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THE PRINCIPLES OF FORMATION OF CANDIDATES FOR THE CATHOLIC PRIESTHOOD IN OPTATAM TOTIUS, PASTORES DABO VOBIS AND RATIO FUNDAMENTALIS INSTITUTIONIS SACERDOTALIS AS PARADIGMATIC OF HUMAN FORMATION

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Abstract

The Catholic Church has always considered the formation of candidates for the priesthood and the ongoing formation of her clergy among its greatest priorities and concerns, knowing that her overall good and the success of her mission are contingent on a well-formed clergy. Consequently, the Church has invested time and efforts to fashion out time tested principles that guide the formation of her candidates. The position of this paper is that these principles, stated in conciliar and post-conciliar documents, because of the breadth and reach of their formulations, are paradigmatic of and applicable to the formation of the Christian person. These principles, summarized as human, intellectual, spiritual and pastoral, when faithfully domesticated and applied, could also be validly utilized for the formation of any Christian person for the mission of the Church and the good of the society.

Keywords: Church, Human Formation, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, *Ratio Fundamentalis*

Introduction

The crisis in the Christian life and in the society today is occasioned by the crisis in the formation of the human person for the important roles that are to be assumed in life. In terms of the priesthood, such crisis can

be traced to the absence of sound formation or the presence of a faulty formation. The priest is fundamentally a man of sacrifice; a man for sacrifice; a man by sacrifice. The sacrifice motif is fundamental to his essence and nature. Priesthood is therefore without soul if sacrifice is removed from it. Sacrifice is the heart of worship and cult. It is the heart of liturgy. If sacrifice is the heart of the priesthood because to talk of the priesthood without it is to completely misunderstand the fundamental essence of what the priesthood is all about, then it stands to reason that the fundament of all formation to the priesthood is to form the human person to become a man of cult or worship. Formation of a Catholic priest is therefore formation for sacrifice. Sacrifice here intended is the sacrifice that found its fullest accomplishment by Christ Jesus in his Paschal Mystery – that is, the Passion, death, resurrection and ascension into glory of Jesus Christ.

The crisis of the priesthood is therefore the crisis of authentic human formation for the roles that are meant to be assumed as priests. The most effective counter measure to this crisis therefore lies in quality of formation of the candidates for the priesthood. The structure of such formation, with some contextualizations and adaptations, are also valid propositions for the authentic formation of the human person in every age, time, season, generation, language, culture. This is because fundamentally, the priest is first of all called to be fully human before he can be fully priestly. The human substratum of his personhood is therefore of fundamental significance, import and relevance to the entire edifice of his formation. If this human edifice is faulty, corrupt, vitiated, corrupted at its fundament, the construction of any formative structure upon this sub-structure cannot therefore but be faulty.

The insights and content of formation of candidates for the priesthood can also be seen to be paradigmatic¹ of human formation because the Church has experience in the formation of the human person. The Church can lay claim to the experience of two millenia in which she has consistently and courageously been in the forefront of the formation and promotion of the good of the human person. On the basis of this experience, the Church can rightly arrogate to herself the competence of not just formulating the fundamental principles of human formation, that is, the basis on which the formation of the human person should rest, but even more importantly, on the strength of her collective experience, the Church is in a position to propose veritable enduring principles that can constitute into the kernel of a program of action for the wholistic formation of the human person in every age, generation, culture, time.

The formation must be human, that is, it must proceed from the fundamentals of what constitutes into our humanity, be based on our

being as persons created in the image and likeness of God, with all our compositions and essence and what makes us who we are as persons. Formation must also have a Christian character, that is, be based on Christian principles and values, ethos, norms. Formation must have didactic or instructional character. The didactic aspect of human formation does not and is not circumscribed to the formal classroom environment or situation. It is the experience that a greater and more efficient aspect of the instructional character of human formation takes place in the non-formal sector, especially in the home. Within the context of formation for the priesthood, a large aspect of the human formation of the candidates for the priesthood takes place in the substratum: that is, in the non-formal sector, among the candidates themselves. This is especially the locus for auto or self-formation, which is fundamental and indispensable to the overall realization of authentic priestly formation. The didactic nature of human formation makes especial use of the experience of the Church in this regard. That experience is founded on the catechetical principles that are foundational to instruction in the faith.

What is Human Formation?

