MOUNT ST. MARY'S SEMINARY

Pastoral Formation Program Manual *for* Academic Year 2025/2026

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PASTORAL FORMATION PROGRAM

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PASTORAL FORMATION
THE FOURTH DIMENSION IN SEMINARY FORMATION

In his 1992 post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis ("I Will Give You Shepherds* after my own heart" – Jer 3:15), St. John Paul II spoke of the entire formation program for priests as resting upon "four dimensions" – human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation of candidates for the priesthood.

In a significant degree, this fourth dimension of formation for the priesthood (often referred to as "pastoral formation education" because a substantial portion of it occurs in the context of ministry among the people whom the seminarian is preparing to serve as a priest) deals with learning the skills and abilities that a priest needs to carry on an effective ministry of service in the name of the Lord Jesus, through programs of hands-on training under the auspices of well-qualified supervisors.

Indeed, Pastoral Formation is not of secondary importance in the preparation of priests. On the contrary, the 2006 *Program of Priestly Formation* of the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops notes, "All four dimensions of formation are interwoven and go forward concurrently. Still in a certain sense, pastoral formation is the culmination of the entire formation process: 'The whole formation imparted to candidates for the priesthood aims at preparing them to enter into communion with the charity of Christ the Good Shepherd. Hence, their formation in its various aspects must have a fundamentally pastoral character" (PPF §236, citing *Pastores dabo vobis #57*).

The bishops go on to say: To be a true shepherd of souls means standing with and for Christ in the community, the Christ who teaches and sanctifies and guides or leads the community. The grace to be a shepherd comes with ordination. That grace, however, calls for the priest's personal commitment to develop the knowledge and skills to teach and preach well, to celebrate the sacraments both properly and prayerfully, and to respond to people's needs as well as to take initiative in the community that holy servant leadership requires (PPF §369).

The Pastoral Formation Experience Program of Mount St. Mary's Seminary is designed to meet this essential dimension of priestly formation, fulfilling the requirements set out by the PPF in its Norms for Pastoral Formation, §§385-398.

The Purpose of Pastoral Formation Experience
Pastoral Formation Experience is a learning activity that has been specifically designed to bring the seminarian to: {a} theological understanding, {b} develop pastoral/professional skills, {c} instill Christ-like ministerial attitudes, and {d} develop personal maturity through practice in actual ministry and theological reflection.

I. INTRODUCTION: WHAT IT IS - OBJECTIVES OF PASTORAL FORMATION

In accordance with the *Program of Priestly Formation*, the seminary requires pastoral experience that includes supervised ministry, evaluation, and theological reflection. Supervised pastoral formation experience is an integral part of the Master of Divinity degree program at Mount St. Mary's Seminary.

Pastoral Formation Experience (hereinafter, PFE) should assist the seminarian in his desire to integrate the various aspects of priestly formation. His human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral

formation should lead to developing a "pastoral personality" in union with our Lord Jesus Christ, who is Head and Shepherd, Servant, and Spouse of the Church.

The goals of the PFE Program are:

- To instill **a self-awareness in the seminarian as a future shepherd** imbued with the charity of Christ and filled with a missionary spirit.

- To help seminarians **gain pastoral competence** through supervised ministry in distinct settings, such as social justice and the corporal works of mercy, teaching, ministry to the sick and dying, and their families, evangelization, catechesis, sacramental formation, parish administration, and diaconate parish placements.

- To provide a **pastoral forum to use and integrate the skill**s they have learned and developed in their spiritual, human, and intellectual formation.

- To train seminarians in **theological reflection** in order to assess their own efforts, to develop confidence in their future ministry, and to learn their particular areas of strength and areas of needed growth.

- To develop an **appreciation for the different ministries** of the Roman Catholic Church, as well as develop an ability to collaborate with different persons in leadership roles, whether they be ordained priests, deacons, consecrated religious, or lay men and women.

II. DESIRED OUTCOMES OF PASTORAL FORMATION EXPERIENCE

Effective Pastoral Formation Experience will enable the seminarian to integrate his formation. As evidenced by the following outcomes, the seminarian will be able to:

A. Personal

- That from his experience the seminarian would gain insight into his strengths and better awareness of his weaknesses.
- That he would be able to take direction and be open to channels of growth and development.

B. Relational

- That the seminarian's relations with those whom he serves, with those who supervise him, and with those with whom he works be in every respect appropriate and respectful.
- That he be able to relate with and communicate to others with ease and effectiveness.

