminaries, especially the freestanding ones, enrolled growing bodies of students. The early seminaries, with communities of 10 to 20 students with no pre-determined number of years of study, gave way after the 1850s to communities with 100 or more students and a set number of at least three or four years of study at the major seminary level. The seminaries then had a more formalized organization with sequential years of course work. The rector's administrative responsibilities were enlarged according to the size and complexity of these communities.

Seminary Reform: 1884 to 1907

When the American bishops assembled in November 1884 for the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, they addressed the pressing issues involving the Catholic community's relationship with the national culture in the areas of education, secret societies, and interfaith marriages. Also on their agenda were issues related to diocesan priests arising from recent priest-bishop conflicts that had gained national attention and had even produced an organized priests' rights movement. The bishops formulated decrees that aimed to reorder diocesan priests' relations with their bishops.

In the minds of bishops and Roman authorities, the behavior of American priests had raised questions about the length and thoroughness of their seminary training. At the behest of Roman officials, the bishops agreed in advance of the council to lengthen the course of major and minor seminary studies to six years for each. Along with this Roman recommendation, the American bishops' framed conciliar decrees reflecting their most extensive common thinking on the diocesan seminary up to that time. The major seminary decree listed and described the courses of the curriculum, giving unprecedented attention to formerly neglected subjects such as biblical studies, homiletics, and church history. The minor seminary decree aimed at a thorough grounding in the humanities, classical languages, and rudiments of clerical spirituality and culture for adolescents preparing for the major seminary. The council also voted to establish a graduate school in the ecclesiastical sciences for priests that opened in 1889 as the Catholic University of America at Washington, DC.

The seminary decrees did not address how rectors were to administer their institutions. Nevertheless, the major seminary decree touched on the office of rector in very general terms by recommending that the rector should be a priest noted for integrity of morals, gravity, excellent experience and judgment, pious, zealous, and possessing all the priestly virtues. It seems unlikely that he should be otherwise. In his responsibility for the internal discipline of the seminary, the decree enjoins him to avoid the extremes of rigor and laxity.¹

The major seminary decree does not explicitly say so, but the rector's range of duties had been enlarged by the new expectations of the seminary as reflected in the lengthier course of studies. The rector would naturally be a key figure in seeing that these provisions were carried out. Of course, his ability to carry out reforms depended on the support of the bishop or other authorities

and the availability of resources and personnel. For instance, some seminaries delayed for many years the lengthening of the course of studies to six years because of either a lack of resources to do so or because client bishops withdrew their seminarians for ordination before completing a full course thereby making it difficult to offer a complete six years.

An important result of the seminary decrees was a sustained discussion among church leaders and seminary educators about the new demands for priests' ministry appropriate for the American Catholic community at the end of the century. This dialogue was carried out through the medium of publications such as the *American Ecclesiastical Review*, founded at the Philadelphia seminary in 1889 as a journal devoted to pastoral theology. It became the usual forum for discussing issues related to priesthood and seminary. For example, in its pages the influential Sulpician John Hogan, president of the Divinity College of the Catholic University of America and the founding rector of Boston's seminary, addressed current pedagogical issues for each academic discipline in the seminary curriculum. These essays were published in the volume *Clerical Studies* (1896).

Another important volume, *Our Seminaries: An Essay on Clerical Training* (1896) by New York priest John Talbot Smith, called for a complete reform of the seminary to meet the demands of a new type of priest required for the times—"an educated gentleman, fitted for public life, physically sound, in sympathy with his environment, and imbued with the true missionary spirit."² To produce this model of an active diocesan priest, Smith expected seminary studies to prepare the priest to deal with a range of contemporary moral and social questions. Smith also endorsed a healthful seminary environment in which students received an adequate diet, enjoyed the reasonable comfort of well-heated and well lighted buildings, and had opportunities for regular physical exercise. He was thereby taking aim at the approving attitude toward physical suffering that had long been expected of seminarians at some institutions.

This sustained discussion revolving around reform of seminary studies, the model of the contemporary priest, and style of seminary life turned several rectors into apostles of seminary reform.

The Society of St. Sulpice took the lead in implementing new ideas.³ At Baltimore's St. Mary's Seminary, French-born Alphonse Magnien, superior from 1876 to 1902, developed a sensitivity for making the seminary more American in character. He recognized the need to bridge the cultural divide separating the conservative French-born faculty and high-spirited American

students. Instead of upholding the rigid restraints of French clerical behavior, he believed that American seminarians, accustomed to the personal freedom common in America, would be more receptive to the faculty's influence if excessive strictness in enforcing traditional seminary discipline was relaxed and arbitrary personal treatment avoided.

Seminary foundings were occasions for adapting inherited traditions to new situations. Sulpicians were called upon to staff the Boston archdiocese's new St. John Seminary at Brighton, Massachusetts, in 1884. Its first rector, the Irish-born Sulpician, John Hogan, brought a strong sense of the need for high academic standards among both faculty and students. The youthful Charles Rex, succeeding Hogan as rector in 1889, introduced such unheard of innovations as a formal physical exercise program and a reading room with a range of contemporary periodicals. He thereby reflected the current discussions calling for the seminary to encourage physical health as well as broad theological and general knowledge.

Sulpicians also accepted the invitation to staff the New York archdiocese's new St. Joseph's Seminary (Dunwoodie) opening at Yonkers in 1896. Here, for America's premier city, they and New York's Archbishop Michael Corrigan were determined to conduct a state-of-the-art seminary. Under founding rector Edward R. Dyer (1896-1904) and his successor James Driscoll (1904-1909), seminary ways were accommodated to an American vision of the priest as in the Baltimore and Boston seminaries. In reaction to some of the intellectually narrow traditions of seminary learning, they developed a high-powered faculty of scholarly priests, a library with current periodicals, and opportunities for students to take some courses at nearby Columbia University.⁴

A significant representative of the tradition of active episcopal involvement in the seminary was Bishop Bernard McQuaid of Rochester, New York. When his great St. Bernard Seminary opened in modern buildings at Rochester in 1893, he moved into the seminary and, despite his age (68), served as rector himself, while also carrying on duties as ordinary of the diocese. As rector, he enforced his vision of a highly educated clergy by developing an excellent faculty of diocesan priests with degrees from European universities and maintaining high academic and personal standards for seminarians. He himself taught homiletics, a course in which he aimed to develop priests as articulate spokesmen for the Catholic community.

Another great seminary activist was the leading light of the Americanist wing of the American Catholic hierarchy, Archbishop John Ireland of St. Paul, Minnesota. His St. Paul Seminary, a benefaction of the Protestant railroad

magnate, James J. Hill, opened in 1894 with a staff of diocesan priests. Though Ireland did not assume the role of rector as McQuaid did, he filled the seminary with his exuberant American spirit. In regular talks to seminarians, he proclaimed a strong desire for a learned clergy, not merely educated in ecclesiastical sciences, but in science, literature, and current events, as well as possessing the ability to articulate that learning in written and spoken word. Without these qualities, he believed, the priest could not be a leader in church or community affairs. His ideas ran contrary to the older view that a program of narrow ecclesiastical learning was sufficient preparation for the priest's ministry.

While the aforementioned seminary leaders acted from a strong sense of affirming an American identity in the formation of diocesan priests, the ethnic character of the Catholic community in the United States did not preclude training priests for specific ethnic communities. During the period two founders arose to master the entrepreneurial skills necessary to launch new seminary ventures. In 1885, a Polish immigrant priest, Joseph Dabrowski, launched a comprehensive school for Polish males in Detroit that included a seminary named for Sts. Cyril and Methodius to train priests for ministry in Polish-American communities. In Columbus, Ohio, an energetic German immigrant priest, Joseph Jessing, had started an orphanage for German boys. From this small enterprise Jessing added a seminary program in 1888, intended for Germans, that eventually achieved a charter from the Holy See as the Pontifical College Josephinum. His multidimensional enterprise included not only orphanage and seminary, but also a German newspaper, book publishing in German, and a factory producing church furnishings. The leadership of Dabrowski and Jessing demonstrates the possibilities of individuals acting on their own to found multidimensional ethnic institutions that included clerical formation. They did so without direct diocesan support.

Apart from the ethnic seminaries, it was the mainstream church leaders of the period who reexamined aspects of diocesan seminary life in the light of the decrees of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore and their assessment of the needs of the American Catholic community. The new seminaries established at major dioceses provided occasions for fresh beginnings in the implementation of new ideas. These seminaries occupied better buildings than most older seminaries to insure the resident community a reasonable middle class comfort. Even older seminaries such as St. Mary's at Baltimore were updating and expanding facilities.

All seminary leaders responded in some fashion to the discussion of the American priest's need for greater intellectual and theological culture. A legacy

of the era that bishops and rectors struggled to achieve was the six-year major seminary course that all seminaries offered by 1911. The leading seminaries required higher standards of performance from their students. The seminary pedagogy advanced as many textbooks written and adopted during this era, particularly the dogmatic theology manuals of the French Sulpician Adolph Tanquerey, were destined to remain influential for decades. Also manuals of pastoral theology written from the perspective of the American experience of ministry made their appearance in the 1890s. In this area, the rector could influence seminarians greatly because in most seminaries he taught the pastoral theology course in the final year of seminary studies. But above all, the rector had enlarged responsibilities for the practical implementation of all these innovations in collaboration with his bishop or superior.

As the century ends, the bishops and rectors most active in thinking about clerical formation stand at the close of the long era in the life of the church in which the characteristics of the local and national church were an important starting point for considerations of the content of seminary programs. None of the figures mentioned here looked to Roman authority to guide them in developing ideas of the priesthood or the content of seminary programs. In the 1890s, Roman officials were not yet addressing seminary issues and promoting universally applicable ideas for the world's Catholic seminaries as they would be doing in the next century.

ENDNOTES

1. *Acta et Decreta Concilii Plenarii Baltimorensis Tertii* (Baltimore, 1886), 70-92.
2. John Talbot Smith, *Our Seminaries: An Essay on Clerical Training* (New York, 1896).
3. Christopher J. Kauffman, *Tradition and Transformation in Catholic Culture: The Priests of Saint Sulpice in the United States from 1791 to the Present* (New York: Macmillan, 1988), 179-198 profiles the activities of this remarkable group of seminary rectors.
4. Thomas J. Shelley, *Dunwoodie: The History of St. Joseph's Seminary* (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1993), 92-117.

The Roman Era I: 1907 to Circa 1940

The ecclesiastical climate that had encouraged seminary leaders to consider reforms of the diocesan seminary's internal life and an expansion of its academic dimensions underwent a drastic change as the 19th century ended and the new century began. By then, Roman officials entered an era of increasingly active responses to the major challenges posed to religious authority. The 19th century's faith in science and human progress and a decline of belief in the supernatural had called into question many aspects of religious tradition. To insure the church's united front against such challenges, Pope Pius IX, reigning from 1846 to 1878, drew the lines of church authority more closely to the papacy. A milestone of this effort was the First Vatican Council that in 1870 proclaimed as dogma the pope's infallibility in faith and morals when he speaks as head of the church. A change of the papacy's relationship with local church life is presaged in the same council's declaration in unqualified terms of the pope's "immediate" jurisdiction over the entire church, obligating all to hierarchical subordination and true obedience in matters of discipline and government of the church. The course was then set for the papacy to exert a growing supervision of all aspects of Catholic life including the seminary.

The Catholic church offered its own intellectual response to the challenges of modern thought when Pope Leo XIII issued the encyclical *Aeterni Patris* in 1879 that imposed the method of St. Thomas Aquinas on Catholic philosophical and theological scholarship. The same pope also restricted the Catholic church's acceptance of discoveries from the era's rapidly developing biblical scholarship by establishing the Pontifical Biblical Commission in 1902 to monitor the views of Catholic biblical scholars. Pope Pius X's condemnation of theological Modernism in 1907 and the imposition of the "Oath against Modernism" for seminary and university officials and their faculties in 1910, to be renewed annually, insured even greater controls over Catholic theological inquiry and writing. It appeared that the Holy See had set its face resolutely against most aspects of contemporary scholarship that were thought to undermine church teaching.

American diocesan seminaries had not generally developed an intellectual life marked by original scholarship that would come under attack from Roman authority's crusade against any real or imagined theological Modernism. However, New York's St. Joseph's Seminary (Dunwoodie) was one institution

whose leaders had to deal with the changed ecclesiastical climate. Here, its scholarly faculty had launched in 1905 the first serious Catholic theological journal published in the United States, the *New York Review* to which European and American scholars contributed articles. Dunwoodie's faculty thereby aimed to develop a reputation as a place of theological learning and a center for its wider diffusion, but strains soon developed. First of all, the Sulpician faculty needed permission to publish articles and books from their cautious superior general in Paris. This problem led to the withdrawal of most faculty members from the society in 1906. Those leaving included the rector James Driscoll and scriptural scholar Francis Gigot, both of whom remained on the faculty as priests of the New York archdiocese. Pope Pius X's condemnation of Modernism in 1907 placed added strains on the academic activists at Dunwoodie. New York's Archbishop John Farley (created cardinal in 1911), who had supported the forward-looking intellectual development of his seminary, became cautious, abruptly terminated the *Review* in 1910, and dispersed the scholarly faculty members to parish assignments. He thereby ended the seminary's early promise as a home for genuine theological and intellectual culture. These incidents illustrate, first, the tensions that could arise when differences occur between the leadership of a community of priests and the bishop who engages them to staff a seminary, and second, the consequences of the church's crusade against Modernism on a seminary's aspirations as a center of learning.

At St. John's Seminary at Brighton, Massachusetts, Boston's Archbishop William H. O'Connell (created cardinal in 1911) forced the Sulpicians, whom he suspected of Modernism and anti-Roman biases of their French heritage, to withdraw from the faculty in 1910. He replaced them with priests of his own archdiocese.

At the aforementioned seminaries, no faculty member was actually discovered to be a Modernist. The most noteworthy American incident in the Roman crusade against Modernism took place not at a seminary but at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC, where the Dutch scriptural scholar Henry Poels was dismissed for his views on the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. The Roman effort against Modernism did not so much uncover Modernist priests teaching in seminaries but had a greater effect in discouraging priests from pursuing a career of theological and biblical scholarship in addition to their teaching.

In addition to control of intellectual life, the Catholic church under Pope Pius X began in 1904 the process of creating a universal ecclesiastical law code that was promulgated in 1917 under his successor, Pope Benedict XV, as the

Code of Canon Law. The Code established a uniform ordering of all aspects of Catholic life. As empowered by the Code, Roman congregations (administrative bureaus) gained a certain “infallibility by association” as they carried out administrative work in specific areas of church life in the pope’s name. Church officials at the local level could scarcely challenge or question the steady stream of decrees based on the Code without appearing to be disloyal to authority, though sometimes these decrees applied universal principles that did not always fit local situations. For oversight of the world’s diocesan seminaries and issuing relevant regulations, the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities was established in 1915 as part of the Holy See’s more powerful bureaucracy.

Under the Code’s seminary canons, the bishop, then, as the ordinary authority in a diocesan seminary (unless owned by an exempt religious community such as the Benedictines) lost much of the unlimited discretion in seminary matters that the Tridentine decree had in theory allowed. Instead, the bishop, the rector, and the administrative structure of any community or order conducting a diocesan seminary had to follow a basic organizational plan and in interpreting seminary canons depend ultimately on Roman officials.

What did the relevant canons of the Code of Canon Law have to say about the diocesan seminary and its leaders? In this the church’s first general legislation on the subject, the canons defined the seminary’s nature and purpose as a place for training priests, named its officials, listed the subjects in the major seminary curriculum, set the number of years of study at six each for major and minor seminaries, and required all candidates for the diocesan priesthood to take seminary studies—not just poor youths as proposed in the Tridentine seminary decree. The canons did not initiate a startling new direction because seminaries already had officials with specific responsibilities, and most offered courses in several academic disciplines. However, the importance of the canons lay in the fact that they prescribed standard practices and required that seminaries have the named officials and courses. The canons thus established legal foundations by which the seminary could be regulated.

In the exercise of his offices, the rector continued to be subject to the authority of the bishop. The canons require the rector to enforce seminary regulations including the duty of seeing that other seminary officials named in the Code—vice rector, treasurer, professors, confessors, and spiritual director—discharge their responsibilities. The rector was also responsible for seeing that the students were instructed in the practice of refinement, courtesy, and politeness.

The Code attached great importance to the office of spiritual director that was required in all seminaries. The rector was thereafter excluded from responsibilities of spiritual direction of seminarians or hearing their confessions unless a student specifically requested such services. The duties of spiritual director and appointment of ordinary confessors designated for seminarians aimed to protect confidentiality. The other faculty priests were considered extraordinary confessors whom the students were free to approach for confession, if they so chose. The Society of St. Sulpice whose members traditionally shared equally in the ordinary spiritual direction of students were exempted from these provisions. Otherwise, the rector, as the official responsible for the whole seminary community, received the canonical rights of pastor for those in his care, thereby excluding the pastor of the local parish from responsibilities in the seminary.¹

Following the Code's promulgation, the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities began to issue the supplementary decrees that were central to its dealing with the world's diocesan seminaries in the following decades. Some of its earliest decrees mandated courses in catechetics and canon law, required Scripture instructors to have degrees from the Pontifical Biblical Institute, and reminded seminary educators that theology and philosophy must be studied according to the method of St. Thomas Aquinas.

By the late 1920s, the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities began to require bishops to report every three years on the seminaries within their dioceses. The triennial report—a printed questionnaire usually completed by seminary officials—required such information as the names and functions of officials, the enrollment figures, course offerings, list of faculty members with their academic degrees, the number of library books, and seminarians' extracurricular activities including sports. The inquiry does not seem very searching, but the answers enabled Roman officials to determine whether the Code's seminary canons and the congregation's decrees were being observed. This kind of inquiry did not aim to evaluate how well the seminary was doing its work or inquire if the seminarians believed that they were being adequately prepared for ministry.

In 1928 after the first questionnaires were submitted from American seminaries, the apostolic delegate in the United States, Archbishop Pietro Fumasoni-Biondi, issued in the name of the Sacred Congregation a report on the condition of American seminaries that was generally favorable. But specific issues concerned the Roman officials. The letter showed a strong interest in the position of the spiritual director in seminary life—still not clearly defined in

some institutions. The priest serving in this position, according to the letter, was to be carefully chosen based on his experience and wisdom. The letter's interest in formal studies was directed to exhortations on the study of Latin, the "Catholic language," and instruction in canon law was to be given by an instructor with a degree in that discipline. The letter noted with disapproval the existence of minor seminaries operating in some large cities as day schools with the students living with their families. The Sacred Congregation ordered these converted to boarding seminaries as soon as possible. The principle here was to isolate minor seminarians from the dangers of the "world." Another isolating aspect was to prohibit all seminarians' participation in athletic activities with other schools.²

The Sacred Congregation's letter, along with some of its other efforts, tended toward insuring the seminary's isolation from outside contacts. For instance, in the 1930s, Roman officials raised the question of placing seminarians in villas during summers to insure their isolation from contacts with their families and home environment. Though some dioceses such as Boston, Chicago, Milwaukee, Newark, and Brooklyn by then operated some kind of summer program for their seminarians, the American bishops successfully opposed proposals to mandate villas for all.

By the late 1930s, the Sacred Congregation's various decrees produced an accumulation of regulations for the world's Catholic seminary officials to observe. In 1937, Pope Pius XI, in whose pontificate since 1922 most seminary legislation had been issued, apparently wondered if it was being obeyed. He ordered a great visitation of Catholic seminaries throughout the world. In the United States, the apostolic delegate, Archbishop Amleto Cicognani, assisted by seven American bishops, divided the task of on-site visits to seminaries and submitted reports on them to the Sacred Congregation. By the time of the visitation's completion in 1940, Pope Pius XI had died, the world was at war, and Roman officials may have been absorbed in other matters so that a general report on American seminaries was not issued.

Roman direction through the era left seminary officials with a clear indication of what the church's legislation required and that they were ultimately answerable to Roman authority. However, Roman legislation focused almost exclusively on the internal life of the seminary while ignoring many seminary-related issues such as seminaries' relationships with each other, their relation to the national educational system, and seminary educators' professional relationships. In other words, the Code assumed that seminary officials and faculty had no professional relationships outside seminary walls and that

they were entirely dependent on the authority of the bishop, who was, in turn, subject to the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities.

With the official church's canonical foundation for the diocesan seminary fixed by the Code and the Sacred Congregation's rulings, how then did officials, whether bishops or rectors, govern diocesan seminaries during this period? Did the legislation make all seminaries uniform in style and spirit? What opportunities were left to the rector in articulating a personal vision of the seminary?

At New York's St. Joseph's Seminary, as noted, Cardinal Farley had signaled the abandonment of its founding ideal of academic excellence in 1909. At that time, he appointed as rector John Chidwick, a former police chaplain with a manly clerical style and no scholarly interests. In 1922 Farley's successor, Cardinal Patrick Hayes, continued the non-intellectual tradition by appointing as rector James McEntyre, an experienced pastor in his 60s with no previous seminary experience. When the latter died in 1930, Arthur Scanlan, the pliable moral theology professor, was chosen as rector. The three rectors reveal no original vision of what their seminary was to be. Their duty was to preside over the day-to-day life of the seminary community and to defer not only to the cardinal-archbishop but also to the real power at the seminary from 1919 to 1940—its procurator or treasurer, John Donovan. The latter's driving concern for 21 years was economy. Thus his regime produced awful food, bad lighting, low heat, poor housekeeping, no library budget, and deferred maintenance on buildings—a kind of Dickensian poorhouse—all accomplished with Cardinal Hayes's approval. The cardinal rarely visited the seminary but was impressed by its always low expenses.³

A somewhat different story of episcopal direction is found at the Boston archdiocesan seminary, St. John's at Brighton, during the years of Cardinal William H. O'Connell (1907-1944). Unlike his colleague of New York, Boston's cardinal-archbishop spent money generously for the seminary and paid close personal attention to its internal affairs. As a former rector of the American College in Rome, he had definite views about seminary life in the Roman style. After terminating the Sulpicians' services in 1910, his subsequent policies tended to isolate the seminary by ending some activities they inspired such as the seminarians' off-campus hospital visitations and catechetical work, and closing down the foreign mission study club. He even ordered the resident faculty not to seek social contacts with clergy friends beyond the seminary. He enforced an even closer personal direction of the seminary after moving to a new mansion on its grounds in 1927. By then, the rector, Roman-trained Charles

Finn, was an executor of the cardinal's policies without promoting a personal vision of his own.

One of the cardinal's Roman novelties was the adoption of the *camerata* system in which the whole student body was divided into groups of 10 to 12 students, each subject to a student prefect or "beadle," who in turn reported to one of the house prefects, a priest faculty member. Accordingly, as the seminary historians record, "the whole student body moved like companies of a regiment to all its various activities."⁴ The *camerata* system reduced the seminarian's personal contacts, already extremely limited, to even fewer. The style of cassock and even clerical outerwear were rigidly standardized. All these measures created a uniform, regimented, and certainly isolated seminary community. And, of course, the rector's role was to enforce the prescribed rules as ordered.

The rectorship of Reynold Hillenbrand at Chicago's St. Mary of the Lake Seminary from 1932 to 1944 reflects a style of leadership strikingly different from the previous two examples. Hillenbrand's seminary was the lavish, expensive ecclesiastical Xanadu that Chicago's archbishop, Cardinal George Mundelein, had created during the 1920s north of Chicago. To make it even grander, the cardinal had obtained a charter from the Holy See to grant pontifical degrees including the doctorate. Jesuits, whom the cardinal admired, taught the academic courses, while Chicago diocesan priests headed by the rector directed the students' spiritual and pastoral formation. To preside over it, a brilliant young Chicago priest, Reynold Hillenbrand, an alumnus of the new seminary with a year of "finishing" in Rome, was appointed rector in 1932 at age 31.

As rector, Hillenbrand brought a personal vision to the seminary without altering the tradition of a highly controlled life of discipline and prayer or violating Roman regulations. Possessing a personal charisma, Hillenbrand opened the seminarians' minds to a broader vision of the Catholic world in three areas: teaching a class in the liturgy and implementing liturgical reforms in seminary worship, teaching a course in social problems for the deacon class, and inviting some of the era's leading Catholic thinkers and activists to lecture. By stressing these themes, Hillenbrand formed a cohort of Chicago priests during his years as rector until 1944 who began their careers with a strong desire to implement the latest liturgical practices and to bring the church's influence to bear in solving social problems.⁵

The various examples of bishops and their rectors point out the styles of seminary leadership existing during the interwar period. Though the Code was

in the first generation of its existence, episcopal authority could and often did set the tone for the diocesan seminary and the boundaries for the seminary rector's personal influence. Against a great archbishop's whims and eccentricities little protection was available to the diocesan seminary or its officials. At that time the seminary did not have a relationship with the larger educational world through accreditation so that rectors could not appeal to its standards when faced with anti-intellectual trends, meager budgets, or excesses of authority.

The seminaries conducted by diocesan clergy that had emerged from the 19th century flourished in the 20th century and were augmented by new ones. Apart from Chicago's seminary under the divided direction of diocesan priests forming the administration and Jesuits supplying the faculty, diocesan priests conducted the new St. John's Home Missions Seminary, opening in 1913 at Little Rock, Arkansas; St. Mary's Seminary of Cleveland, starting in 1924; and Immaculate Conception Seminary in Huntington, New York, established by the Brooklyn diocese in 1930.

The alternate institutional model to the seminary staffed by diocesan clergy subject to their bishop is the seminary entrusted to a community of priests or a religious order. For the period's many new freestanding seminaries, the founding bishops did not have diocesan priests with academic qualifications available to appoint to their staff and faculty. Thus Sulpician influence expanded as they agreed to conduct St. Patrick's Seminary in Menlo Park, California, opening for the archdiocese of San Francisco in 1898; the Sulpician Seminary, now Theological College, at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC, beginning in 1919; St. Edward's Seminary near Seattle, Washington, in 1930; and St. John's Seminary near Detroit in 1949.

Vincentians gained influence in the Western half of the country beginning with the 1894 opening of Kenrick Seminary for the St. Louis archdiocese. In 1916 Kenrick moved from a downtown location to an imposing building in a St. Louis suburb. Their other foundings included St. Thomas Seminary in Denver, Colorado (1906) and St. John Seminary in Camarillo, California (1940) for the Los Angeles archdiocese. In 1941 they took over staffing of St. John Seminary at San Antonio, Texas, founded in 1919 with a staff of diocesan priests. The Society of Mary (Marists) entered the ranks of orders conducting diocesan seminaries in 1923 when they agreed to staff the New Orleans archdiocese's new Notre Dame Seminary.

The American-based provincial superiors of these groups had responsibilities for seminary leadership in addition to bishops and rectors. Since 1921, the

Sulpicians had a United States Province with provincial superiors such as Edward R. Dyer until 1925 and John Fenlon (1925-1943) to coordinate the Society's work of developing a body of qualified personnel for a growing number of institutions. Both provincials were concurrently rectors of St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore. Likewise, the provincial superiors of the Vincentians' Western province, in particular Marshall Winne (1938-1950), were absorbed in seminary issues during a period of rapid expansion. Unlike the situation of a faculty of diocesan priests, personnel of the growing Sulpician and Vincentian communities were transferred from institution to institution, thus giving members a broad perspective of seminary issues. Their members, of course, sustained among themselves an ongoing dialogue on seminary education. Benedictines continued their seminaries whose rectors were subordinate to abbots of their abbeys. Unlike the other communities of priests, Benedictines were committed to the same monastery and its seminary. All the major communities and orders conducting diocesan seminaries had their own international authority structure that included ties to the Holy See.

ENDNOTES

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2. Pietro Fumasoni-Biondi, "Copy of Letter Addressed to All Ordinaries of the United States by Order of the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities," *American Ecclesiastical Review* 79 (1928), 76.
3. Shelley, 172-197.
4. John E. Sexton and Arthur J. Riley, *History of St. John's Seminary*, (Boston: Brighton, 1945), 24.
5. Edward Kantowicz, *Corporation Sole: Cardinal Mundelein and Chicago Catholicism* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983), 123-125. Steven M. Avella, *This Confident Church: Catholic Leadership and Life in Chicago, 1940-1965* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 151-158.

Roman Era II: Circa 1940 to 1965

By the 1940s, seminary officials began to deal with the impact of changing contexts on their institutions. The Roman authority that exerted such control of intellectual life and created fears among seminary faculties about engaging in original theological and biblical scholarship gradually gave way to new direction for Catholic thought. Pope Pius XI, the pontiff presiding over much of the Code's initial implementation, was also the former director of such havens of original research as the Ambrosian Library in Milan and the Vatican Library. His lifelong respect for scholarship is reflected in the reform of pontifical universities contained in the apostolic constitution *Deus Scientiarum Dominus* of 1931. The constitution mandated a dissertation based on scientific research as a requirement for pontifical degrees at the licentiate and doctoral levels. Hitherto, some of Rome's own old-fashioned pontifical graduate schools had not required research and writing as a degree requirement. The constitution gave the idea of historical research and critical methods for theological inquiry—already in use at most pontifical faculties outside Rome—a mighty boost. Thus the graduate institutions in which diocesan seminary faculties were educated began a process of academic reform.

A consequence of the new trend of research scholarship was the founding in the United States of Catholic learned societies in which seminary faculty members developed the characteristic professional activities of annual meetings and scholarly journals for the sharing and diffusion of knowledge. The Catholic Biblical Association (CBA) was formed in 1936 when the American bishops' Confraternity of Christian Doctrine brought together biblical scholars for a new translation of the New Testament. The CBA founded the quarterly journal *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* in 1939, then the only Catholic biblical review in the English language. The Canon Law Society came into being in 1939 at the country's School of Canon Law at the Catholic University of America. The Society's journal, *The Jurist*, began publication in 1941. American members of religious orders with strong academic traditions, the Order of Friars Preachers (Dominicans), and the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) launched important theological journals during this period, respectively *The Thomist* in 1939 and *Theological Studies* in 1940. In 1946, a group of theologians who were faculty members of the Catholic University of America initiated the founding of the Catholic Theological Society of America. The Society brought together in annual convention the theologians serving on the faculties of Catholic seminaries and universities. Along with associations of Catholic historians and philosophers

founded earlier, the academic disciplines represented on major seminary faculties had learned societies by the late 1940s.

Pope Pius XII reinforced these developments during the same decade with landmark encyclicals, *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (1943) that pointed Catholic biblical scholars in the direction of modern scholarship, *Mystici Corporis* (1943) on the ecclesiology of the Mystical Body of Christ, and *Mediator Dei* (1947) on the liturgy. These documents gave a new direction in several areas of research, though the same pope's encyclical *Humani Generis* (1950) expressed fears about new historical approaches in theology.

Catholic theological scholarship of the period developed largely in Western Europe. The meetings and publications of the American Catholic learned societies provided a means of diffusing those ideas among seminary educators in the United States. By so doing, the effects of a lack of original theological inquiry in American Catholic seminaries and universities were in part overcome. While these developments among seminary faculty members presumably had a positive impact in their work as teachers, rectors did not necessarily share these scholarly interests. Likewise, few American bishops of the period, whether responsible for seminaries or not, had direct knowledge of or interest in the intellectual life.

For seminary officials, the major forum for exchanging ideas about their work was the annual meeting of the Seminary Department of the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA). Since the NCEA's founding in 1904, only a fraction of the country's Catholic seminaries, both of religious orders and dioceses, minor and major, were represented at meetings. Nevertheless, published *Proceedings* of meetings reveal the range of concerns for improving the quality of the seminary among the most professionally active seminary educators as expressed in the papers they presented.