Formation is from the latin word, *formo-formare*, which means “form, shape, fashion, model”² formation, from the Latin noun *formatio*, mean “something possessing structure or form”; “the act of assembling a group or structure.”³ “an act of giving form or shape to something or of taking form: development.”⁴ In a general sense, human formation refers to the beginnings of man as homo sapiens, that is, when man came to be made or fashioned or evolve. Formation is the entire process in which the human person is moulded, shaped, configured. Human formation has to do with all the entire process, procedures, motivations, that are put to bear in the grooming of a human person. It is concerned with a part of human development that takes the entire human person, body, soul, affective self as the point of departure and point of arrival, with a view to promoting the emergence of right character, vision, attitudes, view on life.

Human formation has to do with the configuration of the human person to a way of life, an ideal, a standard, and well tested patterns; a growth that is gradual, consistent, insistent, practical, effective, based on nature and founded on grace. Human formation is therefore a consistent development and cultivation of authentic human values.

Christian human formation assumes the basics of human formation. Taking these basics as its point of departure, Christian human formation is the configuration of the human person to the Person and life of Christ. Christian human formation therefore has Christ as the

fundamental referent, and therefore does not proceed ab nihilo, that is, from nothing. Human formation makes use of objective referents that, over time, and with constant and consistent positive usage, have attained universal significance and import and have crystallized into objective norms, ethos and practices. Christian human formation is therefore the conformation of the life of each individual Christian to that of Christ.

The Importance of Formation of Priests

The priesthood, in the words of *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 8, [henceforth PDV]⁵ is best viewed as a “special witness to the primacy of “being” over “having,” and as a recognition that the significance of life consists in a free and responsible giving of oneself to others, a willingness to place oneself entirely at the Service of the Gospel and the kingdom of God....”⁶ Furthermore, “the priestly ministry in the life of the Church and in the world knows no substitute.”⁷ The importance and necessity of priests are also stressed, since “Without priests the Church would not be able to live that fundamental obedience which is at the very heart of her existence and her mission in history, an obedience in response to the command of Christ: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations” (*Mt.* 28:19) and “Do this in remembrance of me” (*Lk.* 22:19; cf. *1 Cor.* 11.24), i.e.; an obedience to the command to announce the Gospel and to renew daily the sacrifice of the giving of his body and the shedding of his blood for the life of the world.”⁸ PDV emphasized that “The priest is a living and transparent image of Christ the priest. The priesthood of Christ, the expression of his absolute “newness” in salvation history, constitutes the one source and essential model of the priesthood shared by all Christians and the priest in particular. Reference to Christ is thus the absolutely necessary key for understanding the reality of priesthood.”⁹

The documents we shall examine individuate four areas that are fundamental to formation of the candidates for the priesthood. These four areas are: Human, Intellectual, Spiritual and Pastoral. When any of these is lacking in the formation of any human person, that person becomes defective in his formative character.

The Content of Formation in *Pastores Dabo Vobis*

The overall aim of *Pastores Dabo Vobis* is pastoral: the commitment to the realization of the promise of Christ not to leave His Church without shepherds. It is dedicated to the formulation of principles that would guide the formation of pastoral persons for the mission of Christ and His Church in the world. Formation in the Church and Christian formation is imitation of Christ: Christ formed those He called and gathered around Himself. Christian Formation is therefore nothing but a

continuation of the work of Christ and in imitation of Christ who gathered disciples around Himself, taught them and sent them out to preach and cast out demons (Mk3,13-15)¹⁰

The context, environment and basis of every human formation is the human society. This is because every person who is called to formation comes from the womb of a human society or community and from particular contexts and circumstances.¹¹ Formation must have the capacity to confront and provide solutions to the problems, contradictions and potentialities of the society. The situation and condition of man in the world, especially with regards to rationalism, individualism, materialism, secularism, human sexuality and the family, inhuman capitalism, subjectivism, multi-racialism and multi-culturalism, demand that there be a robust and well-articulated formation of the priest for today's world. Formation must lead to the confrontation of values that are detrimental to the gospel and to Christian life. For instance, it should confront modern problems identified as wrong interpretation of human existence; consumerism; subjectivism of the faith; a rejection of sacrifice and religious and spiritual values; a distorted sense of freedom that leads to a rejection of God and religious indifference; a debased and degraded interpretation of sexuality, in which sexuality becomes a turning inward to oneself of this precious gift, which results in exploitation and the reduction of this gift to "a consumer good" and is a caricature of a balanced view of sexuality that should lead to affective maturity and "growth in personality".¹²