C. Professional

- The seminarian would come to know, to appreciate, and be able to act within the philosophy and goals of the pastoral setting within which he serves.
- He would become familiar with the language and concepts of the field, with the staff and clientele of the pastoral setting, and the specific tasks it has set for itself.
- He would be able to execute creatively and responsibly the tasks assigned to him in a compassionate, efficient and effective manner**.**

D. Theological

- That the seminarian would be able to integrate what he learns in the classroom with what he is experiencing in the field.
- That he can see how Scripture and the Church's teaching on social justice apply to the situations

he is involved in.
- That he can bring his commitment of faith to bear on his experience.
- That his judgment and actions in ministry are guided by his knowledge of theology.
- That he is able to move from service to prayer and back again to service.

E. Ministerial

- The seminarian would demonstrate initiative, leadership, and a desire to take maximum advantage of the possibilities to learn from the field experience assignment.
- He would appreciate the team model of ministry and be able to function appropriately and effectively within a ministerial team.
- Within his sphere of responsibility, he would demonstrate the ability to lead others toward the greater good, toward wholeness and the appropriate use of freedom.
- He would enable others to use their gifts, insights, and energy.

III. PASTORAL FORMATION and PFE EXPERIENCES: *WHAT IT IS NOT*

It is **NOT** merely an "internship" program for a seminarian to function as a priest. Instead, the PFE site serves as a forum to learn how to serve in appropriate ways for a man who discerns priesthood but is not yet a priest. In other words, the service he provides must fit the seminarian's theological level and experiences.

It is **NOT** a substitute for a pastoral year program. Instead, the PFE experience provides only highlights and glimpses of future priestly ministry. It cannot provide a seminarian the full and complete experience that he or the supervisor may want to have.

It is **NOT** an opportunity simply to provide necessary help to a PFE institution. Instead, the PFE experience requires the supervisor to provide a forum for a man to learn. To assume that a seminarian is sent to a site simply to provide extra help or volunteerism is incorrect. In fact, the PFE institution and supervisor provide more help to the seminarian than vice versa.

It is **NOT** simply a Pass/Fail course. Instead, the PFE is an academic course that requires full compliance with the syllabus, which includes fulfillment of the learning agreement, in order to be ordained a priest. Although the final grade is a Pass or Fail, the seminarian will be evaluated with "letter grades" regarding his performance in particular pastoral settings. Seminarians must consider how their Bishop or Vocation Director would react to a man who seeks ordination but has "failed" the requirements of pastoral formation.

IV. SUPERVISION IN THE PASTORAL FORMATION EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

The responsibilities of the onsite pastoral-supervisor in Pastoral Formation are to mentor the seminarian during the time of the assignment, being attentive to goal setting, according to the ministry assigned, as well as theological reflection.

At the end of each semester, the supervisor will evaluate the seminarian. The fall evaluation will guide the pastoral goals for the upcoming spring semester. The seminarian and supervisor will examine this evaluation together at the end of each semester before it is submitted to the Coordinator of Pastoral Formation. In their final meeting, the supervisor will go over these same materials with the seminarian from the perspective of the seminarian's theological reflection on his experience and any impact it has had on his vocational discernment and preparation for priestly ministry.

Supervision in any arena implies that someone oversees the activity of another. What marks supervision in Pastoral Formation is that its aim is not primarily directed to the work being done as much as it is to the formation of the one doing the work – to assist the seminarian in becoming a compassionate and competent minister and in doing effective ministry after ordination. Good supervision always leads toward good self-supervision. From this perspective, the following points may be mentioned:

- Therefore, the relationship of supervisor to seminarian is not to be thought of as that of employer to employee, nor as only that of a job overseer. Rather, supervision in a formation education is designed to help the seminarian observe, listen, learn, and ask questions while the supervisor guides the process. Appropriate questions in the context of a supervised ministry placement include those questions that explore theological dimensions in the formation experience, that ask what really happened in the situation, and that look for cause-effect relationship, and that look for new possibilities.

- Supervision is accomplished primarily in a reflective way; in other words, the supervisor leads the seminarian to reflect on his experience to understand it and recognize its meaning. Therefore, supervision is not meant to interfere with what happens in the ministerial situation but, rather, it is meant to help the seminarian understand. *If supervision is really to facilitate a process occurring within the seminarian, it must be concerned with his growth* . Accordingly, supervision includes a clear recording of the seminarian's progress. The supervisor must have some clear objectives before he/she starts supervising. The seminarian's goals, coupled with the supervisor's guiding word and example, provide a rich resource for the seminarian's future ministry.

It is important that a formal schedule of supervisory activities be set up and adhered to. **Supervision may include such techniques as**:

- A reflective conversation, which allows the seminarian to explore his perceptions and feelings about the experience and discover God working through the experience.
- A write-up of a critical incident or a verbatim report of the PFE.
- A reflective seminar with a peer group so that the seminarian receives group feedback, evaluation, and support; and
- Evaluations arrived at jointly by the supervisor and seminarian.

