# RULE OF LIFE

MOUNT
ST. MARY'S
SEMINARY

Emmitsburg, MD

2026-2027

# RULE OF LIFE

## Table of Contents

**Vision and Mission Statement** ..... **4**

**Section I: The Seminary Spiritual and Liturgical Life** ..... **5**

I. INTRODUCTION ..... 5

II. PERSONAL ASPECTS ..... 5

A. Essential Elements ..... 5

B. Regular Spiritual Direction ..... 5

C. Daily Prayer ..... 5

1. Daily Holy Hour ..... 6

2. Lectio Divina ..... 6

3. Marian Devotion and Rosary ..... 6

4. Liturgy of the Hours ..... 6

5. Spiritual Reading ..... 6

6. The Sacrament of Penance ..... 6

III. COMMUNAL ASPECTS ..... 6

A. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass ..... 6

B. The Liturgy of the Hours ..... 7

C. Penance Services ..... 7

D. Eucharistic Adoration ..... 7

E. Communal Devotions ..... 7

F. Annual Retreat and Days of Recollection ..... 7

G. Atmosphere of Quiet ..... 8

H. Spiritual Director's Conference ..... 8

IV. CELIBACY STATEMENT ..... 8

A. Responsibilities of the Seminarian ..... 8

1. Understanding the Church's Doctrine on Celibacy ..... 8

2. Seeking Advice and Guidance about Celibacy ..... 8

3. Living a Life Which Nurtures Celibacy ..... 9

B. Areas of Concern for Celibacy ..... 9

C. Grave Violations ..... 10
**Section II: Practices within the Seminary Community ..... 11**
I. INTRODUCTION ..... 11
II. MUTUAL RESPECT AND CONSIDERATION ..... 11
A. Maintaining an Atmosphere of Prayer and Study for All ..... 11
B. Respecting the Property of the Seminary and Seminarians ..... 11
1. Security and Care of Buildings ..... 11
2. Seminary Property ..... 11
3. Kitchen Practices ..... 11
4. Seminary Bar ..... 12
5. Coffee Bar ..... 12
III. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITIES ..... 12
A. Communication and Notices ..... 12
1. The Weekly Bulletin ..... 12
2. Bulletin Boards ..... 12
3. Messages ..... 12
4. Rule of Life and Seminarian Handbook ..... 13
B. Attendance ..... 13
C. Attire and Appearance ..... 14
B. Approvals Required ..... 15
II. POLICIES ..... 16
A. Academic Integrity ..... 16
B. Time Away and Transportation ..... 16
1. Absences ..... 16
2. Breaks and Vacations ..... 17
3. Evangelization Trip ..... 17
4. Pastoral Year ..... 17
5. Vehicles on Campus ..... 18
C. Communal Living ..... 18
1. Room Policies ..... 18
2. Seminarians' Meals ..... 19

3. Recreation Room and Kitchen ..... 19
4. Microwave Use ..... 20
5. Frassati Fitness Room Use ..... 20
6. Barber Shop Use ..... 20
7. Laundry ..... 20
8. Reservations ..... 21
9. Summer Storage ..... 21
10. Packages ..... 21
11. Pets ..... 21
12. Candles ..... 21
13. Lights ..... 21
D. Conduct and Prohibited Items ..... 21
1. Use of Tobacco ..... 21
2. Alcohol ..... 22
3. Controlled Substances ..... 22
4. Guns ..... 22
E. Relationships and Guests ..... 23
1. Relationships with University Students ..... 23
2. Visitors and Guests ..... 23
F. Withdrawals from the Seminary ..... 24
III. MISCELLANEOUS ..... 25
A. Student Government ..... 25
B. Technology ..... 25
1. Computers ..... 25
2. Covenant Eyes ..... 25
3. Social Media ..... 25
4. Electronic Breviary ..... 26
5. Cell Phones ..... 26
Acknowledgement of Receipt ..... 27

## Vision and Mission Statement

*The Vision Statement articulates the motivation for our Seminary. It is an aspirational description of what we would like to achieve.*

Vision: To invite men to "go up to the mountain" (*Haggai* 1:8), so that we might send down holy, self-sacrificial shepherds for the people of God, to light a fire on the earth for the salvation of souls.

*The Mission Statement articulates the purpose of the Seminary. It is who we are and what we do.*

Mission: Mount St. Mary's Seminary prepares men for the Catholic ministerial priesthood in the Third Millennium: men who *love* with the heart of the Church, *think* with the mind of the Church, and *are formed* to have an integrated core of human, intellectual, spiritual, and pastoral virtues modeled by Jesus Christ, our High Priest.

## Section I: The Seminary Spiritual and Liturgical Life

### I. INTRODUCTION

**A.** “For every priest his spiritual formation is the core which unifies and gives life to his being a priest and his acting as a priest” (PDV #45). “Spiritual formation is about forming the heart so that it will interiorize the sentiments and ways of acting of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, who always acted in communion with the Holy Spirit” (PPF #228).

**B.** "Spiritual formation...should be conducted in such a way that the students may learn to live in intimate and unceasing union with God the Father through his Son Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit" (*Optatam Totius* #8; PPF #226).

**C.** "The final goal of spiritual formation in the seminary is to establish attitudes, habits and practices in the spiritual life that will continue after ordination. Spiritual formation in the seminary is meant to set the foundation for a lifetime of priestly ministry and spirituality” (PPF #229).

### II. PERSONAL ASPECTS

#### A. Essential Elements

1. “The spirituality cultivated in the seminary is specifically priestly,” embracing prayer, sacraments, simplicity of life, obedience, pastoral service and celibate chastity (PPF #228).
2. Seminarian spiritual formation goals are found in the Handbook. More practical information and useful aids for achieving the goals are found in the Spiritual Formation Booklet.