At meetings by the 1940s, seminary rectors and other leaders began to discuss accreditation of seminaries with higher education's regional accrediting bodies. Given the absence of state-imposed standards for higher education in the United States, accreditation with regional associations of higher education gave credibility to the programs and degrees of member colleges and universities. Seminaries had been slow to seek an association with any educational authority beyond the church. However, several diocesan seminaries had obtained accreditation for high school and college levels starting in the 1930s so that their credits and degrees were recognized by other accredited institutions. For theological studies, seminaries did not offer degree programs except the Chicago and Baltimore seminaries that had charters from the Holy See to

grant pontifical degrees. Usually only a small number of seminarians at the latter schools sought pontifical degrees by following their specific course requirements and taking the prescribed examinations.

Another issue touching on the Catholic seminary's credibility as an educational institution came about after World War II as veterans of the Armed Forces returned to civilian life with a right to educational benefits under the G.I. Bill. The veterans included some who sought admission to Catholic seminaries. In order to distribute G.I. benefits to seminaries, the federal government needed a list of approved institutions. Because few Catholic seminaries were accredited, the government turned to the NCEA for a list. However, the NCEA, as a voluntary association, was not an accrediting body. This problem arising from the Catholic seminary's uncertain standing in the educational world reinforced in many seminary leaders' minds the need for their institutions to obtain accreditation or to sponsor a Catholic accrediting organization for theological programs similar to the Protestant seminaries' American Association of Theological Schools (the present Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada). Through these years, then, the lack of accreditation would embarrass Catholic seminaries and their alumni who sought recognition for their credits and degrees when applying to secular institutions.

Seminary accreditation slowly advanced on an institution-by-institution basis. In 1946, a landmark event was the accreditation of St. Paul Seminary in Minnesota by the North Central Association. This first accreditation of a major seminary for the theology course was achieved under the leadership of its rector, Rudolph Bendas. St. Paul's theology students, if they wished, could then earn a master's degree in church history for theology studies with completion of a thesis. The degree did not offer recognition for theology studies strictly speaking, but the precedent had been set for a degree at the theology level. Other seminaries did not follow St. Paul's lead by adopting similar programs before the 1960s.

Proponents of seminary accreditation were greatly heartened during the period with the appearance in 1950 of Pope Pius XII's *Menti Nostrae*, a lengthy apostolic exhortation on the priesthood and seminary. In it, he stated that "it is our most earnest wish that, in literary and scientific studies, future priests should at least be in no way inferior to lay students who follow corresponding courses."¹ From then until the Second Vatican Council, forward-looking American seminary educators often quoted the pope's words as a mandate for raising the educational quality of seminaries at the high school and college levels with the goal of obtaining their accreditation.

How did the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities react to these developing issues of accreditation that were of interest to seminary leaders? Roman officials had no discernible reaction to such issues that lay outside the areas normally dealt with by the Sacred Congregation. Instead, through the 1940s and 1950s, the Sacred Congregation's officials continued their routine practices of receiving triennial reports, occasionally mandating additional courses in such areas as pedagogy, social problems, or sacred music, and issuing exhortations on the study of classical languages and the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas. They seemed to be impervious to the pope's views expressed in *Menti Nostrae*. While the Sacred Congregation's officials professed the aim to improve clerical formation, they did so from the point of view of setting forth universal principles for seminaries throughout the Catholic world to follow. Their mentality did not permit them to urge seminary officials to relate seminaries to local and national educational standards.

Through the period, it was left to rectors to think beyond their routine tasks and the requirements of church law to the larger questions of the seminary's outdated ways. Increasingly, they had to take the national educational system into consideration and the ways that the seminary could relate to it particularly through accreditation. In doing so, forward-looking officials had to counter the power of tradition and authoritarianism prevailing in many seminaries, as staff, faculty, and seminarians obediently depended on the rector's personal authority and direction. But the new ideas were gradually entering the body of discourse and might by the 1950s be considered portents of change whose implementation lay years in the future. It might then be asked, how did seminary officials govern seminaries that presumably were in full compliance with ecclesiastical legislation during the late pre-Vatican II years?

One example from the period is St. Patrick's Seminary, Menlo Park, California, the major seminary of the San Francisco archdiocese. In 1944 its new rector, Thomas Mulligan, a Sulpician, took up his work after serving 13 years as founding rector of Seattle's St. Edward's Seminary. In the latter job, he had guided a new seminary with combined 12-year minor and major seminary programs. While there, Mulligan secured accreditation for the high school program with the Northwest Association—one of the first instances of a seminary achieving accreditation at any level. At St. Patrick's Seminary he inherited a seminary whose college division had been accredited since 1938 by the Northwest Association. He demonstrated his commitment to this symbol of seminary renewal by guiding St. Patrick's through the accreditation process at the college level again in 1953 with the new Western States Association.

During his tenure at Menlo Park, Mulligan faced the challenges of developing a quality faculty of Sulpician priests with proper academic degrees from the available pool of the society's membership. These concerns show how advanced was his vision of the seminary even as he was coping with demands for high quality instruction set by San Francisco's crusty Archbishop John Mitty. The traditional standard at all seminaries that faculty members be priests considerably reduced the number of candidates for St. Patrick's faculty, which Mulligan once described as "a group of first-class second-raters—very much like other seminary faculties with which I am acquainted."²

The other dimension of Mulligan's duties was, of course, the rector's classic role of superior of a seminary community of resident priests and seminarians. In fulfilling these duties he was a total martinet, and to prove it, he left a record of his daily actions in a meticulously kept diary through 13 years as rector. His journal reflects an adherence to principle and personal rectitude that might well inspire admiration, but he exercised these qualities in personal dealings with such rigidity that he leaves the impression of no personal warmth and a lack of graciousness. He undoubtedly believed that his strictures were the appropriate means to treat his colleagues, and it was the best approach to forming the professed ideal of the "Christ-like" priest.

What had happened at New York's St. Joseph's Seminary (Dunwoodie) that had sunk to such mediocrity in the interwar years? The regime of meanness ended in 1939 when Francis J. Spellman succeeded Cardinal Hayes as archbishop of New York. Spellman, created cardinal in 1946, appointed the moral theology professor, John Fearn, as rector, and a new procurator, Gustav Schultheiss. In the years ahead, Spellman himself provided the new vision for St. Joseph's Seminary's future. After wartime construction restrictions ended in 1945, he sponsored a seminary renaissance with extensive renovations to a neglected building, plus a new library and gymnasium. With equal concern for the seminary's academic dimension, young archdiocesan priests were sent to graduate schools in North America and Europe to prepare for teaching at Dunwoodie and at the archdiocese's preparatory seminary, Cathedral College. These efforts produced a growing intellectual dimension to the seminary that had long been lacking.

The seminary's rector, John M. Fearn, and the enthusiastic procurator implemented Spellman's vision. However, it appears that Fearn possessed no independent vision of his own as a seminary educator or initiator of programs and policies. Remaining in office until 1956, Fearn's duties focused on maintaining the clock-like workings of the seminary routine. Dunwoodie's historian

describes him “as a stern-faced but kindly man, with a flair for delivering platitudes with convincing credibility in hushed muffled tones. There could have been little scope for leadership in someone who avoided traumatic decisions simply by invoking the sacrosanct standard of following previous precedents.”³ Leadership in internal administration appears lacking as Dunwoodie’s accreditation at the college level was postponed until 1961. In view of this delay, the great seminary of New York, instead of being a leading institution for others to follow was catching up.

Despite the interest in academic reforms, many seminaries and those immediately responsible for them—bishops or rectors—rigidly maintained the strictest controls over seminarians’ intellectual, spiritual, and personal development with little thought of adapting seminary discipline to new situations. An obsessive concern threads through the era’s stories of seminary life that leaders aimed to have their passive charges observe the inherited letter of the laws while often remaining indifferent to imparting a spirit that gives those laws life and purpose.

In *An Autobiography*, Andrew Greeley records how his seminary life at Chicago’s St. Mary of the Lake Seminary from 1947 to 1954 unfolded as a caricature of the seminary routine handed down from the Hillenbrand and Mundelein years. Greeley arrived at the seminary fresh from five years of intellectual stimulation at Chicago’s Quigley Preparatory Seminary. By contrast, seven years at the late Cardinal Mundelein’s “Wonderland” provided the worst that late pre-Vatican II seminary life had to offer. The Jesuits’ Chicago Province, which had little vested interest in the institution, provided its least able members to teach. The diocesan-priest rector, Malachy Foley, a former mathematics instructor, slavishly followed precedent without a thought that the customs established during the seminary’s founding era were no longer relevant. In this atmosphere, obedience loomed above all other virtues to keep seminary life going. Greeley believed that “even then the emphasis on obedience in preference to zeal was a perversion.” Ministering to the laity or even communicating with them—“a minor consideration”—was less important than pleasing authority since the seminarians were destined to be curates subject to pastors for many years. He finds:

Hence obedience, absolute unquestioning obedience, to the pastor and the higher ecclesiastical authorities was the primary virtue. Charity and zeal, which had originally brought me to the seminary were never mentioned. The

object was to produce not competent priests, not zealous priests, not sensitive, charitable, sympathetic priests, but obedient and chaste priests.⁴

In defense of obedience, it might be said that without invoking it as a virtue the students would neither have observed the detailed rules governing daily seminary life nor would those rules have made sense to them. It should be noted that the rector and other seminary officials devoted a large enough amount of time and energy to enforcing seminary rules, dispensing permissions to seminarians to do fairly routine activities, or suspending a rule for some unforeseen circumstances. The classic system of controls of seminarians' lives was scarcely questioned during the 1950s. Undoubtedly most seminary rectors and officials believed the system was simply a timeless aspect of Catholic life and sincerely believed that there was no alternate approach to successfully turning out young men suitably prepared for ministry.

While some aspects of seminary life remained unchallenged, other matters gradually came under scrutiny as a new style of seminary leader came forward. In contrast to the generation of rectors such as Mulligan, Fearn, and Foley, is the Sulpician James Laubacher, appointed in 1944 at age 36 to preside over historic St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore. Laubacher, with his theology doctorate earned in 1939 from the Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium, was attuned to developing trends in Catholic theological thought since the 1930s. As rector, then, he questioned the inherited theological pedagogy with instruction based on the "manuals," that is, the digests of formal doctrinal treatises with opposing positions refuted and the Catholic teaching defended. Some manuals in use, such as those of Adolph Tanquerey, dated from the late 19th century. In 1956, Laubacher urged an overhaul of instruction based on manuals in the key subject of dogmatic theology by adopting an expository approach that traced the development of doctrine resulting in the church's understanding as reflected in official teachings. He also advocated drawing a closer relationship between theology and Christian living. These are among several very fundamental questions he raised in meetings with Sulpician colleagues. The pedagogical system did not change just then, but Laubacher's reforming ideas reflected the views that were developing among a rising generation of seminary educators with theology doctorates earned since the 1930s. Their graduate research opened their minds to the development of theological ideas while the old manuals that they had to use in classrooms presumed a world of static theological ideas.

It is noteworthy that Laubacher's changing perspective of pedagogy did not extend to a new approach to the internal governance of his seminary. In this area, he firmly maintained the traditions of a highly controlled community life.⁵ His reserved manner and formidable appearance earned for him the nickname "Yahweh" from both seminarians and colleagues during his years as rector until leaving office in 1958.

Another Catholic leader responded to the need for changes in the relationship of the diocesan seminary, and indeed all seminaries, to the educational world by the late 1950s. The leading statesman of American Catholic education in the postwar era, Monsignor Frederick Hochwalt, general secretary of the NCEA, oversaw the expansion of services of his association with the appointment of full-time associate general secretaries for each level of Catholic education from elementary schools to universities. In 1958, he recruited as the first associate general secretary for the NCEA Minor and Major Seminary Departments, J. Cyril Dukehart, rector of the Sulpicians' historic minor seminary, St. Charles College in Catonsville, Maryland.

When he undertook the new position, Dukehart surveyed the state of American Catholic seminaries of religious orders and dioceses, both minor and major. His study revealed that 53 percent of the 381 existing seminaries had been established since 1945. More than 40 percent of seminaries—many of small religious orders—had fewer than 50 students. Not only were the smaller ones proliferating, but they had numerous defects related to their size. Most lacked strong admissions procedures to keep out mediocre students. The faculties composed of priests were usually not adequately trained, either in content or method of teaching. Most seminaries of all types, he found, were isolated "from the mainstream of current educational thought, method, and administration." For Dukehart, the proof of the seminary's isolation was found in that only about 10 percent of high school and college seminaries were accredited with regional associations. Many seminaries were isolated from the NCEA's own Seminary Department that attracted only 52 percent of the country's Catholic seminaries as institutional members. The seminary was also isolated from the Catholic laity who were largely ignorant of the nature of seminary training. Likewise, governmental agencies and educational associations knew nothing about the Catholic seminary.

To overcome the seminaries' isolation and related defects, Dukehart urged seminary leaders to seek accreditation—a process that would keep seminaries "on their toes" through self-evaluation and partially end their isolation from the educational world. Accreditation would give the seminaries' degrees the

respect that mere state approval did not confer, and it would eliminate the embarrassment of seminary alumni who did not have recognized credits or degrees when they applied for graduate or professional schools.

Dukehart criticized the way seminaries were administered, thereby implying shortcomings in how the rectors governed. He found that few seminaries had printed statutes to place in the hands of faculties and administrators that outlined administration, curriculum, teaching, finances, and other responsibilities. Of course, the Catholic tradition of dependence on the superior's authority and exaltation of obedience did not favor such procedural clarity. But he urged that "Internal peace and harmony as well as efficient administration depend in great measure on well-defined and published statutes."⁶

In the two years preceding his unexpected death in July 1960, Dukehart gathered information on seminaries and planned regional meetings of seminary rectors with officials of the appropriate regional accrediting associations. By so doing, he aimed to prepare seminary officials for the process of seeking accreditation. Thus, Dukehart, as stated in his last annual report in 1960, saw "a great stirring" in the field of seminary accreditation.⁷ This recognition was directed to high school and college seminaries, some of which began to reorganize to eliminate the course of six years each for minor and major seminaries. Instead, they restructured along the lines of four years each of high school, college, and theological studies.

Dukehart also raised the question of accreditation of seminaries at the theology level that would enable their students to have a degree at the end of the seminary course. Like St. Paul Seminary, accredited in 1946 for the master's degree, several seminaries began to organize a master's degree program for theological studies by the early 1960s. This movement laid the groundwork for the general trend of Catholic seminaries to seek accreditation with The Association of Theological Schools beginning in the late 1960s.

By the time of the Second Vatican Council's opening in 1962, a program of extensive seminary reform was underway that was started quite apart from the principles that would emanate from the council's church-wide seminary reform. Influential seminary rectors were, in fact, developing an agenda of seminary reform as they held regional meetings in the early 1960s with officials of accrediting associations and prepared their own institutions for the accreditation processes. They no longer were simply reacting to the demands of higher authority but were ready to assume leadership roles in planning the seminaries' future.

Late in the pre-Vatican II period, seminary officials had to deal with a new development emanating from the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities. In February 1962, eight months before the Second Vatican Council opened, Pope John XXIII signed the apostolic constitution *Veterum Sapientia* on the study of Latin in seminaries. The constitution represents the culminating effort of the Sacred Congregation's warnings through the years about the supposed decline of Latin studies in the world's diocesan seminaries. The constitution proclaims the Roman ideal that Latin enabled priests "to acquaint themselves with the mind of the Holy See on any matter, and communicate the more easily with Rome and with one another." In addition to its universality, Latin was valued because of its immutability, a characteristic lacking in modern languages. The constitution enjoined bishops and religious-order superiors "to be on their guard" and to take action against anyone within their jurisdiction who "writes against the use of Latin in teaching of the higher studies or in the liturgy."⁸ To protect against any further decline, the constitution demanded that seminarians who had not mastered Latin could not advance to study theology which had to be taught in Latin. Professors who would not speak Latin or use Latin textbooks in theological subjects were to be replaced by those who would. Latin instruction in minor seminaries was not to be compromised to accommodate state requirements for courses in other subjects. Otherwise, course work in Latin would have to be added or the length of studies extended to accommodate it.

Such draconian measures stimulated a flurry of discussions among rectors and faculty members at NCEA meetings and within seminary walls as to how to comply with the constitution. Some rectors ordered attempts to follow its provisions. Comical anecdotes from the period tell of theology professors struggling to lecture in Latin to uncomprehending students and then abandoning the effort. It was unlikely that even the most legalistically minded bishops or rectors would launch witch hunts to identify otherwise qualified professors who could not teach in Latin. Officials of minor seminaries were certainly not in a position to enlarge course work in Latin without creating unrealistic burdens for students. After several months of efforts to respond to provisions of *Veterum Sapientia*, the document was a dead letter. Its appearance was perhaps symbolic of the end of an era in which the Sacred Congregation issued universal decrees without any prior consultation with those involved and just expected immediate compliance. By the end of the pre-Vatican II era, Roman officials, it appears, had no useful ideas to contribute to the developing trends of American seminaries.

For seminary leaders, the Second Vatican Council, meeting between 1962 and 1965, was a period of anticipation of its results, especially its impact on seminaries of all kinds. The Council's seminary decree *Optatam Totius* issued in October 1965 near the Council's ending, proposed that the episcopal conference of each nation devise a Program of Priestly Formation for its seminaries. This approach allowed the Catholic church in each country to develop a seminary program well suited to its national educational system and its people's ministerial needs. The fact that bishops were to be responsible for the program represented some recovery of episcopal collegiality that had been diminished in the era of Roman centralization as well as an affirmation of the bishops' historic responsibility for clerical formation. The process of creating and implementing a Program of Priestly Formation would take place in the years following the Second Vatican Council.

In the meantime, as the council unfolded, a very searching questioning was underway among American seminary leaders and educators concerning the inherited traditions of clerical formation. Since the 1950s, as noted, seminary educators had been questioning their institutions' isolation from normal educational standards as symbolized by a lack of accreditation. By the 1960s, the questioning of every aspect of the seminary was taking place. In some seminaries, young faculty members and groups of seminarians assumed the roles of critics as they analyzed the gulf often separating the aims of ministerial training and the time-honored methods of carrying them out.

The discussion of the seminary received a more systematic and thoughtful exposition in publications. Not since the period of reform at the turn of the century had books and articles appeared that described and analyzed the shortcomings of seminary methods and made recommendations for their change. By 1966, three such volumes appeared. Two are collections of addresses and essays in which seminary educators develop views on seminary life and learning from the point of view of their area of expertise. These two volumes, *Seminary Education in a Time of Change* (Notre Dame, 1965), edited by James Michael Lee and Louis J. Putz, and *Apostolic Renewal in the Seminary in Light of Vatican Council II* (New York, 1965), edited by James Keller and Richard Armstrong, brought together the viewpoints of 35 educators, thereby indicating how widespread thoughtful and responsible people had found the need to renew every aspect of the seminary.

A more provocative book that captures the full range of questioning of inherited ways is Stafford Poole's *Seminary in Crisis* (New York, 1966). The author, a Vincentian priest and vice-rector of Cardinal Glennon College, the St.

Circa 1940 to 1965

Louis archdiocese's seminary college, diagnosed the Catholic seminary's general ills. Poole took aim at theological studies with their apologetical and nonintellectual dimensions that had not accommodated the great advances in biblical studies and theological research of recent decades. He also objected to the solitary and often nonliturgical dimensions of the inherited approaches to seminarians' spiritual formation. More startling is the treatment of such a formerly untouchable subject as the way obedience was practiced in seminary life. The emphasis on obedience along with the church's hierarchical structure created a mentality in which the superior's voice was equated with that of God. Poole argued that too often the way obedience was invoked covered the unwise actions of those in authority and shielded subordinates from responsibility for their actions. His questioning of obedience extended to raising the issue of whether a seminary life based on detailed rules of personal and community conduct practiced in isolation from the larger church and held together by obedience was really a suitable preparation for the demands of an increasingly active priestly ministry in a rapidly changing world. Though Poole's book represents one educator's views, the ideas contained therein reflected some of the obvious deficits of the Catholic seminary that many others observed.

By the end of the Second Vatican Council, as a comprehensive criticism advanced, Catholic seminary leaders looked to reform and renewal of their institutions of ministerial formation, whether of dioceses or religious orders, at the high school through school of theology levels. Their points of reference as leaders in this context were not just the requirements of church law that had been largely directed to the seminary's internal life. Instead, seminary leaders had to turn their attention to relating the seminary outward. Their emerging task was to lead the seminary from its isolation and relate it to the standards of modern education, to integrate into it the recent developments in Catholic thought, to implement a spirituality suitable to candidates for the active ministry, and to discern the ministerial needs of Catholics in a rapidly changing culture. They stood at the threshold of a new era that would test their vision and capacity for leadership at all levels.

Joseph M. White, a church historian in Indianapolis, Indiana, has written The Diocesan Seminary in the United States: A History from the 1780s to the Present, and articles on Catholic seminaries and mid-western religious history.

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The Effects of Institutional Change on the Office of Rector and President in the Roman Catholic Theological Seminaries — 1965-1994

Robert J. Wister
Immaculate Conception Seminary,
Seton Hall University

Preface

The study of the seminary presidency in the Roman Catholic tradition in the period following the Second Vatican Council encompasses an era of evolution and transition, of renewal and consolidation. The profound changes in this office reflect the sea changes in the Catholic Church that have resulted in very different seminaries from those of the period before the council. An explanation of these developments is necessary to understand the forces that have shaped the seminaries and their presidencies. It is only within this context that the office of the presidency today can be understood. Evidence of this is the continuing change in nomenclature. The changing titles of officers in these seminaries are in themselves significant. At the same time, the "official" or canonical titles do not change since the legislation governing Roman Catholic seminaries is directed at institutions in a variety of nations, each with particular structures and terminology. Like all traditions, and perhaps more than many, Roman Catholicism has its own unique lexicon. In the early part of this study I refer to the chief executive officers of Catholic seminaries exclusively as "rectors." In the course of the period chronicled here, "rectors" became "rector-presidents," "president-rectors," "rector-deans," "rector-vice presidents," and "presidents," while some of their brothers remained "rectors."

Seminaries were established exclusively for the training of candidates for the priesthood. The majority of Roman Catholic priests are ordained to serve in a particular diocese, a geographic area governed by a bishop. Quite logically, they are called "diocesan" priests, and the seminaries where they are trained "diocesan seminaries." A very rich part of the Roman Catholic heritage are the "vowed religious," the women and men who take vows of poverty and obedience in addition to the vow of chastity. A majority of the male "religious" are ordained priests. While these groups are organized into orders, societies, congregations,

and institutes, each with a particular form of organization, they are generally known as “religious orders.” Normally, the theological education of their candidates for priesthood took place in “houses of study.” However, they are commonly called “religious seminaries” or “religious order seminaries.” Those who govern religious orders have a variety of titles but are commonly referred to as “superiors.”

The study begins with an overview of the Roman Catholic seminaries in 1965, the year the Second Vatican Council completed its deliberations. It examines their structure and their programs, emphasizing the internal and external aspects of the role of the rector at that time.

The Council was followed by almost two decades of major changes in all aspects of Church life. The study analyzes the response to the Council’s call for the renewal of seminary training and formation, and the effects of that response on the office of rector. Although Roman Catholic theological seminaries are accredited institutions of graduate education, they are essentially at the service of the Church. The traditions of the Church and the directives of the Holy See are essential parts of their identity and affect the execution of their mission. The relationship of the seminaries with the Holy See, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, with diocesan bishops and religious superiors, is regulated by the canon law of the Church. Change and renewal in the seminaries always takes place within the context of these relationships. Of course, like all institutions of human construct, they are subject to the vagaries of their contemporary culture, its strengths and its weaknesses.

One aspect of the renewal resulted in major institutional reorganization of the seminaries. The majority of religious order seminaries coalesced into collaborative institutions, such as the unions. With few exceptions, the diocesan seminaries maintained their separate and independent character. In both instances, the relationship of the chief executive officer with bishops, religious superiors, boards, and others underwent a gradual, and for some, a radical change.

As structural change was taking place, the internal life and program of the seminaries was renewed under the direction of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. All areas—spiritual formation and human development, academic or intellectual formation, and pastoral formation—were altered in structure and content. This internal reorganization replaced often informal arrangements with flow charts and altered the chief executive officer’s relationship to the program itself.

After almost 20 years of change, a period of evaluation began in the mid 1980s. This evaluation directly involved the CEOs. Its implementation and its “mid-course corrections” caused their office to readjust to new realities in the Church and society. The religious, social, and cultural transformation of the American landscape impelled the seminaries to further modifications. The different qualities of incoming students now required introductory programs that were added to the four-year theology curriculum.

Throughout this period of innovation, evolution, evaluation, change, and development, the seminary rector or president was at the center. In order that their voices be heard, the chief executive officers of the 46 Roman Catholic seminaries in the United States were surveyed. Their insights are woven into many parts of this work. The survey is included at the end of this volume. Six CEOs were also asked to provide essays reflecting on their experience in office. They are not quoted by name but their comments, often humorous, sometimes weary, always hopeful, appear frequently.

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The Seminaries of 1965

Roman Catholic seminaries are often perceived as a part of a very well organized, even monolithic, system, each part of which relates to and is coordinated with others. The reality is not so simple.

They were traditionally divided into those whose *principal* mission is the spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation of *diocesan* priests who will serve the parishes of the various dioceses throughout the United States, and those whose *principal* mission is the formation of priests who are members of the many *religious* orders. The origins of these institutions are as diverse as the institutions themselves.

Seminaries founded to train diocesan priests owe their existence to the initiative of an individual bishop such as James Roosevelt Bayley in Newark; to the Sulpicians or Vincentians, religious orders whose missions include the training of diocesan priests; to Benedictine monasteries such as St. Meinrad in Indiana, which have chosen the training of diocesan priests as their particular apostolate; to groups of priests who founded Mount St. Mary's in Emmitsburg, Maryland; as well as to individual priests such as Father Joseph Jessing who founded the Pontifical College Josephinum in Ohio. The characteristics of the individual foundations contributed to the particular institution's ethos that in many instances perdures to this day.

Religious order seminaries owed their existence to similar pioneering spirits. Each order has a unique spirit or "charism," as well as one or more specific apostolates. The American Jesuits and Dominicans, as well as the Augustinians and others, are dedicated primarily to education. The Franciscans, in the spirit of their founder, focus on the witness of poverty, while not neglecting educational enterprises. The Benedictines are monks, linked to a particular monastery, primarily devoted to common prayer in choir, the "Divine Office" or "Liturgy of the Hours," but also involved in educational apostolates, with a particular emphasis on liturgical studies. The Sulpicians are exclusively involved in seminary education, which also forms a significant part of the work of the Vincentians. Almost all orders are involved to some degree in parish ministry. The diverse apostolates of these orders necessitated individual and separate seminaries in which the candidates would not only be trained for the work of the order but also, very importantly, imbued with the spirit, the charism, of the order. This variety led to a multiplication of institutions, in many instances, small and weak ones.

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While the foundation of these seminaries was in many ways haphazard, in fact entrepreneurial in some cases, the majority benefited from systems in place within the Church. They followed the outline of a course of studies and a basic philosophy of education and formation that evolved from the 16th-century Council of Trent for the diocesans, and from the history and traditions of particular religious orders for their own members. Diocesan seminarians and no one else went to seminaries established for them. Jesuit seminarians went to Jesuit seminaries, Franciscans went to their seminaries, and so on.

By 1965, the Roman Catholic seminaries reached the peak of their enrollment and were riding high on the enthusiasm generated by the Second Vatican Council and the continuing growth of the Catholic Church in the United States. A veteran rector mused that for many the seminary of the time was “a system no one questioned. A great amount of certitude prevailed. As in *Candide*, it was the best of all possible worlds.”

The enthusiasm of the 1960s flowed from a period of expansion of the Catholic Church in many directions. The “immigrant church” of the Irish, Germans, Italians, and Poles had “come of age,” signaled for many by the election of the first Catholic president, John F. Kennedy, in 1960. The previous two decades had seen the children of the immigrants enter the mainstream of American cultural and business life. The educational opportunities opened by the G.I. Bill gave many Catholics for the first time the possibility to pursue higher education, and they did so with a vengeance. Catholic higher education expanded at a swift pace. Significantly, Catholics did not restrict their educational options to Church-related institutions.

The children of the immigrants left behind the “ghettos” of the cities and sparked the growth of suburban parishes in many areas that had never seen a Catholic, much less a Catholic Church. Much of this expansion was fueled by the numbers of Catholic men and women who entered the priesthood and religious life, providing the personnel for this unprecedented institutional growth. The “vocation boom,” if we may so name it, provided the pastors for the new churches, the sisters for the schools, and the monks for the cloister.

The “engines” that fueled this expansion were the seminaries.¹ At this moment in history the Catholic seminaries had, like the Catholic Church itself, passed through a period of unprecedented institutional expansion. They were about to embark on a long period of renewal, change, experimentation, evaluation, and consolidation.

The *theological* seminaries of 1965 were part of a much larger enterprise.² In that year there were 454 seminaries (120 diocesan, 334 religious) preparing men for the

Catholic priesthood. Of these, 169 (40 diocesan, 129 religious) were institutions that conducted four-year graduate programs in theology. Such institutions were called "Major Seminaries."³ The philosophy programs of several religious communities were also called "Major Seminaries," even though they did not include theological programs. More than two-thirds of these institutions had fewer than 50 students. Some were exclusively theological seminaries, others were combined with two years of philosophy (junior and senior years of college), still others with a complete four-year college program, and finally several with various other programs (junior colleges, high schools). Seminaries whose programs were restricted to the high school and/or college level were called "Minor Seminaries."

Almost all of the diocesan seminaries were "freestanding" institutions. They provided the entire program of spiritual, academic, and pastoral formation at their own facility. At the urging of Rome, most of these institutions were located in rural settings, away from the "world." John Tracy Ellis, the dean of historians of American Catholicism, noted that this remoteness was "not solely a matter of physical location: it related as well to their attitude toward such outside influences as accrediting agencies and professional philosophical and theological groups."⁴ A notable exception was the Theological College of The Catholic University of America, a residence house of formation whose seminarians attended classes at The Catholic University in Washington. The North American College in Rome and the American College in Louvain are also in this category, their students attending classes at nearby universities. Several other seminaries, such as Mount St. Mary's in Emmitsburg, Maryland, were on or near college campuses but remained substantially separate from them.

The religious orders covered a rather uneven landscape. There were several large freestanding institutions such as the Jesuits' Woodstock College in Maryland with 219 students. Many orders had concentrated their houses of study near Catholic University in Washington. Their seminarians took all or most of their classes at the university. Others located near Catholic University but did not avail themselves of the university's program and remained "freestanding." A great number of small freestanding religious seminaries was spread across the country, each serving a particular order.

In this period it was rare for seminarians studying for the diocesan priesthood to study together with seminarians preparing for life in a religious order. A few, such as St. Meinrad, located at a Benedictine abbey and staffed by Benedictine monks, trained diocesan seminarians side by side with Benedictine candidates.

ROMAN CATHOLIC SEMINARIES - 1965

MAJOR	Diocesan	Religious	Total
Philosophy (3 & 4 college)	-	16	16
THEOLOGY	9	57	66
Philosophy & THEOLOGY	18	49	67
Totals	27	122	149
MAJOR-MINOR	Diocesan	Religious	Total
College	8	37	45
H.S. & College	4	3	7
H.S. & Philosophy	-	1	1
H.S. & THEOLOGY	-	1	1
H.S., Jr. Col. & THEOLOGY	-	5	5
Jr. Col., Phil. & THEOLOGY	1	1	2
College and THEOLOGY	5	11	16
12 years (incl. THEOLOGY)	7	5	12
Totals	25	64	89
MINOR	Diocesan	Religious	Total
High School	33	90	123
Junior College	6	30	36
H.S. & Junior College	28	24	52
Special Latin/"Delayed Vocations"	1	4	5
Totals	68	148	216
	Diocesan	Religious	Grand Total
All Seminaries	120	334	454
Teaching THEOLOGY	40	129	169

The organizational pattern did not always conform to the American system of higher education. In particular, 67 of the theologates were six-year institutions, combining the last two years of college (philosophy) with the four years of theology. This pattern conformed both to the requirements of canon law⁵ and reflected a European system of education. Throughout the 1960s, the seminaries began to move away from six-year programs. Some simply dropped the philosophy department and relied on college seminaries to fill the gap. Others expanded

their philosophy sections into four-year college programs. Still others began to accept credits in philosophy from various universities as fulfilling the requirements for philosophy.

