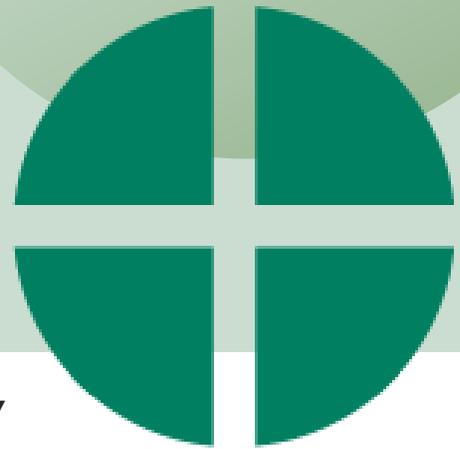


# PRINCIPLES OF THE NEW PPF

The Program of Priestly Formation, Sixth Edition



## THE FATHER OF THE SEMINARY COMMUNITY

*Scripture Reflection: Ephesians 4:1-6*

Under the governance of the diocesan bishop or major superior, seminaries bear special responsibility for the planning, organizing, directing, and evaluating of priestly formation. Essential to these roles are the rector and community of formators who provide personal accompaniment to the individual seminarians. These fathers should have adequate preparation and the experience necessary to carry out the responsibilities they are assigned. They should understand the mission of the Church and seminary and be supportive of it. The rector and priest formators are to be carefully prepared “in sound doctrine, suitable pastoral experience and special training in spirituality and teaching methods.” They should be **models of priestly virtue**, able to live the qualities they encourage in seminarians and men of sound and prudent judgment, who give daily evidence to a love of and dedication to the Church’s service.

In a unique way, the rector, because of his responsibility for the whole formation program, must take an active part in the **accompaniment of seminarians**. The rector is “to be a priest distinguished by prudence, wisdom and balance, someone highly competent,” who is seen as the father of the entire seminary community (*Ratio*, no. 134). It is the rector who sets the tone for the seminary—a tone which must be characterized by trust and mutual respect. “With fraternal charity, he will establish a profound and loyal cooperation with the other formators” (*Ratio*, no. 134). He provides regular (at least annual) reports to the diocesan bishop or competent authority of the ecclesiastical entity on the status of each seminarian.

## KEY WORDS

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The Seminary Rector

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Model of Priestly Virtue

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Accompaniment of Seminarians

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Spiritual & Personal Welfare

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Therefore, while other formators, professors, and specialists will assist the rector in his duties, it is important that he knows each seminarian personally.

The **spiritual and personal welfare** of the seminary community is a central responsibility of the rector. He should give conferences regularly to the seminary community. He should frequently preside at prayer and at the Eucharist.

Depending on the size and structure of the seminary, assisting the rector in the external forum may be priests who serve as vice rector, coordinator of human formation, coordinator of intellectual formation, coordinator of pastoral formation, and formators who accompany seminarians assigned to them and vote in the evaluation process. These priests, in addition to the coordinator of spiritual formation and spiritual director(s), constitute the community of formators within the larger seminary community of professors and specialists.

Assisting the community of formators are the professors and specialists such as permanent deacons, consecrated men and women, and lay faithful who, with competence in their fields, provide “valuable and professional assistance” in the work of priestly formation (*Ratio*, no. 146). In a special way, professors are an integral part of the mission of the seminary community. “The professors should be regarded as part of a single teaching community, and true educators. They ought to guide seminarians towards that unity of knowledge that finds its fulfillment in Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life” (*Ratio*, no. 142).

In collaboration with the bishop or major superior, the rector and those who serve in the external forum must be dedicated to the total formation of the seminarians. Whether clerics, men and women in consecrated life, or laity, they must witness to the Gospel and teach first by the quality of their lives.

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What activities beyond meetings could help strengthen the unity of those who serve as formators, professors, and specialists?
2. What type of formation and training would be helpful for seminary rectors in fulfilling their duties beyond formation, such as public relations and development responsibilities?

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### What is a typical term-of-office for a seminary rector?

According to canon law, the rector continues in office until either (1) a notification in writing of the lapse of a predetermined time, if the appointment was made for a specified term (CIC, cc. 184-186; CCEO cc. 965-966); (2) a resignation that is validly submitted and accepted (CIC, cc. 187-189; CCEO cc. 967-971);

(3) legitimate removal by the competent authority for a just reason (if appointed for an indefinite period of time) (CIC, c. 193; CCEO 974-975); or (4) privation as a penalty for a canonical offense effected according to the norm of law (CIC, c. 196, CCEO c. 978).