#### B. Regular Spiritual Direction

1. Seminarians must have a spiritual director with whom they should meet about every two weeks. The spiritual director is chosen from the list approved by the seminary Rector. The seminarian is free to change directors, with the approval of the Coordinator of Spiritual Formation and Rector. As spiritual direction involves the manifestation of conscience, confidentiality appropriate to the internal forum is always maintained (cf. Canon 239, #2; PPF #104).
2. The task of the spiritual director is to guide the seminarian “in arriving at the interiorization and integration needed for growth in sanctity, virtue, and readiness for Holy Orders” (PPF #229). "Seminarians should confide their personal history, personal relationships, prayer experiences, the cultivation of virtues, their temptations, and other significant topics to their spiritual director” (PPF #105).

#### C. Daily Prayer

“The habit of daily prayer and meditation enables seminarians to acquire a personalized sense of how God's salvation has taken hold of their lives and how they might respond to that great grace. This prayer happens in the context of reflective quiet and solitude in which they learn to be attuned to God's movements in their lives. It grows and develops into a contemplative attitude that learns to find God in all things. It matures in such a way

that it allows for a balanced and unifying rhythm of life in action and contemplation, work and prayer, while providing the future priest with the strength, meaning, and focus he will need in his life" (PPF #229, g).

1. **Daily Holy Hour**

   A hallmark of the spiritual formation of Mount St. Mary's Seminary is the daily Holy Hour. This is understood as at least a half-hour of mental prayer, ideally in the morning, and at least a half-hour of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. Adoration of Our Lord in the Holy Eucharist while exposed is facilitated and encouraged.

2. **Lectio Divina**

   Mental prayer should be nourished by Sacred Scripture, since an "essential element of spiritual formation is the prayerful and meditated reading of the Word of God *(lectio divina)*" (PDV #47).

3. **Marian Devotion and Rosary**

   Seminarians should develop a strong Marian devotion which includes praying the Holy Rosary daily.

4. **Liturgy of the Hours**

   "Seminarians must be instructed to incorporate progressively all of the hours of the Liturgy of the Hours, beginning with Lauds and Vespers, and then the Office of Readings, and, finally, the Daytime Hour and Compline. This entire cycle should be a regular practice of each seminarian at least a year prior to his diaconate ordination" (PPF #250).

5. **Spiritual Reading**

   Daily spiritual reading, especially the Gospels and the lives of the saints, should be a part of the seminarian's spiritual formation.

6. **The Sacrament of Penance**

   Frequent reception of the Sacrament of Penance ought to be part of each seminarian's life. While seminarians are free to approach other priests, the seminarian's spiritual director is "fittingly" his regular confessor. Seminarians may not confess to those priests whose responsibilities are in the external forum (PPF #251).

## III. COMMUNAL ASPECTS

### A. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

1. Seminarians are to participate in the daily celebration of the Eucharist. They are trained "to consider the Eucharistic celebration as the essential moment of their day, in which they will take an active part and at which they will never be satisfied with a merely habitual attendance." They experience the Eucharist as "the high point of Christian prayer" and learn that its daily celebration should be at the center of their future priestly life (cf. PDV #48). Due to the importance of the Mass in the spiritual life, absences should follow the protocol in the Policies Section under absences.

2. Regarding the posture for receiving Holy Communion, the Bishops of the United States tell us that "the norm established for the Dioceses of the United States of America is that Holy Communion is to be received standing, unless an individual member of the faithful wishes to receive Communion while kneeling" (GIRM, 160). A reference to *Redemptionis Sacramentum* 91 follows, which indicates that this subordinate clause serves to remind the minister that Communion should not be denied to someone who wishes to receive kneeling. However, it is preferable for the faithful to follow the norm established by the bishops, and seminarians should be models of such cooperation. Thus, at the Mount seminarians are to receive Holy Communion standing. Likewise, the next paragraph of the GIRM says, "the communicant bows his or her head before the Sacrament as a gesture of reverence," so one should avoid genuflecting in line as well.

**B. The Liturgy of the Hours**

Seminarians participate in the daily communal celebration of Lauds and Vespers. Communal Compline is encouraged for small groups and is prayed several nights of the week as an option in the seminary chapel. Seminarians prepare to undertake the canonical obligation of praying the Liturgy of the Hours and learn to appreciate its value (PPF #229c).

**C. Penance Services**

Communal celebrations of the sacrament with individual confession and absolution are scheduled twice a year (cf. PPF #251). Seminarians thus learn to appreciate the beauty and joy of the Sacrament of Penance (cf. PDV #48 and PPF #229b).

**D. Eucharistic Adoration**

A holy hour of Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place every day in the seminary chapel. Visits to the Blessed Sacrament and Spiritual Communions at other times during the day are also encouraged. Prayerful reflection in the presence of the Eucharistic Lord leads to a deeper sharing in the Paschal Mystery and to a more generous response to the gift of the Eucharist in one's life of faith, hope and charity (PPF #229i*;* #255).

**E. Communal Devotions**

Communal devotional prayer is provided periodically throughout the year.

1. Recitation of the Rosary.
2. Friday Stations of the Cross are celebrated during the season of Lent and periodically throughout the academic year.
3. Devotional prayers to St. Joseph are offered after Mass on Wednesday.
4. Devotional prayers to the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints, such as novenas to Our Lady of Perpetual Help, and the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, are encouraged as means of growth in the spiritual life (PPF #229i).

**F. Annual Retreat and Days of Recollection**

An annual five-day retreat, a weekend of recollection with 40-Hours devotion, and days of recollection are provided as essential components of the spiritual formation program.

Attendance is mandatory (PPF, 252). Seminarians are responsible for making travel arrangements which do not conflict with these events. Anyone wishing to miss the retreat, including a man preparing for ordination, must have a written request from his vocation director.

### G. Atmosphere of Quiet

"An atmosphere of quiet should be provided within the seminary community on a daily basis to ensure an environment conducive for prayer" (PPF #252). To foster a contemplative spirit, the seminary is committed to maintaining a calm and peaceful atmosphere in and around the seminary buildings to encourage prayer and study (cf. *Maintaining an Atmosphere of Prayer and Study for All*, Sect. II, II, A).

### H. Spiritual Director's Conference

The Coordinator of Spiritual Formation regularly offers spiritual conferences. These conferences treat various topics related to priestly life and spirituality. Attendance is mandatory (PPF #253).