In 1965, the theological seminaries served 8,916 students (5,461 studying for the diocesan priesthood; 3,455 for religious communities). The theology students were just the tip of the iceberg of Catholic seminaries. There were 41,041 seminarians in minor seminaries, 164 of these seminaries conducting college level programs and 189 with high school programs. These institutions were the “feeder system” for the theologates. As the statistics indicate, this system had been most successful and seemed to augur well for the future.

From 1949 to 1965, 173 seminaries were founded, 38 of them with theology programs. In 1965 a number of seminaries were in the planning stage, but most of them were not built. The “Code of Canon Law,” the compendium of legislation that governs the Catholic Church, encouraged the multiplication of seminaries. The Code, promulgated in 1918, called on each bishop to establish a seminary in his diocese.⁶ Although this was impossible in most dioceses, such unwise expansion was also encouraged by instructions from the Sacred Congregation for Seminaries and Universities, the office of the Roman Curia that provided norms and instructions for seminary education. Today it is known as the Congregation for Catholic Education.

Of the theologates, eight were regionally accredited in 1964, 12 in 1965, and others were in the process of such accreditation. Some seminaries granted degrees in accord with state charters but never applied for regional or professional accreditation. A few—Catholic University, the University of St. Mary of the Lake, St. Mary’s in Baltimore, and some of the Jesuit and Dominican seminaries—held “pontifical charters,” granted by the Holy See, and conferred ecclesiastical degrees, such as the licentiate and doctorate in sacred theology. Although reforms of these degree programs in the 1930s made them the equivalent of similar United States degrees, they suffered from the reputation these degrees had in the early years of the century as being relatively weak. The result was that most seminarians completed their four years of theology without receiving an accredited degree. Some authorities in the Church saw this as positive, viewing degrees, in particular “secular” degrees, as a source of pride and possibly of intellectual independence. While a significant number of unaccredited seminaries sent their students to accredited institutions such as Catholic University for their academic training, their students were normally in the programs for ecclesiastical degrees.

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While the post World War II growth took place without any central planning, attention to academic excellence and to pastoral preparation was not neglected. An increasing number of faculty obtained doctoral degrees, and serious discussion of the need for professional accreditation had begun.⁷ In 1904, a group of Catholic seminaries and colleges had formed the Catholic Educational Association, the nucleus of what would become the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA), an organization drawing members from the majority of Catholic elementary and secondary schools, colleges, and seminaries. In the period leading to and during the Second Vatican Council, the annual convention of the Seminary Department of the NCEA provided a forum for rectors and administrators to discuss—sometimes heatedly—program reform, accreditation, and other common issues. In 1965, 302 seminaries held membership in the NCEA Seminary Department. Representing the theology programs, 33 diocesan and 95 religious order seminaries belonged to the Major Seminary Department of the NCEA.

In the 1930s and 1940s rectors and faculty of the Catholic seminaries were major contributors to the founding of several scholarly societies such as the Catholic Biblical Association, the Catholic Historical Association and the Catholic Theological Society of America. They formed the backbone of the membership of these associations until after the Second Vatican Council, when the majority of the members came from the university community.

As the fruit of the labor of the United States seminaries, 2,259 priests were ordained during 1965: 1,137 diocesan and 1,122 religious.

The Seminary and the Rector of 1965

The driving force of this engine of institutional expansion was the office of *rector*. The title of “President” was rare in 1965, if not unheard of. The priest chosen for this office held what was considered to be one of the most prestigious positions in the diocese or religious community of which he was a part.

The diocesan seminary of 1965 was governed by the legislation of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore (1884), a nationwide council of the Catholic Church in the United States, and most importantly by the Code of Canon Law, promulgated in 1918. To this legislation was added a half-century of instructions from the Sacred Congregation for Seminaries and Universities. Most of these instructions were commentaries on and expansions of the requirements of the canons. This legislation had its greatest impact on the seminaries for diocesan clergy. The seminaries for religious clergy were governed by the legislation and traditions of the particular religious order that sponsored them. Increasingly the religious order

seminaries felt the impact of the universal legislation of the Code of Canon Law and the Roman congregations.

The Bishop and the Superior

The bishop had ultimate control of the diocesan seminary in all matters. The law stated that:

It belongs to the bishop to determine all things and everything that concerns as either necessary or useful the correct administration, government, and progress of the diocesan seminary and to see to the faithful observance of his rules, always in accordance with the rules made by the Holy See for particular cases.⁸

In the actual situation, the bishop delegated this governing authority to the rector, yet the rector always remained subject to the decisions of the bishop. However, while the bishop could delegate his authority, he could not abdicate it. In cases where religious orders were entrusted with the running of a diocesan seminary, the bishop retained all his authority and usually entered into a contractual agreement with the particular order. Much the same could be said for the religious order seminaries, substituting the superior for the bishop and the legislation of the particular order for the Code of Canon Law.

The Corporation and the Board

Canonically the seminaries were legal entities, “persons.” In some instances, but not all, the seminary existed as a civilly incorporated body with a board of trustees, almost all of whom were priests. Many of the diocesan seminaries were simply a part of the diocesan corporation, which was often a “corporation sole.” In a “corporation sole,” the title to all parishes and institutions is held by the diocesan bishop. In such arrangements the seminary is without separate civil standing. Diocesan seminaries were required to have two boards, one for discipline and one for the administration of property. Each of these boards consisted of two priests, appointed by the bishop. Canon law required the bishop to “seek the advice of the members of the board in matters of great importance.”⁹

In practice, such boards rarely had significant responsibilities. The bishop or religious superior was the individual who made the important decisions. Because the members of the board were canonically his “subjects,” they would rarely

oppose him on any important matters. Their main function was to make him aware of problems they might detect. Although they were to be consulted in certain areas, they had no real authority to act on any issues. In spite of these drawbacks, these board members knew the goals and objectives of the seminary and communication was easy. The boards of seminaries such as the Pontifical College Josephinum and Mount St. Mary's in Emmitsburg, founded without the sponsorship of a bishop or religious order, had more responsibilities, especially in the areas of securing financial support of the institution. The religious order institutions operated according to their individual traditions that, depending on the statutes of the order, allowed a certain degree of participation in decision-making or none at all.

Appointment of the Rector

The rector was appointed directly either by the bishop of the sponsoring diocese or by the superior of the sponsoring religious order. There may or may not have been consultation concerning the appointment. In cases where a religious order conducted a diocesan seminary, the usual procedure was for the bishop to consult with the superior who would "present" a candidate for the bishop's approval. In some religious communities, consultation was required by the statutes of the particular community.

The priest appointed usually had appropriate academic qualifications but rarely academic administrative experience. The 1918 Code of Canon Law simply required that he be "outstanding not only because of (his) learning but also because of (his) virtues and (his) prudence, such as may benefit the seminarians by (his) word and example."¹⁰ Because many rectors became bishops or leaders of religious orders, it was not unusual that the office was perceived as a "stepping stone" to higher positions.

Responsibilities of the Rector

Canon law happily required that "All must defer to the rector in the fulfillment of their respective duties."¹¹ However, the rector was, "in all things and at all times, dependent upon" the bishop or religious superior.¹² In day to day practice, some religious orders were more "democratic." The Sulpicians, for example, had a collegial form of governance, in which decisions were made by the rector and the faculty acting together.

The rector was further charged with seeing to it that "the seminarians observe both the statutes approved by the bishop and the required program of studies and

that they become imbued with the ecclesiastical spirit." The rector was also expected to "stress the rules of true and Christian urbanity and stimulate the seminarians by example to the cultivation of them," to urge the seminarians "to the scrupulous observance of hygienic demands, of cleanliness of body and dress, and of a certain geniality combined with modesty and dignity in conversation." Lastly the rector was charged with the responsibility to "ensure the proper discharge of duty by the instructors."¹³ In other words, the rector directed the entire program of spiritual and academic formation and was also charged with ensuring that those presented for ordination would be proper ecclesiastical gentlemen.

Finances

The funding of diocesan seminaries was the responsibility of the bishop of the diocese. Canon law allowed him to take up annual collections for the support of the seminary and to impose a tax on parishes if he deemed it necessary.¹⁴ Religious communities funded their institutions in a variety of ways but the community had the ultimate responsibility to keep them going. Occasionally, a benefactor would donate funds to erect a building or an entire seminary complex. Rarely were funds set aside for maintenance, and endowments were the exception. When they did exist, they were rather modest. These funds and other bequests were usually controlled by the diocese or the order. The rector and the board had little influence over their investment or their disbursement.

A notable exception was the benefaction of James J. Hill, founder of the Great Northern Railway. In 1894, he supervised the design and construction of the Saint Paul Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, at a cost of \$250,000. He turned the completed buildings over to the Archdiocese of St. Paul and provided an additional \$250,000 to pay faculty salaries.¹⁵ That the administration building was a replica of a train station, and the dormitories had the same silhouette as boxcars, was a small price to pay for such generosity. St. John's Seminary in Camarillo, California, was the recipient of a series of generous bequests, land from Don Juan Camarillo and magnificent libraries, together with a generous endowment from the Doheny family.¹⁶

The day-to-day responsibility for the financial management of the seminary was entrusted to a "procurator,"¹⁷ or business manager. The procurator was, of course, subject to the oversight of the rector. Costs were able to be contained in a manner impossible today. The entire, or in some cases almost the entire, faculty came from the sponsoring diocese or religious order. Their stipends were minimal. Often religious orders of women provided cooking, cleaning, and laundry services

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to the seminary at very low cost. Some seminaries hired local or immigrant help at minimal salaries and provided them with room and board, thus keeping costs very low. The ideal of poverty, taken quite literally by many orders, kept expenses from growing. All of these factors served to keep financial problems from overshadowing the office of rector. If a financial crisis occurred, it was the responsibility of the bishop or superior to solve it or to close the institution. The rectors of the “entrepreneurial” seminaries, such as the Josephinum and Emmitsburg, did not enjoy this luxury.

The Academic and Spiritual Program

The Code of Canon Law required that the seminary program be composed of two years of philosophical studies and four years of theological studies. Specifically, canon law stated that:

The seminarians shall spend at least two years in the study of rational philosophy and branches related to it.... The theological course shall be extended over at least four full years and it should comprise, besides dogmatic and moral theology, the study especially of Sacred Scripture, Church history, canon law, liturgy, sacred eloquence, and ecclesiastical chant.... Lectures shall be given also in pastoral theology together with practice especially in the technique of catechizing children and other persons, of hearing confessions, of visiting the sick, and ministering to the dying.¹⁸

The Third Council of Baltimore in 1884 required, and the Congregation for Seminaries reaffirmed in 1928, that these courses should be given in Latin.¹⁹ Although most seminaries fulfilled the letter of the law by having official texts in Latin while lecturing in English, a number did require occasional lectures in Latin.

This course of studies, particularly in the diocesan seminaries, was standardized according to a Roman model curriculum. Its implementation was not uniform and reflected the diversity among the seminary programs. In particular, the ethos of a religious order would be clearly demonstrated by the emphases chosen. A 1935 study revealed that the program could mean anything from 5,215 class hours at St. John’s Home Mission Seminary in Little Rock, Arkansas, to 3,239 hours required at St. Vincent’s Seminary in Latrobe, Pennsylvania. Dogmatic theology ranged from 1,078 hours provided by the Jesuits at St. Mary of the Lake Seminary in Mundelein, Illinois, to 480 at St. Benedict’s Seminary in Atchison, Kansas. St.

Francis Seminary in Loretto, Pennsylvania, offered 858 hours of moral theology while Mount Angel Seminary in Oregon offered 360. The Josephinum required 858 hours of Scripture, and St. Benedict's at Atchison, Kansas, required only 240 hours. Church history ranged from 858 hours at Boston's St. John's Seminary to 69 hours required by the dogma-minded Jesuit faculty at St. Mary of the Lake.²⁰

All programs were residential, an essential element in a system that emphasized the formational value of community life for both diocesan and religious seminarians. The rhythm of life was ordered by a detailed *horarium* that dictated times for Mass, prayer, class, study, meals, and recreation, as well as time for rising and lights out. The seminarians returned home for short Christmas and Easter vacations. Summers were either free, spent in pastoral assignments, or at the seminary itself in special programs. The evaluation of seminarians was chiefly based on their fidelity to this schedule and their academic proficiency.

Each seminary had one or more spiritual directors, whose responsibility was to monitor the spiritual tone of the community, provide lectures and conferences on topics such as asceticism and celibacy, and serve as personal director often for large numbers of students. In 1965, the North American College in Rome provided two spiritual directors for 284 seminarians. The seminarians were expected to go to confession regularly, at least monthly, often weekly. Faculty could serve as confessors and, in some seminaries, also serve as spiritual directors to individual seminarians.

The spiritual formation program for both diocesan and religious seminarians was clearly cast in a monastic mold and little room was allowed for experimentation or adaptation.

The Pastoral Program

The pastoral program relied on the classroom for pastoral training. Because the seminarians were allowed only limited opportunities to leave the grounds, and the seminaries were often in isolated rural areas, the opportunities for pastoral involvement were minimal if not non-existent. Some diocesan seminaries sent seminarians to parishes for the summer but this was usually to engage in catechetical and summer religion programs for youth. Religious orders often had programs such as novitiate and scholasticate that either preceded or interrupted theological studies for one or more years of work in the various apostolates of the order. However, there was no intentional integration of the pastoral experience and the classroom training.

Faculty

The faculty of the seminary charged with the academic program was almost entirely clerical. A layman was a *rara avis*, a woman unknown until Sister Agnes Cunningham was appointed to St. Mary of the Lake Seminary in the Chicago Archdiocese in 1967.

When the need arose, a bishop responsible for a seminary could choose a priest for graduate studies and assign him to the seminary. Normally the rector would recommend recent alumni for appointment. Canon law required that in these appointments, "preference should be given to the judgment of the bishop and the seminary board."²¹ Available to him were a number of newly or recently ordained men who had already completed advanced degrees at Innsbruck, Louvain, Washington, or Rome, as well as talented priests ordained from local seminaries. Normally those selected would then obtain their doctorates from Roman or other European universities, the Catholic University in Washington, or one of several Catholic faculties in Canada. Sometimes they would work in a field of their own choosing. Sometimes they would not. These studies would be undertaken and completed at relatively modest cost. Some dioceses educated more priests than they needed for immediate needs. In Philadelphia a number of priests with doctoral degrees often were teaching in the archdiocesan high schools. They were the "reserves on the bench" who would eventually be called upon to staff the seminary. Religious orders dedicated to education attracted candidates who entered because of an attraction to studies. Their superiors had an even larger pool from which to select their seminary professors. A number of orders had their own system of higher education in which their priests could matriculate without causing a severe economic burden. Inevitably, in both diocesan and religious seminaries, the overwhelming majority of the faculty would be from the sponsoring diocese or religious order. In most instances, they would be alumni of the institution itself.

The diocesan priest assigned to a seminary would normally expect to spend many of his years living and teaching in the seminary to which he was assigned. Quite a few would spend all their lives. Eventually, some would "take a parish." Similarly, religious order priests would normally devote the greater part of their lives to this calling, living in and a part of the community in which they taught.

Recruitment of Seminarians

The responsibility for recruiting seminarians was taken by bishops and religious superiors assisted by priests designated as “vocation directors.” Usually, the vocation directors simply screened candidates who came to them from the Catholic schools, the minor seminaries, or the parishes. They did not have to “recruit” in the strict sense of the term. The candidates were then sent to the seminary chosen by the bishop or religious superior.

The chief task of the rector was screening candidates with reference to character and ensuring that the number accepted would not overtax the facilities of the seminary. In 1965, as the Second Vatican Council came to a close, the major problem facing many rectors was providing for the increasing number of candidates.

ENDNOTES

1. See Joseph M. White, *The Diocesan Seminary in the United States: A History from the 1780s to the Present* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989).
2. The statistics for seminaries in the academic year 1965-66 are drawn from “Catholic Seminaries in the United States - A statistical study and directory prepared by the Seminary Departments of the National Catholic Educational Association,” in *Seminary Newsletter*, 7:1 (March 1966).
3. The European system of education led to the establishment of minor and major seminaries. The American equivalent of the “major” or six-year seminary is the final two years of college plus the four years of professional theological study.
4. John Tracy Ellis, “The Formation of the American Priest: An Historical Perspective,” in *The Catholic Priest in the United States: Historical Investigations* (Collegeville, MN: St. John’s University Press, 1971), 79-80.
5. Canon 1365 in John A. Abbo and Jerome D. Hannan, *The Sacred Canons: A Concise Presentation of the Current Disciplinary Norms of the Church* (St. Louis, MO: Herder Book Co., 1952). This translation and commentary on the 1918 Code of Canon Law will hereafter be referred to as “Code (1918).”
6. Code (1918), canon 1354.
7. White, 396, 398, 422.
8. Code (1918), canon 1357.
9. Code (1918), canon 1338.2, 3, 4.
10. Code (1918), canon 1360.1.
11. Code (1918), canon 1360.2.
12. An example of the commentaries on the code is A.M. Micheletti, *Constitutiones Seminariorum Clericalium ex Codice Piano-Benedictino omnium Gentium Sacris Institutis accommodatae* (Torino: Marietti, 1919).
13. Code (1918), canon 1369.1, 2, 3.

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14. Code (1918), canons 1355, 1356.
15. White, 175-176.
16. *St. John's Seminary 1992-1993 Catalogue*, Camarillo, CA, 3, 4.
17. Code (1918), canon 1358.
18. Code (1918), canon 1355.1, 2, 3.
19. Abbo and Hannan, 598.
20. White, 364-370.
21. Code (1918), canon 1366.

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Institutional Reorganization

As American society underwent revolutionary changes in the 1960s and 1970s, the Catholic Church embarked on a period of renewal inspired by the Second Vatican Council. The Church's seminaries responded by reorganization and realignment of institutions and the restructuring of programs. As the seminaries were transformed, so were the role and responsibilities of their CEOs. Depending on the type of arrangement that resulted, the traditional office of rector eventually fell into one of several categories: a theology school president, a seminary rector with the responsibilities of a theology school president grafted onto his office, or a seminary rector with varying responsibilities to a university.

The Changing Context

The triumphal catalogue of mid-century institutional expansion had not been welcomed by all. John Tracy Ellis lamented that "the dismal procession of numerous small and weak seminaries continued to appear in every part of the land."¹ Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, the Catholic critique of the seminaries focused on their physical and intellectual isolation and called for more involvement in pastoral life and greater efforts to achieve academic excellence.² This discussion produced an avalanche of articles and monographs, the most significant of which were Stafford Poole's *Seminary in Crisis*, and James Lee and Louis Putz's *Seminary Education in a Time of Change*.³

In seminaries, as in other areas of Church life, the Second Vatican Council gave a powerful impetus to a renewal already in progress. The implications of the goals set by the council were not all immediately evident. The structure of the renewal was local, national, and international. On an official level, the renewal consisted in the implementation of various "norms" established by the council, by the Sacred Congregation for Seminaries and Universities (the Congregation for Catholic Education), and by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. This renewal was both orderly and chaotic, its direction was sometimes clear, at other times obscure. The direction and the definition of renewal were vigorously debated. Conflict would occur when there were contradictory interpretations of the "mind," or "spirit" of the council and the needs of the Church. Significantly, the renewal

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was also driven by completely unforeseen forces outside the control of the Church or the seminaries.

Although the Roman Catholic seminaries of this period may have appeared to be isolated in “monastic fastness,” they and their rectors did not live in isolation. The currents affecting religious, social, political, and cultural change had enormous impact in the years following the Second Vatican Council. Some would prove to be positive; some would prove otherwise.

These years were highlighted by growing secularism throughout Western society. The concept of sin began to disappear and was replaced by psychological explanations of behavior. The “Death of God” was proclaimed in *Time* magazine and the “me generation” was born in America. On the positive side, the “third world” emerged from colonial status, and the value of the hitherto denigrated cultures and religious traditions of the greater part of the globe began to be recognized.

In the United States, the civil rights movement began with its focus on institutionalized racism. The rights agenda would shift from race to sexism, feminism, and gay rights. The assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy contributed to growing disillusionment fired by the Vietnam War. Watergate signaled an erosion and a mistrust of authority in all forms. The drug culture began to emerge and spread throughout the country. A human person walked on the moon. The technological age had begun.

The Roman Catholic Church worshiped in the language of its people for the first time in a millennium and a half. Ecumenism was welcomed with enthusiasm, one-time heretics became separated brethren. Synods of Bishops began to meet in Rome and the Roman Curia was internationalized. Pope Paul VI’s encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*, reaffirming the traditional Church teaching on artificial birth control, was followed by a growing dissent within the Church among both laity and clergy. Marriage and family life declined, divorce increased. The abortion controversy began to emerge. A phenomenal number of priests began to leave the active ministry. Burgeoning numbers of psychologists and other social workers developed as a class of secular healing professionals. All of these religious and societal currents would impact the seminaries, and addressing them would be the responsibility of the rector.

The Renewal—Institutional Reorganization

On December 8, 1965, Pope Paul VI solemnly closed the Second Vatican Council. In its *Decree on Priestly Training, Optatum totius*,⁴ the council called for a

renewal of seminary studies. Other conciliar documents also influenced the renewal of seminaries. *Gaudium et Spes*, the pastoral constitution on “The Church in the Modern World,” and various decrees relating to the laity, ecumenism, and evangelization would direct the minds and spirits of those overseeing these schools. In 1969, four years after the close of the council, the Congregation for Catholic Education had published the *Ratio Fundamentalis*, or the *Basic Plan for Priestly Formation*. The *Basic Plan* called on each nation to adapt the plan to its own exigencies. Within the United States, the direction of this renewal was assumed by the Bishops’ Committee for Priestly Formation, established in 1966 by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. For the first time, the national bishops’ conference had a standing committee charged to serve the seminaries. Its oversight was limited. The committee did not control the seminaries or endorse their programs. Direct oversight of the individual institutions remained in the hands of the bishops and superiors. The committee could conduct evaluative “visitations” of seminaries when requested by the appropriate bishop or superior. A major role of this committee was the drafting of the *Program of Priestly Formation*. The *Program* was then approved by the conference of bishops and, when approved by the Congregation for Catholic Education, became normative for the seminaries.

In 1971, the Congregation for Catholic Education gave final approval to the *Program of Priestly Formation* formulated by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops after a lengthy consultation with the seminaries. The conciliar decrees, the *Basic Plan*, and the *Program*, together with subsequent decrees from the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, would form the foundation blocks of the renewal of Catholic seminaries. The *Program* was the most immediately influential for it contained “principles according to which seminaries at every level should be conducted.”⁵ Its second and third editions, in 1976 and 1981, although they contained some revisions, remained essentially the same. The fourth edition, approved in 1993, is different from its predecessors in format, tone, and content.

Each seminary is a unique organism, with differing structures, traditions, and personalities. In each the office of rector or president is nuanced according to these circumstances. However, they share many common traits and they face similar problems and challenges. The *Program of Priestly Formation*, because its guidelines apply to all the seminaries, is a useful medium to demonstrate the changes in seminary programs that have affected the office of rector or president. Although an episcopal consensus was behind the bishops’ *Program*, conflicts would inevitably arise as to how they were to be implemented.⁶ The religious seminaries

and the diocesan seminaries followed very different paths in their renewal, including their institutional reorganization. The institutional reorganization changed the role of rector. It also changed his title. Most significantly it changed his professional and personal relationships: to the bishop or superior, to the seminary itself, to the faculty, to the seminarians, and to an increasing array of external publics.

Institutional Reorganization, Realignment, and Refounding—Religious Seminaries

As the Second Vatican Council closed, the religious seminaries were already moving on their own initiative toward a dramatic series of relocations and reorganizations.

To a large extent the changes introduced between about 1966 and 1970 were a result of self-determination on the part of the orders and congregations, and were not imposed or proposed in any specific fashion by ecclesiastical agencies outside them. Such self-determination accorded with the way religious orders had traditionally dealt with the training of their members, for which as exempt ecclesiastical bodies they were responsible only to themselves, aside from a few very general norms principally concerning novitiates.⁷

They began a process of consolidation that would give birth to the unions and various cooperative enterprises, some of them of an ecumenical nature. The decline in the number of vocations to religious orders and requests for collaborative and ecumenical education encouraged a consolidation of resources, both personnel and financial. In the spirit of the council, they enthusiastically pursued ecumenical and interfaith relationships.

Many seminary and Church leaders believed that physical isolation had become irrelevant and counterproductive to contemporary formation for active ministries. This belief was particularly strong within the religious orders and influenced the direction of the restructuring of their seminaries.

In many cases these arrangements entailed moving an institution to a city from a freestanding situation in the country. The motivations behind such relocations and reorganizations were certainly complex.... There is little doubt, however, that many religious orders interpreted Vatican II as encouraging or mandating a rather radical reform of their programs so that they would

be equipped to address the “new era” of which the council spoke. In particular, the training of priests at institutions relatively isolated from the cultural milieu in which they would later exercise their ministries was seen as a deficiency to be remedied. More effective use of resources through collaboration was also surely a powerful motive, especially since with passing years the number of candidates for any given order had declined.... Despite considerable diversity among these postconciliar patterns, certain features are common to most or many of them. Schools that relocated generally did so in order to achieve proximity to a university, and sought some degree of formal relationship with it.⁸

The Catholic Theological Union at Chicago, associated with the Association of Chicago Theological Schools and located near the University of Chicago, was established in 1968 with the joint sponsorship of the Franciscans, Servites, and Passionists. These orders, and those that joined later, eventually closed their own schools. In Washington, a similar institution was born with the establishment of the Washington Theological Coalition, later the Washington Theological Union, in 1969. The WTU eventually included Franciscans, Carmelites, Missionary Servants of the Holy Trinity, and other orders.

In California, the Franciscan, Dominican, and Jesuit theologates associated themselves at Berkeley with the Graduate Theological Union at the University of California in the late 1960s. Unlike the unions, in this association the schools retained their institutional autonomy, while cooperating with the GTU on many levels, including the granting of joint degrees.

The Cluster of Independent Theological Schools in Washington, including DeSales School of Theology, Dominican House of Studies, and Oblate College, is an even looser cooperative association of independent religious order institutions. Parallel to these are ecumenical consortia or clusters based on complete institutional autonomy such as the Chicago Cluster, the Minnesota Consortium of Theological Schools, the Toronto School of Theology, and the Boston Theological Institute. The Boston Theological Institute was created in 1968, comprising the divinity schools of several universities, some freestanding Protestant and Orthodox schools, St. John’s Seminary (a diocesan seminary), and the Weston Jesuit School of Theology, the only school in the institute run by a religious order.

Not all such enterprises were successful. The Jesuits’ Woodstock Seminary is a good example. Located for a century in the Maryland countryside, Woodstock moved in 1969 to the upper West Side of Manhattan and entered into affiliation with Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University. Originally the Jesuits

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had planned to move to Yale but the decision was changed without giving time for the arrangements in New York to be completed. In New York, Woodstock occupied space in several buildings some more than twenty blocks removed from each other. The experiment failed and Woodstock closed in 1973. All that survives is its magnificent theological library at the Woodstock Theological Center at Georgetown University.

The consolidation of many small religious seminaries produced major academic institutions that would serve their sponsoring orders as well as a large number of lay students. One of the results of this restructuring was the creation of the new, for Roman Catholic seminaries, office of president. For the religious order seminaries that coalesced into the unions, sometimes referred to as “study centers,” the office of rector remained, but was restricted to the heads of “houses of formation,” residences for the candidates for a particular order. The rector of a house of formation directs the spiritual formation of his students and socializes them into the traditions and customs of their particular religious order. The seminarians take their classes at the unions.

The president of the union became the chief executive officer of a “theological school” in the strict sense. The school offers graduate theological degrees and functions as an independent institution of higher education. His responsibilities are chiefly in the area of academic administration. Although technically absolved of responsibilities in spiritual formation, the president cannot ignore it. The integration or “blending” of the spiritual and academic programs is never a simple matter.

The creation of a “union” required vision, stamina, and a willingness to compromise. The genesis of the Catholic Theological Union at Chicago⁹ is a good example. The account of the formative years of this institution reflects the stories of similar institutions. In 1964, representatives of the Passionist Order, the Benedictine Monastery and Seminary of St. Meinrad in Indiana, and the Servite Order of Illinois gathered to discuss the possibility of a cooperative seminary venture near the campus of The University of Chicago. In 1965 they drew up a proposal for “The School of Catholic Theology.” Very soon, the Benedictines withdrew from the project but their place was taken by Franciscans. The orders entered into communication with the archdiocese of Chicago, the location of this proposed venture. The relationship of religious seminaries and the diocesan bishop is not always clear in canon law and is occasionally a source of tension. In this instance good relations were crucial and the archdiocese was cooperative and helpful.

The archbishops of Chicago, Cardinal Albert Meyer and his successor Cardinal John Cody, hoped the new institution would locate at the spacious property of the archdiocesan seminary in Mundelein, Illinois. Although this desire was not realized, Cody cooperated with the venture and secured permission from Rome to proceed "*ad experimentum*." By 1967 a "Memorandum of Agreement" committed the three orders "to pool their efforts and resources in establishing a School of Catholic Theology...to offer courses in Catholic theology so that the students be fully qualified to meet the requirements of the priesthood."¹⁰ They also promised to make a specific financial contribution, to assign faculty members, and to send all their seminarians to the institution.

Cardinal Cody expressed concern that the name "School of Catholic Theology" might be understood to indicate that the school was sponsored by the archdiocese and so the name was changed to "The Catholic Theological Union at Chicago." As such it received corporate status in 1967. Soon thereafter it was associated with the Association of Chicago Theological Schools. It found a home when the corporation purchased the Aragon Hotel in Hyde Park, and classes began on October 1, 1968.

This new venture and the others like it shared many of the same challenges as seminaries with more "traditional" structures. It also had its own unique problems. But "newness" was an advantage where the leadership was open to innovation and problem solving. Inevitably, tensions arose as three religious orders with different traditions and views of religious life shared the same building. Because the president lived in the building, he was involved with questions relating to it. Their resolution would result in the establishment of "house rules" for those sharing the building and the establishment of separate housing for some orders.

The unions were established before the appearance of the bishops' *Program*. Rather vague organizational models appeared in the 1971 and 1976 editions of the *Program*, but the 1981 edition clarified them, called them by name, and thereby clearly recognized the changes in structure that had taken place over the previous decade and a half. It described them as "freestanding," providing the entire program at the one institution; "supplemental," providing part of the program from its own resources and part from other institutions; and "collaborative," in which several institutions cooperate to share resources and programs.¹¹ The unions and most other religious order seminaries fell into the last category. It also mentioned "clusters" and "consortia," cooperative arrangements made by several religious seminaries which retained their independence while sharing resources.

