

The process of forming the individual priest in the Seminary is built on finding harmony between the inner and outer world while maintaining a clear hierarchy of superiority and fostering the Spirit: "Do not quench the Spirit" (I Thes. 5.19), "Never flag in zeal, be aglow the Spirit serve the Lord"(Rom. 12.11).

A person can conform to the law and dutifully carry it out. The cold fulfilling of the law and regulations; regularity and apparent zeal in carrying out tasks set by superiors, founded only on calculation and pragmatism; restraint and honesty in behavior, are not a true indicator of growth in the spiritual life. All these things can be seen as positive, but until they carry in themselves the "Spirit of life in Christ, they will not have any value before God" (Theophane the Recluse: Guidelines for the Spiritual Life).

Spiritual Life

In the tradition of the Church it has always been stressed that the foundation on which all the activities of the future priest must be based, is spirituality. Spirituality should be for each seminarian an internal motivator, which "encourages" him to see the rules of the Seminary not as ends in themselves, and obligations or restrictions of human freedom, but as tools that will lead to a deeper understanding of both the Christian and priestly vocations.

The Seminary Spiritual Directors as "men of prayer" maintain the inner rule of prayer and initiate the communal prayer of the Seminary and lead it.

On them rests the responsibility for the whole spiritual and prayer life of the Seminary. The Spiritual Directors meet with seminarians during the "spiritual deserts", as well as giving spiritual advice at every opportunity.

The duty of the Confessors is to make available the Sacrament of Penance to seminarians at set times. A seminarian has the right to choose a confessor from outside the Seminary, after having received the blessing of the Rector.

At the time of the creation of the Seminary, our Church had two different groups of priests - one ageing and one young. The older generation, exhausted by persecution, could no longer be Spiritual Directors, and younger still not yet able to be. Given the situation, we experimented using the spiritual experience of Eastern Rite Roman Jesuits and in 1999 in agreement with the "Centro Aletti" in Rome, two of our priests were sent there for a limited period. On their returning these priests became Seminary Spiritual Directors, and now every year their spiritual experience grows deeper.

Shortly after they were joined by two more confessors. Now the seminary has several priests who work through personal contact with seminarians during the weekly "spiritual desert" and weekly conference for each course which are based on set themes and, finally, with the entire body of seminarians.

These conferences are built around the problems inherent to each individual course, and are linked logically to each other, pre-arranged to prepare seminarians to meet the challenges and difficulties in the maturation of their vocation. Notwithstanding all the effort so far, we are aware that an authentic spiritual guidance needs time and tranquility to reach maturation. The guarantee for our positive expectations is that we do have this time, and therefore the Spiritual Directors will become true Spiritual Fathers.

Prayer

The Chapel occupies an important place in the formation of seminarians for the priesthood. The Chapel is not only the center of spiritual life and development, but also the entire life of the Seminary. No important event takes place outside of its walls or at least not without involving it. These occasions are the celebrations of the special Divine Liturgies (eg, the beginning and end of the year), and retreats, and various meetings, and many other events. A considerable part of prayer time is spent in the Chapel. This is the daily liturgical worship circle - Vespers, Compline, Night Prayer, Matins, the Hours, Divine Liturgy, our own Seminary prayers, the Liturgical celebrations of Lent and Easter, akathists, night vigils, often in the presence of the Bishop and accompanied by the seminary choir. All these prayers and Liturgies are an important sign of unity and cooperation.

In its deep essence of the Chapel, crowned with liturgy, prayers that are celebrated there, reveal the whole point of the formation of the future pastor - the liturgical sense. Anyone who learns, works, teaches at the Seminary is involved in one common cause (from the Greek word "Communal Work", Leiturgia), which is fostering the future of the priesthood.

Liturgical meaning of the life of a seminarian at the Seminary can be roughly compared to the three parts of the Divine Liturgy. The seminary liturgy (Communal Work) is continuously celebrated, and its parts harmoniously and in an orderly way interweave, never losing their meaning and or content. The first part of the Liturgy is the Proskomedia. The individual Proskomedia of seminarians is the offering, for the benefit of the seminary community, of their special and personal talents and abilities that they have. This might be singing in the choir, catechesis, preaching, missionary activity, participation in celebrations, concerts, performances, work in orphanages, organizing radio broadcasts, magazine publishing, all sorts of activities, not excluding physical work, as well as many other forms and types of individual ministries. During prayers in the Chapel the seminarians are divided into groups and carry out certain duties and service by turn: some read, others lead the singing, and others sing with them, others according to their turn minister in the sanctuary. Every seminarian performs this service by turn.

Liturgy of the Word for seminarians is their intellectual development and daily study of the depths of Theology, Scripture, Liturgical Tradition, Homiletics and other disciplines.

The Liturgy of the Sacrifice is the growth in prayer and in the spiritual life that occurs through daily participation in joint worship, prayer and the Divine Liturgy. Sacrament of the Eucharist takes place everyday in the Seminary Chapel. Liturgical meaning of life pervades the seminarian not only while he is at the Seminary, but also the whole life of those who are traveling to the priesthood. The Proskomedia - is the offering of their knowledge and the gift of their vocation. The Liturgy of the Word is their formation within the walls of the Seminary, and the Liturgy of Sacrifice is made present in a priestly way through pastorship and service before the Lord's throne.

The life of a believer, of a Christian is always one of service, spiritual labour, and carrying one's cross. The life of the priest is a double spiritual labour, which is primarily his personal responsibility for every member of Christ's flock entrusted to him and the spiritual life of those for whom he is Pastor. Therefore it is important to know what type of minister in God's vineyard this Pastor will be? How will he lead his people who are continuously encouraged by their society to only "take everything they can get out of life"? Where will he lead them, what will he teach them?

"The harvest is plenteous, but the labourers are few" - says our Lord Jesus Christ to his disciples (Matt. 9:37). The harvest is all those who come to Church, looking for a spiritual life, for prayer, those who expect the priest to answer difficult questions, those seeking advice and

comforting words. To be able to accomplish his pastoral ministry, the priest needs more than just effort, desire, more than theological knowledge. He needs spiritual maturity, the practice of the spiritual life, being often in church, which is the school of prayer and obedience. To bring people to salvation, he needs to be on way of salvation himself. The Seminary is designed to be a school for spiritual growth. This is one of its major tasks. This is the way that leads to great and dignified service at God's throne. So for those who see this period of their lives led within the walls of the Seminary and within the walls of the Seminary Chapel in this light, - their time here is pleasant and easy.

Education

Education at the seminary aims at forming mature Christian people through the fostering of the skills of the teacher, the prophet and the pastoral ministry within the future candidate for the priesthood.

The seminarian as the one being formed by the Seminary, is a member of the educational process. The training process involves the administration, the spiritual director, the confessor, the Prefects, the teachers and fellow seminarians each sharing in the training according to their own functions. Educational process includes the following elements: spirituality, obedience, brotherly love, discipline and recreation.

The vice-Rector in charge of Education and the Prefect have direct responsibility for the education of seminarians in the Seminary. Both have a common educational approach, built on fostering the personal freedom and responsibility of each seminarian, and this is developed in collaboration with the Spiritual Directors. Along with this personal pedagogical approach there is great emphasis on education on general church thought through an intense liturgical life. Its foundation is the daily Divine Liturgy with the availability of the Sacrament of Confession, as well as the Liturgy, the Hours and Vespers are served daily and on Saturdays, Sundays and feast days - Matins. Seminarians during their training fully master all the liturgical melodies and thoroughly learn Church Slavonic. We consider it our great achievement that we have a stable staff of educators. This allows us to plan for a solid long-term educational process.