V. EVALUATION IN THE PASTORAL FORMATION PROGRAM

Summarizing all this together, it becomes clear that the supervisor in a FORMATION program should be seasoned with sufficient insight and sensitivity to know what goes on in the process of self-awareness, has some experience and skill in theologizing, appreciates the role and responsibilities of ministers today, and preferably has education and skills in counseling. Opportunities for future growth and self-improvement are encouraged for all supervisors.

Evaluation is a continual process. It is an indispensable component in any educational process but especially in the PFE. Seminarians and supervisors assume the responsibility together for clarifying the goals of a particular pastoral experience. **Regular meetings (we recommend once a month) between seminarian and supervisor are expected to evaluate development in relation to agreed-upon goals**. The final evaluation is a written document from the seminarian' s supervisor signed by both supervisor and seminarian. This evaluation is kept in the seminarian’s personal formation education file.

It is intended to help the seminarian identify his own specific gifts for ministry and needed areas for growth and provide input from the broader Church regarding his readiness for ordained ministry. In the PFE the goal is growth on the part of the seminarian. Regardless, therefore, of whether a given effort was successful or fell short in some measure, it is still valuable for what the seminarian can learn from it, and for its ability to help him improve his personal skills and clarify his vocational decision.

In summary, supervised PFE program involves two interlocking components:

- supervised ministry in approved ministerial settings with qualified supervision and
- theological reflection

The basic elements needed for supervision in a formation experience setting consist of:

- learning agreement requirements which outline the purpose of the assignment, desired outcomes, and the seminarian's PFE goals.
- the supervisor-seminarian relationship, and
- written assignments, theological reflections small group discussion, evaluations, and feedback.

VI. ASSIGNMENT MATRIX

A. Fourth Year – Diaconate / 4th Theology Parochial Ministry: The assignment for fourth-year seminarians and deacons offers our 4th year men the opportunity to serve as transitional deacons, or seminarians soon to be ordained with a particular emphasis on the ministry of preaching. Engagement in sacramental formation processes should also be a key component of this PFE. Additionally, the assignment provides experience in other aspects of ministry such as pastoral administration, planning and leadership. Lastly, the overnight element of the fourth-year assignment invites the seminarians to grow in the area of living and praying in community with fellow clerics.

B. Some Types of Ministerial Placements:

Campus Ministry	➤ Catholic universities and Newman Centers
Multi-ethnic Ministry Communities	➤ Parishes with large African American communities ➤ Parishes with large Hispanic communities ➤ Parishes with other ethnic communities
Urban/Rural Ministry	➤ Parishes in urban areas ➤ Parishes in rural areas
Youth and Young Adult Ministry	➤ Ministry with Youth and Young Adults
Children and Families	➤ Ministry with children & families in parishes/schools
Sacramental Formation	➤ Ministry in sacramental formation of all ages
Charitable Outreach	Food pantries; Missionaries of Charity; Parochial Census Work; Special Olympics

Theological reflections are tools used to cultivate and evaluate the seminarian's growth for ministry. These reflections are to be completed by all in 1st– 4th Theology, as well as by those in 2nd year of philosophy. Guidelines for the theological reflections are included at the end of this manual, as an appendix. The written theological reflections become part of the seminarian's file, and a copy is sent to the bishop at the end of the year.

C. PFE Contract (Learning Agreement) Requirements:

Each semester, the seminarian and supervisor will enter into a PFE Contract, where the following are specified and agreed upon:

- specific outcomes
- specific goals
- PFE ministry schedule
- Supervision meetings schedule - a minimum of once a month is required.

It is the hope of the PFE program that the seminarian will see his supervisors as mentors with whom he can develop deeper pastoral insight through conversations in the pastoral formation placement, during scheduled meetings, and as needed.

It is also important to include any preparatory work that must be done and that will not be detrimental to the other aspects of the seminarian's formation.

VII. GENERAL PASTORAL FORMATION REQUIREMENTS

In order to earn one required academic credit each semester, as well as a favorable report for his vocation director and (arch)bishop, every 1T – 4T seminarian engaged in PFE must fulfill the following requirements:

A. Full compliance with the PFE course syllabus and Contract: Each seminarian will receive a course syllabus, via Canvas. Seminarians and supervisors must complete, sign, and return the learning agreement by the due date. Supervisors are expected to schedule monthly meetings with the seminarians. An evaluation will be completed by the supervisor at the end of each semester.