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These arrangements reflect the distinct approach to priestly formation of religious orders. These distinctions are recognized in the *Program* itself in a variety of ways. The 1971 and 1976 editions contained a section on “The Religious Priests’ Formation,” addressed to the particular needs of the orders. The 1981 edition omits this section but contains a statement from the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM), a federation of the superiors of the religious orders. The superiors state that:

while the priestly life and work of religious will differ from that of diocesan priests, the difference does not stem from their priesthood as such. Religious and diocesan priests share an increasingly pluriform priesthood; their needs for priestly formation as such do not differ.... (They accept the program while) preserving the rights and privileges granted religious in Church law, especially regarding the religious and spiritual formation of their own candidates.¹²

The 1993 *Program*, after repeating the rights of the religious orders to their particular formation, describes the collaborative model as:

several specific groups, such as religious institutes, societies, or dioceses, (choosing) to unite their resources. They may join administrative and academic structures with houses of formation clustered around a central study center. In such collaborative models, individual institutions may retain varying degrees of autonomy.¹³

Although the union president functions as the president of a small college, much like his Protestant brethren, there are important differences. He is a member of a religious order and has responsibilities toward his order. The integral nature of priestly formation, including spiritual as well as academic and pastoral components, is, in varying degrees, a part of his responsibility. The more independent nature of his institution makes him more responsible to and more reliant upon his board than his other confreres, the CEOs of diocesan seminaries and many freestanding religious seminaries. He has had to and continues to develop a “tradition” for his institution, the “new kid on the block.” In this he must respect not only the traditions of the orders in his union and the laws of the Church, but also respond to the new demands of a diverse body of lay students.

In 1965, 129 seminaries were serving the religious orders with an enrollment of 3,455 seminarians. In 1993, the total of religious order candidates for the

priesthood was 754. The schools serving religious orders include the Catholic Theological Union; the Washington Theological Union; three schools at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California; three schools which form the Cluster of Independent Theological Schools in Washington, DC; Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Cambridge, Massachusetts; and Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas. The greatest concentrations are at Catholic Theological Union (128), Washington Theological Union (95), Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley (74), and Weston Jesuit School of Theology (64). These four schools train almost half (361 of 754) of the religious order seminarians. Moreau Seminary sends its students to the University of Notre Dame. Students from St. John's Abbey attend St. John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota, and Aquinas Institute provides programs in cooperation with St. Louis University. Students from the Benedictine abbeys of St. Vincent in Latrobe, Pennsylvania; St. Meinrad in St. Meinrad, Indiana; and Mount Angel in St. Benedict, Oregon, attend classes at the seminaries for diocesan priests conducted by their respective abbeys, as do some students for the Sacred Heart Fathers at their chiefly diocesan oriented seminary in Hales Corners, Wisconsin. Groups of religious order students also attend classes at various diocesan sponsored seminaries, usually living off campus at their order's house of formation. In 1993, theology schools conducted by religious orders educated 580 full-time and 817 part-time students who are not studying for the priesthood.¹⁴

Institutional Restructuring and Refounding— Diocesan Seminaries

The religious orders had, without prompting, already taken the route that later would be encouraged by the American bishops in their *Program* and eventually by the Congregation in Rome. Calls for amalgamation and consolidation, calls that found receptive ears among religious orders, met deaf ears among most diocesan authorities. The realization that financial and personnel resources were already strained led to the inclusion of this warning in the 1971, 1976, and 1981 editions of the *Program*:

The need to achieve maximum use of limited resources and to provide student bodies sufficiently large to make possible a dynamic and varied academic program points toward a policy of amalgamation rather than proliferation of seminaries. To these academic reasons, financial arguments can be readily added.... In view of spiraling construction costs and the existing surplus

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of seminaries, the foundation of new seminaries should be avoided. The extensive renovation of institutions should be weighed against the advantages of sending students to larger and academically stronger institutions.¹⁵

Although the bishops' *Program* had encouraged consolidation, their own diocesan seminaries would not follow this route. Most of them would "tough it out," and only a few would close in the coming years. With some exceptions, most of the closures were of comparatively small or new institutions. In addition, a number of small Benedictine seminaries that conducted theology programs for diocesan candidates closed these programs and limited themselves to college level seminaries. A few might be said to have "merged." Diocesan-run St. John Vianney in East Aurora, New York, closed and Franciscan-run Christ the King moved from St. Bonaventure, New York, in rural Cattaraugus County, to the suburban East Aurora campus. Recently, the Franciscans withdrew administratively and the seminary is now conducted principally by diocesan priests. Assumption in San Antonio dropped its academic program and sends its seminarians to Oblate School of Theology. St. Mary's in Houston sends its students to the University of St. Thomas School of Theology, which is conveniently located on the seminary campus. Although St. Bernard's Seminary in Rochester, New York, closed, it continues as "St. Bernard's Institute," affiliated with Colgate Rochester Divinity School, but not offering a program for priesthood candidates.

A number of schools consolidated their physical resources. St. Mary's Seminary in Cleveland, Kenrick Seminary in St. Louis, and Mt. St. Mary's Seminary in Cincinnati moved to smaller quarters, in some instances sharing facilities with a college seminary.

Regional control of seminaries, which appeared to many to be a logical development of the conciliar ideals of collaboration, did not prosper. After often heated debate, St. John's Regional Seminary in Plymouth, Michigan, closed in 1988. Its programs were continued at Sacred Heart Seminary in Detroit which was re-founded as a college and also as a theologate under the sponsorship of the Archdiocese of Detroit. Today, the only regional seminary is St. Vincent DePaul in Boynton Beach, Florida, sponsored by the dioceses of Florida and several adjoining states.

Why did the diocesan seminaries not follow the same path as the religious? The maintenance of an existing seminary is a source of pride for a diocese. It is also a center for theological vitality, and became from the 1970s onward a place for the training of deacons, lay ministers, catechists, and others. Its faculty is often

consulted by the bishop regarding theological questions. Not surprisingly, a bishop is hesitant to allow such a resource to disappear from his diocese. He is concerned that the diocese would be impoverished by such a loss. Monasteries that conduct seminaries see them as their particular apostolate or mission and as an integral part of their identity. For some, the main motivation was institutional survival. A rector recalls his bishop telling him that “if we hold on for a few years, some others may close and we will get their students.” Some of those who held on grew, but others fell by the wayside.

Serious attempts to promote the consolidation of diocesan seminaries came to naught. In 1972, the bishops of New York commissioned a study of theological seminaries in New York State with a view toward possible amalgamation of institutions. At that time there were 11 theological seminaries in the state: four diocesan, two religious that trained diocesan candidates, and five religious seminaries. The commission recommended that there be two diocesan seminaries in New York, one urban, the other rural. The project came to naught.¹⁶ Today the religious seminaries in New York have either closed or moved to a union. Of the other six, three remain.¹⁷

The major effort toward encouraging consolidation took place at the level of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. The Vatican’s Congregation for Catholic Education, which before the Second Vatican Council had encouraged the multiplication of seminaries, adopted a new policy. This was provoked by the decline in the number of seminarians, the continuing catalogue of seminary closings, especially religious and minor seminaries, and concern over dwindling resources. In 1979 and 1981, the Congregation pointed out the need for the National Conference of Catholic Bishops to draw up a national and regional seminary plan, so that closings would not be made by chance but according to a clear policy.¹⁸

The development of a plan was hampered by two significant factors: a bishop’s unwillingness to close the seminary in his diocese and the lack of a mechanism to develop and oversee any such plan. Within the National Conference of Bishops there is no committee empowered to act to create a national plan of amalgamation. The committee charged with oversight of the seminaries, the Bishops’ Committee on Priestly Formation, has no authority to do more than suggest amalgamation where there is evidence of need. Even then, the decision rests with the bishop or religious superior.

A partial response to the Roman initiative, outlining principles for the distribution and resources of United States seminaries, was contained in a report submitted to the November 1983 meeting of the National Conference of Catholic

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Bishops by the executive director of the Seminary Department of the NCEA and Father Francis K. Sheets, OSC. The National Conference took no action. The lack of central authority over such a project coupled with the local importance of the seminaries, foredoomed any such project at the national level.

In September 1982, representatives of the Bishops Committee for Priestly Formation, the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, and the National Catholic Educational Association Seminary Department met to discuss means to bring together those with the ultimate responsibility regarding seminary cooperation, resource evaluation, and amalgamation. Through the generosity of the Lilly Endowment, the presidents and rector-presidents of theologates, together with their sponsoring bishops or superiors, were convened to discuss the maintenance of high quality programs, the quality of candidates, and adequate stewardship of limited resources—personnel and financial. The meeting, “The Assembly of Ordinaries and Rectors,” took place at St. Mary of the Lake Seminary, Mundelein, Illinois, in June 1983.

The Assembly raised nine major issues, including equity in funding and planning for regional/national formation programs. The assembly had some tense moments. The discussion of amalgamation at the national level was openly discussed. A number of rectors and bishops believed that there was a “hidden agenda” to the assembly, namely, the amalgamation of the diocesan seminaries. While many favored amalgamation and consolidation in principle, few bishops or rectors were willing to sacrifice the independence of their own institutions. In spite of raising the issue of regional/national programs, little was done, or could be done by the bishops as a body. The leadership in finances and planning was to a great extent assumed by some of the individual seminaries, often with the assistance of the Lilly Endowment. The Endowment’s sponsorship of a series of financial studies gave impetus, information, and programmatic assistance to many institutions in developing their planning processes, but national planning under episcopal sponsorship in areas of finance or consolidation was not to be.

The religious order seminaries very quickly had consolidated into unions and various cooperative ventures. In most, the academic and spiritual formation took place separately. The diocesan seminaries did not consolidate; the majority did not separate spiritual and academic formation. For the diocesan seminaries, whether sponsored by a diocese or by a religious order, most of the post-conciliar institutional reorganization took place *within* the institutions. Legal incorporation where it had not before existed and accreditation by The Association of Theological Schools led to the institution of the title and office of “President-Rector” or “Rector-President.” The title indicated the traditional responsibilities of a rector for the

governance of the seminary's internal program of priestly formation in its spiritual, academic, and pastoral components. It now included the responsibilities of a president of a small college as well as relationships to accrediting agencies and other publics previously not a significant part of the world of a rector.

Without an understanding of the commitment of time and energy involved, the additional responsibilities of a president of a theological school were grafted on to the office of rector as the seminaries entered more profoundly into the world of American higher education. The extent and importance of these responsibilities only slowly dawned upon those who had assumed them, and they are often unknown to or unappreciated by the students, the staff, the faculty, and Church authorities. The rector-president shares the programmatic changes and the new publics with the union presidents and with the rectors whose seminaries have entered into affiliations with Catholic universities.

University Affiliations

Although centrally organized consolidation of diocesan seminaries did not occur, several formerly freestanding diocesan seminaries affiliated with Catholic universities. In these cases, the move was spurred by financial considerations and declining enrollment. The relationships that resulted created a new style of affiliation of seminary and university. Other university-related seminaries are either essentially houses of formation that sent their students to a particular university or freestanding seminaries existing in an almost totally independent manner on a university campus. Two of these recent affiliations demonstrate rather different arrangements.

In New Jersey, the property of Immaculate Conception Seminary was sold and, in 1984, the seminary moved from its suburban campus in Darlington, New Jersey, to Seton Hall University. It relocated in a new university-owned facility on the main campus in South Orange, New Jersey. The seminary became the School of Theology, one of the six constituent schools of Seton Hall. The President-Rector became the Rector-Dean, rector of the seminary and dean of the school of theology. In the late 1980s, the Saint Paul Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, affiliated with the adjacent University of St. Thomas. Most of its former buildings and grounds were purchased by the university, which was in need of room for expansion. A new seminary residence and administration building was constructed on a portion of the old seminary campus still owned by the seminary corporation. The President-Rector became the Rector-Vice President, rector of the seminary and vice president

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of the university. In each instance, seminaries sponsored by a diocese affiliated with a university that was sponsored by the same diocese. In each instance, the driving forces were decreasing enrollment and increasing costs. These affiliations were not always easily accomplished or implemented. Both rectors also took on additional tasks that were necessary to fulfill their new responsibilities to the universities.

While these affiliations opened the facilities of the universities to the seminaries and hopefully ameliorated the seminaries' fiscal problems, they also opened a host of other issues. Catholic universities, like their counterparts in higher education, are autonomous institutions. Their relationship to the pastoral authorities of the Church is a hotly debated question. Seminaries, on the other hand, are by canon law closely related to the authority of the bishop. Questions such as academic freedom, tenure, and autonomy, while important to the seminary, are often raised to a much higher level of debate within the universities. Some in the university community see a seminary as the nose of the ecclesiastical camel entering the tent of academic freedom and institutional autonomy.

The facilitation of these affiliation arrangements is a difficult and time-consuming task, especially for the chief executive officer of the seminary before, during, and after the affiliation. When continual attention is given to all details of the arrangement, it seems to work well. A rector who guided one affiliation emphasized that preparation, patience, and mutual trust are essential:

The special questions of the relationship of the Church and State and the necessary autonomy of a seminary program were constant major issues in the discussion. Enormous good will on the part of the seminary, university, and archdiocese kept the process moving.

When ecclesiastical issues are not sensitively dealt with, difficulties and constant revision and reorganization consume the energies of the rector. At one university-affiliated seminary, the affiliation had to be redone after the Vatican Visitation of Seminaries in 1986 expressed concern that the rights and responsibilities of the diocesan bishop had not been adequately safeguarded in the affiliation agreement.

The rector-vice president or rector-dean in these arrangements takes on a host of new relationships and responsibilities. The arrangements differ according to the setting. The rector-vice president is responsible to the president of the university and the diocesan bishop; the rector-dean reports to the provost in academic

matters as dean of a school, and to the diocesan bishop and the university president regarding other seminary matters. The boards also differ: one remains independent and autonomous, the other is a committee of the university board. In both cases the rectors have to deal with two boards, the seminary's and the university's. Sometimes these boards have different expectations of the seminary, and the rector can find himself in the position of reconciling two conflicting boards. Similarly, rectors of seminaries affiliated with universities spend additional time securing the place of the seminary within the larger structure. These situations have changed their perspectives of the office. As one expresses it:

It is no longer possible for me to focus exclusively on the traditional role of a seminary rector. I am now in contact with a much more diverse group of people whose gifts and talents have enriched both my work and the success of the seminary programs...(and I spend) a good deal more energy than when I took over the position.

Normally, the rector of a university-affiliated seminary is not responsible for maintenance and upkeep of buildings but must negotiate with the university for allocation of funds for these purposes. Other practical issues and difficulties can occur. The anticipated financial savings expected by the seminaries in moving to a university campus are often not realized to the degree expected, if at all. On the other hand, the seminary has the advantage of conveniently utilizing the university's existing programs. Undergraduate courses in theology and philosophy are readily available for those who need them. Foreign language and English as a Second Language programs are equally accessible. Further the seminarians have the use of the university's library, student services, and sports facilities. A faculty member of the Saint Paul Seminary notes that affiliation has vastly improved salaries and benefits, provided access to training for staff, and shared services such as counseling for seminarians. Other advantages cited are interaction with peers in other schools of the university, faculty development, endowed chair funds, and opportunity for sabbaticals. Ultimately, being part of the university allows the seminary to be much more efficient and have access to many more resources than when it was independent.

Reorganization Completed

In 1965 there were 5,461 candidates for diocesan priesthood in the 40 diocesan theological seminaries and in religious order theological seminaries that accepted diocesan students. Today there are 2,377 diocesan seminarians studying at 36 seminaries. Twenty-four of these seminaries are sponsored by dioceses. Twelve are sponsored by or conducted by religious orders. The faculties of these institutions are diverse in varying degrees. Diocesan priests are on the staff of religious-order-sponsored institutions and vice versa. All include religious sisters and laity on their staffs. Twenty-eight of these seminaries may be classified as freestanding, eight as university-related or collaborative. The majority of diocesan theological seminarians, 1,904, attend freestanding seminaries, while 475 attend university-related and collaborative seminaries. Diocesan-sponsored seminaries also enroll 317 full-time and 956 part-time non-priesthood students.¹⁹

In spite of their differing approaches to priestly formation that resulted in different structures and organization, the religious and diocesan seminaries shared an essentially common program and would face similar challenges in its implementation. The rectors, presidents, rector-presidents, president-rectors, rector-vice presidents, and rector-deans soon discovered that all had acquired new but similar external publics and faced similar changes in the internal makeup of their institutions.

The publication of the 1981 edition of the *Program* for the first time mentioned “president-rectors,” which is what the majority of the diocesan rectors had become. The 1993 *Program* describes the rector or rector-president as:

(setting) the direction and tone of the seminary program...pastor of the seminary community...in some schools (he) is called the president...appointed by appropriate ecclesiastical authority ...responsible to the bishop or religious ordinary...responsible to a seminary board...chief administrative officer and principal agent responsible for the implementation of the seminary program...often responsible for public relations and development...leader of the internal life of the seminary, as pastor and priestly model...responsible for the “spiritual and personal welfare of faculty and students.”²⁰

The institutional restructuring resulted in three distinct models of organization: freestanding, university-related, and collaborative.²¹ The chief executive officers in each category have very different job descriptions with the nuances

expected in each institution. The internal restructuring of the priestly formation program would result in even more dramatic changes in their relationships with faculty, staff, and students, in the structure of their administration, in their day-to-day activities. These changes would be both exhilarating, problematic, and, in some cases, painful.

ENDNOTES

1. John Tracy Ellis, "The Formation of the American Priest: An Historical Perspective," in *The Catholic Priest in the United States: Historical Investigations* (Collegeville, MN: St. John's Press, 1971), 54.
2. Joseph M. White, *The Diocesan Seminary in the United States: A History from the 1780s to the Present* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), see especially 405-430.
3. Stafford Poole, *Seminary in Crisis* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966), and James Michael Lee and Louis J. Putz, *Seminary Education in a Time of Change* (Notre Dame, IN: Fides, 1965).
4. This document, *The Decree on Priestly Training*, the *Ratio Fundamentalis*, and other official documents relating to priestly training can be found in *Norms for Priestly Formation*, published by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in 1982. An updated edition containing subsequent documents is in preparation.
5. *Program of Priestly Formation*, 1971, xii.
6. Christopher J. Kauffman, *Tradition and Transformation in Catholic Culture: The Priests of Saint Sulpice in the United States from 1791 to the Present* (New York: Macmillan, 1988), especially 277-312, and James P. Gaffey, *Men of Menlo: Transformation of an American Seminary* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1992), especially 76-152, provide a chronicle and analysis of the effects of the conciliar changes on the Sulpician seminaries.
7. See John O'Malley, "The Houses of Study of Religious Orders and Congregations: A Historical Sketch," in Katarina Schuth, *Reason for the Hope: The Futures of Roman Catholic Theologates* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1989), 29-45.
8. O'Malley, 40.
9. The account of the founding of the Catholic Theological Union is based upon Paul Bechtold, *Catholic Theological Union at Chicago: The Founding Years* (Chicago, IL: Catholic Theological Union, 1993).
10. Bechtold, 18-20.
11. *Program*, 1981, 17.
 17. One of the results of the call for greater breadth, flexibility, and creativity in the formation and education of priests in the pluralistic context of our country has been the development of new models of seminary structures to effect greater renewal by religious orders, dioceses, and other churches preparing candidates for ordained ministry. This 1981 revision recognizes the various models of seminary structures operative today, each of which necessarily encompasses the constitutive elements required for a program of formation in preparation for ordained ministry. The work of renewal could well prompt other models in the future.
Program, 1981, 228.
 228. A variety of forms and structures characterize the seminary program in our country, and undoubtedly there will be new models in the future. Currently, seminaries may be classified on the basis of student body as: (a) Diocesan, drawn from

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members of a single diocese, a province, a region, or a larger grouping; (b) Religious, drawn from a single province or group of provinces; (c) Combinations of diocesan and religious students under diocesan or religious sponsorship.

Program, 1981, 229.

229. A seminary may be classified on the basis of program as: (a) A traditional or freestanding seminary structure which provides the entire program of spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation; (b) A supplemental model which provides one or more parts of the program from its own resources while other parts, such as the academic, are provided by another institution, such as a university; (c) A collaborative model in which several institutions cooperate to share resources or programs in one or more areas: (i) In the Union model, several specific groups (religious orders and/or dioceses) unite their resources in one institution under a single administrative and academic structure; (ii) In the Federation model, seminaries of religious orders or of diocese or other, non-Catholic churches, or "union" seminaries make their resources available to each other to be shared according to several patterns of agreement—the cluster, consortium, or coalition; (iii) In the Mixed model, some of the administrative functions (a common registrar, for example) and some of the academic offerings belong specifically to the federation while others remain as the responsibility of the individual member institutions.

12. *Program*, 1981, "CMSM Statement," 3.

13. *Program*, 1993, 259.

14. *CARA Seminary Directory 1994*, CARA Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, Washington, DC, x-xi, xxii-xxv.

15. *Program*, 1971, 248.

16. Memorandum of New York State Seminary Planning Board, March 1972; Memorandum, Rev. William Coyle of the Bishops' Committee on Priestly Formation to the Advisory Committee on the New York State Seminary Amalgamation Study, Washington, March 21, 1972, in Files, Seminary Department, National Catholic Educational Association, Washington, DC.

17. In Wisconsin, two similar projects were initiated, in 1969 and 1979-81, but each focused on college-level seminaries. See "A proposal, resulting from evaluation by heads of Wisconsin Seminary Colleges, concerning some ways to coordinate and/or consolidate operations, September 16, 1969" and "Regional Seminary Project Report, August 7, 1981" in Files, Seminary Department, National Catholic Educational Association, Washington, DC.

18. Documents in Files, Seminary Department, National Catholic Educational Association.

19. *CARA Seminary Directory 1994*, viii-ix, xxii-xxv. In the compilation of these statistics, I consider the following institutions as university-related or collaborative: The North American College, Rome; The American College, Louvain; Immaculate Conception Seminary School of Theology of Seton Hall University; Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity of the University of St. Thomas; University of St. Thomas School of Theology; Oblate School of Theology; Theological College of The Catholic University of America; St. John's University (Collegeville, MN). Mt. St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, MD, although related to Mt. St. Mary's College, is essentially a freestanding program.

20. *Program*, 1993, 459-462.

21. *Program*, 1993, 257-259. The 1993 *Program* reflects the current structures of the seminaries and succinctly describes them. For further details, see the section of this paper on "Communication, Evaluation, and Recommitment."

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Structural reorganization essentially took place apart from the bishops' *Program*. It was determined independently and individually by bishops and superiors responsible for particular seminaries. It was not anticipated that the process would radically and permanently change the office of rector, now the office of president, rector-president, or hyphenated rector. Nor was it expected that his relationship with bishop, superior, board, and others would undergo a gradual and, in some cases, a radical change. No longer was the CEO simply appointed by the bishop or superior to hold office at his will. No longer was the bishop or superior the sole source of funding for the seminary. No longer was he the sole source of students. No longer was he the sole source of faculty. No longer was the board a "rubber stamp," nor was it composed of a homogeneous group with a uniform knowledge and experience of the needs and program of the seminary. The rapidity of change caused many chief executive officers of seminaries to feel as if they were riding a roller coaster. Their main challenge was to keep the car on the track.

The Bishop and the Superior

The simple lines of authority and responsibility that existed in 1965 no longer exist. The clear and direct relationship of the rector to the bishop or religious superior changed as the rectors became presidents, rector-presidents, and other hyphenated officers.

In diocesan seminaries, especially those sponsored by particular dioceses, the authority of the bishop remains strong and, in canon law, his authority remains undiminished. However, most bishops have adopted a more collegial style of exercising their authority. Other factors make it more difficult for them to exercise as direct and immediate control as in the past. The bishop is no longer the unique source of funding or of faculty. President-rectors must look elsewhere for both. They have sought and developed alternate, sometimes independent, funding and have established endowments, usually in concert with the bishop, but not always. Contractual arrangements with faculty, priests, religious sisters, and lay women and men, often place the bishop's relationship to faculty within parameters regulated by civil as well as ecclesiastical law. The superior of a seminary exclusively conducted by his order is in a position similar to that of a bishop.

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When the seminary is affiliated with a university, the relationship and the constraints are similar, but have added dimensions. The bishop retains his canonical authority, which he now exercises within the context of the arrangement made by him with the university.

The same cannot be said of the presidents of the unions. In the unions the president is appointed by and primarily responsible to the board for the running of the school. On the surface this appears simple, but in a way the president is responsible to many superiors, those represented on the board and others not on the board who sent their seminarians to his school.

The Corporation and the Board

The Second Vatican Council's enhanced vision of the role of the laity in the Church led naturally to lay involvement with seminaries. The inclusion of lay members on seminary boards was a gradual process. The establishment of new seminary boards was hastened by incorporation, accreditation, and institutional reorganization. The maturation of many of these boards has established them as major partners in ensuring the future of the Catholic seminaries. Their role, according to the *Program*, is to "develop the basic policy of the school in accordance with Church law, this *Program* of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, and standard American educational practice."¹ For the first time lay members of these boards have a role in determining the policy, staffing, and financing of Roman Catholic seminaries, within the framework of the official guidelines. The board is to include "clergy, religious, and laity" and also draw from the "broader academic community" and professions such as "law, medicine, and finance."² The development of boards was initially the responsibility of the rector. Their effectiveness is quite diverse.

The rector-president's relationship with his board and the degree of freedom he is given to develop it determine its effectiveness. A board can be extremely helpful or it can be simply an exercise in futility. Boards can assist in the evaluation of programs, financial planning, strategic planning for the whole institution, community relations, and development. Most take part in the selection of the rector, in some cases presenting the candidate to the bishop or superior for appointment.

The experience of seminary CEOs with boards is generally very positive. Boards require leadership and an articulated vision from the rector, and, when that is given, they support him and the school. Upon entering office in the 1970s, many president-rectors found boards that had no idea of their function, whose members

believed that their task was to come “once a year to check the books and see that the building is still standing and full.” Members of such boards were usually frustrated and felt they “always seemed to be stirring the pot, but nothing ever came to the surface.” Even today some president-rectors find that they must overcome board inertia and encourage the board to assume a more directive role. Sometimes inertia comes from the attitude of board members that to take initiative would undermine the “hierarchical nature of the Church.” Once boards understand their function, they gain self-confidence and provide much assistance, in particular in financial planning and management. A president-rector points out that:

One of the main benefits of a board are the checks and balances, the friendly criticism and counsel, that the president-rector receives from it. The board holds you accountable for making the strongest possible case for any program and policy changes. You earn the respect of trustees by providing them with timely and reliable information, cogent argument, and enthusiasm.

As a board gains self-confidence and authority as the primary policy-making body for the seminary, it can run into opposition from faculty who disagree with the direction in which the board is pushing the school. A “Who is in charge here?” situation may develop, especially when there is a tradition of faculty autonomy and self-governance. Boards may also clash with an assertive bishop or superior. As one rector describes such a situation, “Medieval church law always gave the bishop a *‘sors valentior,’* or a ‘weighted vote’ in all collegial deliberations. When that vote gets too heavy, board members wonder why they are at the meeting.” Fortunately such accounts are less frequently heard today. A board member described such a situation in the mid-1980s:

The role that the board performs is directly related to the ecclesiology of the bishop or religious superior. The ability of boards to guide the direction of schools depends entirely on ecclesial officials. Many ordinaries are inclined to shift to others the responsibility for finances, but they want to retain control of every other aspect of the theologate. An independent board will not tolerate that position for long.³

In spite of any difficulties, rector-presidents increasingly see the value of boards. The expertise of board members in management, finances, and academic administration undergirds a president-rector who cannot be expected to be well versed in all these areas. “I never claimed to have universal knowledge. Board

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members have saved the seminary and me personally from potentially disastrous decisions.” It is not unusual to hear CEOs recount how the commitment of board members to the mission of the school has reinforced and strengthened their own commitment. Moreover, a great many CEOs now see a strong board as essential to ensure the continuity of the school and its mission. As one president reflects:

The best contribution I can make during my time as president will be in developing the board. Not only will a strong board help secure the future of the institution, but it will provide my successors with a peer group of advisors who share in the governance of the seminary. To this point governance and responsibility have fallen on the president alone—a situation that is both isolating for the president and dangerous for the institution, particularly in view of the changing role of the president and the growing demands facing seminaries.

While working with a board is time consuming, the personal relationships developed by presidents with board members have often been a source of great support, “an added bonus I did not anticipate.” The enthusiasm of committed board members not only strengthens the school but gives valuable personal and moral support to the CEO at all seminaries. The growing networks of interpersonal relationships also become sources of important friendships in their lives.

Most rector-presidents have had little experience dealing with boards before they enter their office. ATS and Lilly Endowment have sponsored leadership workshops, and involvement with the Association of Governing Boards has also proved to be quite helpful. While workshops and meetings are beneficial, a number of rectors have noted that the assistance provided by the Lilly Endowment for them to run board development projects that bring in outside experts to work with their own boards have been even more useful and fruitful.

The various seminary models naturally produce different experiences in board development. The diocesan seminaries initially tended to have rather weak boards. The bishop remains the “landlord” of most diocesan seminaries, but the creation of governing boards in some instances has imposed a more collegial episcopal style, even where it was not part of a particular prelate’s personal approach. Bishops have a responsibility to safeguard their rights, and some believe they are not in a canonical position to give the board more than advisory power.

Yet “advisory” has proved to have many meanings. Advisory boards can recommend policy; they can provide counsel and feedback. In particular, when the board is widely representative and includes laity, perspectives are widened from those provided by exclusively clerical boards. The composition of all types of boards is much more diverse. The majority of members are no longer the clerical “subjects” of the bishop and consequently are much freer in expressing their opinions.

Where a diocesan seminary is conducted by a religious order, the clear and direct authority of the diocesan bishop remains, within the context of the contract between the diocese and the order. In those instances where a monastery owns and runs a seminary for diocesan candidates, the superior has a role similar to the bishop. However, the local diocesan bishop has some general oversight over the program for diocesan students although he does not exercise any direct control of the corporation. Normally, he is a member of the board.⁴

The university-related seminaries have boards that are either independent from the university, or boards that function as committees of the university governing board. A general experience has been that where a seminary has a mixture of corporate, governing, and advisory boards, the allocating of responsibilities can cause disagreement.

The unions, as new institutions, were rather creative in their approach. Their boards usually included representatives of the different orders forming the union as well as laity. This diversity is an asset of which they are justly proud. The innovative character of the unions themselves led them to allow greater participation in a variety of areas of decision making, simply because there were more decisions to be made.

The establishment of a Board of Trustees for a union was in the beginning an easy task. At Catholic Theological Union (CTU) for example, two members of each sponsoring order made up the original board. As CTU grew, it encouraged orders with students attending the union to become corporate members. The boards in these schools are rarely “rubber stamps.” Because the schools are more and more on their own as financial resources of sponsoring orders diminish, the board responsibility for finances has increased.

The development of a board is never as simple as its establishment. As in any institution, misunderstandings are inevitable. It was not surprising that at CTU the first major board crisis concerned finances. Neither is the specific issue a surprise. “How was the deficit to be resolved?” One suggestion was to pro-rate the deficit in proportion to the number of students from each corporate member. This placed a larger burden on the communities with more students. The second

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suggestion was to divide the deficit in two parts. One half would be divided equally among the corporate members and the other half pro-rated as in the first suggestion. This Solomonic arrangement was adopted.⁵

Schools sponsored by a single order faced questions of board composition similar to those of the unions. Where a board consisted of the various “provincials,” or regional superiors of one order, the questions were delicate. The provincials held the purse strings of the subsidy to the school. However, they often were physically far removed from the institution and immersed in many other tasks. Seldom could they give the school and the president the assistance he needed in the areas of fundraising, business management, and public relations. To obtain this assistance it is necessary to either broaden the board membership and include lay members or to establish a secondary “advisory” board. The latter choice is always the “safest” from the point of view of maintaining direct ecclesiastical control. The former is usually more productive because the members of a governing board, in the experience of presidents, take much more interest and ownership in the institution.