Every form of formation of the human Christian person must have the ideals of the Christian life as its goal and aspiration. These ideals are enumerated as true and genuine freedom; the value of the human person; love for authenticity and sincerity; a new understanding of the reciprocal rapport between men and women; a move towards a just and sympathetic world; openness and dialogue; commitment to peace; the resurgence of ideals voluntary service can help youth and young men to follow the path of complete consecration to God as a priest.¹³

The Fundamental Characters and Foundation of Formation of the Christian Person

The formation of the human person, for it to be Christian, must have three indispensable and fundamental characters and foundations: Christocentric and Christological, Trinitarian and Ecclesiological. In terms of its Christocentric and Christological foundation, it must be based on the contemplation of Christ, the high priest, in whose priesthood the ministerial priesthood is a participation. The entire ministerial priesthood is a participation in the life of Christ Himself.¹⁴

Christian formation of the human person must have a Trinitarian foundation, origin and source. This is more so for the life of the priest: “the priest, by virtue of the consecration which he receives in the sacrament of orders, is sent forth by the Father through the mediatorship of Jesus Christ, to whom he is configured in a special way as head and shepherd of his people, in order to live and work by the power of the Holy Spirit in service of the Church and for the salvation of the world.”¹⁵ The missionary and relational dimensions of priestly formation¹⁶, ministry and life are brought out through and in this Trinitarian foundation

Lastly, the Christian formation of the human person must have an Ecclesiological foundation. The church is mystery, communion and mission.¹⁷ The human person is a mystery based on the connection with God who is mystery in Himself. The human person is called to relational communion relationship with others, that is, the communion and sharing of life. The human persons who discover themselves in mystery and communion are the same persons called to express these dimensions in mission, that is, taking the good news out and witnessing to the world.

Human Formation

In its discussion of human formation, the *Ratio Fundamentalis* (henceforth RF) concentrates on four principal and indispensable dimensions: psychological formation which “focuses on the constitution of a stable personality, characterized by emotional balance, self control and a well integrated sexuality”;¹⁸ moral formation which entails the formation of a good conscience, that is, the formation of “responsible persons able to make the right decisions, gifted with right judgement and able to have an objective perception of person and events”¹⁹; aesthetic formation which indicates capacity to relate with the environment and appreciation of beauty and goodness; historical formation which involves the personal history of the persons for formation, their socializations prior to entrance into formation and how this has affected the growth of their personality. Formation is to help them to guard against attachment or preferences of certain persons over and above others; to be inclusive rather than exclusive in their social and relational preferences and choices. Human formation also exposes them to the dynamics of self-formation, that is, a formation of the self that is guided and accompanied by trained formators and experts. In this regard, there must be openness to the formative contributions of women “who, by their witness of their lives, give an example of prayer and pastoral service, a spirit of sacrifice and self-denial, of care and tender closeness to their neighbours”²⁰

Human formation is fundamental to and is the first of the dimensions of formation. Everything a human person wants to be is built

upon the human *substratum* or the humanity of that person. Holiness perfects humanity, and does not replace or diminish it. “The whole work of priestly formation would be deprived of its necessary foundation if it lacked a suitable human formation”²¹. The foundation of all human Christian formation is configuration to Christ. Human formation determines Christian and priestly identity. The qualities acquired in human formation are important for candidates to the priesthood if they are to be balanced, strong, free, with the capacity to bear the weight pastoral responsibilities.²²

Human formation is therefore to be understood as ontological configuration to Christ. The priest is called by God. He is chosen by God for a special mission. His human formation therefore has to be Christic and Christo-centric. His vocation is a gift, and not merited. He therefore has to cooperate with the Giver of the gift for the gift to blossom and arrive at its fullest maturity and realization. As a person called to serve the people, the priest needs to “sharpen his human sensitivity so as to understand more clearly their needs, respond to their demands, perceive their unvoiced questions and share the hopes and expectations, the joys and burdens which are part of life: thus he will be able to meet and enter into dialogue with all people.”²³

The human aspect of formation has to do with the ability of the person in formation to be at home with his humanity, personal history and limitations and rise above all of these limiting and militating situations. The person to be formed has a fundamental role to play in his formation. Consequently, “each seminarian is the protagonist of his own formation ... and is called to a journey of ongoing growth in the human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral areas, taking into count his own personal and family background. Seminarians are likewise responsible for establishing and maintaining a climate of formation that is consistent with the values of the Gospel”²⁴.

