



## Priestly Formation

“The Church must never cease to pray to the Lord of the harvest that he send labourers into his harvest (cf. Mt 9:38). She must propose clearly and courageously to each generation the vocational call, help people to discern the authenticity of their call from God and to respond to it generously, and give particular care to the formation of candidates for the priesthood.”

- *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 2.

### A. Vocations and Seminarians Office

The Vocations and Seminarians Office fosters vocations to the diocesan priesthood and provides a centre for information pertaining to these vocations.

The Archbishop appoints the Director of Vocations and Seminarians, who is accountable to the Archbishop in all his work. The Director is responsible for fostering the response of individuals who are considering an interest in the diocesan priesthood, assessing candidates for seminary, and assisting in the formation of candidates for priesthood. He collaborates in these tasks with other diocesan priests who contribute to the development of policies and procedures in matters related to the purposes of the office.

### B. Vocations Advisory Committee

The Vocations Advisory Committee, consisting of the Archbishop, the Director of Vocations and Seminarians, and a number of diocesan priests, meets monthly for the following purposes:

- To consider the suitability of candidates for the priesthood, and to make judgements on the same based on the information provided by the candidate's Application Packet, the personal assessment of the Director, as well as those of the Vocations Interview Committee (see below).
- To make judgements on the course of formation for those candidates who have been accepted as seminarians.
- To review the progress of current seminarians and make judgements about the next steps in their formation.
- To provide input regarding the current initiatives of the Vocations and Seminarians Office and to suggest new ones.

### C. Vocations Interview Committee

The Vocations Interview Committee, consisting of lay faithful from different walks of life and Religious, assists the Director of Vocations and Seminarians in evaluating candidates for admission to the seminary. The purpose of these interviews is to provide the Vocations and Seminarians Office with the perspective of non-clerics as to whether or not a candidate for the seminary might one day be suitable for the priesthood.



## D. Promotion of Vocations

### *Areas of Concern*

- a. Fostering prayer from all the faithful for those who are being called to a priestly vocation.
- b. Promoting education on the nature of a calling to the priesthood, and on discernment methods.
- c. Raising awareness among the various cultural and ethnic groups of the Archdiocese concerning the need for prayerful priests, and what can be done to help that need.
- d. Creating an atmosphere in which a calling to the priesthood can be heard and can be perceived as something very good for the individual and the Church.
- e. Assisting in the discernment of those who are considering a calling to the priesthood.
- f. Inviting those who show some signs of having a call to the priesthood to attend specific activities hosted by the Vocations and Seminarians Office (see below).

### *Specific activities*

- a. Visiting university and college campuses and maintaining contact with students open to a vocation calling.
- b. Coordinating visits to secondary schools and speaking to classes, parents' groups, teachers, and others regarding vocation topics.
- c. Coordinating a support group for men interested in exploring priesthood.
- d. Collaborating with school vocation coordinators in developing and implementing a vocation awareness program.
- e. Offering an overnight retreat once a year for men interested in considering a vocation to the priesthood.
- f. Being available for counselling those who come seeking assistance in their vocation decisions.
- g. Coordinating vocational promotions through *The B.C. Catholic* and other media.
- h. Being available for talks on vocations to adult groups such as C.W.L. and youth groups.
- i. Being available to assist in the development of Parish Vocation Committees and continuing to assist those requesting assistance.
- j. Communicating on a regular basis with priests, brothers and sisters serving the Archdiocese especially on matters relating to vocation ministry.
- k. Searching out audio/visual materials and prayer resources for vocation promotions.
- l. Being available, when possible, to celebrate the Sunday Eucharist and/or preach on vocations in the parishes of the Archdiocese.



- m. Keeping available literature on a religious calling in general, and on the many ways of pursuing that calling through a particular community.
- n. Working with vocation directors from other dioceses on promotions and shared resources/strategies.
- o. Collaborating with the Seminary of Christ the King on “come and see” weekends.