B. Scheduled time and requirements at the pastoral placement: The supervised ministry will require a certain number of times / hours each week at the placement, as well as other placement requirements, according to the year of formation. Travel and preparation time are not included. The time requirements, according to the cohort/year of study, are as follows:

1. THE DISCIPLESHIP STAGE:

a. **1st PHILOSOPHY:** Seminarians in their first year of philosophical studies are not assigned to a regular PFE assignment.

b. **2nd PHILOSOPHY**: Seminarians in their second year of philosophical studies will be assigned to a regular but limited PFE assignment. The hours required are 1.5-2 hours per week or six to eight hours per month. This time frame does not include travel time. Extra time in a PFE site requires permission from the Coordinator of Pastoral Formation. Ministries at this level include work with the poor, food pantries, parish census activities, and working in shrines.

Exemptions: Seminarians will need to speak with the Coordinator of Pastoral Formation and supervisor regarding any rare exemptions to the learning agreement. They are expected to fulfill their assignments. In case that some urgent matter presents itself, it is the responsibility of the seminarian to communicate those issues with the Coordinator of Pastoral Formation and his supervisor in as timely a manner as possible. Except for medical emergencies, two weeks' notice is a 'professional standard' of time for communicating the exemptions to scheduled requirements.

All seminarians are required to assist in some capacity for two activities:

(1) seminary participation in the annual March for Life in Washington, DC; and
(2) the Mount's annual Eucharistic gathering for youth (Mount 2000)

2. CONFIGURATION STAGE:

a. **First Theology Seminarians:**

Three hours per week. It is possible for the seminarian to attend his PFE two times every other week for a six-hour block of time. This time frame does not include travel time. Additional time at the site requires permission from the Coordinator of Pastoral Formation to ensure the seminarian is keeping a balanced schedule.

b. **Second Theology Seminarians:**

Four hours per week. It is possible for the seminarian to attend his PFE two times every other week for a longer block of time. This time frame does not include travel time. Additional time at the site requires permission from the Coordinator of Pastoral Formation to ensure the seminarian is keeping a balanced schedule.

c. **Third Theology Seminarians:**

Five hours per week or twenty hours per month. This time frame does not include travel time. Additional time at the site requires permission from the Coordinator of Pastoral Formation to ensure the seminarian is keeping a balanced schedule.

Overnight 3rd year Placement: The seminarian may arrive at the parish by Friday evening and are expected to return by 5:00 pm the following Sunday to participate in community Vespers. A seminarian with an overnight placement, in agreement with his pastor, could choose to combine some overnight weekends with weekday work, to have an equivalent of five hours per week or twenty hours per month.

d. **Fourth Theology Seminarians:**

At least ten scheduled weekend overnights per semester, with a maximum of twelve weekends per semester. Failure to complete ten weekends per semester will result in failing the PFE course with notification to the vocation director and bishop. The weekends must be specifically stated in the learning agreement which is to be signed by the supervisor and seminarian at the beginning of each semester. If necessary, specific weekends could be changed, but the requirement of ten weekends per semester cannot be changed. The "weekend" technically begins after the 7:30 am Morning Mass, however, the seminarian, with the supervisor's approval, can choose to begin the weekend at the parish no later than 11:00 am Saturday and end his weekend in time to return to the seminary by 5:00 pm for community Vespers. In case you will be having the Mass later at your parish on Saturday, you are not required to attend the Saturday Morning Mass at the Seminary.

It is also possible for the seminarian to attend one "extra PFE opportunity" for a weekday event at the parish per month. That will allow the seminarian and supervisor to organize a pastoral experience that does not occur on weekends, such as a marriage preparation meeting, a baptism preparation meeting, a funeral liturgy, a parish council meeting, school board meeting, a parish mission, or a special parish celebration. In some cases, these "extra PFE opportunities" can be scheduled at the beginning of the semester. However, ample time must be given if the supervisor wants the seminarian to attend a weekday parish event to ensure a proper balance in the seminarian's schedule.

Pastor supervisors are asked to ensure that the seminarians have ample pastoral activity on Saturday morning and afternoon, prior to the Saturday vigil Masses. Permission for seminarian to return later on Sunday can be granted by the Coordinator of Pastoral Formation.

Additionally, please note that deacons are:

1) Expected to **preach** at least **1 Sunday homily** every weekend or **2 Sunday homilies** every other week.

2) Required to spend minimum of **20** and maximum of **24** weekends in the parish per academic year (at least 10 scheduled weekend overnights per semester, with a maximum of 12 weekends per semester).
3) Expected to celebrate/assist at least one **baptism**, **wedding** outside Mass, and **wake** or **burial** in the parish (this may vary according to the parish's reality)
4) Expected to help **prepare** couples for **marriage** and/or for the **baptism** of their children.
5) Expected to attend one or more **parish council** and/or **finance committee** meetings even if that takes place on weekday evening.
6) Expected to regularly visit **hospitals**, **nursing homes** and **homebound sick** of the parish.
7) Expected to spend some time with parish clergy for common meals and fraternal socializing.
8) Expected to accompany pastors or parochial vicars for pastoral activities in parish when possible.
9) Expected to accompany priest for Anointing of the Sick to become familiar with the Rite.
10) Must report to the parish no later than 9am on Saturday and be back at the seminary for Sunday Vespers at 5pm. Occasional permission to miss Vespers can be given by the Coordinator of Pastoral Formation, as the need arises.