Formation helps candidates preparing for the priesthood to be “balanced people, strong and free, capable of bearing the weight of pastoral responsibilities, to be educated to love truth, to be loyal, to respect every person, to have a sense of justice, to be true to their word, to have genuine compassion, to be men of integrity and especially to be balanced in judgement and behavior.”²⁵ Human formation is formation in essential good attributes: courage, magnanimity, humility, common sense, discretion, transparency, right judgement, honesty, love of truth²⁶ Both PDV and RF are agreed that the foundation of formation would be faulty if the human dimension of it is not properly taken care of.²⁷ Human formation is formation of the humanity of the person, the radical transformation of the core of a human person.

The person to be formed is taken from a human community, has a human personality. In terms of the formation of a priest, the humanity of the priest should be a bridge and not an obstacle.²⁸

Consequently, human formation should lead to personal maturity, in their spiritual, emotional, physical, sexual, intellectual, psychological and social dimensions. Human formation must lead to the perfection of the image of Christ in the person being formed and reflect the perfection found in the humanity of Christ, the perfect man. A solid human formation makes the relational, relatedness and interactive dimensions of the human person possible. It leads to the development of solid human qualities.

Human formation should lead to affective maturity, the ability to love and to receive love. This love takes the whole person as its point of departure and forms the candidates in responsible love and the authentic meaning of sexuality, which will also include education to true meaning of friendship and “fraternal affection”. Human formation, that leads to human maturity, must also concentrate its creative energy and attention on formation to the responsible use of freedom. This responsible freedom will help the candidates to overcome the problematics of selfishness and individualism and advance the education of the moral conscience.²⁹

Human formation should lead to commitment to the truth, respect for others, justice, truth telling, compassion, integrity, balance in judgement, self-control, strength of character, development of a high sense of responsibility.³⁰ It should also focus on self-determination and responsibility for one’s actions, which translates into a balance in relationships. Consequently, the entire life history, the ability of the person to be reconciled to and integrate that personal history, family influences, awareness of personal weakness, are very important for human formation. Human formation of the candidates for the priesthood should also take into cognizance the importance of interpersonal relationship and relationship with the environment³¹; relationship with women; the ability to take responsibility; self-determination; awareness of personal weakness; the care for physical well-being; cultivation of good habits; emotional stability; development of leadership skills; cultivation of interactive skills; capacity for dialogue; openness; respect; affective maturity; understanding of self and others and sympathy; compassion; patience; tolerance; love of the truth; honesty; moral excellence; transparency.

Spiritual Formation

The second important dimension of formation which human formation leads to and in which it finds its completion is spiritual formation. There

is in every human person the religious “character” or dimension: the openness to transcendence and the absolute.³² Spiritual formation has to do with communion with God, with Christ, submission of life to the Spirit, “in a filial attitude toward the Father and a trustful attachment to the Church. Spiritual formation has its roots in the experience of the cross, which in deep communion leads to the totality of the paschal mystery.”³³ Spiritual formation is the core “which gives life” to the being of the priest and to his activities in the world. It should lead to union with the Trinity, drawing close to and living in intimate union and communion with Christ, living out the paschal mystery, seeking Christ through meditation on God’s word, participating in the divine mysteries of worship, in filial obedience to the Bishop and in veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary.³⁴

Spiritual formation opens candidates to the mystery that the Christian religion is: “the gift, of a personal covenant of love and life between God and human beings.”³⁵ It is communion with Christ, that is expressed in the deepest act of love and friendship with Him. It is search for Jesus which if assiduously carried out, will lead to finding Him, following Him and being in communion with Him.³⁶ This seeking or search for Jesus would be achieved if three important steps or paths are covered: “a faithful meditation on the word of God, active participation in the Church’s holy mysteries and the service of charity to the “little ones.”³⁷ The fundamental and primal way of responding to the word of God is prayer,³⁸ which is nothing but that deep intimacy with God, which expresses itself in a total gift of self “to Christ and through Christ to the Father.”³⁹ Formation for prayer will include formation for the appreciation of silence. Formation for Christian commitment to prayer finds its highest expression in the Eucharist, the “‘summit and source’ of the sacraments and the Liturgy of the Hours.”⁴⁰ Spiritual formation will also include formation for the liturgy of the Church, the expression and continuation of the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ. It will include formation and appreciation for the other sacraments, especially penance, the cultivation of the practices of asceticism and self-sacrifice; the understanding of the meaning and centrality of the cross, the heart of the paschal mystery, in the life of every believer and identification with Christ crucified.⁴¹ Spiritual formation will also teach the candidate to seek Christ in people, to offer himself as a gift to others, to be a man of charity and to teach others what the commandment of love truly entails,⁴² and to understand the core spiritual values inherent in the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience as the free expression of the total gift of self in imitation of the charity of Christ.⁴³

