

Chapter 7: Power versus Ministry? Recent Challenges for Priestly Formation in Responding to the Double Crisis in the Catholic Church

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The double crisis in the Catholic Church caused by instances of sexual abuse and their cover-up by the Church hierarchy calls into question the initial formation of priests and, in particular, the milieu of Catholic seminaries. The final reports from the national commissions of inquiry from different countries show similar findings and propose comparable recommendations. This paper lists the main challenges encountered in priestly formation and—after theological reflection on a paradigm of transforming the power of ministry—proposes the implementation of some preventive measures and illustrates these with examples.

Power Versus Ministry

A compelling factor in this double crisis, as Faggioli has argued,¹ is a lack of courage and faith to face the stories, listen to the voices of survivors, and act responsibly. Ordained servants are supposed to use properly granted power for the good of People of God. One can see members of the Church hierarchy facing two challenges: protecting and clearing the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ and protecting and healing deeply wounded children.² Pope Francis in his *Letter to the People of God* writes, “The heart-

¹ Massimo Faggioli, “What the CIASE Report on Abuse in the Catholic Church in France (1950–2020) Says to Theology,” *Concilium*, October 18, 2021, concilium-vatican2.org/en/conversations/transforming-the-church/ciase/.

² For example, the Grand Jury of Pennsylvania mentions common strategies detected in received diocesan files which reveal failures in healing and supporting victims of abuse: “First, make sure to use euphemisms rather than real words to describe the sexual assaults in diocese documents. Never say ‘rape’; say ‘inappropriate contact’ or ‘boundary issues.’ Second, don’t conduct genuine investigations with properly trained personnel. Instead, assign fellow clergy members to ask inadequate questions and then make credibility determinations about the

wrenching pain of these victims, which cries out to heaven, was long ignored, kept quiet or silenced. But their outcry was more powerful than all the measures meant to silence it or sought even to resolve it by decisions that increased its gravity by falling into complicity. The Lord heard that cry and once again showed us on which side he stands” (no. 1).

Improper decisions and covering for abusive clergy heavily damaged not only the Bride of Christ but produced another wave of wounds for victims and survivors. Pope Francis calls for repentance and with pain cites his predecessor in the ninth station of the Way of the Cross composed for Good Friday 2005: “How much filth there is in the Church, and even among those who, in the priesthood, ought to belong entirely to [Christ]! How much pride, how much self-complacency! Christ’s betrayal by his disciples, their unworthy reception of his body and blood, is certainly the greatest suffering endured by the Redeemer; it pierces his heart. We can only call to him from the depths of our hearts: *Kyrie eleison*—Lord, save us! (cf. Matthew 8:25)” (*Letter to the People of God*, no. 1).³

colleagues with whom they live and work. Third, for an appearance of integrity, send priests for ‘evaluation’ at church-run psychiatric treatment centers. Allow these experts to ‘diagnose’ whether the priest was a pedophile, based largely on the priest’s ‘self-reports,’ and regardless of whether the priest had actually engaged in sexual contact with a child. Fourth, when a priest does have to be removed, don’t say why. Tell his parishioners that he is on ‘sick leave,’ or suffering from ‘nervous exhaustion.’ Or say nothing at all. Fifth, even if a priest is raping children, keep providing him housing and living expenses, although he may be using these resources to facilitate more sexual assaults. Sixth, if a predator’s conduct becomes known to the community, don’t remove him from the priesthood to ensure that no more children will be victimized. Instead, transfer him to a new location where no one will know he is a child abuser. Finally, and above all, don’t tell the police. Child sexual abuse, even short of actual penetration, is and has for all relevant times been a crime. But don’t treat it that way; handle it like a personnel matter, ‘in house.’” Office of Attorney General, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, *Report I of 40th Statewide Investigating Grand Jury*, 2018, www.attorneygeneral.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/A-Report-of-the-Fortieth-Statewide-Investigating-Grand-Jury_Cleland-Redactions-8-12-08_Redacted.pdf.

³ For Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger’s original words, see “Ninth Station: Jesus Falls for the Third Time,” www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/2005/via_crucis/en/station_09.html.

Keeping in mind the training of future clergy, it is necessary to rediscover the paradigm proven in the beginnings of the Church: to see and serve Jesus Christ in the suffering human being (cf. Matthew 25:31–46). An impressive *topos* of this paradigm is in the Johannine scene of Jesus’s crucifixion and burial (John 19). Some authors have suggested that Jesus should be identified as a victim of sexual abuse and sexual violence in a literal and historical sense.⁴ Synoptic passion narratives provide a basis for this claim, especially in terms of Jesus’s being undressed and left naked. Regarding John’s Christology, his gospel does not explicitly identify Jesus as a victim. However, as Orchard has shown,⁵ there are literary reasons to see Jesus in John’s passion narrative not only as a victor but also implicitly as the victim of an abuse of power.