e. **Homiletic Assessment & Preaching Evaluation**

At the end of the fall semester, all 4th Theology seminarians will submit a maximum two-page report based on the homiletic feedback received from the evaluation process. All 4th year seminarians in parish placements must preach at least once per month, preferably every weekend they go to their PFE parish assignment. The exact number of preaching opportunities will be determined by the supervising pastor and the seminarian. If a 4th Theology seminarian is not yet ordained a deacon, the supervisor must provide some opportunity for the seminarian to exercise some "practice" of preaching before a congregation. Non-deacon preaching can be done as a "post- communion reflection", a prayer group reflection, at a parish mission, or even in a Liturgy of the Word outside of Mass. Before the end of the first semester each 4th theologian, with the help of the supervising pastor, will complete a preaching evaluation. The specific evaluation sheet will be made available early in the academic year. The specific instructions are as follows:

The deacon and pastor will select a weekend to evaluate the deacon's homily.

1) The deacon will be responsible for making ten copies of the preaching evaluation form. He will give five blank copies to the pastor.
2) The pastor will select five parishioners, at random, who will complete the preaching evaluation form. The deacon will distribute his remaining five copies to other parishioners. These parishioners should represent the following groups of people: (1) a senior citizen (2) a married couple with a young family (3) a young adult single male (4) a young adult single female (5) a teenager.
3) After collecting the completed evaluation forms, the deacon and supervising pastor should discuss the results. The pastor should offer his personalized comments to the deacon regarding the style, content, and tone of the deacon's homily.
4) The concluding remarks and evaluation form from the pastor will be emailed to

the Coordinator of Pastoral Formation by the assigned date. Proper copies need to be made.

f. **Further Clarifications of Policies for Deacons**
Seminarians from the Archdiocese of Baltimore, Archdiocese of Washington, Diocese of Arlington, Diocese of Harrisburg, and the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston usually receive an assignment from their (arch)bishop.

NOTE: Deacons are on a rotating schedule to preside during the Sunday Holy Hour at 4:00 pm and solemn Vespers at 5:00 pm. (The same deacon presides during both liturgies.) **The deacon should give the supervisor advance notice (two weeks) about this matter**. On those days, he will have to leave earlier relative to travel time.

g. **Preaching and Preaching Evaluations: A** deacon should assist at appointed Sunday Masses and should preach at least during one of those Masses. There will be times in which he must complete a preaching evaluation.

h. **Weekday Duties:** Fourth theologians (4T) are assigned (generally) only on weekends. However, in order to provide some limited experience for parish preparation, the supervisor and seminarian can organize a schedule that will allow the seminarian to come to the parish one extra day per month, during the weekday, in order to experience another important pastoral experience, such as a wake service or an important parish meeting that occurs during the weekday. This extra day can be helpful in completing the leaning agreement requirements. This extra day of pastoral presence, however, cannot be scheduled at an inopportune time that would affect the seminarian's other duties or the seminary community schedule. This extra visit will also require mileage reimbursement, but not a stipend.

3. **All seminarians are required to make up missed assignments**.

4. **All seminarians are required to attend all scheduled pastoral formation experience workshops:** This includes all meetings set forth and agreed upon by the seminarian and supervisor at the beginning of the academic year. This also requires the seminarian to ensure an appropriate balance of his schedule along with the other responsibilities set forth by the seminary.

5. **All seminarians are required to complete all written materials as follows:**
   a) a completed copy of the signed learning agreement.
   b) two theological reflections in the fall semester (one for PT2 seminarians).
   c) two theological reflections in the spring semester (one for PT2 seminarians).
   d) completed pre-placement assessment forms for the following year.
   e) the seminarian's evaluation of the PFE site and supervisor; and
   f) <u>for 4T seminarians only</u>: an assessment and preaching evaluations at the end of the 1st semester.

   Submission of all materials and proper copies distributed by the established date: Seminarians are required to upload a PDF copy of PFE contracts, theological reflections, pre-placements assessments, site evaluations, other written materials, assignments, and evaluations on to CANVAS. Please keep all your records including the PFE attendance list among your personal records. You do not have to email them to the Coordinator of Pastoral Formation and Assistant to the Faculty, Ginny, as was the case before.

Failure to return all necessary information by the due date or to comply with all instructions, unless previously excused due to serious illness or unforeseen emergencies, <u>will result in a failure of the PFE course</u>.