Intellectual Formation

This aspect of formation of the human person has to do with the formation of the mind, and the scientific acquisition of knowledge, which is not intended to be a mere acquisition of knowledge but a knowledge that is directed towards knowing and adhering to God. Intellectual formation is important because of the nature of the ministry to which the candidates will be called to share in, the need for evangelization and the necessity to defend the faith.⁴⁴ Being called to collaborate with Christ in the salvation of their brothers and sisters, they have the responsibility “to seek an ever deeper knowledge of the divine mysteries.” Owing to the challenges of modernity and post modernity, the formation of candidates must equip them intellectually to have the capacity to proclaim “the changeless Gospel of Christ.”⁴⁵ This formation needs a stable institution and a formal atmosphere for it to take place. In the formal environment in which the formation of candidates to the priesthood takes place, there is need for a corp of persons who by virtue of their preparation and training, are equipped to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the intellectual formation of the candidates for the priesthood. Intellectual formation must take place in a suitable environment.

Formation candidates must demonstrate commitment to intellectual formation,⁴⁶ which must have focus and content. This intellectual formation is carried out through the study of Philosophy and Theology, two disciplines that must be coordinated effectively “so that they supplement one another in revealing to the minds of students with ever increasing clarity the Mystery of Christ, which affects the whole course of human history.”⁴⁷ This dimension formation must not be simple expression of rarified truths but equally pastoral application of same and concern for the challenges and preoccupations of the times. With a firm intellectual formation, formation candidates are equipped to thoroughly assess the negative teachings and philosophies that are bandied about in the modern world and proffer solution to counteract them, based on the truths of the gospel. Intellectual formation must also focus on the “unity of the educational process in its diverse aspects.”⁴⁸ Consequently, the “commitment to study, which takes up no small part of the time of those preparing for the priesthood, is not in fact an external and secondary dimension of their human, Christian, spiritual and vocational growth. In reality, through study, especially the study of theology, the future priest assents to the word of God, grows in his spiritual life and prepares himself to fulfill his pastoral ministry.”⁴⁹ What this implies is that intellectual formation must not be carried out as if it is an end in itself, as pure abstract knowledge that has no bearing with real life, but must be “integrated with a spirituality marked by a personal

experience of God. In this way a purely abstract approach to knowledge is overcome in favor of that intelligence of heart which knows how 'to look beyond,' and then is in a position to communicate the mystery of God to the people."⁵⁰

The study of Philosophy will lead to a "deeper understanding and interpretation of the person, and of the person's freedom and relationship with the world and with God."⁵¹ It will also lead "the students gradually to a solid and consistent knowledge of man, the world and God."⁵² It is also vital because of the links that exist between the great themes studied in Philosophy that find expression in theology. Philosophical studies will also help to dethrone "subjectivism as a criterion and measure of truth..."⁵³ and lead candidates to appreciate the truth that can never be given by man but is a gift from God Himself. The second part of intellectual formation of the candidates is theology, the discourse on God. Theological studies must have the true faith as its point of departure and point of arrival.⁵⁴ This faith is one about which questions are asked and answers are given, on the basis of divine revelation, tradition and the living magisterium of the Church, in order to arrive at its deeper understanding. This faith is faith in Jesus Christ, which is expressed and exercised in the Church. Thus, the faith has Christological, Ecclesiological and Ecclesial foundation, implication and dimension. These dimensions should help the candidate to develop a deep love for Christ and His Body, the Church. Intellectual formation must be integrated with spiritual formation and the prayer life, otherwise it regresses into pure abstraction and theological gymnastics and sophistry. The aim of theological formation should be the arrival at "a complete and unified vision of the truths which God has revealed in Jesus Christ and of the Church's experience of faith."⁵⁵ It should integrate the scientific study of theology with its pastoral aim and seek the inculturation of revealed truths within the cultural expressions that the Church is called upon to preach the message of salvation.⁵⁶