The scene of the crucifixion follows Pilate’s choice to release Barabbas and to punish Jesus, who is unjustly sentenced by religious and civil authorities. The abuse of power snowballs, and soldiers graphically participate (John 19:2–3). Pilate tries to leave the burden on the shoulders of the high priests and their group, but the situation worsens. He is forced to sentence Jesus to death. Pilate’s first and last words about Jesus are that he is the King of the Jews (John 18:33; 19:19), but the derogatory meaning of the title is properly explained by Pilate himself (John 19:4–5) and his soldiers (John 19:2–3). Jesus is mocked, sentenced to death, and crucified. Previously, Jesus had been mocked (John 18:22) and sentenced to death (John 18:31–32; 19:6, 15) by the religious authorities of his own nation. The conflict of these two powers shows another more subtle abuse of power. Pilate was humiliated by the high priests, so he publicly humiliates them by the inscription on Jesus’s cross. They humiliated him at the court;

⁴ See David Tombs, “Crucifixion, State Terror, and Sexual Abuse,” *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, no. 53 (1999): 89–109, hdl.handle.net/10523/6067; Elaine A. Heath, *We Were the Least of These: Reading the Bible with Survivors of Sexual Abuse* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2011); Michael Trainor, *Body of Jesus and Sexual Abuse: How the Gospel Passion Narrative Informs a Pastoral Approach* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014).

⁵ Helen C. Orchard, *Courting Betrayal: Jesus as Victim in the Gospel of John* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998).

he strikes back at them publicly by proclaiming crucified Jesus as their king. Both authorities only see each other and their own agenda. They do not realize that their power comes from a number of sources.⁶

However, there is another contrast in the scene of the crucifixion. On the one hand, the high priests argue with Pilate about the inscription on the cross (John 19:19–22). On the other hand, the beloved disciple with Jesus's mother and the other women do not care about the title on the cross because they see Jesus nailed on the cross. They do not yet have the post-Easter experience and faith, but they are present. They see a victim of human sin, narcissism, and unsatisfied desire for power. Although they do not know what to do, they are present, share his pain, and try to help and understand. They see and are seen by Jesus. Surprisingly, he in fact helps them. His mother receives a son, and the beloved disciple receives a mother.

The scene of the burial (John 19:38–42) depicts two high-ranking members of the local religious hierarchy: Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. They do not argue with their colleagues. Instead, they use their position and power to return dignity to Jesus after his crucifixion. Joseph successfully contacts Pontius Pilate and asks for Jesus's dead body to prepare him for burial in a new tomb.⁷ Beasley-Murray asserts, "It was therefore an uncommonly courageous act for Joseph to dissociate himself from the Sanhedrin and to show his sympathy for Jesus, who had been so ignominiously condemned and killed."⁸ Nicodemus brings a great amount of myrrh with aloe for anointing. Both men are very generous and

⁶ Juraj Fenik. "Transfer of Power: Examples from John's Gospel," in *Theokratie: Exegetische und wirkungsgeschichtliche Ansätze*, ed. Peter Juhás, Róbert Lapko and Reinhard Müller, (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2021), 181.

⁷ In *The Gospel according to John (XIII-XXI): Introduction, translation, and notes*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 956, Raymond E. Brown remarks on "an interesting progression in Pilate's responses to the requests he receives concerning the crucified Jesus." Pilate refuses the first request of the Jews to change the title (19:22), then he quietly grants the second request of the Jews to hasten the removal of the bodies (19:32), but he explicitly grants the request of Joseph as Jesus's disciple to remove and bury the body (19:38).

⁸ George R. Beasley-Murray, *John* (Dallas, TX: Word, Incorporated, 1999), 358.

probably do not work alone. Bassler reminds us that “no single individual could manage alone both Jesus’s body and one hundred *litras* of burial spices.”⁹

The paradigm to see and serve Jesus Christ as the suffering human being (Matthew 25:31–46) is also present in John’s passion narrative. First is what kind of action to avoid, illustrated by the high priests, Pilate, and his soldiers. Second is what to do, illustrated by the example of Jesus’s mother, the beloved disciple, the women near the cross, and the efforts of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. The last two also provide an interesting case of a shift from power to ministry, which can be useful for the education and formation of future priests. Several verbs characterize the paradigm: to see, to be present, to listen, to serve, to be generous, to cooperate.