Board development was a significant task of the president and one in which the presidents of the unions and similar schools excelled. Perhaps they felt less encumbered by the presence of a sponsoring bishop or superior who held clear canonical jurisdiction as well as the deed to the property. More likely, they saw the need to develop alternate sources of revenue and students since, from the beginning, they were to a great degree on their own.

The Washington Theological Union (WTU) has been a pioneer in board development. WTU has not only taken advantage of ATS-sponsored board development workshops and Lilly Endowment grants for board development, but it has developed a cooperative venture in board development with Lilly. Since 1989, the annual “Keystone Conferences,” funded by Lilly and the Franciscan Order, have provided retreats for board members, not only from WTU, but from a broad spectrum of seminaries.

The Appointment of the Rector-President

The appointment of the rector-president in most diocesan seminaries remains the prerogative of the diocesan bishop. Where appropriate, he exercises it in consultation with religious superiors who would be involved if they staffed the seminary. The influence of boards and faculty increased as bishops were urged to seek the advice of both groups.⁶ In most diocesan seminaries, the board, often with faculty involvement, conducts the search for a rector and recommends one

or more candidates to the bishop. He either approves the appointment or makes it himself. The amount of consultation depends on the structure of the seminary. Where the diocese owns the seminary, the bishop's decision is sometimes made with minimal consultation. The more independent the seminary, the greater the influence of the board and the faculty on the appointment process. This can be counter-productive. In the 1980s both Mount St. Mary's in Emmitsburg, Maryland, and the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio, had interim rectors for more than a year as the board and faculty failed to agree on a rector.

In university-related seminaries the appointment of a rector-dean or rector-vice president follows a similar process of search and recommendation. However, in these institutions the appointment flows from the bishop in consultation with the university president.

Finding candidates for the office of rector-president is increasingly difficult. Diocesan seminaries share with religious seminaries a decreasing pool of qualified and willing candidates. These schools have also been affected by the decline in numbers in the religious orders. Religious orders, such as the Vincentians, which conducted many diocesan seminaries, have been forced to reduce their commitment to the seminaries. The Vincentians withdrew from staffing St. Vincent DePaul Seminary in Brighton Beach, Florida, and it is now staffed entirely by diocesan priests and lay faculty. Vincentians remain as part of the staff of St. John's Seminary in Camarillo, California, but the rector-president and many of the staff are now diocesan priests. At Kenrick Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, staffed by Vincentians with a Vincentian rector-president, almost all the faculty are diocesan priests, sisters, and laity.

The office of seminary rector-president is one that has not normally been on the "career track" of the diocesan priest. The diocesan priest is ordained chiefly for parish ministry, although many are asked to enter the educational field at various levels. After a number of years in education, it is not unusual for a diocesan priest to ask for assignment as a pastor. The decreasing number of priests available for parishes has caused many bishops to reduce the number of their priests who might obtain graduate degrees and enter education. In short, the pool of qualified candidates for the office of rector-president is shrinking.

All too often the strain of the job caused by lack of support or conflict over approaches to renewal policies impelled rectors to resign after short terms. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s many seminaries were weakened by a series of short-term rectors who did not stay long enough to give the institution the direction it needed. In one three-year period, half the rectors changed.⁷ One rector, appointed

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in the early 1980s, mentions that he had been preceded by “17 years of one- to three-year revolving door rectorships.” Such experiences were unfortunately too common. Today the situation has stabilized and rector-presidents are remaining in office for longer periods.

Nor was it uncommon that a man would be appointed without any preparation for administration, even if he had served on the faculty for many years. “I was like Balboa, about to see the Pacific Ocean for the first time. For me the office of rector was a place of new discoveries.” For those coming from outside the seminary, there were other concerns. “I was conscious that I didn’t know many of the faculty and even fewer of the students. I had limited knowledge of the issues in theological education or formation.” Such remarks and experiences are not unusual, but are heard less frequently.

The Appointment of the President

In the unions, because the enterprise was a cooperative effort, the board assumed the responsibility of naming the president, who is accountable to it. The union president is appointed by the board after a search procedure much like that in any college. There are some differences. Because the orders that are members of the union have a big stake in the institution, it would be unusual for the man chosen as president to be from outside the membership of the sponsoring orders. The pool for the presidency is thereby rather limited in numbers but fortunately not in talent at the present time. As religious order membership declines, it remains to be seen whether or not this good fortune will continue.

The presidents of religious order seminaries and schools that are members of the Graduate Theological Union at Berkeley are also normally appointed after a search by a board-appointed committee. However, the dynamics of these institutions, and their by-laws as well, require that the president be a member of the sponsoring order. This is logical since the identity of these schools is inextricably linked with the sponsoring religious order. The president, though responsible in varying degrees to a board, has clearer lines of responsibility to his superior. These schools also face a declining number of qualified candidates for the position. In addition, all religious order seminaries are further affected by declining numbers of qualified candidates for positions of responsibility within the order. Their officers speak of good presidents and deans occasionally being “elected out.” This term might sound ominous, but actually it refers to a school president being elected as provincial or superior of the order, and thereby relinquishing the presidency.

Faculty

Few responsibilities consume more of the time of a president or rector-president than the recruitment, integration, development, and maintenance of faculty. The composition of the faculty quickly changed from a homogeneous to a diverse group. This change in itself required careful management. The faculty of a seminary had traditionally been drawn from the priests of the sponsoring diocese or religious order. The diocesan seminary of Boston, for example, drew its faculty exclusively from the priests of that diocese; the faculty of St. Meinrad was composed of monks of St. Meinrad Abbey; the faculty of Kenrick Seminary in St. Louis was made up of members of the Vincentian Order. The rector-president of a large diocesan seminary recalls that, "In the past it was simply a matter of going to the Archbishop and asking that a particular priest be released for studies, now a wholly different search process is necessary."

As the priest shortage continues in the United States, bishops and superiors are under pressure to fill other assignments in parishes and religious order apostolates. It is increasingly difficult to withdraw a priest from parish ministry and prepare him for seminary ministry. The same limited pool of potential candidates is often targeted by other offices or agencies who need priests in their service. It has become more difficult to find suitable candidates for higher studies. Of these, many are not willing to accept assignments to teach in seminaries. Simultaneously, theology as an academic discipline has quickly spread from the seminary and entered the mainstream of university studies, Catholic and non-Catholic. More and different options are available for priests who feel an attraction and a call to theological studies. For a variety of reasons, some priests find the university more attractive and leave seminary teaching for posts in colleges and universities. One president laments that he "lost two of (his) best faculty to Catholic universities. They offered them what I could not."

While the overwhelming majority of presidents and rector-presidents view their local bishop and other bishops as supportive and recognize the personnel problems faced by these prelates, their frustration regarding faculty recruiting is unambiguous. The comments of two rector-presidents are illustrative of the opinions of many:

Sending bishops make it clear that they would like to have a faculty that is heavily made up of priests even as they demur when it comes to freeing qualified priests for seminary work.

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Bishops often tell rectors that we would not have any personnel problems if we would close a few seminaries. At the same time, the bishops as a national conference have not addressed that broader question of the need for consolidation.

Approximately three out of four seminary faculty members today are priests.⁸ The remaining quarter includes lay women, sisters, and lay men. This does not indicate all of the new diversity. Most seminaries depend on a mixture of religious orders, diocesan priests, and laity. The Saint Paul Seminary, now the Saint Paul School of Divinity of the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1980 had a faculty composed of 12 priests of the archdiocese of Minneapolis-St. Paul, four religious order priests, one sister, one lay man, and one lay woman. In 1993 that faculty had 10 priests of the Minneapolis-St. Paul archdiocese, one priest from the archdiocese of New York, one religious order priest, five sisters, two lay women, and five lay men.

This diversity raises a host of questions. When the faculty was from the same group of priests, diocesan or religious order, a common thread held them together—the diocese and the bishop, or the order and its ethos and traditions. Initially, many presidents and rector-presidents experienced resistance from faculty of the sponsoring order or diocese who were unwilling to share decision-making authority with the “newcomers,” who were sometimes regarded as “outsiders.” The new faculty in its turn often believed that they were “second-class citizens,” and one recalls being referred to as an “adjunct” by a colleague. Different roles for different faculty were made evident as some resided in the seminary and others did not. Often the resident faculty believed that they were carrying the burden of the institution while non-resident faculty who did not live in the seminary building could go home after working “nine-to-five.”

The new diversity necessitated the development of new bonds of unity. The president or rector-president found it necessary to clarify his vision of the school and the mission of the school. Around the mission and under the direction of the president or rector-president, unity, or at least reasonable solidarity, could be found. It was not always easy. Yet the majority of these officers view diversity in a positive light, as one of them points out:

Diversity within the faculty brings enrichment to the faculty. It brings new dynamics to faculty discussions as well as every aspect of seminary life. It brings a realism to the seminary that is not possible with a one dimension faculty.

At the same time as faculties were becoming more diverse, they became more “professional.” Accreditation spurred those faculties that were seeking academic excellence to adopt more of the procedures and criteria that characterize American universities. This also brought with it “the many quirks of an academic institution.” It was noticed that the role of the rector-president changed as the seminary adopted faculty, administrative, and other “guidebooks,” “job descriptions,” and the paraphernalia of the academy. As responsibilities were clearly delineated, so were rights. This brought legitimate protection to faculty who were often called upon to perform many extraneous tasks, which, they felt, negatively affected their primary responsibilities. The definition of “responsibilities” was not easy. Rector-presidents found it necessary to ask more and more of their faculty. Frequently the request was in the form of part-time administrative duties. Today such requests usually require negotiation.

For many the “family” atmosphere of the seminary disappeared as well as the corporate effort. It was the passing of an era. Not only were faculty relationships changing but all relationships were changing. When the rector was “*paterfamilias*” he was responsible for the entire seminary family, faculty, staff, seminarians, groundskeepers, sisters. Rarely did these personnel have any contractual relationships with the seminary. The rector saw to it that their needs were met within the perspective of Christian ethical responsibility. As the sisters disappeared from the kitchen and the laundry and entered the classroom, they were replaced by food services and coin-operated washing machines. The groundskeepers were replaced by cleaning and landscaping services. The faculty from the diocese or the religious order, assigned at the will of the bishop or superior and subject to instant reassignment, were replaced, in many instances, by new faculty with clearly specified contractual relationships. All the faculty members had their rights and responsibilities outlined in legally binding documents. It became professional, but inevitably lost the simpler familial relationships. Different bonds had to be developed. The ideal of a community of believers striving together for a common goal is essential to a vibrant seminary or theological school. It requires continual balancing of responsibilities, as a rector-president muses:

It is not a question of choosing one commitment over the other—the Church or the academy—but rather the faculty member will be ever balancing and reconciling his obligations to both demands.

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The transformation took place quickly in the unions. Initially, faculty were simply assigned by the participating religious orders. This traditional approach did not fit the new school. The identity of the union as a primarily academic institution, together with the environment of other theological schools and universities, made this style of appointment obsolete. At a faculty workshop at CTU in 1969, the question was asked: "Are professors at CTU because they have been assigned to the school by their provincials, or because of a driving desire for excellence, and to make a career of the teaching profession?" As in many other institutions, the process of ATS accreditation and its standards for faculty would assist in the resolution of this question. It was solved, there and elsewhere, by the eventual adoption of the professional methods of hiring, salary, and promotion normative in American higher education.⁹

Professional methods, standards, and credentials soon demanded professional salaries. When a person is hired "degree in hand," that person expects compensation that will reimburse him/her or the diocese or the order for educational expenses. Professional salaries are obviously necessary for lay faculty who may have a family to support. No less are they required for religious who bear the burden of supporting retired members of their orders and who must reimburse the order for their education. Diocesan priests as well need financial support to maintain their status as participants in the professional realm of the academy. The balancing of the religious commitment to poverty and the ideal of simplicity of life of diocesan priests occasionally conflicts with the all too human concern that others are being paid much more for the same or less work.

"Food and shelter" are major faculty issues in any school. Presidents and rector-presidents also face faculty issues that can be exacerbated by differing views of the mission of the seminary itself. One rector-president summarizes the problem in these words:

Occasionally some people must lose or leave, and others must win before a group can reconstitute itself and move on. Leading and managing a struggling seminary is not the same as conducting a seminary. The stakes are real, the choices unpalatable, and often there isn't time to waste. In retrospect, my mistake was in not informing the faculty sharply enough just how frustrated I was by our inability to unite behind a new vision. Some faculty simply do not belong in a seminary community. The hardest experience I have had is to ask a faculty member to leave the seminary.

Faculty solidarity is essential for the good order of the seminary. "Seminarians infallibly sense the unity and tension in the faculty, and almost unconsciously absorb it. Nothing is more important to a sound and prospering seminary than a strong and unified faculty." One rector finds that he spends "an inordinate amount of time listening and talking with faculty." In spite of the time and energy faculty consume, presidents and rector-presidents are highly complimentary of the "dedication and high level of commitment to the Church and the academy" they find in their faculty. They enjoy working with people "who will sacrifice for the priesthood and the future good of the Church." Over all, they appear inclined to celebrate the good and minimize the difficulties, recognizing that it is necessary to "allow for certain amount of eccentricity. One essential faculty function is to afford entertainment for the students."

The growing diversity of the faculty stimulated numerous questions. The proportion of priests on a faculty, the intersection of academic and spiritual formational roles, financial and professional support for faculty are but a few. Some view diversity with alarm as damaging to a proper understanding of the priesthood and priestly training. A few consider lay faculty as provisional until they can be replaced by priests. Others view diversity as a proper expression of a collaborative approach to ministry in ministerial training.¹⁰

No longer can a rector simply ask the bishop or superior to assign a priest to the faculty. The hiring process, in most instances, has left the area of simple assignments, and more and more appointments are negotiated. Although most of their predecessors were assigned to their work, only a small minority of today's faculty were directly assigned by bishops or superiors. They either were asked to consider the position or they sought it. Catholic seminaries now seek faculty members outside of their traditional bases and traditional personnel. It is not unusual to see advertisements for seminary professors in *Openings*, the job hunting journal of the American Academy of Religion.

Although search committees have replaced simple assignment in faculty hiring, the president is almost always involved. Often he has the task of convincing a superior to "release" a particular person whom the union wanted to hire. Members of religious orders and diocesan priests as well are always subject to recall by their superiors or bishops for other assignments. Having obtained the desired faculty members, the president often continues to negotiate to keep them.

The escalating difficulty in recruiting qualified priest faculty has led many CEOs to adopt new hiring policies and strategies. Often many do not specifically seek priests out of frustration emerging from the lack of qualified applicants, or the

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refusal of bishops or superiors to allow a particular priest to accept a seminary position. Many now intentionally seek women and minority applicants so that their faculty will have balance and be models of collaboration.

Not only has the recruiting of academic faculty become more difficult. Spiritual direction has become more complex, and directors are expected to have advanced training in spirituality and other related disciplines. The comments of one rector-president reflect a common approach:

We have strengthened the role of spiritual direction with our students because it is so critically important today. We want to use only those with special gifts and training to take on that role. This in turn means we need more priests and better trained priests for this work. It is no longer sufficient to say that any priest can serve as a spiritual director for students even if that priest has an advanced degree in theology. In turn, the priest spiritual director can take only a limited number of directees.

Personal development and formation programs also require staff trained in psychology and related fields. The faculty today requires not only professors trained in the traditional academic disciplines but also others trained in spirituality, psychology, social sciences, and communications. The significant proportion of faculty who today possess degrees in the social sciences reflects the importance given these fields as well as the increasing professionalization of those faculty engaged in specifically formational roles.

Although a CEO may delegate much of the details of recruiting and support of faculty to the academic dean, whenever difficulties with faculty arise, he is inevitably involved. As one rector-president emphasizes:

Students sometimes question the orthodoxy of one or another faculty member when the student has scarcely begun his academic program The rector is the one person that the diocese will want to deal with on such issues.

Recruitment of Students

The major issue facing most seminaries continues to be the rapid decline in the number of seminarians, both religious and diocesan. Enrollment in feeder systems declined precipitously. Between 1965 and 1994, college seminary enrollment dropped 90 percent, from 14,850 to 1,642. In the same period, seminarian enrollment in theologates fell 50 percent, from 8,916 to 3,416.¹¹ By the late 1970s

it was evident that the college seminaries could no longer be relied upon to fill the classrooms of the theologates.

A number of strategies was adopted to address this crisis. In some institutions, a director of recruitment was appointed. However, because of the nature of the Catholic seminaries, it was often necessary for the rector-president, particularly of a diocesan seminary, to become more involved in recruitment. This work entails a great expenditure of time and energy. The assignment of diocesan seminarians to a particular seminary is the prerogative of the bishops. A few, not many, bishops allow seminarians to choose their seminary, usually from an approved list. The role of the diocesan vocation director has assumed a higher profile, and he has emerged as a “broker” for potential students for the seminaries. Often he is the major factor in choosing the seminary. Because of their influence and their frequent visits to seminaries, rector-presidents cultivate these officers in order to keep their favor and their seminarians. When vocation directors visit the seminary, the person they want to speak with is the CEO. Diocesan seminaries also cast their net in new waters and encourage religious orders to send their seminarians to their institution, even if only for the academic program.

Rector-presidents frequently visit “sending” bishops, superiors, and vocation directors who patronize their seminaries to encourage them to continue to send their students. They also visit other bishops and superiors in the hope of convincing them of the merits of their particular institution. These visits are often frustrating. One rector-president reflects that “Visits to bishops . . . are ineffective without larger institutional shifts to announce. Bishops are skeptical of smooth talk from a seminary president-rector looking for students. They trust their ‘grapevine’ and . . . have their minds made up.” This recruiting is sometimes looked upon as “poaching” by those who lose the patronage of a particular bishop or religious order. The religious order seminaries and unions seek new priesthood students among the other orders. The unions continue to add new orders as religious seminaries either close or affiliate with one or the other of the unions.

Many seminaries compete with one another for lay students. However, they are also in increasing competition with graduate academic and pastoral programs in Catholic colleges and universities. Non-Catholic seminaries, divinity schools, and universities draw a growing number of Catholic students. Lay students, particularly women, often find the Catholic seminary atmosphere less than welcoming and the lack of financial assistance at the seminaries and many Catholic colleges discouraging.

Finances

The growing financial problems have been exacerbated by a number of factors. Precious few Roman Catholic seminaries have a significant financial endowment. In fact, few have an endowment at all. For decades, they had relied on the great “personnel endowment” of priests, brothers, and sisters. These dedicated individuals provided academic, professional, staff, and other services for room, board, and a small stipend. They began to disappear in the 1960s, and to disappear rapidly. The decline in religious orders of women and the refocusing of their apostolates led many to withdraw their sisters from various support roles. They all had to be replaced by salaried personnel. Just as they were departing, a plethora of new programs appeared in the seminaries. All needed trained personnel. The new program directors required professional office and assistance staff. Often these new officers were laity who required professional salaries. Even when the faculty members were ordained, if they came from outside the sponsoring diocese or religious order, they required professional salaries.

The rise in the price of fuel after 1973 added to costs. Meanwhile, the aging of the seminary buildings occasioned unexpected capital outlays. The short terms of many rectors led them to put off projects that they foresaw they would not be able to complete. In 1990-1991, the Lilly Endowment provided grants to study the condition of facilities at theological schools. Eight Catholic seminaries participated in the study. The study concluded that the average capital renewal / deferred maintenance cost for theological schools was \$1,906,825 per institution.¹²

Changes in the program often caused unexpected expenses. For example, who was to pay for the pastoral training expenses of seminarians? The seminarians were normally unable to earn money but they required automobiles simply to get to and from their pastoral assignments. The loosening of the internal rules of the seminaries meant that something as simple as electricity (and rewiring!) bills burgeoned under the strain of the stereos, televisions, and eventually computers. The encouragement of counseling for seminarians brought bills from counselors to the rector's desk.

Seminaries overly dependent upon subsidies from dioceses and religious orders soon found that the priorities of their sponsors were shifting. The many new activities undertaken by their sponsors were straining scarce resources. By the late 1970s, religious communities began to incur increasing expenses to provide for the retirement of their aging members. Dioceses were experiencing financial strains,

especially the dioceses in the Northeast and the Midwest. Seminaries were told that their subsidies would be substantially reduced and were urged to seek funding elsewhere. Diocesan seminaries, dependent upon subsidies from the sponsoring diocese, are the most vulnerable. In recent years, one diocesan seminary was informed, with little notice, that its diocesan subsidy was to be frozen for five years, another that its subsidy was to be cut the next year by \$200,000, and a third seminary that all travel expenses for staff and faculty would be eliminated immediately.

Fiscal warning bells were ringing in the ears of each and every rector. Through generous funding from the Lilly Endowment, the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) embarked on a series of studies of the financing of seminary education. In the 1980s a series of reports was issued: *The Study of the Fiscal Resources of Catholic Theology Schools and Formation Houses 1975-1983* and *Fact Book: National Key Issues Summaries, 1975-1983, Key Indicators, 1978-1979*, both by Francis Kelly Scheets, and *Planning for the Future: The National Task Force Report on The Fiscal Resources of Catholic Theology Schools 1975-1983*. These were followed by an update in 1985, the *NCEA Fact Book: National Summary of Key Issues 1980-1984, Planning and Management Information*. The 1980 report, *Planning for the Future*, showed that costs had risen dramatically and that unless serious steps were taken, the future of many institutions was in danger. The report also urged that realistic tuitions be charged and that bishops and superiors “sending their personnel to seminaries they do not own and operate should realize their obligation in justice to pay a larger amount of the per-student costs over and above tuition and room and board than is the common practice today.” After recommending board involvement in fundraising, and urging seminaries to look to a “multiplicity of resources,” the report bluntly stated that “Seminaries serious about their fiscal stability must be willing to make a substantial investment of personnel, time, and money in establishing and carrying out a development program.”¹³

All of these studies called for more equitable means of funding seminaries, in particular more realistic tuitions. Some have begun to rise to more realistic levels but many seminaries are hesitant to increase their tuition. The lack of substantial endowments means that the seminaries depend on tuition and subsidy from the sponsoring diocese or religious order for a disproportionate percentage of their expenses. Those with development programs and growing endowment income can offer lower tuitions because of this added income. They are naturally hesitant to agree to a national or regional policy that would set tuitions at a level that would make them less competitive. No seminary would take the risk of raising its tuition

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only to make the situation more equitable for an institution that has a higher tuition. Bishops and superiors who send their students to seminaries outside of their jurisdictions are happy to accept the lower tuitions provided by the subsidies of other bishops and superiors. They see no reason to change a situation from which they obviously benefit. As in consolidation, there is no central authority with the power to create or enforce equitable funding. Like consolidation, it is left to the individual institutions to figure out the solution.

Presidents and rector-presidents are responsible for planning a balanced budget, raising new money, and maintaining the faculty. For most of them, this requires “on the job” training and learning about finances, law, and contracts. As burdensome as many find these new tasks, some gain “an enormous appreciation for the seminary’s legal counsel and financial advisors, a gratitude for their faith in the mission of the seminary, and an appreciation of their willingness to give so much of their time to the seminary.” Very quickly, all realize that the only serious and secure way to ensure the financial viability of their own seminary is development and planning on a local and individual basis. There is no cornucopia upon which a seminary can rely.

Although time consuming, fundraising has had unexpected benefits for many presidents and rector-presidents. Like board development, it opens to them a new world of personal friendships and contacts. Key to fundraising is high visibility and the ability to “sell the product.” The positive and negative aspects of fundraising are indicated by these comments:

I was advised to widen my contacts in the community and get to know a handful of major donor prospects The more successful I became in raising money, the more confidence I engendered among the trustees and the more respect I received from the broader community. At least in the eyes of some key laity, we began to look like a winner, and that put even more people on our side. Still, my life as a president-rector, fund raiser, and member of the board was mostly invisible and largely irrelevant to most faculty and students, and I had no way of conveying to them what was really involved in it. They were interested in my spending more time with them personally, but time is exactly what I didn’t have. My days were completely packed with organizational business that satisfied, but exhausted me. And, I was frustrated when the scope and magnitude of these tasks weren’t appreciated or supported.

Fundraising for the seminaries is different from that of colleges and universities. Alumni, a customary source of major contributions to educational institutions, are rarely wealthy. Potential donors are often rendered unapproachable. Presidents are occasionally told by a bishop or superior to “back away” from a possible donor who was already being “tapped” by the bishop or superior for his own projects.

The simple “direct line” relation of a rector and his bishop or superior for funding, students, or faculty no longer exists. It has been replaced by a web of interpersonal relationships influenced by many forces within the seminary and outside of it. New publics exist within the seminary: the board, the diverse faculty, new professional staff—directors of finances, development, recruitment, public relations, and new service staff—plant managers, food service managers. New publics outside the seminary call for the attention of the president and the rector-president: donors, vocation directors, sending bishops, and superiors.

ENDNOTES

1. *Program*, 1971, 205.
2. *Program*, 1971, 205.
3. Katarina Schuth, *Reason for the Hope: The Futures of Roman Catholic Theologates* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1989), 64. The section on governance (62-72) describes in a few pages the variety of board structures in the American Catholic seminaries.
4. Mt. St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, MD, owned by an independent corporation, is under the ecclesiastical authority of the diocesan bishop, the Archbishop of Baltimore, who is a board member. The Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, OH, is, by special legislation, under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Apostolic Nuncio, the Vatican Ambassador to the United States.
5. Paul Bechtold, *Catholic Theological Union at Chicago: The Founding Years* (Chicago, IL: Catholic Theological Union, 1993), 104-107.
6. *Program*, 1971, 221.
7. Catholic Seminaries and Their Future, FADICA Conference Proceedings, January 1988, 24.
8. Eugene Hemrick and Robert Wister, *The Recruitment and Retention of Faculty in Roman Catholic Theological Seminaries* (Washington, DC: National Catholic Educational Association, 1992), 25.
9. Bechtold, 57.
10. Hemrick and Wister, 55-59.
11. *CARA Seminary Directory 1994*, v; “Catholic Seminaries in the United States,” iii.
12. Walter A. Schaw, *Today's Challenge to Tomorrow's Vision: A Study of Facilities Conditions at Schools of Theology* (APPA and Lilly Endowment, Inc., 1991), 3.
13. Planning for the Future: The National Task Force Report of The Fiscal Resources of Catholic Theology Schools 1975-1983 (Washington, DC: CARA Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, 1988), 8.

National Coordination of Seminaries

The Program of Priestly Formation

Priestly formation in the Catholic Church traditionally has been composed of spiritual formation and human development, academic or intellectual formation, and pastoral formation. The changes authorized by the Second Vatican Council, and implemented beginning in 1971 by the United States bishops' *Program of Priestly Formation*, radically altered the structure and the content of this formation in each of its components.

The internal reorganization of the seminaries was directed by the *Program*. It was to "promote and direct the renewal of priestly formation,"¹ in "the light of the Second Vatican Council."² Seminaries were called upon to continue "to respond to the work of renewal by the Church in the United States."³ Significantly, the *Program* was extended to "all diocesan and inter-diocesan seminaries, (and) . . . should also be followed by seminaries and schools owned and operated by religious in providing programs for the preparation of candidates for the diocesan priesthood . . . (and) should guide religious institutes in adapting their own formation programs."⁴ From 1971 until 1993, three rather similar editions of the *Program* directed and reflected the renewal of Catholic seminaries and provided the guideposts for eventual examination and evaluation.

A single document governing the programs of both religious and diocesan seminaries was a new phenomenon. The impact of the *Program* was most strongly felt in the diocesan seminaries. However, since the religious orders had accepted it, reserving their rights and privileges, it also impacted on them.

The *Program* described the objectives and the specifics of the spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral aspects of priestly formation. The implementation of the *Program* in its entirety is the responsibility of the rector. Although their titles now vary, the chief officers of seminaries continue to be called "rectors" in most Church documents. The experiences of seminary CEOs in realizing the goals of the *Program* are almost as varied as their institutions, but they have much in common.

The local character of the implementation of the renewal was clear in the 1971 *Program*.

Renewal of theological education requires that theological faculties, within the scope of this Program, and under the direction and with the approval of the Ordinaries (bishops and superiors) concerned, through reflection, innovation, and careful evalua-

tion, develop their own particular programs adapted to the needs of the Church in the United States and in the world.⁵

The norms of the *Program* were the benchmarks for the renewal. The interpretation of renewal and the idea of “innovation” encouraged originality and experimentation while it also attracted its share of controversy. The existing diversity of the seminaries, their various missions and affiliations with dioceses or religious orders, and the plurality of “ethos” and traditions determined how they applied the norms. In all cases, the implementation of the norms led to the creation of new institutions with changed approaches to spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation.

This internal renewal alone changed the role of the rector from the broad and comprehensive character of the pre-conciliar seminary. It separated a rector-president from direct administration of each component of the program and involved the transfer of many internal responsibilities to academic deans, formation directors, and other administrators.

The Spiritual Formation and Human Development Program

Spiritual formation traditionally relies on several foundations: daily celebration of Mass, common prayer, frequent confession, adherence to a written rule, the experience of community life. The traditional program had a “leveling” quality. Everyone followed the same schedule, attended the same classes, and dressed in identical cassocks or religious habits. The new program retained many of these basics but added new emphases. Spiritual growth that had been presumed to take place within the former system was now more intentionally directed and evaluated. New stress was placed on the interior conversion of the seminarian and the necessity to assist the seminarian to integrate his faith and prayer into every aspect of his life. Such formation should “look to the needs both of the Church and the world . . . and . . . not proceed in isolation from either.”⁶ In the practical order this meant that the rule of life was relaxed, with the goal of producing a person who gave more than surface adherence to a rule and who would use mature judgment in making choices. The strict rules and discipline often gave way quickly. Schedules of seminarians varied, attendance was not mandatory at all exercises, dress codes were modified or discarded. Automobiles, stereos, televisions, and free weekends appeared as a part of the life of the seminarian.

The experience of St. Patrick’s Seminary in Menlo Park, California, is typical of the early and mid 1970s.

Archbishop McGucken was generally benevolent to a program which removed the feeling of repression common in traditional seminaries and which created, as he said, a "normal atmosphere." Nonetheless, he harbored strong reservations arising from his conviction that the seminary must preserve the elements that nourished obedience and respect.⁷

(The reform of the seminary rule) offered no list of hard regulations but instead presented a series of recommendations expressing gently but clearly what was expected of students. Inviting them to cooperate out of conviction rather than coercion, the Directives granted a greater degree of freedom, no longer formally demanding compulsory attendance at exercises including liturgies.⁸

The most noticeable result of the new system was the breakdown of the traditional system of community With the explicit removal of an explicit requirement to attend liturgies, participation in these exercises declined to the extent that according to the faculty more students were missing at daily Mass than those who came⁹

The premise, however, underlying the faculty's position was that true and lasting convictions came not through excessive external control but through a process of exercising free choice, a process that fostered the benefits of self-discovery but in which the stages could be uneven, unpredictable, and incomplete (The result was the) rise of young priests who appeared tentative in their values and loyalties.¹⁰

These changes quickly caused conflict within seminaries and often with bishops and superiors. Difficulties arose from different interpretations of the conciliar renewal and of the role and character of the priesthood. No matter which side he took in these questions, the rector often found himself the target of the faculty, the students, and increasingly, the bishops and superiors.

In recent years many seminaries have introduced modified dress codes and, in some schools, clerical dress for various occasions. They have moved from total reliance on the good will of the students to a more structured program with procedures for accountability in the fulfillment of spiritual formation responsibilities. This sometimes takes the form of compulsory attendance at spiritual and other exercises. The maintenance of an equilibrium between mandatory attendance and the interior appropriation of spiritual values continues to vex the faculties of many institutions.

Perhaps as a result of the preoccupation with practical pastoral training, professionalization, and accreditation in the 1960s, the first edition of the *Program*, in 1971, had placed spiritual formation after academic and pastoral formation. The second edition, in 1976, moved it to first place “as a sign that this is the basic purpose of a seminary.”¹¹ The emphasis on spiritual formation in Catholic seminaries continues to distinguish them from seminaries of most other churches.