6. **Other case-by-case requirements: The seminarian, working with his supervisor, formation advisor, and Coordinator of Pastoral Formation, may have other requirements to maximize the educational aspect of this PFE experience.**

VIII. PASTORAL FORMATION G U I D E L I N E S & POLICIES

A schedule of PFE events will be given to each seminarian and supervisor at the beginning of the year. The schedule provides the supervisor and seminarians with a list of dates when the seminarian is NOT available to participate in his PFE, due to seminary or university obligations.

The program hopes to establish a "regular" schedule of PFE experiences weekly or monthly. The PFE program schedule hopes to create regularity for the seminarian, the people he serves, and the supervisor to sense consistency in his ministry.

The hours listed must not be interpreted so strictly that the hours no longer correspond with the reality of the situation at the PFE itself. In other words, there will be a need for flexibility, just like in all pastoral settings. These "policies" should be seen more as "guidelines" to help establish a good, honest, thorough schedule between the seminarian and supervisor. These policies do not include driving time but should be considered a factor by the seminarian and supervisor, especially during the busy times of the seminarian's semester. Flexibility and constant communication about the schedule are **<u>essential</u>** to this program. There may be times when either the PFE supervisor or the seminarian's schedule precludes a scheduled meeting. Missed meetings that were scheduled should be made up for the seminarian to show that he is pro-active in ministry and not simply trying to do the bare minimum in terms of his service. A seminarian is not required to make up weather-related cancellations.

Those seminarians, who for some reason are not able to make up their time required by the Manual, must arrange the make-up time on their PFE assignment (always in communication with the coordinator for pastoral formation) or through the food pantry, soup kitchen or similar organized by the coordinator of pastoral formation. If there are serious extenuating circumstances for mission the PFE assignment, please speak with the coordinator for pastoral formation. Those seminarians who did not miss any PFE time are also welcome to join the food pantry, soup kitchen or similar organized by the coordinator for pastoral formation as an opportunity to serve the poor and marginalized.

Supervisors are asked to ensure the seminarian works within the goals established but not misconception that he is the sole provider of a particular ministry.

These policies suggest a certain number of hours/time commitment per month, which can be increased or decreased if it is agreed upon by the supervisor and seminarian and approved by the Coordinator of Pastoral Formation.

It is important that at the first meeting, the seminarian and supervisor discuss schedules to complete the PFE learning agreement by the due date. That will help avoid any confusion about the seminarian's expected days and times of service.

The official PFE schedule contains two helpful distinctions: First, "OPTIONAL EXEMPTION" – i.e., a seminarian may legitimately ask to be absent from a PFE date originally r e q u e s t e d by the

supervisor; Second, "OPTIONAL OPPORTUNITY" – i.e., seminarians may choose to participate in a PFE even during a non-required time, such as one of the semester breaks.

A. Absences

If a seminarian is unable to attend a scheduled assignment, he must inform both the supervisor and the Coordinator of Pastoral Formation before the scheduled event. It is a serious formation issue if a seminarian chooses to miss an assignment without due cause. If a seminarian learns that a scheduled placement has been cancelled (e.g., due to inclement weather or by supervisor's decision), he should also inform the Coordinator of Pastoral Formation. Any excused absences requested by the seminarian must be made up to fulfill syllabus requirements.

B. Inclement Weather or Other Emergencies

Seminarians must be attentive to any closings due to inclement weather. Seminarians must have a way to contact the supervisor in case of emergencies. At the introductory supervisor meeting there should be a discussion of all policies. Seminarians must have an alternative number or a cell phone for each supervisor to immediately communicate any delays or cancellations.

C. Mediation

If the seminarian has made attempts but has not been successful in discussing an issue with the PFE supervisor, he must contact the Coordinator of Pastoral Formation as soon as possible. Learning to recognize and address potential problems early on is an important skill in ministry. The Coordinator of Pastoral Formation will inform the seminarian of any concerns raised by his supervisor.

D. Mileage Reimbursements for all PFE Seminarians

The seminary expects seminarians to use their personal vehicle for traveling to PFE assignments. Teams are expected to carpool. If carpooling is available, but the seminarians choose to drive separately, they will only be reimbursed for one driver. A PFE site is not expected to pay equal reimbursement for two men who choose to drive separately for any reason. Any exemptions must be approved by the Coordinator of Pastoral Formation. Otherwise, mileage reimbursements will not be provided in those cases in which team members choose to travel separately.