## **E. Assessment of Candidates**

### ***First Phase: Preliminary Application***

- a. Interested applicants are usually referred to the Vocations and Seminarians Office. The applicant writes or telephones the Director of Vocations and Seminarians. A personal interview is arranged to determine the man’s general suitability for the priesthood.
- b. If this interview shows that the man has suitability for the priesthood, he is asked to establish/maintain two important and on-going relationships.
  - i. If he does not already have one, the applicant is to seek out a spiritual director who is a priest. The relationship shared by these two individuals is absolutely confidential.
  - ii. The applicant is asked to meet regularly with the Director of Vocations and Seminarians or one of the priests on the Vocations Advisory Committee, who acts as the person’s vocation counsellor. While this is intended to be a friendly and honest relationship, it is not as confidential as the relationship enjoyed with a spiritual director. The information shared with the counsellor is eventually shared with the Archbishop and all the members of the Vocations Advisory Committee.
- c. Depending on the applicant's readiness this relationship may last from six months to two years. The applicant is prepared to enter the second phase of the formal application upon mutual agreement between the applicant and the vocation counsellor.
- d. If it becomes necessary for the Director of Vocations and Seminarians to discourage an applicant from continuing, he always does so in consultation with the Archbishop and with the advice of at least one other member of the Vocations Advisory Committee.

### ***Second Phase: Formal Application***

- a. The Director of Vocations and Seminarians asks the applicant to submit a formal application for priestly formation. This formal application requires the completion of all elements of the “Applications Packet”, beginning with a formal scripted interview with the Director.

Following the interview, the applicant must submit transcripts from all previous high schools, universities or seminaries, letters of reference, baptismal and confirmation certificates, police record checks, and a short autobiography.



The applicant will then be required to arrange the following:

- i. A medical evaluation (form provided by the Vocations and Seminarians Office) by a competent physician.
  - ii. A psychological assessment by a designated psychologist. The Vocations and Seminarians Office pays for the cost of this assessment.
- b. After the applicant has completed the “Application Packet,” a time will be arranged for him to be interviewed by three members of the Vocations Interview Committee, who will then provide their assessments to the Director of Vocations and Seminarians.
  - c. The Director will next review the whole of the application process. He will present his personal assessment, and those of the Vocations Interview Committee, to the Vocations Advisory Committee, who will then vote on whether the applicant should be accepted to study as a seminarian in the Archdiocese of Vancouver. The Archbishop will make the final decision.
  - d. The Director will forward the applicant’s Application Packet to the Seminary of Christ the King, for evaluation and approval by the Seminary administration. The Director of Vocations and Seminarians will assist the candidate with the admissions requirements.
  - e. With the Seminary’s acceptance and the Archbishop’s approval, the candidate is advised by mail that he has been admitted to the Spirituality Year.

## **F. Seminary Formation**

### ***On-going Assessment***

- a. While in the seminary, the candidate is under the specific guidance of the seminary authorities. They continue the process of ongoing assessment while helping the candidate to develop skills and attitudes suitable to diocesan ordained ministry.
- b. The Director of Vocations and Seminarians acts as a liaison between the Archbishop and the seminary authorities.
- c. Evaluations, recommendations and academic records prepared by the seminary authorities with regard to each seminarian are received by the Archbishop on an annual basis. The Director will coordinate with the Seminary of Christ the King for the reception of ministries by the seminarians.

### ***Summer Program***

- a. Upon completion of the first year of theology, each seminarian will receive pastoral placement in a parish in the Archdiocese during the summer months. This requirement is adjustable in the case of some other seminary policy or recommendation.
- b. An outline of responsibilities and ministries is sent to the priest-supervisor at the beginning of summer. This should be used as a point of reference when developing the role expectations of the seminarian.



- c. The Archbishop assigns each seminarian in consultation with the Vocations and Seminarians Office. The specific needs of the seminarian are of high priority in this decision, while also taking into account the needs of parishes for seminarian ministry and the availability of suitable priest-supervisors.
- d. A program of evaluation is directed by each seminary and by the Director of Vocations and Seminarians.
- e. Ordinarily, a seminarian is not placed in the same parish in successive summers so as to ensure as broad an experience as possible.

### ***Other Programs***

Enrollment in the following programs depends on the recommendation of the Vocations Advisory Committee:

- a. Clinical Pastoral Education;
- b. Institute for Priestly Formation – Summer Program for Diocesan Seminarians.

**Approved: September 12, 2018**  
**Memorial of the Most Holy Name  
of Mary**

*+ J. Michael Miller CSB*

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**Archbishop of Vancouver**

**The following policy is hereby superseded:  
*Priestly Formation, issued on January 25, 1994***