Reflecting the increasingly therapeutic attitudes of society, the spiritual director’s role was expanded in 1971 to include provision of psychological counseling where needed.¹² In areas distinct from spiritual formation, counseling programs were to be supervised by a “Director of Guidance.”¹³ Making such distinctions is rarely an easy task.

Spiritual direction has assumed a heightened and deepened role in formation. Seminarians are now permitted to choose their spiritual directors from among most of the faculty and are not restricted to one or two choices. The members of the faculty, who in most institutions had previously acted as individual spiritual directors of seminarians only in special circumstances, now served that role more frequently. The methodology of spiritual growth has expanded from the one-on-one relationship to group experiences of spiritual reflection and awareness, and includes a variety of approaches to prayer and spirituality.

The spiritual formation component of the program soon required its own staff and director. The office of Director of Spiritual Formation appeared to coordinate the work of the spiritual directors and others involved in spiritual formation. While previously a spiritual director would be chosen from priests outstanding in personal piety, it was now required that he not only possess “manly piety and prudent judgment,” but also have “pastoral experience.” Moreover, it was strongly urged that he “receive advanced training in . . . contemporary theology, scripture, and counseling.”¹⁴

Not every faculty member is considered to be qualified to serve as a spiritual director. A rector-president explains his policy in these words:

We want to use only those with special gifts and training to take on that role. This in turn means we need more priests and better trained priests for this work. It is no longer sufficient to say that any priest can serve as a spiritual director for students even if that priest has an advanced degree in theology. In turn, the priest spiritual director can take only a limited number of directees.

The relaxation of community rules altered the traditional process of student evaluation that had been based on external compliance to a community rule. Increasing sophistication and new methods in evaluating students meant moving from a reliance on observable behavior to include a host of other internal and psychological issues. "Peer evaluation" was encouraged by the program.¹⁵ To this was added "self evaluation."¹⁶ Evaluation of summer and other pastoral activities as well as the deacon internship were also part of the package.¹⁷ Finally, the "People of God" were given a role in the evaluation of the candidate, although how this was to be accomplished was not spelled out.¹⁸

These developments, while positive in themselves, created some difficulties. The multiplicity of spiritual directors makes possible a lack of unity of vision in this very important part of the program. The weighing of various areas of evaluation consumes more and more of the time of the faculty and the rector. In addition to teaching, faculty members often serve as "mentors" or "directors" of groups of students.

Difficulties arise as some question the appropriateness of faculty who were engaged in the "external forum" of the teaching and evaluation of seminarians also serving in the "internal forum" of confidential personal spiritual direction. Faculty with an academic orientation sometimes protest that they cannot maintain academic vitality if formational tasks are placed on them. These issues did not arise in the more strictly compartmentalized system previously in place, and would involve the rector in developing solutions.

While evaluation is a major part of the faculty's role, the final recommendation for ordination remains the responsibility of the rector. Evaluation of students requires more time and discussion than the process required in previous years, with the consequence of greater emotional stress on evaluators. The president-rector has a paramount role in this process. Quite often, the president-rector is present at ordinations and, as part of the liturgy, publicly certifies the fitness of candidates trained in his institution.

Bishops often say that "the seminary has a man for four years, the diocese has him for 40, so be careful." No matter how collegial the evaluative process, whenever there is a "borderline" candidate, the final decision falls on the rector-president as reflected in this statement:

My role in evaluating students is clearly defined by Church law. The rite of ordination itself refers to the need for testimony on the candidates suitability by those entrusted with his formation. Each year I provide the dioceses we serve with a detailed evaluation about the suitability of the candidates to continue their

formation or to be called to Orders. That creates some built-in tensions for the presidency. First, he is expected to know the students as a pastor who ministers to a community. This means creating a healthy climate for good morale in the house and being present to faculty and students. At the same time he must maintain a distance in order to be objective as he serves the best interests of the Church in evaluating the candidates. This becomes troublesome when it becomes clear to the faculty, who advise the president, that a student cannot be recommended to continue. Carrying out the necessary decision without injuring the morale of the house is a difficult balancing act.

The presence of laity on campus and their involvement in the spiritual formation programs raised new issues. The growing presence of women as faculty and students drew positive attention when the 1981 *Program* stated that “The recognition of the relationship of the seminaries to the total People of God composed of men and women dictated a modification throughout the present text of the *Program of Priestly Formation* to use consciously inclusive language.”¹⁹ As women were added to the faculty, many wished to serve as spiritual directors to seminarians. This became a neuralgic issue. Many seminaries moved in this direction, and the development of this practice caused strains within the faculty and tension with bishops and superiors. The 1993 *Program* explicitly restricts spiritual direction to priests recommended by the rector and approved by the bishop.²⁰

For many rector-presidents, the implementation of this norm has been exceedingly painful. Many believe that trained and qualified women bring unique and valuable insights to spiritual direction. Often, they had encouraged and hired women in whose skills they had great confidence. In many seminaries, faculty and students have been equally supportive. It became clear that Church leadership did not agree with this policy. The rector-president had no choice but to accept the authority of the bishops. One rector-president said that the question was “the most emotion laden issue I dealt with as a rector. Informing trusted and trusting women faculty that they could no longer serve as spiritual directors was the most painful and difficult task that I ever had.”

Spiritual formation was further affected by numerous movements and programs that began or peaked during this period. Seminarians arrived with previous experience of spiritual and personal encounter movements such as Charismatic Renewal, Teens Encounter Christ, Search, Antioch, Emmaus, and Marriage Encounter. These and the renewed Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) as well as RENEW, a widespread program of “grass roots” parish renewal, often had

a positive impact on the seminarians' lives. Other trends within the Church and society provoked dissension within the seminaries. Many Catholic theologians and priests, including seminary teachers, questioned the value of celibacy as a requirement for orders for diocesan candidates. Organizations to promote married clergy and the ordination of women made these agendas highly visible in the seminaries, often causing seminarians to challenge the idea of formation for a celibate life. The seminarians were negatively influenced by the increasing materialism of American society, challenging the traditional expressions of the vow of poverty among the religious orders and the commitment to simplicity of life among diocesan seminarians. Sexual permissiveness, the drug culture, and the gay liberation movement challenged moral teachings in all parts of society. When expressed in the behavior of seminarians, they necessarily drew the attention of faculty and rector. Obtaining a unified response in accord with Church teaching, from occasionally divided faculty, was a new task for rector-presidents.

The character, the "qualities," the experience of seminarians had changed and continued to change. Acceptance of the Church's teachings and laws regarding priestly celibacy was no longer to be taken for granted. Celibacy and chastity received additional comment in the 1981 edition that expanded the sections devoted to these questions. This edition also used more "psychological" terminology in these sections, for example, seminarians were expected "to remain free of relationships that are characterized by exclusivity, dependency, possessiveness, and manipulation."²¹

The role of the community as a formative experience was expanded in the 1971 *Program*. The seminarians were no longer simply participants in a strictly scheduled *horarium*, the benefits of which it was presumed they would absorb. Rather idealistically, the *Program* urged that "Observing the principle of subsidiarity, faculty and students should collaborate on specific community programs to achieve the goals of priestly formation. While administration and faculty hold the ultimate responsibility, students should be given the opportunity to *enter into the decision making process* (italics mine) in proportion to their maturity and background."²² The rector-president was now expected to be in continual dialogue with students and student groups as well as to be present at numerous community social gatherings.

The decline in the number of seminarians had its impact on spirit and morale when as few as 50 seminarians might live in a building erected for 200. "Rattling around" in half-empty buildings gave the feeling of being on a sinking ship. As facilities were pared down and property sold, this shrinkage could cause morale

problems. A Jesuit novitiate in New York was transformed into the Culinary Institute of America. The Marist seminary in Santa Cruz became a hotel and conference center. As difficult as institutional contraction can be, humor softens the pain. A rector recalled that "The minor seminary property became an animal hospital. We all felt at that time that it was fortunate we had built a beautiful gymnasium in the late 1950s so there would be a place for the giraffes."

The spirituality and the very identity of the religious orders were undergoing a lengthy and thorough period of self examination. Urged by Pope Pius XII (1939-1958) and by the Second Vatican Council, the orders had embarked on a study of the "charism" of their founders. They hoped to recover the original spirit of their communities and then apply it to the changed circumstances of the world. Disagreements over the future direction of the particular orders were felt in their seminaries and reflected in their programs. The practical training of candidates was often a matter of vocal and divisive tension.

Spiritual formation provoked unique problems for the unions and similar institutions. Although the president was not involved in recommending candidates for ordination and did not "pastor" the community of students, spiritual formation could not be neglected. Each sponsoring or "sending" order had its own ethos, its own traditions, its own system of formation. Spiritual formation remained the responsibility of the individual orders. Each order had its own "director of formation," often the rector of a residence for students of the order, who might also be a faculty member of the union. At Catholic Theological Union (CTU), after meeting informally for two years, the formation directors formed a "Formation Council"²³ to serve as a forum to address concerns in this area. Although technically apart from the CTU, this council addresses formational issues before they become serious and involve the president. It also serves to assure orders that are considering joining the CTU that it is a safe and healthy place to send their students. Academic excellence alone is not a sufficient reason for an order to choose a given school of theology. Even more important is an environment in which spirituality was honored and fostered. The president must maintain a delicate balance, assuring academic excellence and maintaining a high level of Catholic spirit and spirituality throughout the school. For the unions this is complicated by the different traditions and definitions of spirituality of the orders represented at the school.

The Intellectual and Academic Program

On the surface, the renewal of intellectual formation, or the academic program, was the simplest of matters. Yet, as the 1971 *Program* noted:

in recent times a significant shift in emphasis has taken place in the teaching of theology. Stress is now put on the need to involve the student in a dynamic reflection on the problems of life, and to instill in him a sense of the historical development of the Christian faith in the life of the individual and the Christian community.²⁴

The *revision* of the curriculum, based on the traditional foundations of biblical studies, systematic theology, and historical studies, was also to take into account both “the riches of Christian tradition and the experiences and insights of the whole believing community of today.”²⁵ All theology was to be taught with pastoral application in mind since “it is not possible to teach even the most speculative branches of theology in isolation from pastoral concerns.”²⁶

The renewed academic program was expected to focus on the individual student and the issues of the times. Its basic principles were “to take into consideration the experiences, interests, and the needs of the student as a person ... (and) include the social, moral, and ecclesial problems of the present time in their relation to the Christian faith.”²⁷ The image of the priest was to be that of servant. The seminarian was “to understand that the priest is ordained to serve a priestly people, to assist this people to grow in their own gifts of the Spirit, not to dominate but to inspire and guide.”²⁸ The *Program* even provided a model curriculum in the first edition and several in the second and third editions. The 1993 *Program* designated “areas” of required study but did not include model curricula.

There was a rapid move away from the neo-scholastic, pre-Vatican II textbooks and manuals in Catholic seminaries. Liturgy and Ecumenism became serious areas of study, added to the already renewed scripture studies. Ecumenism was given an entire section in the first three editions of the *Program*, a section characterized by a combination of both hopes and cautions.²⁹ The council’s liturgical changes were to be a major area of concentration in class and practical training, with the goal that “seminarians will prepare to help people adapt to the changes called for by the Second Vatican Council.”³⁰

Accreditation, which inevitably strengthened the stress on academic excellence, was encouraged. Seminaries were urged to join the American Association

of Theological Schools (now The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, the ATS). The direction in the 1971 *Program* that “at least a first professional degree should be offered to make it possible for all priests to have a certification of professional training”³¹ opened the door to the application of the M.Div. program to Catholic seminaries for the first time.

Catholic theological seminaries became a significant presence and some, although not all, presidents and rector-presidents became involved in ATS. While the accreditation process would be of great assistance in enhancing the professional quality of programs, it indirectly led to some serious problems. Although canon law required “four full years” of theological study, the first edition of the *Program* allowed that “the basic program should be *flexible*” (italics mine). It stated that “*Normally* (italics mine) students will need at least eight semesters of theological study to complete the academic and field education requirements” and provided for “a period of supervised pastoral work away from the seminary.”³² This flexibility encouraged a number of institutions to limit their programs to the M.Div. requirements of the ATS, which is a three-year program. Some seminaries shortened their program to three or three and a half years. The freed time was used for internship programs during the seventh and eighth semesters of the four years or for a deacon internship afterward, in a way fulfilling the letter of the law. This pattern created tensions with Church authorities. On the other hand, some bishops welcomed the shorter programs so that they would have personnel available as soon as possible! The 1976 edition of the *Program* dropped the word “flexible” and restated that “normally” eight semesters would be required.

The professionalization that ATS accreditation encouraged came at an opportune time for Catholic seminaries. It provided a mechanism to enhance pastoral training, absent from the pre-conciliar seminary. It provided for the evaluation of faculty, officers, and boards. The clear distinctions between undergraduate and graduate education encouraged the Catholic seminaries to move away from the European model and to adopt the American system based on college and graduate levels of higher education. An unnoticed, and perhaps unintended, contribution of ATS was, in a way, prophetic. As the pool of priest faculty members became smaller, it became necessary to attract lay faculty. Accreditation had pushed the seminaries into setting professional standards for faculty, standards that included guides outlining rights and responsibilities, that provided a measure of security necessary to attract non-ordained faculty.

Some Catholic presidents and rector-presidents do not fully participate in the various activities and programs provided by ATS. This is unfortunate because

those who have taken the time have found that the ATS-sponsored programs for new presidents, in particular, have been very helpful. The press of other work is usually cited as the reason for this lack of involvement. It may also result from many president-rectors coming to their jobs with little or no experience in academic administration. They sometimes view the accreditation process as just another hoop to go through before their term expires and do not acquaint themselves with the other services of ATS. Ironically, this lack of academic administrative experience makes the ATS "orientation" and other programs even more useful.

Catholic seminaries have a lower sense of need of ATS and often find it difficult to conceptualize the services of the Association. The Catholic Church, through its canon law, the Congregation for Catholic Education, and the *Program of Priestly Formation* provided all necessary details for staffing schools and outlined the program they were to follow. Until recently the Church also provided students and selected and prepared faculty. Only slowly did most rectors come to awareness that the Second Vatican Council, *Optatum totius*, and the *Ratio Fundamentalis*, actually made them accountable for the integrity of their programs. It had become their responsibility to integrate old and new elements and to assure the Church of the effectiveness of their programs. They also had to provide the resources for their programs: financial, faculty, and students. Most Catholic seminaries are relatively small and reflect the hesitancy of the majority of small theological schools to participate actively in the affairs and program opportunities of ATS.³³

As positive as most presidents are toward ATS, many Church officials regard ATS with caution. The ATS policy statement on ecclesiastical assessment, happily revised before it was approved at the 1990 Biennial Meeting, caused a great deal of misunderstanding and provoked suspicion and anger among bishops. The wording of the original draft was viewed as impinging on the canonical rights and responsibilities of bishops toward seminaries. It is not an understatement to say that if the early version of the policy had passed, and if ATS had attempted to impose it on the Catholic seminaries, it would have occasioned the withdrawal of most of the Catholic seminaries from ATS.

The management of the academic program has changed from scheduling classes and arranging the academic calendar to a full-time job requiring skills in administration, hiring, and communication with professional organizations. Most of these responsibilities have been delegated to the academic dean. The position of academic dean expanded as the seminary achieved accreditation and added programs. The dean is normally responsible for dealing with ATS and

regional accreditation agencies, and serves as the spokesperson of the academic faculty. In many institutions the dean directs the day-to-day administration of the academic program and has become the most influential person in the setting of policy, academic and otherwise. The relationship of the academic dean and the rector-president is one of the most important for the efficient running of the seminary. The academic dean relieves the president-rector of much of the administration in his area. If the president or president-rector does not have confidence in and support the academic dean, difficulties inevitably occur. If the lines of responsibility are not clear, faculty and students feel encouraged to “appeal to Caesar” whenever convenient. The rector-president may then find himself deeply involved in the minutia of academic administration to the neglect of other duties.

New Programs for New Students

The Second Vatican Council had highlighted the priesthood of the faithful and enhanced the role of the laity. Large numbers of laity and sisters applied for admission to seminaries to pursue degrees, including the M.Div. degree, recognized as the “license for ordination” in many quarters. The seminary assumed the obligation to provide professional theological and pastoral training to these non-ordination candidates who would serve the Church in a variety of lay ministries.

Seminaries that admit lay students into professional ministerial programs have discovered that these students have specific spiritual formation needs. They often ask the school to develop programs that will enable them to enhance their spiritual lives and integrate their spirituality into their ministerial calling. Some schools have begun to provide such programs. To neglect to do so implies that spiritual formation, an integral part of formation for priesthood, is not necessary for non-ordained ministries. Such a position is rather untenable in the Catholic tradition. Offering programs to lay students brings the concomitant responsibility to assist them in finding ministerial placements, a problem not shared by those studying for the priesthood.

How their presence would affect the priestly formation program necessitated a discussion of the mission and identity of the seminary. Is the school first and foremost a place for the formation of future priests? Or is it first and foremost a center of ministry where priesthood is an equal concern alongside others in an expanded school of ministry? The question would be formulated in terminology thus far unfamiliar to the Catholic seminary. The choices of “seminary” vs. “school

of ministry," "priesthood" vs. "ministry," "laity" vs. "clergy," and "women" vs. "men" were suddenly in the air, and they would not go away.

As one president summarized the issue: "It is a comparatively simple choice. Is the seminary the context for other programs, or were these other programs the context for the seminary?" It appears simple but the question has theological ramifications. It has pastoral ramifications. It has ecclesiastical political ramifications. It has personal ramifications. It has financial ramifications. The seminaries respond in different ways.

Most seminaries have established programs for lay students. But how to structure them would bedevil rectors for years and still troubles some. Some institutions, such as the unions, simply opened registration in all programs to all qualified students. Because admission did not imply residence in a seminary building, this posed no immediate problems. A variety of programs was created at freestanding seminaries for "lay students," non-ordination candidates. Like the unions, some chose an "open registration" policy. Lay students were admitted into existing degree programs, including the M.Div., on a full- or part-time basis and could take any classes they wished. Immaculate Conception Seminary, then in Darlington, New Jersey, opened its doors to lay students in 1972. It continues this policy at its present location on the campus of Seton Hall University. St. Mary's in Cleveland, among others, has a similar policy.

Non-degree evening programs, separate and distinct from their priestly ministry programs, were established by many seminaries. The classes are held apart from the seminarians and the students are not offered the M.Div. degree. The Catechetical Institutes at St. Charles in Philadelphia and St. Joseph's in New York represent this model. St. Mary's in Baltimore opened its Ecumenical Institute evening program in 1968. Similarly, the Center for Development in Ministry on the campus of the University of St. Mary of the Lake in Mundelein, Illinois, offers a variety of continuing education programs. St. Patrick's in Menlo Park, California, has a specialized continuing education program for priests housed in its Vatican II Institute.

Some faculty and more than a few bishops questioned the admission of laity to the seminaries, particularly their participation in parts of the spiritual formation program. A concern was that the particular focus of priestly formation would be diluted. A further concern was that the admission of sisters and laywomen, especially to the M.Div. program, would give the impression that the seminary was preparing them for ordination. On the other hand, it was argued that collaborative ministry with deacons, sisters, and lay ministers was the reality in most parishes. Therefore formation for priesthood should be in a setting where people were

trained together for all of these ministries. Those opposed to the opening to lay students often suggested that the motivating force was not only theological but financial. They charged that dwindling enrollment was being addressed by adding students who were not ordination candidates and whose presence weakened the priestly formation program.

It was possible to admit lay students to provide a critical mass of students and to provide theological education for other ministries. However, as the number of seminarians continued to decline, the question arose whether the specificity of priestly training was being maintained. In 1981, the third edition of the *Program* recognized the development of these programs and included a section entitled "Programs of Formation for Other Ministries and Christian Service in Relation to the Seminary Program." While recognizing the "increasing need for educational and formational programs for persons involved in traditional as well as new and evolving ministries in the Church," the *Program* emphasized that:

The primary purpose of a seminary is the preparation of students for ordination to the priesthood. This purpose should not be weakened by the addition of programs that would jeopardize the centrality of the program of priestly formation, create confusion concerning the specific nature of ministerial priesthood, or obstruct the formation and community life of students preparing for the priesthood.³⁴

The Pastoral Program

Before the Second Vatican Council, Roman Catholic seminaries relied on the classroom for pastoral training. "It was like studying surgery without ever entering the operating room."³⁵ Field education became an integral part of the bishops' program as well as a requirement for accreditation for the M.Div. degree adopted by almost all Roman Catholic institutions. As the program grew in size and complexity it required another new administrator, the director of field education, who, according to the *Program*, should enjoy "full faculty status."³⁶ Initially, most institutions adopted "simultaneous" programs that ran during the academic year. Field education required mobility, further dispersing the seminarians who engaged in pastoral programs during the school year. Many seminaries established "deacon internships" which began after the completion of the theological program and ordination to the diaconate. They normally ran for a year and ended with ordination to the priesthood. Often the diaconate internship was

attached to a program of theological studies that ran for less than the required four years. It became evident very quickly that this program had inherent difficulties. What happens to an ordained deacon who shows no pastoral aptitude at all! He has already been ordained to the order of deacon. Should he be ordained a priest? In recent years, post-seminary deacon internships have all but disappeared. More and more seminaries have introduced the concept of a "pastoral year," an extended time of supervised pastoral training usually between the second and third years of theology.

The "Clinical Pastoral Experience," long used by Protestant seminaries, was adopted in many schools. The 1971 *Program* stated that it "seemed to offer promise of real benefits to the student."³⁷ In the 1976 program, "Some sort of clinical experience . . . is highly recommended."³⁸ In spite of its positive aspects and benefits, problems arose. Most programs were conducted under Protestant auspices. Seminarians reported that Catholic sacramental tradition and practice were not given the respect they deserved within the programs. This led to the withdrawal of many Catholic seminaries from these programs and the establishment of CPE programs under Catholic auspices. The 1993 *Program* requires that "the Catholic, sacramental dimension of pastoral care (must be) integral to all such programs in which seminarians participate."³⁹

The growth of the pastoral program was criticized by the more academically oriented members of the faculty, some of whom wondered whether the tail was wagging the dog. Often they would look down on the program as thin and as interfering with more "serious" academic pursuits. The heavy academic program in Catholic seminaries makes field education appear in many institutions to be simply an "add on" to the program. When the director of field education does not possess academic credentials equal to those of other faculty, the image of field education is diminished. The integration of field education into the seminary program has not been an easy task and is still developing.

Field education went through growth pains at the unions as the experience of CTU shows. Because field education was part of the M.Div. program, it apparently fell under the jurisdiction of the union. However, training for the "apostolate," or mission of the community was the responsibility of the particular orders. The resolution of these "turf" questions involved the patient and skillful negotiating abilities of the president.

CTU had united many traditions, community objectives, and educational viewpoints. But the union was neither absolute nor complete. In the faculty there were differing philosophies of seminary education. While giving token assent to the ideal of

supervised field education, some faculty members preferred seminary education after the graduate academic model. Their ideal, perhaps only subliminally, was the scholar in his study. The pastor of a struggling parish, the missionary in the barrio, the chaplain in the emergency room were of less concern. Because CTU had to honor the wishes of the participating communities, it was difficult to impose one model of preparation for the priesthood Some directors of formation resisted the group process and human development factor of field education as invasive of their jurisdiction. In a number of instances the religious communities themselves arranged for student participation in apostolic work. At times there was supervision, at times not.⁴⁰

Through consultation among the orders and the students, a resolution was reached and a program developed by 1974 that had the support of the union faculty, the orders, and the students. Eventually, the program would be reworked again and be renamed "Guided Ministerial Experience."

New Administrative Style

The implementation of the bishops' *Program* resulted in new styles of administration. The rector's role, or more properly, the rector-president's or president's role, was no longer as broad and comprehensive. The complexity of each area of spiritual, academic, and pastoral formation made it impossible for him to exercise direct control and oversight in each of these areas. A "director of spiritual formation," an "academic dean," and a "director of field education" became the officers in charge of each of these areas of the program. Answerable to the CEO, they are a new internal "public" to whom he is answerable and over whom he exercises authority. However, it also means he is less involved with direct management of the different aspects of the seminary program. He has become the overseer of program directors, the recruiter of faculty, and the evaluator of faculty and other administrators.

These comments reflect the different styles that individual rector-presidents adopt to address their responsibilities.

My conviction is that overall pastoral leadership of a seminary requires both the rector dimension and the president dimension. The circumstances of a given institution and the temperament of rector-president will determine which of these two dimensions receives the greatest emphasis. Both, however, in different ways are genuinely pastoral dimensions.

In relation to the students, the rector-president is “a figure of ecclesiastical authority whose pastoral concern is often mediated through other personalities (faculty) and structures.”

My first responsibility is to pastor the seminary community. That means knowing the community, praying with them, preaching and teaching, holding up the vision of the place. . . . I still believe the fundamental role of a rector is to serve as pastor of the seminary community.

At the unions and similar institutions, the renewal of the academic program, and the pastoral program insofar as it was a part of the M.Div., had the major impact. The other areas of priestly formation were less the concern of the president of these schools. Rather, they were the responsibility of the rectors of the houses of formation.

The new *Program* had directed, and the seminaries had implemented, many internal structural and programmatic changes between 1971 and 1981. All of these had necessarily impacted on the other since no aspect of the program could exist in total isolation from another. The allocation of scarce resources to one area often meant the lessening of support for another. Sometimes this was the actual case; often it was the perception of those who felt their area was neglected. Besides overseeing these issues, rectors, presidents, and rector-presidents also dealt with the accommodation of a variety of developments, some foreseen and others not anticipated by the *Program* in 1971. In the 1980s, the renewal of the 1960s and 1970s would be evaluated and consolidated.

ENDNOTES

1. *Program*, 1971, 5.
2. *Program*, 1976, ix.
3. *Program*, 1981, 9.
4. *Program*, 1971, 6.
5. *Ibid.*, 13.
6. *Ibid.*, 101, 130.
7. James P. Gaffey, *Men of Menlo: Transformation of an American Seminary* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1992), 85.
8. *Ibid.*, 97.
9. *Ibid.*, 98.
10. *Ibid.*, 93.
11. *Program*, 1976, ix.
12. *Program*, 1971, 165.

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13. *Ibid.*, 225.
14. *Ibid.*, 166.
15. *Ibid.*, 237.
16. *Ibid.*, 251.
17. *Ibid.*, 239.
18. *Ibid.*, 241.
19. *Program*, 1981, 20.
20. *Program*, 1993, 323.
21. *Program*, 1981, 77, cf. 22-23, 73-80.
22. *Program*, 1971, 187, cf. 219, 245.
23. Paul Bechtold, *Catholic Theological Union at Chicago: The Founding Years* (Chicago, IL: Catholic Theological Union, 1993), 123-130.
24. *Program*, 1971, 27.
25. *Ibid.*, 28.
26. *Ibid.*, 32.
27. *Ibid.*, 35.
28. *Ibid.*, 75.
29. *Ibid.*, 253-288.
30. *Ibid.*, 72.
31. *Ibid.*, 92.
32. *Ibid.*, 93.
33. William Baumgaertner, commentary on draft of this study.
34. *Program*, 1981, 545.
35. Vincent Cushing, OFM, commentary on this chapter.
36. *Program*, 1971, 105.
37. *Ibid.*, 105.
38. *Ibid.*, 202.
39. *Program*, 1993, 428.
40. Bechtold, 166-168.

Communication, Evaluation, and Recommitment

Communication and Mutual Support

The *Program of Priestly Formation* and other Church directives are implemented through vertical lines of authority. At the same time, the chief executive officers of the seminaries relate to one another horizontally, through service organizations and other gatherings that serve as forums for discussion and dialogue as well as provide mutual support. The chief executive officers use the existing structures for discussion and interchange. They also establish new regional organizations. In addition, they take advantage of the opportunities provided by Lilly Endowment-sponsored assemblies of rectors, presidents, bishops, superiors, and various experts. At these conferences, the horizontal and vertical aspects of seminary organization have an opportunity to intersect in a mutually beneficial manner.

The oldest national seminary organization has been in place for almost a century. One of the founding departments of the Catholic Educational Association (now the National Catholic Educational Association [NCEA]) in 1904, the Seminary Department of NCEA for decades provided various services to the seminaries. The department is governed by an executive committee consisting of administrators chosen by the institutional members of the department. Three administrators, usually rector-presidents and presidents, represent the theological schools. This committee determines policy, recommends projects, and governs the convention program. The annual convention of the department provides an opportunity for CEOs, administrators, and faculty to address matters of mutual concern. This forum is within the annual NCEA convention held each year in the week following Easter. Three days of discussion take place in a variety of settings, formal and informal. A rector-president gives us this reflection on the NCEA convention:

At these gatherings various experts provide not only a great deal of information for someone like me who has little background in seminary work, but they also are very supportive on an affective level. This is more than a matter of misery loves company. All of us realize we have been given significant responsibilities by the Church with insufficient resources, and it is helpful to learn how others face similar situations.

In recent years this convention has addressed such issues as "The Influence of the American Culture on the Future Ministry of Priests," "The African American

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Seminarian," "The Hispanic Seminarian," "Research and Scholarship in a Seminary Environment," "Theology of Priesthood," "Stages of Psycho-Sexual Development in Celibacy," and "Pedagogy in the Theologate." In the opinion of a rector-president:

These topics were enlightening and forward-looking, and the intent of such gatherings was, more often than not, an effort at continuing education and motivation which spurred creativity.

Additional communication among seminaries and CEOs is provided by the NCEA's *Seminary News*, published three times during each academic year. This publication provides news affecting seminaries, publishes the major addresses of the convention, papers prepared for other seminary-related meetings, and articles of interest to seminaries.

In 1967, the rectors of the seminaries in the area covered by the North Central Association formed a division of the NCEA Seminary Department called the Midwest Association of Theological Schools (MATS). Between 1965 and 1970, it drew up a set of standards for theological seminaries to help them qualify for accreditation by North Central. These standards were also helpful in formulating the 1971 edition of the *Program of Priestly Formation*. The original membership was later increased to include schools farther West, among them seminaries in Colorado, California, and Oregon. MATS presidents, rector-presidents, deans, and other faculty meet each October in Chicago. The annual meeting includes presentations on specific themes and provides opportunities for dialogue and informal interaction. The MATS presidents and rector-presidents also meet annually in June at another location to discuss various issues with experts in a particular field.

The East Coast rectors began to meet as a group in the mid 1970s. This group, the East Coast Association of Rectors of Major Seminaries (EARS), represents the theologates on the Eastern seaboard. The meeting takes place in February or March in Florida. The format is similar to the MATS rectors' meeting.

These organizations give their members an opportunity to discuss questions of mutual concern as well as to form a readily identifiable professional group. The stability of these associations, the regularity of the meetings, and the involvement of the presidents and rector-presidents gives the seminaries a variety of established organizations through which they can raise and address specific issues.

The Biennial Meetings of The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS) provides yet another forum for presidents and rector-presidents to convene and to discuss theological education in a wider context.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the presidents and rector-presidents participated in an extensive consultation directed by the Bishop's Committee for Priestly Formation regarding the revision of the *Program*. In 1990 and 1991 a major portion of the annual NCEA convention was devoted to discussion of the revision of the *Program of Priestly Formation*. The convention provided a place for rectors, administrators, and faculty to present their opinions on proposed revisions to members and staff of the Bishops' Committee.

The Vatican Visitation

When, in 1981, the third edition of the *Program of Priestly Formation* was published, a period of rapid and dramatic change had been completed. Since the Second Vatican Council, essentially new institutions had been created in structure and in programs. The 1980s were characterized by stabilized enrollment, internal examination, and external evaluation.