## IV. CELIBACY STATEMENT

### A. Responsibilities of the Seminarian

Candidates for the priesthood must be able to discern a twofold call: a call to ordained ministry and a call to live the celibate life. For the Latin Catholic priest, there is no call to priesthood without the call to celibacy. The seminarian should come to see celibacy not only as an obligation, but as a gift to be desired.

Information relevant to formation in this area is found in various places. The **Handbook** contains policies regarding boundaries and harassment. The **Spiritual Formation Booklet** contains practical ideas for growth. Below are general ideas about celibacy and some behaviors to avoid. Finally, further detail on these topics is found in the **Guidelines for Spiritual Directors.**

#### 1. Understanding the Church's Doctrine on Celibacy

Only by reading and reflecting on Church documents which treat celibacy in depth, such as *Presbyterorum Ordinis* (Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests), Pope Paul VI's encyclical, *Sacerdotalis Caelibatus* (On Priestly Celibacy), and Pope John Paul II's many writings, especially *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, will the seminarian be able to grasp adequately what is entailed in the celibate commitment. Over the course of their formation, students should be well informed about what they will be embracing at ordination. They should be able to recognize celibacy as a personal gift for more radical discipleship of Christ and for greater freedom to serve the Church, with a desire to give witness to the coming of the eschatological Kingdom.

#### 2. Seeking Advice and Guidance about Celibacy

Each seminarian has a formation advisor and a spiritual director to assist in this area. If helpful, either can recommend psychological counseling as well.

a. **The formation advisor** carries out his duties in the external forum. He assists in creating goals to meet the benchmarks of each stage of formation and reports on progress, verifying the requisites for advancement.

b. **The spiritual director,** working in the internal forum, allows the seminarian to reveal himself at his own pace and helps him to discern what and when to bring matters to the external forum.

3. **Living a Life Which Nurtures Celibacy**

a. **Prayer:** Since celibacy is not a natural virtue but a gift from the Lord, it cannot be sustained without a life of prayer and regular participation in the sacramental life of the Church. Daily participation in the Eucharist and regular confession are vital supports in fidelity to a chaste, celibate life. Devotion to the Virgin Mary as the model of faithfulness both to her Son and to the chaste life should hold a significant place in the seminarian's spiritual life. Seminarians should also look to the lives of the saints for inspiration and strength in their own struggles.

b. **Communion with Others:** Celibacy cannot be lived in a healthy way in isolation. Candidates for priesthood should acknowledge the need for human relationship and show that they can live in communion in various ways: by forming satisfying friendships; experiencing the fraternity of fellow seminarians; establishing good relationships with the men and women encountered in their apostolates; forming bonds with the presbyterate of their home dioceses; and strengthening ties to their families.

c. **Poverty and Obedience:** Celibacy does not stand in isolation from the other two evangelical counsels -- poverty and obedience. If celibacy means availability for others, so do poverty or simplicity of life and obedience. A priest who is preoccupied with material things cannot be free for service to others; nor can a priest who does not listen to others -- whether they are his superiors, his peers, or his people -- honestly claim that he has put himself at the service of others. The self-emptying of oneself that is expressed in celibacy should be mirrored in a moderate lifestyle and a docile spirit.

**B. Areas of Concern for Celibacy**

1. **Relationships with Women**: The ability to develop relationships with women that are consistent with priestly celibacy is vital. It is important for seminarians to distinguish healthy friendship from romance. Attraction to women and a desire for marriage are not signs of a lack of a call to celibacy, however flirting, dating, or dating-like behavior are not appropriate for a celibate man.

2. **Homosexuality:** Celibacy well-lived requires affective maturity. Homosexual attractions, defined as "an exclusive or predominant sexual attraction toward persons of the same sex" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2357) are "objectively disordered" (CCC, 2358) and are a sign of affective immaturity. "The Church, while profoundly respecting the persons in question, cannot admit to the seminary or to holy orders those who practice homosexuality, present deep-seated homosexual tendencies or

support the so-called 'gay culture'" (Instruction from the Congregation for Catholic Education, 2005, 2).

3. **Pornography:** Among the greatest challenges today to live chastity is the proper use of social media and the internet. Any use of pornography or masturbation is contrary to celibacy, but if a cycle of unchaste, sinful behavior exists, help is available to eliminate it. The seminary offers the Friends of St. Joseph, a confidential support group, or the possibility of professional counseling. If a serious problem in this area has not been resolved after a year or two in seminary formation, it may be advisable that the seminarian discontinue priestly formation, at least for a time.

### C. Grave Violations

Chastity is a virtue in which every seminarian is called to continual growth. Because purity of heart requires vigilance, seminarians should avoid behaviors that undermine this virtue, including imprudent entertainment choices, inappropriate jokes or innuendo, and social situations that compromise Christian modesty or integrity. Such behaviors, if left unaddressed, can weaken one's commitment to chaste living and should be discussed promptly with one's formation advisor or spiritual director. Serious violations of chastity, especially those that reveal a pattern of misconduct or a lack of suitability for priestly life, may result in dismissal from formation. Examples that may result in dismissal include:

- Pornography which is violent, homosexual, or extreme
- Pornography which is accessed on public computers or shared with another
- Sharing of sexual images of any kind with another
- Phone, text, social media, or online communications of a sexual nature with another person
- Behavior of a sexual nature with any person, male or female
- Comments, messages, or behaviors that constitute sexual harassment, grooming, or sexual propositions
- Visiting clubs or establishments that are lewd or scandalous
- Subscribing to apps or websites which facilitate or encourage lewd behavior

## Section II: Practices within the Seminary Community

### I. INTRODUCTION

The seminary program of life serves its principal aim: the formation of future priests, pastors of the Church. These practices with the seminary community are meant to serve this aim and to give concrete norms so that Mount St. Mary's Seminary is truly what it is called to be, "a community built on deep friendship and charity...a true family living in joy" (*PDV* #60).