Pastoral Formation

The last aspect of formation of the human person for the priesthood is Pastoral Formation. Pastoral formation has to do with the configuration of the candidate to become shepherds after the image of Christ, the Good Shepherd. This is stated so well in *Optatum Totius* that recommends that candidates should be trained for the ministry of the word, of worship and sanctification, of the shepherd. The other three dimensions of formation: human, spiritual, intellectual should be directed to "a specific pastoral end."⁵⁷ Pastoral formation should consist of "mature reflection and practical application"⁵⁸ and taking cue from Pastoral Theology, must not be seen just as an art, but as "a scientific

reflection on the Church as she is built up daily, by the power of the Spirit, in history; on the Church as the “universal sacrament of salvation, as a living sign and instrument of the salvation wrought by Christ through the word, the sacraments and the service of charity.”⁵⁹ It must concern itself with the practical application of the principles encountered and acquired during the scientific intellectual formation that the candidate has to undergo. These principles are to be put into practice in the various pastoral trainings, experiences and services that are to be carried out during the formative years. Pastoral formation should lead the candidates to “deeper communion with the pastoral charity of Jesus Christ”⁶⁰

Pastoral formation is therefore “a type of formation meant not only to ensure scientific, pastoral competence and practical skill, but also and especially a way of being in communion with the very sentiments and behavior of Christ the good shepherd: “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5).”⁶¹ Pastoral formation, which is not mere apprenticeship, should “seek really and truly to initiate the candidate into the sensitivity of being a shepherd, in the conscious and mature assumption of his responsibilities, in the interior habit of evaluating problems and establishing priorities and looking for solutions on the basis of honest motivations of faith and according to the theological demands inherent in pastoral work.”⁶² It should expose the candidates to living out the charity of Christ in terms of the care for the less fortunate, the poor, the sick, the marginalized, the normads, and to various forms of social works, all with the intention of expressing the closeness and the love of Christ to those who are most in need of it. It should teach the candidate to defend the rights and dignity of man, created in the image and likeness of God, wherever such appear to be jeopardized, and inculcate in the candidate the capacity to live out his mission as a service in the community.⁶³ It should help the candidate to understand and see the Church as mystery (work and presence of the Trinity), communion (community, collaboration, cooperation) and mission (the missionary dimension of the life of the Church).⁶⁴

The Formation for the Priesthood as Paradigmatic of Formation of the Human Person

The four principal areas that are foundational and fundamental to the formation of candidates for the priesthood could also be validly contextualized and utilized as paradigms and directional principles for the formation of any human person in order to arrive at fullest Christian maturity and attain the deployment of their latent potentials and the realization of their possibilities.

Human Formation

The insights gained in the documents studied can be validly proposed for the formation of any human person, and especially of a Christian, in any circumstance. The documents proposed that human formation is the bedrock of all formation. The formation of any person is fundamentally based on human formation. Human formation is the formation of the humanity of the person, the radical transformation of who a person is. This human formation has the ontological configuration to Christ as its principal point of departure and arrival. It involves sensitivity to the needs of others, ability to be at home with one's humanity and rise above personal history and limitations. Human formation has to do with formation to be balanced persons, to love truth, justice, be loyal, respectful, compassionate, to be persons of integrity and be balanced in judgment and behaviour. Human formation will therefore include formation in affective maturity, self-responsibility, self-determination, development of leadership skills, cultivation of interactive skills, moral excellence and transparency. These are foundational principles that should form the bedrock of the formation of human persons for the good of society and humanity in general. Consequently, the insights of the documents are very valid in this regard for the authentic formation of persons.

Spiritual Formation in the Formation of the Human Person

The important insights and guiding principles used in the spiritual formation of candidates for the priesthood are equally of valid importance in the formation of the human person. The documents describe spiritual formation as predisposition to transcendence and the absolute, communion with God and with Jesus Christ, the good shepherd and submission of life to the Holy Spirit,⁶⁵ and that it is central to the life of the faithful and "unifies their being and living as Christians, that is, as new creatures in Christ who walk in the Spirit..."⁶⁶ It consists in living the life of Christ, living in union and communion with Christ, communion with Christ, search for Jesus, meditation on God's word, participation in the mysteries of worship, and dedication to the service of charity. These ideals of the spiritual formation of candidates for the priesthood are also important in the overall formation of the human person in terms of cultivation of the ideals of self-sacrificial love, love of the cross, dedication and commitment to the paschal mystery, participation in the liturgy of the Church, living out ascetical practices that help in the promotion of the life of man in the world. The insights in these documents clarify the fact that man's push towards transcendence can be validly assisted through authentic formation in spiritual values that are cognate to his nature.

Intellectual formation

The documents studied emphasized the formation of the mind and the indispensability of the scientific acquisition of knowledge, which should, however, not be for the sake of mere acquisition but a knowledge that is God-centred and directed towards knowledge of God and the good of others. The formation of the mind is important in today's world. This need is especially seen in the propagation of the culture of death, moral relativism, flight from commitments; consumerism; hedonism and pleasure seeking. Intellectual formation will equip the human person to make differential judgment and determine in a personal, informed way, the course of action to take. We are aware and are living witnesses today to the power and influence of the modern means of communication in the shaping of behaviour and conduct. A well-integrated, well informed, balanced and systematic presentation of truths within the programme of intellectual formation, will help every human person to make the right decisions about the course of actions to pursue.