The election of Pope John Paul II in October 1978 signaled the assumption of a more directive role by the Vatican in all areas of Church life. The seminaries quickly came under scrutiny. In the words of a rector-president:

John Paul II ushered in a reappraisal of post-conciliar Catholicism. At the center of the pope's program was a bold reassertion of papal authority, expressed in certain traditional Catholic emphases, particularly the teaching on birth control and the obligatory celibacy of the clergy. Gradually, it became evident that a number of doors, temptingly left ajar during the papacy of Pope Paul VI, were being firmly shut One era was ending, another was settling in.

Early in 1979, the pope appointed Cardinal William Baum, Archbishop of Washington, to head the Congregation for Catholic Education. Soon after assuming his post, Cardinal Baum announced a "Papal Visitation," an ecclesiastical assessment of the seminaries of the United States. Some concern was expressed initially over how this visitation would be conducted. The director of the visitation, Bishop John Marshall of Burlington, Vermont, did much to calm matters. He quickly announced that the visitation would be based upon the recently approved third edition (1981) of the *Program of Priestly Formation* and that the visiting teams would be composed of bishops and seminary personnel. Organizations such as the NCEA, MATS, and EARS provided useful venues in which any concerns that arose were able to be discussed, often with the officials responsible for the visitation.

The announcement of the visitation coincided with and encouraged a pause in change and development. The seminaries now entered upon a time of intensive self study and evaluation, focusing naturally on ecclesiastical issues, although other issues did not disappear. A major period of change was ending. The unions were in place. Most of the diocesan seminaries had survived the decline in vocations. The various programs for the pastoral and theological training of laity were well established. Almost all of the Catholic seminaries were accredited by ATS. Most were also accredited by regional associations. The face of the faculties had changed. Almost one in four faculty were women or lay men.

The visitations were conducted from 1982 to 1986. Each seminary was visited by a team that examined the spiritual, academic, and pastoral programs, and also the administration and structure of the seminary. The evaluation instrument was developed by Bishop John Marshall after consultation with bishops, superiors, and seminary personnel. The format was much like an accreditation visit including self studies and interviews of faculty, students, alumni, and board members, followed by an exit conference and a written report. The written report was sent to the bishop or superior and to Rome's Congregation for Catholic Education which sent its reply to the bishop or superior.

While the visitation was underway, the CEOs met with the ordinaries, the bishops, and superiors who sponsored seminaries, on two occasions. These meetings, the Assembly of Rectors and Ordinaries in 1983 and the Second Assembly of Rectors and Ordinaries in 1986, funded by the Lilly Endowment, gave the presidents and rector-presidents an opportunity to raise and discuss matters of common concern with those who hold canonical responsibility for the seminaries. Not surprisingly, these gatherings addressed many of the questions that were being raised by the visitation and the interpretation of the *Program*, and facilitated communication during this period. The visitation, these gatherings, and a focused consultation would all contribute to the revision of the *Program* completed in 1993.

The 1983 Assembly of Rectors and Ordinaries

This assembly highlighted nine major issues for consideration judged to be significant by the rectors. They indicate the continuing reflection of CEOs on the implications of the renewal and some of the unexpected problems and challenges which resulted from it. The topics highlighted were:

1. Formation Programs for Multicultural Candidates
2. Formation Programs to Prepare Candidates to Serve in Multicultural Ministries
3. Ecclesiology, different understandings of the Church and its mission resulting in tension on rectors
4. Equity in Seminary Funding
5. Relationship of Priest and Lay Formation Programs
6. Planning for Regional/National Formation Programs
7. Screening and Selection of Candidates, Establishment of Regional Screening Centers
8. Better Data on Seminaries and Seminarians
9. Development of an Effective Collaborative Process for Education/Formation after Ordination¹

Most of these matters had been germinating during the previous two decades. In some instances, they would be addressed on a national level, others would be left to the seminaries, and still others would not receive further attention for a variety of reasons. The multicultural issues provoked Lilly Endowment-funded studies by the NCCB and the NCEA.² Screening continued to be addressed by each seminary on its own with assistance from national resources such as the NCEA-NCCB sponsored Conference of Admissions Personnel in 1988, also funded by the Lilly Endowment, and from publications and guidance from national offices. However, a nationally or regionally coordinated screening center, as recommended by the assembly, met the same difficulties as nationally coordinated amalgamation or national equity in funding, the lack of a mechanism to implement it. Post-ordination programs, although conducted by many seminaries, would have to wait for national coordination which, although possible, has not yet been forthcoming. Better data collection and studies would come about, again through the generosity of the Lilly Endowment. Ecclesiology, the definition of the Church and its ministries, was the most sensitive problem. Its interpretation affected the relationship of lay ministry and priestly formation programs, the understanding of all ministerial programs, the role of women in the Church, and academic freedom.

Connected with ecclesiology was the theology of Holy Orders, and the allied question of priestly identity. Discussion surrounding the role of the priest had arisen in the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council. It emerged from conciliar teachings regarding the priesthood of the faithful, the universal call to holiness,

and the mission of the Church to the world. In many quarters there were and continue to be calls for optional celibacy and the ordination of women. Of even greater concern to Church authorities were theological trends which appeared to reduce the necessity of the ordained ministry in the Church.

The 1986 Assembly of Rectors and Ordinaries

In 1986, a second Assembly of Rectors and Ordinaries met at Seton Hall University. This assembly raised four issues for further discussion. They were:

1. Theology of Priesthood
2. Academic Freedom
3. Religious and Diocesan Formation
4. Collaboration

The currents of reform of the Second Vatican Council were being met by certain restrictions and cautions. Each of the issues of the Second Assembly, in its own way, reflected basic questions regarding ecclesiology and priestly identity. Some bishops expressed concern that the teaching of the theology of priesthood was being neglected in the seminaries. This perceived neglect was believed to be rooted in different definitions of the Church itself. Depending on one's understanding of the Church, concepts such as academic freedom, religious and diocesan formation, and collaboration would vary. The four issues of the Second Assembly were elaborated in Lilly-funded, NCEA-sponsored study groups and in the NCEA convention of 1989. In particular, the issue of priesthood was further addressed through a dialogue of scholars with the members of the Bishops Committee for Priestly Formation. This dialogue assisted the bishops in the formulation of a "Doctrinal Understanding of the Ministerial Priesthood" which forms a foundational part of the 1993 *Program*. In 1989, the papers on priesthood resulting from the convention, the study groups, and the dialogue were published in *Priests: Identity and Ministry* and in *Theology of Priesthood and Seminary Formation: Issues of Assembly II*.³

The Vatican Visitation Evaluates the Seminaries

In 1986, Cardinal Baum sent a letter to the United States Bishops reflecting on the visitation of diocesan seminaries. The cardinal's letter was rather complimentary, affirming the freestanding seminaries as "generally satisfactory. Some, in fact, are excellent, a few have one or more serious deficiencies, and the majority are

serving the Church well." Further they are "characterized by good leadership on the part of their rectors."⁴ Cardinal Baum came very quickly to the point of the visitation:

Our most serious recommendations have been about the need to develop a clearer concept of the ordained priesthood, to promote the specialized nature of priestly formation in accordance with Vatican Council II's affirmation of seminaries, to deepen the academic formation so that it becomes more properly and adequately theological . . . and to ensure that the seminarians develop a good grasp of the specific contribution that the priest has to make to each pastoral situation.⁵

The emergence and popularity in recent years of the language of "ministry" has enabled many people to understand their roles in the Church, but it has also led in some instances to the blurring of the concept of priesthood in a generally undifferentiated notion of ministry.⁶

Related to these concerns was the growth of programs other than priestly formation within the seminaries. The lay ministry programs, deacon training programs, and the involvement of faculty in a variety of other endeavors were flagged by the cardinal. He urged that the seminaries be careful lest they overextend their resources, especially their diminishing resources of priest personnel. This apprehension was related to priestly identity, as is clear from the cardinal's comment that "in some seminaries (it) has led to a fragmentation of the enterprise, confusion about the priesthood and a lowering of theological standards. It is unwise and unfair to expect a seminary to serve all a local church's needs of theological learning and formation for ecclesial service."⁷

Continuing the theme of priestly identity, Cardinal Baum criticized the mixing of clerical and lay students, remarking that "in some quarters there is a tendency to think that because future priests must work with other people in their lay ministries, the best solution is to form all ministers together."⁸ In spite of this caution from the cardinal, seminaries, often encouraged by bishops, would continue to offer a variety of such programs. The letter did impel them to more clearly delineate the specific aspects of their programs which involve priestly formation.

In the same vein, Cardinal Baum reaffirmed the necessity of a significant number of priests on the seminary faculty, linking this goal to the very identity of the seminary. He wrote that "identity as a seminary is promoted and reinforced by a confident sense of purpose informed by a sound theology of priesthood, by

a staffing policy which recognizes the importance of recruiting good priests to serve in the seminary....”⁹ As much as rector-presidents and presidents seek to hire priests for their faculty, they continue to find it difficult, almost impossible to recruit a sufficient number of suitable priest professors in some areas.

The cardinal had praise for CEOs and viewed the overextension of their role with alarm.

The Rectors of the freestanding theologates are competent and dedicated priests, loyal and generous in their personal commitment to the work of priestly formation. We think that some are over-stretched because the job descriptions they are given to fulfill are too broad. They are asked to be public relations officers, fund raisers, recruiters, as well as leaders of the internal life of the seminary. We are very much of the opinion that their internal leadership of the seminaries is by far the most important part of their work. Rectors who have proper time to lead their seminaries have successfully knit together their colleagues, have cared for them, have coordinated the various activities of priestly formation, and have set and protected the pace and pattern of life in which priestly formation most effectively and intimately takes place. As Rectors, they have a special importance as decision making Pastors and as exemplary Ministers of Word and Sacrament within their seminaries, which have particular importance when they preside at their seminaries’ liturgies In this respect the Bishops could help by freeing these rectors from extraneous duties and helping them to concentrate on the internal leadership of the seminaries.¹⁰

Presidents and rector-presidents, often frustrated by the multiplicity of duties thrust upon them, welcomed this paragraph more than any other. Yet the burden for achieving all the goals of the seminaries continues to fall on them. Cardinal Baum’s letter emphasizes the importance of the traditional “internal” role of the “rector” and cautions against “external” activities. On the surface, the solution of this dilemma is delegation of some external activities. However, many seminaries do not have the financial resources to hire qualified persons to whom they can delegate many of these tasks. Realistically, some external tasks such as recruitment, public relations, and fundraising continue to claim the personal involvement of the CEO. This necessitates the further delegation of internal activities, which are deemed more important in the cardinal’s letter and in other Church documents. Trying to fulfill all of these responsibilities, the more traditional “internal” tasks, and the growing “external” activities is a dilemma for a rector-president.

In general, the academic excellence of the seminaries was affirmed, while the cardinal expressed concern regarding a:

few instances of dissent from the Magisterium in the teaching of moral theology . . . a more common phenomenon is not dissent from the Magisterium but confusion about it When things go wrong in a seminary, the Rector should take note, nipping the problem in the bud, knowing that he has the support of the Bishops, just as when he sees signs of great promise he should give them his support. This, of course, applies to all aspects of the seminary's life, but it has a particular application at the present time to moral theology in a few seminaries.¹¹

Moral theology has become the "lightening rod" discipline in many seminaries. Recruiting professors, even priest professors, is extremely difficult. One rector-president recalls: "I asked three priests to study moral theology. All turned me down. One said, 'Are you trying to get me into trouble?'"

With regard to pastoral formation, the affirming of priestly identity again surfaced as the major issue. Cardinal Baum asked that "more attention be given to working out a clear understanding of what specific priestly contribution is to be made to the various pastoral situations which the seminarian is experiencing." He expressed further concern that "sometimes the psychological and sociological dimensions of problem solving can obscure the specifically priestly dimension."¹²

The Religious Order Seminaries

The unions would discover that while they thought they were implementing the desires of the Vatican and the Bishops' Conference in addressing questions of stewardship of personnel and financial resources in an innovative manner, their structure would raise questions. Canon law and Church authorities presume that problems should be resolved at specific levels. A superior expects to give a directive to a "subject" and be obeyed. The president of a union, as an individual, is subject to the superior of his religious order; but, as president, he reports to a board. In these schools, there is no individual to whom a directive from Church authorities concerning a particular faculty member or policy might be sent, no one person who is empowered to execute the directive on his own authority. Such issues must be referred to the board. But the board is a corporate body; it is not a single individual. The question of the lines of authority causes the unions to expend much time explaining their operation to bishops and to authorities in Rome at the Congregation for Catholic Education and the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life

and Societies of Apostolic Life, the Vatican office charged with the oversight of the religious orders.

The conclusions of the visitation for the religious order seminaries, including the unions, were announced on January 5, 1990. On that date, a letter jointly issued by Cardinal Baum of the Congregation for Catholic Education and Cardinal Jerome Hamer of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, addressed the results of the visitations of the religious seminaries, the unions and clusters, and independent institutions.¹³ The joint origin of this letter indicates the different lines of authority governing religious seminaries, which are responsible to both the Education Congregation in the academic area and the congregation governing religious orders for matters relating to spiritual and religious formation.

While in general this letter emphasized the same themes as Cardinal Baum's letter regarding the freestanding seminaries, it noted several situations particular to the religious order seminaries. The former arrangement, in which the entire priestly formation program was in one institution, had given way to study centers providing academic training and houses of formation providing spiritual formation. Pastoral formation is a part of each—the field education required by the M.Div. under the aegis of the study center and other additional pastoral endeavors particular to the order within the house of formation. The letter noted that there must be “clear agreement about what is delegated to the Study Center and what is left to the Houses”¹⁴ and that the houses of formation should consult those who teach students for recommendations to orders.¹⁵ Although these comments are addressed to the unions, they apply equally to diocesan university-related seminaries. The unions were specifically urged to:

devise lines of communication in which those who are responsible for the intellectual formation of the students are enabled to express their judgment on the same students' suitability for the priesthood on wider criteria than the academic alone.¹⁶

The president was thereby charged to involve himself and the academic faculty in the evaluation process leading to ordination. The composition of the faculty, which includes religious order priests, diocesan priests, religious women, lay women and men, makes this a rather daunting undertaking.

The relative newness of the unions and the interplay of civil and canonical structures and relationships still require further development. The cardinals noted that:

The canonical form of governance needs to be developed so that superintending authority and ultimate responsibility are vested

in those who hold ecclesiastical jurisdiction; and who hold it preferably for a sufficient length of time to see through at least one generation of students from entry to graduation/ordination The relationship of each center with the Bishop of the diocese in which it is located is very important . . . steps towards canonical structures of episcopal support and supervision are as yet unexplored.¹⁷

These dilemmas remain unresolved and draw the attention of superiors, presidents, and boards. They are further complicated by the continuing discussion of the “Catholic identity” of Catholic colleges and universities, and the relation of the diocesan bishop to these institutions, particularly to the teaching of theologically related disciplines within them. Faculty naturally are interested in these issues as they may imply different definitions of academic freedom. Where there is good communication and mutual respect between the president and the diocesan bishop, many of these questions are muted and do not provoke great concern. When there are different opinions regarding the relationship of the union and the diocese, a great deal of the president’s time and energy necessarily is directed toward their resolution.

The Fourth Edition of The *Program of Priestly Formation*

In 1990, the International Synod of Bishops, an assembly in Rome of representative bishops, considered “The Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of Today.” The preparation of the synod involved consultation with rectors and bishops throughout the world. In 1992, Pope John Paul II issued an apostolic exhortation entitled *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, reflecting on priestly formation. These events, the Vatican Visitation, and specific consultations combined to influence the 1993 edition of the *Program*.

In 1993, after a lengthy period of consultation with bishops, superiors, and rectors, the Bishops Committee for Priestly Formation and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops approved, and the Congregation for Catholic Education ratified, the fourth edition of the *Program*. The norms of the *Program* were essentially unchanged from the third edition, but the document was rearranged and new sections added. The new structure indicated that the bishops accepted the current direction of the seminaries and emphasized the clarification and strengthening of existing programs, rather than the reform of the seminary system.

The major concern of the Vatican Visitation and of many of the rectors, as evidenced from their deliberations at the two assemblies, was the theology and the

identity of the priesthood. This had been echoed by Cardinal Baum. In response, the new edition, in Chapter One, sets forth a doctrinal understanding of the priesthood. It follows this with a statement on the spiritual life of diocesan priests, thereby linking the sacramental identity of the priest to his personal faith. The fourth edition of the *Program* also asks that each seminary include in its mission statement a “brief summary of the Church’s doctrinal understanding of the ministerial priesthood.”¹⁸

The 1993 *Program* recognizes that many of the Vatican Council’s goals for the renewal of seminaries have been accomplished. It integrates throughout the text four topics that, in earlier editions, had been regarded as new emphases and had been considered separately:

1. The Changing Ethnic and Racial Fabric of the Church in the United States
2. Peace, Justice, and Respect for Life
3. Ecumenism and Interfaith Relations
4. Collaboration

The spiritual formation program is placed first, and its strength and necessity underscored. The necessity of professional training for spiritual directors is strongly affirmed, as well as the requirement that all spiritual directors be priests. The traditional concepts of community life, daily Mass, and common prayer are re-emphasized.

The goal of intellectual formation remains “the conversion of mind and heart.”¹⁹ More specifically the *Program* urges that:

A theological education should be comprehensive and extensive, covering the range of Christian doctrine. It should witness to the unity of the faith—according to tradition and the Magisterium—and its authentic diversity of theological expression. Such an education should be pastorally oriented, ecumenically sensitive, and personally appropriated by the individual seminarian.²⁰

Such formation must be intensive, because “the higher level of education on the part of Catholics requires more than ever a thorough theological education on the part of the priest.”²¹ Unlike previous editions, the 1993 *Program* does not include any model curricula, but the section on intellectual formation mentions very specific required areas of study, notably including study of the Theology of the Priesthood. Concerning faculty, it expresses the hope that “priest faculty

members should teach significant portions of the course of studies in the major theological disciplines."²² However, no percentages are specified.

The various approaches to scheduling field education are left to the discretion of the seminary. The priestly aspects of field education are to be emphasized to "introduce (seminarians) to the sacramental and spiritual, the specifically priestly dimension of pastoral work." The program also recognizes that "authentic pastoral formation is ecumenically and multiculturally sensitive, alert to questions of social justice and collaborative in nature."²³

The new *Program* describes the structures of the seminaries in a manner that reflects their current situation:

The **freestanding** structure provides within one institution an entire and integral program of human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation. Distinct houses of formation may relate to freestanding institutions, for example, by sending their seminarians to them for their academic program.

The **university-related** model provides one or more parts of the program from its resources as a seminary or house of formation while other parts, such as the academic, are provided by a college or university. In some situations, each component remains completely distinct. In others a variety of styles of integration or affiliation obtains.

In the **collaborative** model, several specific groups, such as religious institutes, societies, or dioceses, choose to unite their resources. They may join administrative and academic structures with houses of formation clustered around a central study center. In such collaborative models, individual institutions may retain varying degrees of autonomy.²⁴

As in previous editions, the religious orders accepted the *Program*, "preserving the rights and privileges granted religious in Church law, especially regarding the religious and spiritual formation of their own candidates."²⁵ The distinct religious order structures are noted in the *Program*.

Most religious seminaries associate in a federal model of cooperation. Responsibility for the canonical form of governance belongs to those who hold ecclesiastical jurisdiction. . . . The statutes of such institutions must be approved by competent ecclesiastical authority. The approval of the Holy See is necessary for centers formed by members of religious institutes or

societies.²⁶

Echoing the concern of the visitation, the *Program* asks that the programmatic integration among these institutions be carefully examined and assured. The canonical questions brought up in the visitation are not solved but all should be “in accord with canon law and all particular legislation governing seminary training.”²⁷

The section on the office of “Rector/President” speaks of the “rector” but mentions that in “some schools, the chief executive officer is called the president (and) may have different responsibilities.”²⁸ In spite of this, it describes the office as that which primarily exists in freestanding seminaries. The rector or president:

serves as chief administrative officer and principal agent responsible for the implementation of the seminary program. He should also maintain close contact with the bishops and religious ordinaries of the dioceses and religious institutes or societies the seminary serves. In addition, he is often responsible for public relations and development. While these duties may call him away from the seminary, it is important that the rector serve as leader of the internal life of the seminary, as pastor and priestly model. Given the extent and gravity of these responsibilities, the rector should not have additional obligations outside the seminary which detract from his primary duties.²⁹

He is also responsible for the “spiritual and personal welfare of faculty and students.”³⁰

A variety of boards, including multiple boards, are expected to function in the seminaries. They should be composed of clergy, religious, and laity; represent the dioceses or orders served by the seminary; and also “reflect the multicultural composition of the Church in the United States.”³¹

Responding to the need for continuing formation and education, the fourth edition of the *Program* includes a new section on “The Continuing Formation of Priests.” This section emphasizes that growth and development are lifelong processes, and urges the dioceses and orders to establish continuing education programs for their priests. Time will tell if the Bishops’ Conference will go further and establish a mandatory program.

The most significant programmatic change is the addition of a section on “Pre-Theology Programs.” The bishops, recognizing the radical changes in the background of the incoming seminarians, require that seminaries establish two-year programs for those applicants who have no previous college seminary back-

ground.

Changing Students and Pre-Theology Programs

In 1988, when the Bishops' Committee on Priestly Formation undertook the revision of the *Program*, it quickly decided to address the changing character of the seminary students. It was aware that numerous programs were already in place. They were called "propaedeutic," "introductory," "preparatory," "spiritual," and "pre-theology." The committee decided to recognize these programs and to provide guidance for them. It chose to designate all of them as "pre-theology programs."

After a consultation with bishops, seminary administrators, and faculty, the committee drafted a new section on "Pre-Theology" for inclusion in the fourth edition of the *Program*. What began as attempts in individual seminaries to provide remediation to address deficits in entrance transcripts has evolved into a structured and integral program. This section has spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral components. It requires 24 credits in philosophy, up from 18, and 12 in undergraduate theology.³² Each of these requirements is fleshed out by naming areas of study that should be covered in these disciplines. It further encourages intensified periods of spiritual formation. Its goal is the readiness of candidates to begin formation for the priesthood at the level of graduate theological studies. These norms are identical to the admission requirements in the *Program*, as well as the norms for college seminaries. Because fewer applicants attend these preparatory institutions, it has been deemed necessary to provide a structure for their preparation to enter the theologate.

Reflecting on contemporary candidates, a rector-president comments that:

Their general academic and formational background is increasingly far removed from what we considered the traditional background of candidates for the priesthood. Some students now come with no personal experience of Catholic culture or with only very limited education in the Catholic faith.

The gradually changing character of the incoming students had been noted in the first three editions of the *Program*. The 1971 edition urged that "Special programs should be established to enable men coming from culturally disadvantaged social groups in American society to achieve excellence and to enter the priesthood."³³ The 1976 edition went further and added a section on "Seminary

Education in a Multicultural and Multiracial Society” in response to the desires of the “Black, Spanish, and American Indian communities to have more priests from their own cultures.”³⁴ The presence of students from an increasing variety of cultural backgrounds required not only sensitivity to their needs but often remedial English programs and other adjustments to make them feel comfortable in the seminary environment.

The 1981 *Program* also recognized that for “the ever-increasing number of applicants of a higher age who often enough do not have the traditional philosophical and theological background, as well as a strong basis in spiritual formation and the experience of a Catholic culture in their background within family life, education, or Church life itself . . . additional time will be necessary to prepare such students for the priesthood.”³⁵

Thirty years ago the majority of candidates who applied to theologates had attended a college seminary or had participated in a two-year philosophical program attached to a theologate. They had thereby experienced structured spiritual formation together with intellectual formation that emphasized the humanities, especially philosophical studies. Over the years, this changed.

In the 1970s and 1980s, many institutions that had combined two-year philosophy programs with the four-year theologate dropped their philosophy section. At the same time, decreasing enrollment forced many college seminaries to close. As more and more candidates applying to theologates lacked the traditional intellectual, spiritual, and pastoral background, seminaries gradually introduced programs to ensure that the candidates fulfilled the academic entrance requirements of the *Program* and were ready to begin theological studies. Through the 1980s these programs expanded, became more formalized, and added spiritual and pastoral formation.

Initially this was not a very complicated or difficult challenge. The entrance requirements appeared simple: 18 credits in philosophy, 12 in religious studies. The growing number of applicants who lacked required courses in philosophy were provided with whatever academic course work was needed. Often this could be done over the summer months before entry. As the years passed, more and more candidates applied without *any* background in philosophy, and programs were expanded. In some cases this was done in cooperation with neighboring colleges and universities. Simultaneously, a thorough examination of transcripts revealed that courses presented did not always fulfill the spirit of the requirements. In fact, many courses designated as “philosophy” by a particular college could not be considered as “philosophy” in a classical sense. While fulfilling the letter of the law, it was possible to admit students whose background was not really strong

enough to begin graduate theological studies.

Very quickly, year-long preparatory programs evolved. As they developed, administrators and professors began to discuss the role of philosophy in the program. The question was complicated by changes in the American educational system which moved further away from classical educational models. The popular understanding and appreciation of the study of the humanities had all but disintegrated. The teaching of theology did not draw as intensely on or relate as clearly to classical languages, to philosophy, or the humanities. These shifts made it more difficult for the student to deal with the abstract nature of philosophical studies themselves and, in the opinion of many, had undermined the understanding of the relationship between philosophy and Catholic theology.³⁶ To address this and to assure a proper philosophical foundation for the study of theology, the 1993 *Program* raised the entrance requirements from 18 to 24 credits in philosophy and specified the areas to be covered.

The seminaries also began to notice that many of the applicants presented courses under the rubric of “religious studies” which clearly did not indicate a breadth or depth of knowledge of the Christian tradition. The entrance requirement for religious studies seemed clear enough, 12 credits. When the first *Program* was written in 1971 it could safely be presumed that the candidate had a firm grasp of Catholic traditions through a strong home life and many years of Catholic education.

College-level studies of other faiths and religions were a very valuable addition to this knowledge of the Catholic faith. However, one president-rector was heard to lament that an applicant listed six credits in “Vedantic Studies 1 and 2” as fulfillment of the required studies in Catholic traditions. The fragility of religious education in the 1970s and 1980s, combined with a rather generalist and professedly neutral approach in many university departments of religious studies, resulted in applicants whose knowledge of Catholic traditions was much weaker than that of their predecessors. To provide adequate basic knowledge of Catholic faith and traditions, the 1993 *Program* replaced the requirement of 12 credits in “religious studies” with 12 credits in specified areas of “undergraduate theology.”

Programs which began as “remedial” to fill gaps in academic areas began to address human development and spiritual formation needs. The following comments of rector-presidents illustrate the situation:

Generally, students who sought admission to the seminary were well known in their parishes and had an active faith life, usually nurtured by supportive family structures. Most students would

have had a solid Catholic education background and would be familiar with Catholic practice and protocol. No small number would have been fortified with strong ethnic traditions which valued religious faith as part and parcel of their heritage.

Students are more mature in the sense that they have far more experience with the mores of the world. This is a mixed blessing. There exists a great sense of forbearance in many areas where tolerance should not prevail.

The personal backgrounds of students appear to be more complex than in the past . . . a number come with significant personal issues ranging from chemical dependency to sexual abuse as children.

The dominant secular culture of the United States affected all seminarians no matter what their ethnic or racial background. While the seminary must be aware of and sensitive to the culture of each seminarian, it would miss the mark entirely if it placed each racial or ethnic group in a box, as it were, and neglected the rapid “Americanization,” for better or for worse, taking place among all. In an April 30, 1993 op-ed piece in *The New York Times*, Vincent Lam, whose family left Vietnam in 1975, wrote:

Assimilation, education, the English language, the American “I”—these have carried me and many others further from that beloved tropical country than the C-130 ever could When did this happen? Who knows? One night, America quietly seeps in and takes hold of one’s mind, body, and the Vietnamese soul of sorrows slowly fades away. In the morning, the Vietnamese American speaks a new language of materialism: his vocabulary includes terms like career choices, down payment, escrow, overtime.

The power of American culture increasingly overshadowed every aspect of the formation of future priests. Several seminaries saw the need to create special programs to address the disparate and often weak spiritual background of their students. The need for a different approach to spiritual formation due to the changing circumstances is summarized in this comment of a rector-president:

The formation program was based upon an assumption—that each student came to the seminary with a spiritual foundation of some sort. Formation personnel built on that foundation. Spiritual directors guided the student to a more intense faith relationship. Academics informed early knowledge. Faculty integrators

helped the student blend the different facets of the seminary program into one operative whole. Attention to the spiritual life was highlighted by rector's conferences, retreats, student prayer groups, days of recollection, etc. In general, formation was seen as a continuation of what had already begun and not as an initiation of what ought to be.

Both the Second Vatican Council³⁷ and the *Program*³⁸ mention intensive spiritual programs but do not elaborate extensively on them or mandate them. The most ambitious program in place today is at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Philadelphia. St. Charles has developed a "spiritual year" during which the seminarians, before beginning the first year of theological studies, spend nine months off campus at the former Mary Immaculate Seminary in Northampton, Pennsylvania. There they follow a strict daily schedule of prayer and reflection. The schedule is very much like that observed in most seminaries before the Second Vatican Council. The seminarians have the opportunity to deepen their spiritual lives without external distraction. Lectures and workshops focus on areas related to spiritual development. They include: Ascetical and Mystical Theology, the History of Christian Spirituality, Theological Principles of the Spiritual Life, The Life of Prayer, the Theology and Spirituality of Priestly Ministry, Liturgy, Conversion and Penance, and Psychosexual Development. St. John's Seminary in Camarillo, California, adopted a similar program, but much shorter, extending over a two month period.³⁹ Both programs and all CEOs agree on the need to seriously face the diffuse and often fragile backgrounds of contemporary candidates.

The theological unions, consortia, and houses of study that serve religious orders are in a quite different situation. For many, the concept of pre-theology is something that their programs of study and novitiates have filled for many years, in some cases, for many centuries. Not surprisingly, Jesuit and Dominican institutions require up to 45 credits in philosophy and 24 in undergraduate theology. The idea of an "intensive" period of spiritual formation has long been part of religious formation in a variety of forms: novitiate, postulancy, scholasticate. The various study centers rely on the communities they serve to provide the required spiritual and intellectual preparation before admission and to nurture it during the course of theological studies.

Through the consultation process the presidents and rector-presidents were aware that the then forthcoming fourth edition of the *Program* would include a section on pre-theology. In January 1993, they gathered for a five-day NCEA-

sponsored meeting funded by the Lilly Endowment to consider all the issues that had influenced the adoption of this new addition to seminary training and the ramifications for the seminaries and their own responsibilities.

It was immediately clear that the structure of the seminary had been radically altered, not simply by the promulgation of a new edition of the *Program*, but by the changes of the past three decades. The four-year program of priestly formation is now, for most seminarians, a six-year program: two years of pre-theological studies and four years of theological studies. For some, it could be a seven-year program if they, as many do, take a year of pastoral activity away from the seminary between the second and third years of theological training. In a way, the Catholic seminaries have returned to the six-year program of philosophical and theological studies of 1965. However, there are major differences. The philosophical studies do not neatly mesh with the third and fourth years of college studies. The spiritual formation does not neatly build upon a deep background in Catholic life and culture.

In the coming years, a major challenge for presidents and rector-presidents will be to create an introductory spiritual formation program adapted to the needs of the seminarians and the capabilities of their institution, while developing undergraduate theology courses that are foundational to the graduate program but do not replicate it. On a very practical level, they will have to address the entire question of a lengthened program in which seminarians will attend the same institution for as many as six years, in fact over a seven-year period, for those who take a pastoral year.