### II. MUTUAL RESPECT AND CONSIDERATION

#### A. Maintaining an Atmosphere of Prayer and Study for All

1. At all times, seminarians should be aware of the noise level during conversations, phone calls, and when using musical instruments or electronic devices. These should not disturb others.
2. In the evening, even on weekends, an atmosphere of quiet should be maintained on seminary residence floors.
3. Silence begins at 9:00 pm on the residence hallways and stairwells. It extends to the entire house, including outside, between 11:00 pm and 7:00 am.

#### B. Respecting the Property of the Seminary and Seminarians

1. **Security and Care of Buildings**

   Unfamiliar people in the building or anything unusual should be reported to the Vice Rector or another seminary authority. Exterior doors and windows found left open should be closed.

2. **Seminary Property**

   Personal appropriation of any seminary property by a seminarian without permission is forbidden. Borrowing with the intention to return is not a legitimate reason for taking property without permission. Any article used with permission must be returned to its proper place.

3. **Kitchen Practices**

   a. The primary use of the kitchen is for seminarian and house activities.

   b. Anyone who uses the kitchen is responsible for:
      i washing all plates, glasses, cups, silverware and cooking utensils, and returning them to their proper storage places
      ii cleaning tables and countertops
      iii putting all garbage in the proper containers
      iv storing all unconsumed food and drink in the refrigerators or cabinets. Unmarked food is considered community property
      v disposing of any apparent spoiled food
      vi leaving the kitchen generally clean, neat, and orderly

c. All food left in the refrigerator for over one week will be disposed of by the Kitchen Coordinator.

d. If the kitchen has not been properly used or cleaned, contact the parties involved and report their names to the Kitchen Coordinator.

e. The Kitchen Coordinator will report repeat offenders to the Vice Rector, who may deny them future use of the kitchen.

f. To reserve the kitchen, see the Policies Section.

4. **Seminary Bar**

a. The seminary bar is under the supervision of the Phillips Lounge Coordinator, who enlists seminarians to serve according to a regular schedule.

b. Bar hours are Sunday, Wednesday and Friday from 7:30 to 9:00 pm, and Saturday 7:30 – 10:00 pm. The bar is closed on Fridays in Lent.

c. The bar sells soft drinks, beer and wine and is cash only. No other form of alcohol may be sold. Prices are kept to a minimum and cover only the operating costs of maintaining the bar. No profits are made. See the alcohol policy.

5. **Coffee Bar**

A variety of hot drinks are available in the seminary kitchen. Those who use the coffee machine should use it responsibly and follow the directions carefully.

## III. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

### A. Communication and Notices

1. **The Weekly Bulletin**

a. It is the responsibility of each seminarian to read the weekly electronic bulletin sent to his Mount email.

2. **Bulletin Boards**

a. Only notices approved and initialed by a faculty or staff member may be placed on the main bulletin board.

b. Seminarian notices may be placed on the seminarians' bulletin boards and/or on the bulletin boards on each floor.

c. No notices may be posted on doors throughout the seminary. All notices posted on doors will be removed.

3. **Messages**

a. Seminarians are responsible for checking their mailboxes daily.

b. Seminarians are required to check their cell phones for text and voicemail messages frequently (at least twice a day). Messages from faculty, administration, or staff should be responded to within 24 hours.

c. Seminarians are required to use and check their Mount St. Mary's email at least twice a day. Messages from faculty, administration, or staff should be responded to within 24 hours.

4. **Rule of Life and Seminarian Handbook**

   Seminarians must become familiar with the activities and policies of Mount St. Mary's Seminary and are required to read the entirety of the Rule of Life and the Seminarian Handbook.

**B. Attendance**

1. Seminarians are expected to be present and on time for all mandatory events.
2. On weekdays, seminarians are required to attend Lauds at 6:45 am and Mass at 7:00 am, as well as Vespers at 5:00 pm.
3. On Saturdays, seminarians are required to attend Mass at 8:30 am, unless for a legitimate reason they are away from the seminary (for example, a pastoral formation assignment).
4. On Sundays, seminarians are required to attend the 9:00 am Sunday Mass in Immaculate Conception Chapel, with only the following exceptions:
   a. Seminarians in fourth configuration on their parish assignments
   b. those who have conflicting pastoral formation assignments
   c. those who have received permission to be away for the weekend for exceptional reasons
5. Seminarians are required to attend Solemn Vespers at 5:00 pm on Sundays. Seminarians in fourth configuration whose obligations at their parish assignments have concluded should attend Solemn Vespers. Seminarians who have been given permission to be away for the weekend must also plan to return in time for Vespers, unless specific permission has been given otherwise.
6. Seminarians are expected to spend weekends in the seminary, except those in fourth configuration who have weekend parish assignments.
7. Each seminarian has a pew partner in Immaculate Conception Chapel. A seminarian who is sick or has an excused absence should let his pew partner know. If a pew partner notices that his partner is missing for a liturgical event without having notified him, he should check in with the man. If the absent man continues to not report his absences to the pew partner or does not respond to the pew partner, the pew partner should share his concern with his Formation Advisor. Pew partners are not required in St. Bernard's Chapel. Seating in St. Bernard's choir loft is not permitted during communal prayer and conferences.
8. After an unexcused absence from a required community exercise, the seminarian is required to notify the Vice Rector and the Formation Advisor as soon as possible.

Repeated absences will be made known to the formation team and may involve a meeting with the Coordinator of Human Formation and even the Rector.

9. Class attendance and punctuality are required.
10. **Sickness.** A seminarian who is ill should notify his Formation Advisor and the floor leader. If the seminarian needs to go to the hospital, the Rector must be informed immediately.
    a. Arrangements to obtain meals and/or Holy Communion should be made through the floor leader.
    b. Seminarians who miss a class because of illness should notify their professors before class, if possible.
    c. If a seminarian is going to miss his formation experience placement because of illness or other serious reasons, he should obtain permission from the Coordinator of Pastoral Formation and notify the supervisor of the assignment.
    d. It is presupposed that seminarians who are too ill to attend class are normally expected not to go to their pastoral formation assignments, off-campus activities, the chapel or dining room or other public areas.
11. **Curfew.** Seminarians are expected to be at the seminary by 11:00 pm from Sunday through Thursday nights. Curfew on Friday and Saturday is 12 midnight. All exterior doors to the seminary will be locked each night between 6:30 pm and 6:00 am.