Pastoral Formation

Every human person, to arrive at full maturity, needs the important insights on the formation of the pastoral person as enunciated in the documents and teachings of the Church. The person and character of the Church through history, the lessons the Church has learnt, will be of invaluable aid in the pursuit of such a pastoral endeavour. Pastoral formation principles could be used in the development of certain values in the human person: the charity of Christ in the care for others; commitment to social work; work for the promotion of human dignity with Christian principles; living out one's Christian mission as a form of service that benefits other people; recognition of one's identity and that of others; capacity for communion, collaboration, cooperation, co-responsibility; understanding; trust and love for the Church. The principles of pastoral formation could also be validly deployed in the search and actualization of the different vocations, for instance, "marriage, social services, apostolate, ministries and other responsibilities in pastoral activity, the consecrated life, involvement in political and social leadership, scientific research, teaching."⁶⁷ The fruits of Pastoral formation will be valuable in teaching the lay faithful "in their vocation to be present in and to transform the world with the light of the Gospel, by recognizing this task of their and showing respect for it."⁶⁸ The principles of pastoral formation of the candidates for the priesthood are equally important in the area of the missionary content of the life of every baptized and of every human person. Every human person should live with the self-recognition that life has a mission. In the context of the Christian person, that mission is Christ Himself, the way and the truth

and the life. That mission of Christ is prolonged and carried on in the activities of the Church, called upon to continue and carry on the mission of the Saviour until the end of time. That mission includes living out and proclaiming the gospel of Christ in the events of life and even sometimes as lay missionaries, witnessing to the truths of the gospel, in cooperation and collaboration with the ministerial priests.

Conclusion

The four formative principles, pillars or dimensions: human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral, formulated and stated in conciliar and post-conciliar documents on the formation of the candidates for the sacred priesthood, especially *Optatam Totius*, *Pastores Dabo Vobis* and the *New Ratio Fundamental Institutionis Sacerdotalis* and used for the training of candidates in preparation for the assumption of responsibilities as Catholic priests, are valid instruments that could also be used for the formation of any human person. The underlying strength of these time-tested formative principles lies in the fact that they would ensure, in a wholistic way, the configuration of the human person, to the Person of Christ, the perfect Model of formation. The reasonability of these principles reveals the Church as that great teacher that strives to make disciples for Christ, since everyone who encounters the Church, cannot but be formed after the image of Christ, the Bridegroom of the Church. However, as consistently maintained in this paper, the wholistic formation of the human person gives absolute premium to the humanity of the human person who is called to witness to Jesus Christ. The humanity of every individual sets the fulcrum or pivot around which the other dimensions turn. Thus, a faulty human formation cannot produce a formed individual in the wholistic sense. The dependability of the other dimensions of formation on human formation is clearly cut. The point of divergence between the dimensions of the formative processes under the jurisdictions of human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral indicates the various cardinal aspects of the human person; the point of convergence is largely the integration of these aspects of the human person, to be formed in the image of Christ, thus, becoming another Christ in the society. These formative principles, though insufficient in themselves, when taken together, become sufficient in building up the candidates for the sacred priesthood and the human person called to live out their mission in the society. Hence, there must a successful synergizing of the results of the various dimensions of formation to attain holistic formation of the human person.