1. Seminarians may request mileage reimbursement to cover travel expenses to and from the placement sites *only*. It is a serious formation issue for any seminarian to take unfair advantage of this policy. This must always be documented with on-line travel planning assistance (i.e., Google Maps)

2. Seminarians are asked to make an accounting report to each supervisor for mileage. Seminarians must organize a system with their supervisor by the start of the semester to request reimbursement. Reimbursement can be paid directly to the seminarian each month, or the PFE supervisor can provide a reimbursement or partial reimbursement check to the seminary each semester to cover those expenses. The seminary PFE fund will reimburse the seminarian's travel expenses if the PFE site cannot do so. Seminarians must follow the policies established on the PFE reimbursement form. Seminarians receiving stipends and/or mileage reimbursement from the supervisor should not request a reimbursement from the PFE program. It is a serious formation issue to violate this policy.

3. Reimbursements are distributed monthly only. Seminarians should submit the forms by the requested monthly deadline and not wait for semester breaks. Failure to follow this policy

may result in a delay or denial of reimbursement.

E. Pastoral Service Compensation

The normal rate for seminarian reimbursement is $.45/mile. There are exceptions which can be made with the Coordinator of Pastoral Formation. Pastor-Mentors for 4th year deacons are asked to provide at least $50.00 compensation per weekend of service plus mileage reimbursement of .45 cents per mile. This payment can be made directly to the deacon and thus avoid having to write a check to the seminary for the mileage reimbursement. However, accounting by the deacon is required. If a deacon attends a weekday opportunity, he should receive mileage reimbursement but not the $50.00. The $50.00 compensation is only for deacons (not 4th year theology seminarians) and only for weekends, as it is expected that deacons will perform some sacramental service such as weddings, baptisms, prayer services, and preaching homilies. Again, 4th year theologians who are not deacons do not receive the $50.00 compensation but are qualified to receive mileage reimbursement.

IX. ROLE OF PASTORAL FORMATION STAFF

The Coordinator of Pastoral Formation has responsibility for:

a. Identifying appropriate settings in which Mount St. Mary's seminarians can gain pastoral experience.
b. Interviewing seminarians, as needed, in order to determine the best placement in relation to individual ability and the needs of the Church.
c. Approving supervisors for the seminarians' pastoral formation experience.
d. Visiting the pastoral formation experience sites, as time permits.
e. Communicating with vocation directors or other diocesan personnel regarding pastoral formation experience progress.
f. Organizing group theological reflection groups with seminarians, as time permits.
g. Receiving final evaluations and communicating any commendations and recommendations to the Formation Team.
h. Maintaining pastoral formation records and reviewing them with the Formation Team before ordination to priesthood and conferral of the Master of Divinity degree; and
i. Providing learning opportunities that will strengthen pastoral formation.

X. PROFESSIONAL MINISTERIAL ETHICS

Seminarians are preparing, step by step, for the priesthood, by virtue of which they will *"stand and act in the community in the name and person of Jesus Christ, Head and Shepherd of the Church."* (PPF §368) As a consequence, the closer they come to ordination, the more closely their ministry should approximate in style and motivation that of the one who *"came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."* (Mk 10:45)

The first and fundamental norm for the ethics of seminarians engaged in pastoral ministry must be the teachings of Jesus. Therefore, ever more prayerful reflection upon the passages of the Gospel in which Jesus lays out the kind of ministry he expects his disciples to carry out in his name is essential. Equally important is conscientious attention to the Lord's critique of the attitudes and actions of religious personnel that he did *not* want his own to manifest in their ministry.

Supervisors in the Pastoral Formation Experience setting model and clarify for the seminarian how these general principles and Gospel mandates apply to the concrete circumstances that arise in

their particular ministry, and the discernment process by which a specifically Christian response to concrete situations may be identified.

A. Serving and Being Served

1. The seminarian's life should be marked by a desire to be of service as much as possible consistent with his other responsibilities, rather than by the attempt to find the bare minimum necessary to satisfy the obligation the program imposes.
2. Granting that persons of certain personalities, characteristics, interests, values, and theological stances will naturally be more attractive to him than others, nevertheless the seminarian will endeavor to provide equally committed service to others without regard to their age, race, gender, social status or mental/physical abilities.
3. The seminarian, like all Church ministers, has an obligation to those whom he serves to be as knowledgeable, competent, and prepared for his assignments as he can be.
4. Nevertheless, it is important that he keeps in mind that he is present in his pastoral formation assignments precisely as <u>one who is learning, not as the authority</u>.
5. The seminarian should have sufficient self-discipline to maintain clear boundaries in his pastoral relationships to ensure that they serve the other rather than the seminarian's own needs for attention, dependency, etc.
6. Precisely because the seminarian is in the process of becoming a priest, it is not uncommon for people to accord him already the respect and deference that they show to the ordained. The temptation is strong to relish these marks of respect.
7. The seminarian must be alert to the temptation and careful to measure his attitude by that of Christ. (Phil 2:5-8; Mt 20:25-27)
8. Prudence must be exercised in the matter of accepting gifts or favors from those to whom the seminarian ministers in a pastoral formation experience assignment. As much as possible, care is to be taken to avoid dual relationships that can lead to conflict of interest and misunderstandings even as they feed a sense of entitlement on the part of the priest - to-be.