## C. Attire and Appearance

### Class Attire

At Lauds, Mass, Vespers, dinner, classes, pastoral formation assignments and community conferences:

1. Men in the configuration stage are required to wear a tucked-in black shirt with clerical collar, black dress pants, black belt, black shoes and black socks. Sweaters and/or suit jackets, when worn with clerical shirts, should be solid black. In general, sweatshirts are not class attire.
2. Men in the discipleship stage are to wear black dress pants, black belt, black shoes and black socks, and one of the following: (1) a white, gray or black dress shirt, long or short-sleeved, or (2) a collared polo/golf style shirt, which may be white, gray, or black. If there is an emblem, it must be either a diocesan or seminary emblem. Sweaters and/or suit jackets should be solid black. In general, sweatshirts are not class attire.

### Formal Attire

1. When “formal attire” is required, a black suit jacket is to be worn. Men in the discipleship stage are required to wear a white dress shirt with a black necktie. Formal attire is worn for liturgical events on Sundays and Solemnities and other occasions as specified.

**Chapel Casual**

1. "Chapel casual" includes trousers, shoes or sandals with socks, tucked-in shirts with collars (either sport shirt or polo shirt styles). Chapel casual can be worn at Saturday Mass and at Vespers on Fridays, as well as certain other occasions (like retreats, days of recollection, workshops, etc.).
2. Water bottles or other beverage containers are not permitted in chapel.
3. While a seminarian should use his best discretion, out of respect for the Blessed Sacrament, shorts, pajamas, sleeveless shirts, and flip flops are generally not appropriate in the chapel.

**Liturgical Vesture**

1. Ministers at liturgical services should wear a cassock and surplice. The surplice style is "Vienna #31610" available from CM Almy. This is the only acceptable surplice for use at the Mount.
    a. For Lauds and Vespers, deacons must wear cassock, surplice and stole, unless Mass follows immediately.
2. For Solemn Vespers in Immaculate Conception Chapel, seminarians in configuration are to wear cassock and surplice. Seminarians in discipleship are to wear suits.
3. If it is more convenient to retain the cassock when going to a meal after serving, seminarians may keep it on in Patriot Hall.

**Other Attire Policies**

1. With the exception of pastoral formation assignments and other official seminary functions, the attire of the seminarian off campus is expected to conform to the policy of his own diocese.
2. On certain occasions (such as the March for Life) all seminarians, including men in the discipleship stage, will be directed to wear clerical attire.
3. When wearing clerical attire in public areas, seminarians are expected to wear it properly, that is, tabs in place, collars attached to shirts, shirts tucked in, etc.
4. Seminarians should wear a bathrobe or shirt and shorts when going to and coming from the shower.
5. Seminarians are to be appropriately groomed. Hair should be neatly cut and combed.
    a. Seminarians should follow the policies of their dioceses regarding facial hair.
    b. Those who have facial hair are expected to keep it neatly and closely trimmed, avoiding all appearance of a "bushy" or "unkempt" beard and/or mustache.
    c. Those without beards should shave daily.
    d. Seminarians who arrive in August with a beard, mustache, or sideburns may maintain them during the year. Seminarians are not permitted to grow any style of facial hair during the academic year, including breaks.

**B. Approvals Required**

1. Diocesan policies concerning media and publications must be followed. Seminarians are required to inform their formation advisor before submitting materials.

2. Seminarians are not to engage in demonstrations or public protests without the knowledge and consent of their respective dioceses and the prior approval of the Rector.
3. No collection, monetary or otherwise, may be taken up in the seminary without the prior approval of the Rector. Seminarians may not engage in any kind of solicitation for personal funds, whether within the seminary or from outside sources. If a seminarian finds himself in financial need, he should speak to the Rector.
4. Seminarians are not to hold jobs, on or off campus, without the prior permission of the Rector and the seminarian's diocese.
5. Seminarians engaging in apostolic activities beyond those required by their pastoral formation assignments should have the permission of their formation advisor and/or vocation director.

## II. POLICIES

### A. Academic Integrity

1. Seminarians are expected to be models of academic integrity according to the policies laid out in the Seminary Catalogue.
2. Each seminarian is to strive toward completing the required readings for his courses according to each professor's expectations and his other duties.

### B. Time Away and Transportation

#### 1. Absences

a. Seminarians should not request to be absent from mandatory activities, except for the following reasons and following the prescribed procedure:
   i. For immediate family occasions such as Weddings, Funerals, Baptisms, First Holy Communions, Confirmations, Ordinations, or Religious Professions. These are usually not reasons to request an absence in the case of friends. Other family celebrations (birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, etc.) are not sufficient reasons to be absent. Any exceptions to these policies will be determined by the Rector.
   ii. For events in their home diocese, (e.g. diocesan ordinations). A seminarian's presence must be requested by the bishop or vocation director in writing via letter or email.
   iii. For reasons deemed serious by the Vice Rector (such as medical or counseling appointments or service to the seminary community).

b. Procedures to obtain permission:

   A seminarian who wishes to be absent:
   i. **From Mass, Liturgy of the Hours, and obligatory Communal Prayer** – must request permission from the Vice Rector.
   ii. **From a single class** – must request permission from the Academic Dean and inform the class instructor prior to the anticipated absence.

iii. **From a Rector's Conference** – must request permission from the Rector.
iv. **From a Spiritual Director's conference, or any part of a day of recollection, or house retreat** – must request permission from the Coordinator of Spiritual Formation.
v. **From pastoral formation assignment** – must request permission from the Coordinator of Pastoral Formation and the placement supervisor prior to the absence. If necessary, a substitute should be found.
vi. **For an overnight absence involving one day of missed classes or other required activities** – the Overnight Absence Request Form (available in the seminarian mailroom) must be fully completed.
vii. **Absences involving more than one night** – These are not permitted. Exceptions will be considered by the Rector on a case-by-case basis.