Endnotes

¹ The word *paradigma* is originally a Greek (and later Latin) word. Etymologically, the word *paradigma* is from two Greek words, 'para' meaning 'beside' and 'deiknynai' meaning 'to display or show' and these two words "were combined to form 'paradeiknynai', which possessed the literal meaning 'to display side by side'". The word "was used to refer to 'a model or pattern,'" ["Paradigm" in <https://www.macmillandictionaryblog.com/paradigm>, accessed 08.03.21, 08.45 am]. It could also mean a method, a well-tested and proven to be reliable form that could be replicated. Paradigm is thus "a standard, perspective, or set of ideas" ["Paradigm" in <https://www.google.com/search?client=opera&q=paradigma&sourceid=opera&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8>, accessed 08.03.21, 09.16 am.] Paradigmatic is the adjectival form of *paradigma* and it means "serving as a typical example of something" and "of or denoting the relationship between a set of linguistic items that form mutually exclusive choices in particular syntactic roles." It is also "a fancy word for describing something that is an ideal or standard. ... You'll come across it if you study the subject of linguistics, where "paradigmatic analysis" is one way of analyzing a text, by examining patterns within it." "Paradigmatic" in https://www.google.com/search?client=opera&hs=V8Y&ei=a9pFYLWOLbHO1fAPklmnyA8&q=paradigmatic+meaning&oq=paradigmatic&gs_lcp=Cgdnd3Mtd2l6EAEYATIKCAAQkQIQRhD5ATIFCAAQkQlyAggAMgIIADICCAAyAggAMgIIADICCAAyAggAMgIIADoHCAAQRxCwA1DmhQNYqooDYJDVA2gBcAJ4AYABwwOAdMlkgEJMC4xLjluMC4xmAEAoAEBqgEHZ3dzLXdpesgBCMABAQ&scIent=gws-wiz, accessed 08.03.21, 9.34 a.m

² "Latin definition for: *formo, formare, formavi, formatus*" in <https://latindictionary.net/definition/20903/formo-formare-formavi-formatus>, accessed 20.02.2020, 18.31 p.m

³ "Formation", in <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/formation>, accessed 20.02.2020, 18.39

⁴ "Definition of formation", in <https://www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary/formation>, accessed 20.02.2020, 18.15pm

⁵ *Pastores Dabo Vobis* is the post synodal Apostolic Exhortation written by Pope John Paul II at the conclusion of the Eighth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, from 30 September to 28 October, 1990, dedicated to "The Formation of Priests in Circumstances of the Present Day. This post synodal apostolic exhortation has as its focus the formation of priests for the modern age and time. Formation must know the present situation of the world full of ambivalence and contradictions, difficulties and potentialities, and have genuine courage to discern, interpret and find solutions to it [Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 10] Formation of persons for the priesthood must therefore have gospel discernment at its heart: the ability to discern and interpret the situation of the world in the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ, that is, in the light of Christ Himself [cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 10]

⁶ *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 8

⁷ *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 10

⁸ *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 1

⁹ *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 12

¹⁰ *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 2

¹¹ *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 5

¹² Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 8

¹³ Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 9

¹⁴ Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 11H

¹⁵ *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 12

¹⁶ Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 12

¹⁷ "As a mystery, the Church is essentially related to Jesus Christ. She is his fullness, his body, his spouse. She is the "sign" and living "memorial" of his permanent presence and activity in our midst and on our behalf. The priest finds the full truth of his identity in being a derivation, a specific participation in and continuation of Christ himself, the one high priest of the new and eternal covenant." *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 12

¹⁸ Congregation for the Clergy, *The Gift of the Priestly Vocation- Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*, Liberia Editrice Vaticana, Vatican (2016), n. 94

¹⁹ Ibid. n. 94

²⁰ Ibid. n. 95

²¹ *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 43

²² *Optatam Totius* 11

²³ *Pastores Dabo Vobis* n. 72

²⁴ *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*, 130

²⁵ *Optatam Totius* 11

²⁶ *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*, no: 93.

²⁷ *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, no: 43.

²⁸ *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, no: 43.

²⁹ Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 44

³⁰ Cf. *Optatam Totius*, no: 11.

³¹ Cf. *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*, no: 94.

³² *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 45

³³ Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 45

³⁴ Cf. *Optatam Totius* 8

³⁵ *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 46

³⁶ Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 46

³⁷ *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 46

³⁸ Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 47

³⁹ *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 47

⁴⁰ *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 48

⁴¹ Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 48

⁴² Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 49

⁴³ Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 50

⁴⁴ Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 51

⁴⁵ *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 51

- ⁴⁶ Congregation for the Clergy, *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*, n.141
- ⁴⁷ The Second Vatican Council, *Optatam Totius* 14.
- ⁴⁸ *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 51
- ⁴⁹ *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 51
- ⁵⁰ *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 51
- ⁵¹ *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 52
- ⁵² *Optatam Totius* 15
- ⁵³ *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 52
- ⁵⁴ Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 53
- ⁵⁵ *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 54
- ⁵⁶ Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 55
- ⁵⁷ *Optatam Totius* 4; Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 57
- ⁵⁸ *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 57
- ⁵⁹ *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 57
- ⁶⁰ *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 57
- ⁶¹ *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 57
- ⁶² *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 58
- ⁶³ Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 58
- ⁶⁴ Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 59
- ⁶⁵ Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 45
- ⁶⁶ *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 45
- ⁶⁷ *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 59
- ⁶⁸ *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 59