Other issues that surround pre-theology are familiar: the maintenance of quality in an expanded program in a time of limited resources, financial and personnel; the number of students; availability of qualified faculty; adequate finances; proper environment and the integration of philosophy and theology.⁴⁰

ENDNOTES

1. *July 1983 Assembly of Rectors and Ordinaries Steering Committee Final Report* (Washington, DC: NCCB, CMSM, NCEA, 1983).

2. Among these studies, the majority of which were funded by the Lilly Endowment, are:

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3. Robert Wister, ed., *Priests: Identity and Ministry* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1989) and *Theology of Priesthood and Seminary Formation: Issues of Assembly II* (Washington, DC: NCEA, 1989).

4. "Letter of Cardinal Baum to American Bishops on Visitation of Theologates," September 14, 1986, in *Origins*, 16.18 (October 16, 1986): 315.

5. *Ibid.*, 315.

6. *Ibid.*, 316.

7. *Ibid.*, 315.

8. *Ibid.*, 315.

9. *Ibid.*, 315.

10. *Ibid.*, 317.

11. *Ibid.*, 322.

12. *Ibid.*, 323.

13. "Letter of Cardinals Baum and Hamer to United States Bishops and Religious Superiors of Men," in *Origins*, 19.45: 750-754.

14. *Ibid.*, 3.ii.

15. *Ibid.*, 14.

16. *Ibid.*, 25.

17. *Ibid.*, 20, 21.

18. *Program*, 1993, 250.

19. *Ibid.*, 333.

20. *Ibid.*, 339.

Communication, Evaluation, and Recommitment

21. *Ibid.*, 338.
 22. *Ibid.*, 487.
 23. *Ibid.*, 398.
 24. *Ibid.*, 257-259.
 25. Statement of Conference of Major Superiors of Men, in *Program*, 1993, ii.
 26. *Program*, 1993, 451.
 27. *Ibid.*, 261.
 28. *Ibid.*, 460.
 29. *Ibid.*, 462.
 30. *Ibid.*, 462.
 31. *Ibid.*, 453.
 32. *Program*, 1993, 234, 235, 239
234. Central to the academic formation of all pre-theology programs is the study of philosophy. A philosophy program should be balanced, comprehensive, integrated, and coherent. It should include studies in metaphysics, anthropology, natural theology, epistemology, ethics, and logic. It should also include studies in the history of philosophy treating ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary philosophy. Some treatment of American Philosophy or social thought is also helpful for seminarians in understanding the underlying dynamics of contemporary society in the United States.
235. The study of undergraduate theology is essential for those who lack adequate catechesis in the faith and whose understanding of Catholic doctrine, customs, and culture is not as comprehensive as it ought to be. The courses offered in the basic teachings of the Church should ensure a knowledge of biblical revelation; the history and the doctrine of the Church; spirituality; Christian ethics; Catholic social teaching; liturgy; and the literature, art, and music of Catholic piety and culture. Candidates should also study the Church's teaching on ecumenism and interfaith relations. Undergraduate theology courses are intended as a preparation for studies in the theologate, not as a replacement for them.
239. Sound philosophical formation requires 24 semester credit hours. A minimum of 12 semester credit hours is required in appropriate courses of undergraduate theology.
33. *Program*, 1971, 18.
 34. *Program*, 1976, Preface.
 35. *Program*, 1981, 24.
 36. Cf. David Denz, "Philosophy and Teaching Methodologies," in *Seminary News* (Special Edition: Report on Pre-Theology), 31.4 (May 1993): 21-26.
 37. *Optatum totius*, 12.
 38. *Program*, 1971, 167-170.
 39. Joseph Reilly, "The Spiritual Year in Formation," in *NCEA Pre-Theology Conference Data Book* (Washington, DC: NCEA, 1992). This article contains the programs of St. Charles Seminary and St. John's Seminary.
 40. Katarina Schuth, "Response," in *Seminary News* (Special Edition: Report on Pre-Theology), 31.4 (May 1993): 40. (1) Enroll a critical mass of students who have similar needs for remediation; the concern is to attract an adequate number of students whose needs can reasonably be met; (2) Have in place a suitable faculty for all aspects of

formation, including personal, spiritual, academic, and pastoral; the concern is finding qualified faculty, especially in light of the pressure on dioceses with fewer priests available to serve in this specialized ministry; (3) Have adequate support to finance programs that are often expensive because of the need to individualize instruction; the concern is that multiple small programs are unnecessarily costly in human and financial resources; (4) Be flexible enough to meet the varying needs of a changing student population that includes age, educational, and ethnic diversity; the concern is to maintain personnel who are able to understand students with varied backgrounds and provide suitable programs for them; (5) Provide an environment that deepens students' acquaintance with Catholic culture and provides the spiritual nourishment that will help them discern their vocation; the concern is to locate programs in strategic places where they can be in touch with their own diocese and at the same time enroll an adequate number of students to justify the personnel; (6) Successfully integrate philosophical studies with theological studies; the concern is to establish relationships with theologates so that common understandings are developed about what is taught at each level and how these courses complement each other.

A Study of the Presidents, Rectors, and Rector-Presidents

The Survey

The chief executive officers of the 46 Catholic seminaries in the United States were surveyed concerning various aspects of their job. Forty-one of these officers responded, representing the entire spectrum of seminary structures. The responses were placed into three categories that reflect the different arrangements described in the *Program*. Within each category there are many similarities among the schools but there is also considerable diversity. Further subdivision to reflect all of the characteristics of each school would result in a unique category for each institution.

The largest group, the “freestanding” seminaries, includes responses from 22 schools. They are:

Christ the King Seminary, Buffalo, NY
Kenrick-Glennon Seminary, St. Louis, MO
Mount Angel Seminary, St. Benedict, OR
Mount St. Mary’s of the West, Cincinnati, OH
Notre Dame Seminary, New Orleans, LA
Pontifical College Josephinum, Columbus, OH
Pope John XXIII Seminary, Weston, MA
Sacred Heart School of Theology, Hales Corners, WI
Sacred Heart Major Seminary, Detroit, MI
St. Charles Borromeo Seminary, Philadelphia, PA
SS. Cyril and Methodius, Orchard Lake, MI
St. Francis Seminary, Milwaukee, WI
St. John’s Seminary, Camarillo, CA
St. Mary’s Seminary, Cleveland, OH
St. Mary’s Seminary and University School of Theology, Baltimore, MD
St. Meinrad Seminary, St. Meinrad, IN
St. Patrick’s Seminary, Menlo Park, CA
St. Thomas Theological Seminary, Denver, CO
St. Vincent DePaul Regional Seminary, Boynton Beach, FL
St. Vincent Seminary, Latrobe, PA
Seminary of the Immaculate Conception, Huntington, NY
University of St. Mary of the Lake, Mundelein, IL

In size, these institutions range from the University of St. Mary of the Lake with 172 diocesan seminarians and six full-time lay students to St. Francis Seminary with 13 diocesan seminarians and 46 full-time lay students.¹ They include Pope

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John XXIII and Sacred Heart (Hales Corners), whose programs are tailored for older students. Although all are primarily for diocesan seminarians, more than one-third are sponsored by or conducted by religious orders. The CEOs of these institutions are “rector-presidents” or “president-rectors.”²

The second largest group, the collaborative institutions, are more commonly referred to as unions and clusters. All of these schools are conducted by religious orders for religious order seminarians and lay students. Although some relate with one another, they are essentially independent institutions. Their CEOs are “presidents.” The four largest of these—Catholic Theological Union, Washington Theological Union, Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley, and Weston Jesuit School of Theology—enroll almost half (361 of 754) of the religious order seminarians in the United States. They also enroll almost half (417 of 879) of the full-time non-priesthood students.³ Ten of these institutions responded to the survey; they are:

Aquinas Institute of Theology, St. Louis, MO
Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, IL
DeSales School of Theology, Washington, DC
Dominican House of Studies, Washington, DC
Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology, Berkeley, CA
Franciscan School of Theology, Berkeley, CA
Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley, Berkeley, CA
Oblate School of Theology, San Antonio, TX
Washington Theological Union, Silver Spring, MD
Weston Jesuit School of Theology, Chestnut Hill, MA

The university-related schools are very diverse. The Saint Paul Seminary and Immaculate Conception Seminary are affiliated with the University of St. Thomas and Seton Hall University respectively, and their rectors are academic officers of the universities. Although university-related, they have many of the characteristics of freestanding institutions. Theological College is affiliated with the Catholic University of America, but its rector is not an academic officer of the university. The European seminaries in Rome and Louvain are essentially houses of formation. Mt. St. Mary Seminary (Emmitsburg, Maryland) is located on the campus of Mt. St. Mary’s College but maintains a clearly distinct identity and program. While the priestly formation programs of these seminaries are open only to ordination candidates, the universities with which they are affiliated admit lay students to their academic programs in theology. The nine such schools included in the study are:

American College, University of Louvain/Leuven, Leuven, Belgium
Assumption Seminary, Oblate School of Theology, San Antonio, TX
Immaculate Conception Seminary, Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ
Moreau Seminary, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN
Mt. St. Mary's Seminary, Mt. St. Mary's College, Emmitsburg, MD
North American College, Roman Universities, Rome, Italy
Saint Paul Seminary, University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, MN
St. John's Seminary, St. John's University, Collegeville, MN
Theological College, Catholic University, Washington, DC

The CEOs were asked to apportion the time they spent in various activities and to evaluate the relative importance of these tasks. They also provided evaluations of the support they perceive from various groups: faculty, boards, bishops, superiors, and vocation directors. The increasing complexity of their role is highlighted by the number of new offices that have been created in their institutions since 1965. Their background and preparation for their position is further analyzed, as well as the length of their tenure and the manner of their appointment.

These officers also furnish insights into the sources of satisfaction and the challenges of their positions, and they offer suggestions for the seminaries of the future. Finally they reflect on the description of their office as provided in the 1993 *Program of Priestly Formation*. Their responses and insights give us a picture of their day to day activities.

The Responses

It is not surprising to find that the major differences among the CEOs in the apportionment of time are determined by the structure and organization of their particular school or seminary. The different types of schools also reveal many similarities and some differences in the way their CEOs view the rewards of their service and the challenges they foresee for seminaries.

The title of the CEO of a university-related seminary is usually "rector." In those institutions where they are also part of the university structure, they add "dean" or "vice president" to this designation. When discussing CEOs of university-related seminaries in this study, they are referred to, for simplicity, as "rectors." In freestanding seminaries, the CEO's title is "president-rector" or "rector-president." Again for simplicity, this study designates these officers as "rector-presidents." The unions, clusters, and independent religious order schools of theology normally designate their CEOs as "presidents," as does this report.

The Academic and Spiritual Formation Programs

The proportion of time spent in academic and formation administration clearly reflects the structure of the seminary. The rector-presidents (freestanding) spend more time in the administration of the formation program than in academic administration. Half report that they spend 25 percent or more of their time in formation administration. Because their responsibilities include the evaluation of priesthood candidates, this involvement is required. Almost two out of three spend 10 percent or less of their time in academic administration, clearly indicating the growth of the office of academic dean in these institutions. Some of this apportionment of time may be due to their own personalities and interests, as well as the level of responsibility of the dean. It also may indicate that a particular area in their seminary needs more attention than another.

The rectors (university-related) spend more time in administration of and participation in spiritual formation than in academic administration. In most of these institutions academic administration is taken care of by the university, but in those where the rector has responsibility for the academic program, a considerable amount of his time is devoted to this area.

In the unions and clusters the division of academic and spiritual formation programs is much more straightforward. The presidents have no direct formation responsibilities and engage in academic administration which varies according to how much is delegated to the dean. In all instances, the amount of time spent in any activity parallels the level of importance attached to it by the respondent.

Some rectors (university-related) and rector-presidents (freestanding) would prefer to have more time available for evaluation of seminarians but most are content with the time allocated. For presidents of unions and clusters, this is not an issue.

Finances

Financial administration and planning, when combined with fundraising, consumes a great deal of time of all CEOs. This is a major change from the pre-Vatican II period when these tasks rarely intruded on their time. In particular, the presidents (unions and clusters) devote much of their energy to finances. Two of three presidents give a quarter or more of their time to fundraising and half give an equal amount of time to financial administration. The independent character of these institutions makes this imperative. Two of these presidents devote 40 percent, and one 60 percent, of their time to fundraising.

On the other hand, only a very few rector-presidents (freestanding) or rectors (university-related) spend this much time in dealing with fundraising and finances. In some of the university-related schools, fiscal affairs and development are handled by the university. For a number of the freestanding seminaries, the sponsoring diocese or religious order assumes a great portion of the institution's financial responsibilities. However, given their responsibilities in formation, which the union presidents do not have, these officers devote significant time to financial affairs. Almost all spend 10 percent or more of their time on finances and more than half give 10 percent or more of their efforts to fundraising.

College Seminaries

College seminaries have declined in numbers and enrollment, but where they are connected with theologates, they impose significant responsibilities on the CEO. Six of the 22 rector-presidents (freestanding) report significant time spent in the administration of college seminaries. Two devote 20 percent or more of their time to the college seminary. In some instances they serve as CEO of both the college seminary and the theological school, delegating responsibility for the college to a vice rector, a provost, or a dean. With rare exception this is not an issue for the university-related institutions or the clusters.

Teaching

The great majority of CEOs also serve as professors. Of course, they give less time to teaching than before they assumed office. The amount of time spent in the classroom varies greatly from place to place and probably reflects personal choice to a certain extent. The majority is generally content with the time they can spend in the classroom, although many would prefer to be more involved in teaching.

Public Relations

Public relations activities are very significant for some officers, most dedicating 10 to 15 percent of their time to these activities. Public relations includes community relations and also recruitment of students. Because maintaining enrollment of priesthood candidates depends the good will of bishops, religious superiors, and vocation directors, most CEOs visit them regularly, and entertain them when they visit the seminary. The unions are an exception to this in that they are not involved directly with vocation directors.

Related Institutions

Interaction with related institutions is not a major factor in the time allocation of most officers. Rector-presidents (freestanding) are usually not involved with other schools on a formal basis. Rectors (university-related) are involved with the universities and other institutions with which they are affiliated; the degree of involvement dependent on the particular circumstances. Similarly, the presidents of schools which are part of clusters interact with their peers.

Decision Making

Administrative styles differ among the seminaries. In most freestanding, and all but one of the university-related institutions, the rector or rector-president has the final decision in most matters. This reflects the canon law structure which has the most impact on these institutions. However, it does not preclude collegial discussion of issues. It indicates that the *final* decision in the majority of cases is his. In most of the unions and religious order schools, the president operates in a more collegial manner and does not have as much direct authority. This is more like the contemporary university system and also reflects the heritage of religious orders in which decision making is often shared.

Faculty Relations

It is rather significant and encouraging that rectors, rector-presidents, and presidents were unanimous in evaluating their faculty as supportive (28) or very supportive (13). Not one CEO considered the faculty as unsupportive.

Governance

Boards are very diverse in areas of competence and effectiveness. Their responsibilities follow the normal pattern and include general policy making, program approval, involvement in the appointment of the CEO, and institutional planning and development. The overwhelming majority have been established comparatively recently. In some cases, the officers responding did not know when their boards were established. For the Catholic seminaries, boards other than the traditional clerical board are a comparatively recent development. Of 44 boards mentioned, seven were established before 1960, 20 between 1960 and 1980, and 17 since 1980. A number of these boards were restructured in recent years.

The presidents (unions and clusters), with a few exceptions, devote 10 percent or more of their time to work with boards. The majority of the rector-presidents (freestanding) and almost all of the rectors (university-related) give half as much

time to these activities. The higher level of board development and reliance upon boards in the unions and clusters is indicated by the greater allocation of time to them by the presidents.

All but one of the presidents (unions and clusters) describe their board support as good or excellent. More than likely this relates directly to the significant amount of time they devote to their boards. The majority of rector-presidents (freestanding) and rectors (university-related) have similar positive experiences but about one out of four of these officers tell us that their board support is only adequate or is even poor.

The presidents (unions and clusters) are more positive than other CEOs in their evaluation of support from religious superiors and those who send them students. The rector-presidents (freestanding) unanimously regard as good or excellent the support from the diocesan bishop. They are almost as positive in evaluating the support from sending bishops. Rectors (university-related) find less support from their local bishop and from bishops outside their area. Most CEOs rate the support of vocation directors as positive, although there are exceptions.

Structure

The current freestanding seminaries have retained the same basic structure since 1965, although a number have dropped their philosophy programs. The unions and university-related institutions are essentially new schools, reflecting the organizational changes that have occurred since the Second Vatican Council.

Institutional reorganization since 1965 has occasioned the creation of 170 new full- or part-time administrative positions in the 41 schools responding to this survey. These positions include those related to internal programs, such as directors of field education and formation, and those directed at external publics, for example, directors of development, public relations, and recruitment. Some of these part-time positions are filled by existing staff, but all represent offices that either directly or indirectly report to the CEO.

Tenure in Office

Three out of four CEOs have specific terms. Almost all of these initial terms are for five years or less. In most instances, they can be renewed more than once, usually for shorter periods.

Almost two-thirds of current CEOs have held office for five years or less; almost one-quarter are in their first year of service. Half either do not know how long they will continue to serve, or anticipate that they will leave office within two years.

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Some of these are interim rectors and others anticipate the end of a term which might, however, be renewed.

There does not seem to be a clear relationship between the length of the term of office and the actual tenure in office. The terms of most CEOs can be renewed more than once. Eight of the nine rectors (university-related) have been in office for five years or less (four are in their first year), only one for more than 10 years. Half of the 10 presidents (unions and clusters) have held their office for more than five years, one for 23 and another for 18 years. Of the rector-presidents (freestanding), half have been in office more than five years, one for 16 years.

Preparation

Reflecting on preparation which was helpful to them, the overwhelming majority of CEOs stated that administrative experience was very or most important. This is the only area of preparation in which there is unanimity among all three groups. The majority of rectors (university-related) and rector-presidents (freestanding) viewed pastoral experience and previous seminary experience in the same light, as most or very important. These institutions serve diocesan seminarians and have a formational component, so this is not surprising. Presidents (unions and clusters), whose focus is more academic and less formational, view pastoral experience as less helpful. Previous experience in spiritual direction was seen as important by only nine respondents. All but one of the presidents (unions and clusters) viewed advanced studies as very or most important. About half of the rector-presidents (freestanding) also agreed. Surprisingly only one of three rectors of university-related institutions held the same opinion.

Most CEOs have had experience in seminaries. Presidents (unions and clusters) are usually drawn from the sponsoring orders and have worked either in seminaries or in the educational institutions of their religious community. Diocesan seminaries (freestanding and university-related) normally draw their CEO from the seminary system. However, this is not always the case. Recently appointed CEOs in diocesan schools have come from parish ministry, the diplomatic and curial offices of the Holy See, diocesan offices, and from among vocation directors.

Satisfaction

The CEOs were asked, "What do you see as the chief rewards of your service as rector?" Again, the responses reflected the particular structure of their seminary.

Rectors (university-related), *some* of whose institutions are essentially houses of formation, regard their involvement in formational activities leading to the education of good priests as their principal reward. One writes:

It is rewarding to nurture the spiritual lives of young men eager to serve the Lord and his people. It is rewarding to play such a significant role in shaping the leadership of the Church. It is rewarding to work with and build up a formation team of highly dedicated men and women who love the Church.

In the words of one president (unions and clusters), “all the rewards are in heaven. None seem to exist on earth. Perhaps one: being my own boss, more or less.” More particularly, presidents find their rewards in the development of excellence in theological education and advancing the mission of their schools. They gain further satisfaction in developing new models of ministry and assisting in the advance of collaborative ministry.

The president-rectors (freestanding) find satisfaction in many and varied activities. Most significant for many of them is providing service to the Church in developing high quality leaders. They consider it an honor to work with “such qualified and generous people” as their faculty. They judge their students very positively and draw satisfaction from their work with them. As one rector-president describes his experience:

I am profoundly humbled and inspired to have the privilege to be assisting our seminarians as they move toward the service of the Church and priesthood and have been increasingly impressed by their quality, their dedication, and their prayerfulness.

Challenges

When asked, “What do you see as the major challenges you face as rector?” commonalities and differences emerged.

All CEOs face the common challenges of finances, faculty recruitment, and enrollment. However, the CEOs also confront specific challenges determined by the organization of their institution. The rectors (university-affiliated) highlight the ongoing evolution of their relations with the universities with which they are affiliated. The presidents (unions and clusters) emphasize the need to continually improve board and governance structures. The all-inclusive nature of the office of rector-president (freestanding) is evident in the challenges they see: balancing multiple responsibilities, time management, diocesan relations and politics, as well as creating community and modeling collegiality.

The Future

When asked, "What suggestions would you offer to make the office of rector more effective for today's seminaries?" the rectors (university-related) ask for more clarity about expectations. These officers relate both to the Church and the university, two institutions that often have conflicting demands and expectations. Where they are also officers of a university, these additional responsibilities add to the complexity of their work.

The rector-presidents (freestanding) find the tension of being president and rector wearing, and, like the rectors (university-related), seek more clarity in the expectations of their office. However, most of them focus on the need to clarify and, in many instances, to enhance their role as "pastor" within the seminary. To achieve this, several urge restructuring their office, some suggesting that the roles of rector and president be divided.

The presidents (unions and clusters) suggest better preparation, particularly in the area of administration. Again not a surprise as they are chiefly academic administrators.

Job Description

The reflections on the description of the office of rector in the 1993 edition of *The Program of Priestly Formation* were, like everything else drawn out in the survey, determined by the variety of institutional organization and the expectations placed on these officers.

459. The rector sets the direction and tone of the seminary program. By creating a climate of mutual confidence and trust, he elicits the full cooperation and involvement of faculty and students. The rector serves as the pastor of the seminary community. In some schools the chief executive officer is called the president. He may have different responsibilities according to the ecclesiastical law governing these schools. His job description should be carefully drawn to ensure that he has the authority properly to discharge the responsibilities of his office.

The rector-presidents (freestanding) judge this statement to be adequate and excellent, but also a bit idealistic. The *Program* and the Vatican documents focus on this arrangement more precisely than on the others. The comments of these officers show the strain they feel to be an effective pastor of the seminary community, and the inhibitions that the office places on this desire. A number of them liken their role to that of a bishop. The comments of two rector-presidents are illustrative of the majority view:

The faculty really sets the direction and the tone. Rectors are often more pragmatic and ecclesiastically minded (i.e., think like the bishop) than the faculty (who think like academics). The rector is “pastor” in a way not unlike a bishop who really projects more CEO type qualities than most want to admit. Unlike bishops and pastors, a rector’s responsibilities go far beyond his authority.

The rector’s office requires a person who is capable of actively listening to faculty, students, administrators, the board and all constituencies. He draws insights from all concerned and together with them articulates a vision which serves as a source of direction for all involved in the enterprise.

One rector-president, however, remarks that the *Program* “attributes more power to the rector than he can or should have. I doubt that any one person ‘sets the tone and direction’ or ‘creates a climate.’ The analogy of rector and pastor is good, but just as a pastor needs many others to be effective, so does a rector.”

The presidents (unions and clusters) do not see themselves in the role of pastor. They see this paragraph as “adequate for a rector, but not for the president of a union.” Like other aspects of the *Program*, they regard this section as written for the freestanding seminaries and not easily applicable to their positions.

Rectors (university-related) who hold university office see the “pastor role as the least practical in daily functions” and note that “sometimes just showing up is a major achievement.” Those whose institutions are essentially houses of formation are more comfortable with the pastoral responsibility, one remarking that “no other responsibilities should render him unable to be present to the seminary community the substantial portion of the academic year.”

460. The rector is appointed by appropriate ecclesiastical authority, who according to local statutes, seeks the recommendation of the seminary board and other interested parties, especially the faculty. The rector is responsible to the bishop or religious ordinary and should consult with him in matters of major concern. As a rule, the rector also is responsible to a seminary board, if a legal corporation exists. If the board is advisory, he should give thoughtful consideration to its counsel and take advantage of its expertise in administering the seminary.

The rector-presidents (freestanding) call this a “good description.” However, they mention that lines of accountability to bishop and board are often not clear

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and can often become sources of tension. Some urge that boards assume greater responsibility for the seminary.

The rectors (university-related) agree with the paragraph but note that it fails to recognize the variety of relationships that they have with universities, and the added responsibilities these entail.

Some of the presidents (unions and clusters) consider this description as accurate regarding appointment, but others state that it does not reflect their situations. In the unions, the president is appointed by the board, not by a specific ecclesiastical authority.

461. The rector serves as chief administrative officer and principal agent responsible for the implementation of the seminary program. He should also maintain close contact with the bishops and religious ordinaries of the dioceses and religious institutes or societies the seminary serves. In addition, he is often responsible for public relations and development. While these duties may call him away from the seminary, it is important that the rector serve as leader of the internal life of the seminary, as pastor and priestly model. Given the extent and gravity of these responsibilities, the rector should not have additional obligations outside the seminary which detract from his primary duties.

While the rector-presidents (freestanding) recognize the importance of the internal responsibilities mentioned here, they express frustration that the external responsibilities often consume a great deal of their time. Several of them clearly stated their concern:

In my experience this is unreal. I spend much more time on external affairs and delegate much of the internal work to competent and collaborative administrators. It is too much to ask.

Nice to say, but, today the need for more students and diocesan support makes the rector into a travelling salesperson for his program.

It is difficult to be . . . involved in the internal life of the seminary as much as one should. However, I do agree with the statement.

The presidents (unions and clusters) view this paragraph as presuming the freestanding model and generally inapplicable to the union model. In their words:

The president is called to a major *external* role. That is the nature of the job. This diocesan model, as so often in seminary legislation, does not serve the religious orders well.

A good portion of my time, as I understand it, is development. This does take one away from the school for a good amount of time.

It is a nice thought. Given the lack of gifted people in religious life today, every gifted person I know has one full-time job *and at least* one half-time job. And hopefully, a good internist for the job-related illnesses.

The rectors (university-related) agree with the spirit of this section. However, their major concern is the integration of the spiritual formation and academic components of the *Program*. When these components are under different jurisdictions, as in their situations, this is not easy.

462. The spiritual and personal welfare of faculty and students is a central responsibility of the rector. On regular and frequent occasions, the rector should give conferences to the seminary community. He should preside regularly at prayer and at Eucharist.

The rector-presidents (freestanding) generally agree, often "completely." Rectors' conferences and pastoral concern are seen as intrinsic to their role. They do point out that in many cases the spiritual director is the key person in this area, and that the pulls and tensions of their job make concern for the spiritual and personal welfare of all at the seminary a difficult goal. One summarizes the opinions of the majority:

This statement reflects the rector's role as pastor to the seminary community. His conferences offer an opportunity for sharing the vision of the seminary and challenging the community to ongoing spiritual growth and development. The rector's presence at Eucharist is vital for witnessing his own faith to others in the community.

Another, however, remarks that "this is unreal."

The presidents (unions and clusters) agree but only to a limited degree. They note that they are "presidents, not traditional rectors," and that "the academic dean attends to much of the faculty's needs. The director of student services handles many lay students' concerns." To presidents, this description "sounds like a freestanding diocesan seminary."

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The rectors (university-related) agree with this statement as it applies to students but question “responsibility toward the faculty when some of them are lay people and not part of the regular spiritual life of the school as seminarians and priest faculty are.”

463. Like other members of the faculty, the rector “should receive a careful preparation in sound doctrine, suitable pastoral experience and special training in spirituality and teaching methods.” (Decree on Priestly Formation, n.5) The rector should be an exemplary model of priestly virtue, able to live in himself the qualities he encourages in students. A man of sound and prudent judgment, the rector should evidence a love and dedication to the Church’s service.

The rectors (university-related) and the rector-presidents (freestanding) affirm this paragraph of the *Program*. However, they disagree on the emphases. Some judge that training in spirituality and in teaching methodology is not as important as training in administration, commenting that “the rector is not primarily a spiritual director.” On the other hand, a number believe that teaching is necessary for the rector-president to be seen as a peer of the faculty, one remarking that “it is most important that the rector not be seen only as an administrator. He should regularly study and teach. He must be seen by the faculty as intellectually their peer.” One rector-president writes that “Charity tempered by prudence is probably the most essential characteristic of a rector. He must know when to affirm and when to challenge others.” And another adds that rector-presidents “should eventually be canonized.”

The presidents (unions and clusters) believe that these qualities are desirable in the president of a theology school. However, they think that the language is “pious,” “lofty,” and even “vapid.”

464. Depending on the size and structure of the institution, the rector may also assume some of the responsibilities of other administrators mentioned in this chapter with the exception of the spiritual direction of seminarians.

The rectors (university-related) generally accept this statement. Rector-presidents (freestanding) are emphatic that it is unrealistic to expect a rector to handle any additional responsibilities. One warns: “Don’t try to kill the man to save money.” For the presidents (unions and clusters), this section is regarded as inapplicable to their office. In fact, they see it as “fudging” the need for quality in administration.

Reflections

A president writes:

I suspect my role is much more similar to that of a president of a small college or professional school—involving close work with a board of trustees (not an advisory board), development and PR work, strategic planning and oversight of financial and plant management. I do have to work closely with ecclesiastical constituencies—e.g., the provincials, the local archbishop, etc.—but even here I suspect the relationship is quite different from that of a diocesan seminary rector.

Character issues and a capacity for pastoral leadership remain crucial for the person in this role but the president does not deal directly with the students in any formational role. I am convinced the role model of “pastor” is not the correct or effective one for the position of president. I realize that the role in a union type school may be atypical. Perhaps if we move to amalgamate more diocesan seminaries the rector may become more of an educational administrator and less of a pastor than is the case now.

Rector-presidents comment:

The rector has a modeling function that is distinct from and complementary to that of the faculty. He models church authority, pastoral leadership, and administrative leadership.

As a rector, I identify more with busy pastors, bishops, and lay persons than I did as a theology professor. My life is more complex, diverse, stressful, and yet fulfilled. The challenges are energizing.

I am very curious to see how many rectors have seen the “CEO-President” model become more their style of operation. I am only beginning to learn how to juggle these various *ad intra* and *ad extra* responsibilities.

What is described in the PPF is the *ideal* rector. While it is very hard to disagree with any of the expectations, I am sorry that it is not somewhat recognized as an ideal. The effect, as it now reads, is to establish the ideal as the norm. This is not only unrealistic, but can be quite discouraging to anyone in the position of rector. I strongly suspect that anyone who takes the “job description” literally would have to feel that he is continually failing to do a good job, since I don’t believe it is possible for anyone to do everything mentioned.

A Study of the Presidents, Rectors, and Rector-Presidents

There is a need to focus on how to prepare future leadership for seminaries. Most of us learned "on the job." A more professional approach would be helpful for new men beginning.

The survey illustrates the great diversity of institutions preparing men for the priesthood in the Catholic Church. It further shows that the gradual changes of the past three decades have made the position of seminary CEO difficult to describe in general terms. Moreover, the reorganization of these institutions has produced at least three clearly distinct offices: rector-president, president, and rector (sometimes hyphenated). The *Program of Priestly Formation* has contributed to providing a common vision and common goals. The achievement of this vision and these goals, however, is necessarily worked out in a wide variety of ways. The religious and diocesan institutions maintain their distinctive characteristics and the individual seminaries their traditions. These factors make each a unique institution, whose CEO will have a singular job description.

ENDNOTES

1. *CARA Seminary Directory 1994*, viii-ix, xxii-xxiii.
2. Sacred Heart Seminary (Hales Corners, WI) has a rector and a president. The University of St. Mary of the Lake (Mundelein, IL) has a vice chancellor for university administration.
3. *CARA Seminary Directory 1994*, x-xi, xxii-xxiii.

Robert J. Wister is Assistant Professor of Historical Studies at Immaculate Conception Seminary of Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey, and former Director of the National Catholic Educational Association in Washington, DC.