A seminarian is required to inform his formation advisor if he has received any of these permissions.

2. **Breaks and Vacations**

a. Seminarians are expected to make travel plans and reservations according to the official calendar. A less expensive air fare is not sufficient reason to leave early or return late.

b. A seminarian may leave after his last obligation following morning Mass on the day that the break is scheduled to begin. During final exams week, a seminarian may leave any time after finishing his last exam.

c. Returning from any break, seminarians are required to promptly check in using the process provided by the Vice Rector. Seminarians must return by curfew. Should a seminarian experience a delay in returning from breaks, he should notify the Vice Rector. If a seminarian has neither checked in nor notified the Vice Rector of his absence by noon of the first day of classes, his diocesan vocation office will be contacted.

d. Men in the discipleship stage who are expected to be serving in their dioceses during Holy Week must notify their university professors and make arrangements to fulfill their academic obligations. Those who are not called back must attend classes through Wednesday.

3. **Evangelization Trip**
Seminarians are required to participate in at least one seminary sponsored evangelization trip before the completion of second configuration.

4. **Pastoral Year**

a. A seminarian on pastoral year is:
i. Strongly encouraged to participate in the annual seminarian retreat.
ii. Expected to maintain monthly contact with his formation advisor, either in person or by Zoom.

iii. Expected to meet regularly with his spiritual director, either in person or by Zoom. Alternatively, he can arrange for regular meetings with a local spiritual director in his diocese, with approval from the Coordinator of Spiritual Formation.

5. **Vehicles on Campus**

Personal Cars and Parking

i. Seminarians wishing to park their own vehicles on campus need to register online with Public Safety and pay the fee to secure a parking sticker, which must be displayed clearly on the car.
ii. Shortly after the beginning of the academic year, each seminarian with a registered vehicle will be assigned a parking space. Seminarians may only park in their assigned spaces.
iii. If a seminarian finds someone has parked in his assigned space, he should contact the Parking Coordinator and park temporarily in the Memorial Gym lot until the matter is resolved.
iv. Parking behind Gallagher, Mulcahy, and Keating Halls, including the area around the storage shed, is prohibited (except for temporary loading or unloading). Vehicles left in this area unattended during the day or overnight will be reported, ticketed, and towed.
v. No seminarian may have, ride, or store a motorcycle (or any form of motorized bicycle) on campus. Any use of a motorcycle during the academic year is discouraged.

Mount Vehicle Policy

i. Mount St. Mary's University Department of Public Safety has vehicles available for use by seminarians for official or required travel. All arrangements for these vehicles must be made by contacting Public Safety.
ii. Seminary house cars will be available through the Coordinator of Pastoral Formation. Normally, such cars can be used only for travel to and from pastoral placements. Any other use by seminarians is possible only with permission from the Rector.
iii. Seminarians wishing to use a university vehicle must follow the procedures listed in the booklets entitled "Vehicle Policy" and "Student Driver Program," which are available from the Department of Public Safety.

## C. Communal Living

1. **Room Policies**

a. At the beginning of each year, each seminarian can pick up his room key from the Administrative Assistant to the Rector. Keys must be returned to the Administrative Assistant when the seminarian vacates the room at the end of the academic year. A charge will be assessed to the seminarian for an unreturned key.

b. Each seminarian is responsible to secure his own property.

c. Except for small nails, tacks, and small screws, nothing is to be attached to the walls of seminarians' rooms that could cause damage. Be careful of various types of adhesives, as some cannot be removed or will cause damage. Seminarians' rooms may not be painted, other than by the university maintenance department.

d. Each seminarian should keep his room neat and clean, and beds should be made daily. In rooms with a private bath, it is the seminarian's responsibility to clean and maintain the bathroom. Cleaning supplies are available from the housekeeping staff.

e. Maintenance needs should be reported in a timely fashion to the floor leader, who will submit the work order.

f. Rooms may be inspected by the Rector and/or Vice Rector at any time.

g. At the end of the year, the seminarian is responsible for ensuring that his room is as he found it, including furnishings.

h. When vacating a room, it is the seminarian's responsibility to see that all his personal items have been removed from the room and closet, trash or discarded items are removed, and the bathroom, if there is one, is left clean.

i. At the end of the year, the seminarian cannot leave until his room has been inspected by the Vice Rector or Rector.

j. Seminarians who fail to comply with the above will be assessed a cleaning fee to be billed to the seminarian's diocese.

k. Fire and insurance regulations require that the halls be kept clear.

2. **Seminarians' Meals**

a. Seminarians are expected to eat lunch and dinner together in the Seminary Dining Room. Seminarians should not make a habit of taking their food to-go.

b. Seminarians should eat lunch in the seminary dining room when possible Monday through Thursday. Seminarians are required to eat dinner together Sunday through Thursday around 5:30pm. If a group of seminarians wants to have a fraternal dinner off campus or in the seminary building, they can do so one night a week without permission.

c. Classrooms are never an appropriate location for eating meals.

d. Attendance at House or Class Community dinners is mandatory.

3. **Recreation Room and Kitchen**

a. The seminary Recreation Room and Kitchen are for the use of seminarians. Their privacy should be respected, and they are not to be excluded from using this area. No event may be scheduled in the Recreation Room or Kitchen during the last week of classes or during exam week.

b. Any group that would like to reserve the Recreation Room or Kitchen must submit a reservation request to the Administrative Assistant to Administration and Faculty at least one week in advance. If there are any conflicting requests, the Vice Rector and/or Rector will make the final determination.

c. Outside groups are not permitted to use the Recreation Room or Kitchen. Exceptions may be made at the Rector's discretion.

d. Seminarians are not to invite university students individually into the recreation room. If a seminarian wishes to organize a social event with students with whom he is working in some capacity (campus ministry, sports chaplaincy, Legion of Mary, etc.), he must first receive permission from the Vice Rector before reserving the Recreation Room. The event must be completed and the room cleaned by no later than 7:30 pm.

e. With regard to "Sport Team Dinners" organized by the appropriate chaplains:
   i. They must take place on either Mondays or Thursdays.
   ii. Dinners must conclude and the student athletes must depart from the seminary by 7:30 pm.
   iii. Each sport team is allotted one dinner in the seminary per year.
   iv. No dinners can be scheduled during the last week of class or during exam week.
   v. The Kitchen and the Recreation Room must both be reserved.
   vi. Seminary funds are not available for expenses incurred for the dinners.