The official documents and norms of the Catholic Church on the formation of future priests repeat and develop the model of configuration to Christ as the Good Shepherd.¹⁰ In the post synodal exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, the biblical model of the Good Shepherd includes, on the one hand, a permanent invitation to ministry and the care of others, especially the poor and the marginalized and, on the other hand, the configuration of the priest to Jesus Christ “in a special way as head and shepherd of his people in order to live and work by the power of the Holy Spirit” (no. 12). However, the problem of formation remains at the practical level. Slater critically writes, “Despite these wonderful exhortations, it appears that clericalism still rears its ugly head as evident in the abuses that take place in

⁹ Jouette M. Bassler, “Mixed Signals: Nicodemus in the Fourth Gospel,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 108, no. 4 (1989): 641.

¹⁰ In “Seminary Education and Formation: the Challenges and Some Ideas about Future Developments,” *International Studies in Catholic Education* 9, no. 2 (2017): doi.org/10.1080/19422539.2017.1360613, David Oakley points out in *Presbyterorum ordinis* a shift of focus from the spiritual counsels directed towards personal sanctity to the virtues needed for a fruitful ministry: “The student’s spiritual life was connected to an understanding of what a priest does in the exercise of his pastoral ministry. There was less talk of the ‘sacred power’ given to the priest in ordination and more discussion of the need to be configured to ‘Christ the Servant Shepherd.’”

the church and the debilitating hierarchical priestly leadership. ... The new approaches towards seminarian formation set out in *Pastores Dabo Vobis* do not seem to have made any significant breakthrough into the hardened comprehension and impact that clericalism has on priesthood.”¹¹

The new *Ratio Fundamentalis* briefly mentions clericalism without any detailed description¹² and recalls the same model of the Good Shepherd and the constant shift from power to ministry: “The fundamental idea is that Seminaries should form missionary disciples who are ‘in love’ with the Master, shepherds ‘with the smell of the sheep,’ who live in their midst to bring the mercy of God to them. Hence every priest should always feel that he is a disciple on a journey, constantly needing an integrated formation, understood as a continuous configuration to Christ.”¹³ The new *Ratio* then proposes four stages of initial formation, inserting before the configuration stage two new stages: the propaedeutic phase and the phase of discipleship. According to the *Ratio*, it is expected of the candidate that, “day after day, he will internalize the spirit of the Gospel, thanks to a constant and personal friendship with Christ, leading him to share His sentiments and His attitudes. Thus, by growing in charity, the future priest must seek to develop a balanced and mature capacity to enter into relationship with his neighbor. Indeed, he is called above all to a basic human and spiritual serenity that, by overcoming every form of self-promotion or emotional dependency, allows him to be a man of communion, of mission and of dialogue. In contemplating the Lord,

¹¹ Jennifer Slater, “The Catholic Church in Need of De-Clericalization and Moral Doctrinal Agency: Towards an Ethically Accountable Hierarchical Leadership,” *HTS Theological Studies* 75, no. 4 (2019): doi.org/10.4102/hts.v75i4.5446.

¹² Congregation for the Clergy, *The Gift of Priestly Vocation. Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* (L’Osservatore Romano, Vatican City, 2016), 19, www.clerus.va/content/dam/clerus/Ratio%20Fundamentalis/The%20Gift%20of%20the%20Priestly%20Vocation.pdf: “Consequently, future priests should be educated so that they do not become prey to ‘clericalism’, nor yield to the temptation of modeling their lives on the search for popular consensus.”

¹³ Congregation for the Clergy, *The Gift*, 4.

who offered His life for others, he will be able to give himself generously and with self-sacrifice for the People of God.”¹⁴

Priestly Formation and Investigations at the National Level

The temptation of clericalism and abuse of power is a permanent challenge for the Church as well as for the formation of future clergy. One factor usually pointed out in church circles as a cause of child sexual abuse in church environments is an immoral priest who trespasses moral norms and commits a sin¹⁵ or a religious person with a psychosexual disruption like pedophilia or ephebophilia.¹⁶ However, the issue is more complicated and different commissions of inquiry, which have studied specific cases in different countries, point to the cooperation of several factors. In addition to individual factors relating to the offender, there are systemic factors relating to the environment in which offenders are allowed to act and which create an opportunity for abuse. To illustrate this point, I explore findings from the Australian, German, and French official investigations into the abuse crisis.

In its final report in 2017, the Australian Royal Commission identifies individual risk factors such as a mistake in the perception of priesthood identity; immature and not internalized motivation; insecurity and confusion in one’s own sexual orientation; any personality disorder of

¹⁴ Congregation for the Clergy, *The Gift*, 21.

¹⁵ This stems from an understanding of sexual abuse as a sin against the sixth commandment. The view was implemented in canonical norms on delicts: “*Normae de delictis Congregationi pro Doctrina Fidei reservatis seu Normae de delictis contra fidem necnon de gravioribus delictis*,” AAS, no. 102 (May 2010): 419–434.