B. Appropriate Conduct

1. It is understood that in all his relationships the seminarian must model in word and deed the chastity required by a life of celibacy embraced for the sake of the Kingdom.
2. Great prudence must be exercised in evaluating whether a hug or indeed any form of physical contact is an appropriate expression of pastoral care in each given instance.
3. The standard must be how the gesture is perceived by the *other*, and the potential for misperception is great since there are always many factors in that person's life and previous experience that the minister cannot know.
4. The seminarian has a responsibility to be familiar with the dynamics of transference and countertransference that make pastoral ministers vulnerable to violating sexual boundaries, and with the warning signs that one is approaching a boundary violation.

C. Respect and Confidentiality

1. Like all Church ministers, the seminarian is to carefully preserve the confidentiality of what is confided to him during his pastoral formation experience. Later when engaged in group theological reflection exercises involving case studies, when preaching and offering

reflections, and when simply sharing experiences in informal conversations with other seminarians, care must be taken that confidences are not broken, nor identities revealed.

2. The seminarian is perceived as a representative of the Church; his words and actions must reflect this status lest he causes scandal. By avoiding gossip and conversation that is demeaning, disrespectful, or harmful to another's reputation, the seminarian needs to demonstrate his trustworthiness as one who respects the dignity of all human persons.
3. Notwithstanding the ordinary inviolateness of confidences, seminarians are bound by all applicable provisions of the Archdiocese's *Decree on Child Protection of Youth* regarding reporting any instances of physical or sexual abuse of children of which he may become aware.

APPENDIX ONE

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION FOR SEMINARIANS

WHAT is theological reflection?

Theological reflection is the ancient practice of integrating faith and life. It is a process of reflecting on an experience in connection with Scripture and Tradition, as we seek to be aware of God's presence in our lives. Our reflection necessarily invites us to action.

WHY include theological reflection in pastoral formation?

Theological reflection provides an opportunity for personal synthesis, the clarification of motivations, and the development of directions for life and ministry. The final step is to return to the ministry or pastoral situation, but now with more knowledge and ability and a better inner sense of direction because of an enriched spiritual life and a more deeply grounded sense of priestly identity.

Supervision, theological reflection, and evaluation are necessary components of an effective pastoral program. Although theological reflection can help the development of pastoral skills, its primary purpose is to interpret pastoral experience or activity in light of Scripture, Church teaching, personal faith, and pastoral practices. Reflection of this kind should become a lifelong habit in priestly ministry.

HOW to prepare a *written theological reflection*? B.E.G. / Start and finish with prayer.

- **Be** attentive and recognize the Experience
- **Be** fully present. Experiences occur naturally in each PFE placement.
- Recall a recent PFE. Choose something that surprised/challenged you. Life is full of both.
- **Be** specific and concrete. Consider the following: ***What*** happened? ***Who*** was involved? ***What*** was your role? ***What*** were your actions at the time? ***Were*** you watching something unfold? ***Were*** you directly involved in pastoral care: evangelization, catechesis, health care, prison, homeless or marginalized ministries? Preaching or asked for assistance in a difficult situation, etc.? ***What*** was the 'essence' / critical part' of the experience? ***Why*** do you think this happened the way it did?
- Grow in self-awareness and emotional intelligence. Consider the following: ***What*** feelings/emotions did you experience at the time of the event, and now as you recall it? Did you have assumptions, attitudes, cultural biases? ***Were*** you challenged or surprised? ***What*** was at stake for you? ***How*** did this experience relate to prior experiences in your life?

Engage Scripture, Tradition, and Culture in dialogue with experience.

- Reflect on what Scripture, Tradition, and culture bring to your experience.
- What Scripture accounts, images or symbols come to mind? What can God's Word reveal to you?
- What teachings come to mind? Possibilities could be but are not limited to covenant, God's grace, relationship, sin, forgiveness, incarnation, restoration, faith, renewal,

peace, obedience, discernment, hope, holiness, solidarity, hospitality, etc.

- How does this experience relate to our culture? If you grew up/lived somewhere other than USA, do the values from that culture give you a different point of view? Does our culture present challenges? Does our culture present opportunities? What are signs of God's presence in the culture?

Gather insights and recognize invitation to on-going growth & transformation.

- How did God reveal himself to you in this experience?
- How did the PFE surprise you or challenge you?
- What did you learn about yourself? What did you learn about witnessing the Lord in your PFE?
- What did you learn about listening skills, empathy, patience, how to have difficult conversations?
- What did you learn about your pastoral identity? What questions/concerns remain?
- How does your reflection on this experience relate to your formation goals? Where do you need transformation and growth?