4. **Microwave Use**

   a. Seminarians are not permitted to have or to use microwave ovens in their rooms. Microwaves are available and may be used only in the seminary kitchen or in hall community rooms. If a student causes an alarm to be sounded, he or his diocese will be charged any assessed fee by the fire department for causing an unnecessary response.

5. **Frassati Fitness Room Use**

   a. The gym is for the use of the seminary community and official seminary guests. As a rule, outsiders are not permitted to use the gym, unless permission is granted by the Vice Rector.
   b. A seminarian wishing to listen to music must wear headphones.

6. **Barber Shop Use**

   a. The Barber Shop is for the exclusive use of the Seminary community.

7. **Laundry**

   a. Laundry is the responsibility of each seminarian. Use of the washers and dryers is free. The laundry room is located on the ground floor of Keating Hall.

b. Each washer and dryer has Bluetooth connectivity. The machines are controlled through the "One Tap Away" app. Further instructions are available in the laundry room.

8. **Reservations**

a. All reservations for the use of seminary facilities (St. Bernard's Chapel, recreation rooms, JPII Reading Room, classrooms) must be made with the Administrative Assistant to Administration and Faculty.

b. Any activity in Immaculate Conception Chapel must be cleared with the campus ministry office and a prior reservation made with them.

9. **Summer Storage**

a. Limited storage of seminarians' property during the summer is available in certain designated storage areas. Seminarians are expected to read and comply with all regulations posted regarding summer storage. Any articles left in storage for the summer, however, are left at the seminarian's own risk. The seminary assumes no responsibility for any personal belongings left in the storage areas.

10. **Packages**

a. Seminarians who get a notification in their mailbox that a package has been received in the seminary post office may pick up their package when the post office is open at the following times: Mondays through Fridays for 15 minutes after Vespers (or community dinner) and whenever the post office is open for mail sorting. Please do not approach seminary staff regarding access to the seminary post office. On weekends, to get a package, please contact one of the student postmen, whose names are indicated on the post office door. In case of emergency, if you are unable to locate any of the postmen, you may notify the Vice Rector.

11. **Pets**

a. Seminarians may not keep pets of any kind.

12. **Candles**

a. The burning of any kind of candle in seminarians' rooms is prohibited.

13. **Lights**

a. The last person to leave St. Bernard's chapel, the chapel choir loft, a classroom, a restroom, or any other public area, should turn off the lights.

**D. Conduct and Prohibited Items**

1. **Use of Tobacco**

a. Seminarians are expected to take steps to stop the use of tobacco of any kind as part of their formation. Seminarians should discuss tobacco use with their formation advisor and spiritual director.

b. All tobacco products, including electronic cigarettes and smokeless products, are prohibited in any enclosed workplace, residential facility, or other facility on the Mount campus.

2. **Alcohol**

a. Seminarians should keep in mind their public role when consuming alcohol. Excessive and frequent drinking is unacceptable behavior. The following regulations are to be observed:
   i. Seminarians should not consume more than one alcoholic beverage per hour.
   ii. The only alcohol in the seminary is that which is purchased and served by the bar.
   iii. The bar serves wine, beer, soft drinks, and water only. Hard liquors are not permitted in the seminary.
   iv. Alcohol must be served behind the bar and by a bartender, who can only serve a seminarian one drink at a time.
   v. During certain seminary functions or communal events, alcohol can be served on the table during a meal.
   vi. The bar can be opened and alcohol served by a bartender on other days and hours for designated seminary functions. For other events, including breaks, permission for the consumption of alcohol must be granted by the Vice Rector or the Rector.
   vii. Alcohol can be consumed in the Recreation Room, Kitchen, Patio, Cave, and JP II Room but it must be served from the bar by a bartender.
   viii. The possession or use of alcohol in one's room is forbidden. Violation of this provision is considered a grave offense.

b. Even when off-campus, seminarians are to conduct themselves in a prudent, temperate and respectful manner.

c. Seminarians are to keep in mind the low or even no tolerance of the civil law with regard to drinking and driving.

3. **Controlled Substances**

a. Any possession or use of a controlled substance by a seminarian is liable to an investigation by Seminary and University officials, including a search of the seminarian's room. Illicit use is a grave offense.

4. **Guns**

a. Seminarians are prohibited from keeping firearms or restricted weapons of any kind on their person, in their rooms, vehicles, or anywhere else on university property.

## E. Relationships and Guests

### 1. Relationships with University Students

Sharing a campus with university students provides opportunities for developing healthy relationships appropriate to men studying for the priesthood. Seminarians should cultivate ministerial rather than social relationships. It is the seminarian's responsibility to ensure that his relationships with students are appropriate in appearance and in fact.

a. No seminarian may date under any circumstance.

b. Particular care should be taken to avoid one-on-one meetings with female students, which could give the appearance of dating.

c. Seminarians are permitted to use university facilities and participate in university activities, including the intramural sports program. However, whenever any of these activities conflicts with a mandatory seminary activity, the seminarian is required to be at the seminary, unless specific individual permission has been given by the Vice Rector or Rector.

d. In general, events organized by seminarians for undergraduates should take place in the McGowan Center, Welcome Center, or other public areas of the university, rather than in the seminary.

e. No seminarian is to visit any university student's room at any time, for any reason, without the express prior permission of the Vice Rector. Seminarians are not to travel in private vehicles with undergraduates.

f. University students are not permitted in the recreation room or other areas of the seminary without explicit permission. If a seminarian wants to organize a meeting with university students at the seminary, he must first ask permission from the Vice Rector. They may meet in the Keating Conference Room (014) and the meeting must end by 7:30 pm. Students should use the Keating Lobby doors.

g. The presence of university students anywhere in the seminary is not permitted during the hours of 7:30 pm to 7:00 am.

h. In all interactions, seminarians must keep appropriate boundaries as well as comply with the safe environment regulations of both the university and the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

### 2. Visitors and Guests

a. Visitors are welcome to liturgies in St. Bernard's Chapel. However, visitors other than official seminary guests, personal guests of seminarians and faculty, and scheduled groups should not be in other parts of the seminary. Visitors may use the restroom facilities on the ground floor or the main floor. Visitors may not walk around the seminary unaccompanied.

b. In order to preserve the importance of the Community Mass, only bishops and vocations directors are allowed to say private Masses with seminarians from their dioceses. Other guest priests should be encouraged to join the Community Mass.

c. Visiting priests or deacons who are staying at the seminary or participating in a liturgy must provide a letter of suitability before arrival.

d. Guests are welcome to stay at the seminary. Particular consideration should be given to ensure that female guests respect the privacy of seminarians, especially in the residence hallways.

e. Because of the limited guest room facilities in the seminary, only official seminary guests can be accommodated overnight, e.g., bishops, vocation directors, visiting faculty, priests, and prospective seminarians. Personal friends and relatives are accommodated on a space-available basis.

f. No minors may enter a residential area or stay overnight without a parent.

g. Other than service animals, no visitor or guest may bring a pet into the seminary.

h. The presence of guests does not ordinarily excuse a seminarian from attendance at regular community exercises.

i. If a prospective seminarian or any other guest wishes to attend a class, the host seminarian must show the courtesy of introducing the guest to the professor before the start of class.

j. Guest meal passes to the student dining room can be provided only to official and/or invited guests of the seminary. Meal passes cannot be provided for other visiting priests or for visiting friends, seminarians, or family members who are personal guests of seminarians.

**F. Withdrawals from the Seminary**

a. When a seminarian is dismissed or withdraws, he should see to it that:
   i. He speaks personally to the Rector, who informs him how the rest of the community will be notified.
   ii. He returns any books he has borrowed from the library.
   iii. He pays any parking fines or other fines still outstanding.
   iv. He informs the seminary Registrar in writing of his intent to withdraw from classes.
   v. His room is inspected by the Vice Rector or Rector before departure.
   vi. His room key is returned (otherwise, he will be billed for the lock change).

b. A departing seminarian may be given a two-week period during which he is to vacate his room and remove all his property from the room and from the storage shed, unless explicit permission has been received from the Rector or Vice Rector for a delay.
   i. After two weeks, any personal belongings in his room or in the storage shed will be discarded or donated.

ii. If a seminarian who has left articles in summer storage will not return for the fall semester for any reason, he is to remove all stored items at least three days before the date set for the arrival of the new seminarians. If he fails to do so without receiving permission for a delay, they will be made available to any seminarians who could use them.

## III. MISCELLANEOUS

### A. Student Government

Seminarians are expected to abide by the Constitutions and By-laws of Mount St. Mary's Seminary Student Government Association, as approved by the Rector.

### B. Technology

The use of technology is a necessary part of modern life which requires prudence and maturity. A healthy use of technology is manifested in the amount of time one spends on the internet, streaming, gaming, etc. This should be regularly discussed with one's formation advisor and spiritual director.

1. **Computers**

   a. In accord with the Acceptable Use Policy of the University, computer systems and networks provided by the University may not be used to display or propagate materials (words or images) that are obscene, pornographic, or otherwise inappropriate to the mission of the University and the Seminary.

   b. With the permission of the professor, computers may be used in class for note taking. However, they should not be used for purposes that distract from learning.

   c. Printers, copiers, scanners, and cutting boards for student use are located throughout campus. The faculty workroom is not for the personal use of seminarians.

2. **Covenant Eyes**

   a. Internet monitoring software product, Covenant Eyes, is paid for by the seminary and is available to seminarians upon request to the Coordinator of Human Formation. In certain circumstances, it may be required. A seminarian who uses Covenant Eyes must designate his formation advisor, spiritual director, and Coordinator of Human Formation as accountability allies on his account.

   b. Certainly, by the time a seminarian is preparing immediately for Holy Orders (diaconate), he should have grown the free and joyful capacity to uninstall any accountability software from his computer and devices, after consulting with his Spiritual Director and Formation Advisor. Measurable growth in this virtue is key to an authentic embrace of celibate chastity.

3. **Social Media**

   a. Seminarians engaged in social media should always reflect the positions of the Church, the Holy Father, their diocesan bishop and/or religious superior.

Seminarians also are to respect any policies of their (arch)diocese/religious community, the Archdiocese of Baltimore, and Mount St. Mary's University.

b. In all electronic communications, the content and language should appropriately reflect the seminarian's role as a Christian gentleman.
c. Throughout their formation, seminarians are strongly encouraged to grow in the virtuous use of social media. This should be discussed regularly with one's formation advisor and spiritual director.

4. **Electronic Breviary**

a. The electronic breviary may not be used for the public celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours in Immaculate Conception Chapel or St. Bernard's Chapel.

5. **Cell Phones**

a. Each seminarian is required to have a cell phone.
b. Cell phones may not be used in seminary hallways, stairwells, the dining hall, or during classes.
c. Texting should be avoided when walking around campus.
d. The same principles apply to smart watches and earbuds.

**Acknowledgement of Receipt**

**of the Rule of Life and Student Handbook**

I acknowledge receipt of the policies and procedures contained in the Mount St. Mary's Seminary **Rule of Life** and **Student Handbook**. By signing this statement, I agree to abide by all the regulations, policies, and procedures contained herein, and any amendments that may occur from time to time.

_____

Seminarian's Signature

_____

Seminarian's Name (Print)

_____

Date

*A copy of this page must be printed, signed, and returned to:*

***Administrative Assistant to Administration and Faculty***