¹⁶ This is also a broadly held opinion in general culture. In the 90s in Ireland, someone plead guilty to being an abusive priest and was later diagnosed as a pedophile: “Initially, he denied all charges to gardai. It was only after agreeing to take part in a programme for paedophiles run by a psychologist, Ms. Suzanne Jenkins, formerly of the Gracewell Clinic in Birmingham, that he admitted his actions. Ms. Jenkins said paedophilia was not a sickness that could be cured but something that needed to be kept under control. But one of his victims told the court that his admissions brought little comfort.” Alison O’Connor, “The Jekyll and Hyde career of a paedophile priest,” *Irish Times*, June 29, 1996, www.irishtimes.com/culture/the-jekyll-and-hyde-career-of-a-paedophile-priest-1.62917.

moderate or greater severity, in particular antisocial personality disorder; borderline personality disorders; and narcissistic personality disorder or any hidden sexual disorders.¹⁷ Except for the first two factors, all are objects of psychology and psychiatry. However, in the context of priesthood specifically, a mistake in the identity of priesthood and immature motivation are necessarily related to theology and understanding or misunderstanding it. The report states that clericalism is the main systemic factor that creates an environment in the Church which facilitates the sexual abuse of minors. Clericalism puts the priest on a pedestal and presents him as an untouchable and perfect person representing the Church and equipped with divine power. In conjunction with narcissism and uncontrolled power, this leads to a culture of secrecy and a broken relationship with the wider community and civil society.¹⁸ The report claims, that “a combination of individual and systemic factors enabled child sexual abuse in the Catholic Church and contributed to inadequate institutional responses to allegations or instances of abuse.”¹⁹ The Australian final report also highlighted six factors in the selection, screening, and initial formation of candidates, which may have contributed to an increased risk of child sexual abuse: “the role of human formation and formation to live a celibate life; the challenges of sexuality and sexual orientation; the relationship between formation and clericalism; pastoral formation; previous admission to seminaries and houses of religious formation; and the issue of seminarians and candidates who have trained overseas.”²⁰

The final report of the German inquiry commission in 2018 claims a heterogeneity of attitudes and approaches in the individual dioceses but

¹⁷ Royal Commission into Institutional Responses that Child Sexual Abuse, *Final Report*, vol. 16: *Religious Institutions Book 2* (Australia: Commonwealth of Australia, 2017), 595, www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/final_report_-_volume_16_religious_institutions_book_2.pdf.

¹⁸ Royal Commission, *Final Report*, 588.

¹⁹ Royal Commission, *Final Report*, 586.

²⁰ Royal Commission, *Final Report*, 589.

recommends: psychological counseling of clerics; better formation in aspects of sexual identity; proper formation for the high emotional demands of the priesthood; the integration of modern psychological and scientific knowledge into the training of future priests; opening the system of priestly formation to external experts; and the standardization of the selection of candidates by implementing established psychological methods.²¹ The German final report also affirms that homosexuality is not a risk factor for sexual abuse and calls for a reconsideration of the fundamentally negative attitude of the Catholic Church to the ordination of homosexual men. Celibacy is also not a risk factor for sexual abuse, but the inquiry commission claims that a celibate lifestyle requires an intensive examination of one's own emotionality, eros, and sexuality. The final report recommends lifelong professional guidance and support that is appropriate to the topic more than a predominantly theological and pastoral approach and warns that the implementation of time-limited training modules in the seminaries does not cover this need.²²

The final report of the French commission of inquiry in 2021 claims that “training is an effective way of implementing prevention by raising awareness of the patterns of abuse, by identifying situations of risk and by breaking with a culture of silence or avoidance.”²³ The report therefore recommends an improvement of formation of spiritual accompaniment; a better discernment of vocation during screening and admission of candidates; a study of human sciences and understanding of the dynamics

²¹ Harald Dreßing, Hans Joachim Salize, Dieter Dölling, Dieter Hermann, Andreas Kruse, Eric Schmitt, Britta Bannenber, Andreas Hoell, Elke Voß, Alexandra Collong, Barbara Horten, and Jörg Hinner, *Sexueller Missbrauch an Minderjährigen durch katholische Priester, Diakone und männliche Ordensangehörige im Bereich der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz. Projektbericht* (Mannheim, Heidelberg, Gießen, 2018), 16, www.dbk.de/fileadmin/redaktion/diverse_downloads/dossiers_2018/MHG-Studie-gesamt.pdf.

²² Dreßing et al., *Sexueller Missbrauch*, 17.

²³ French Independent Commission on Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Church (CIASE), *Sexual Violence in the Catholic Church France 1950–2020 Final Report French Independent Commission on Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Church (CIASE)*, 334, www.ciase.fr/medias/Ciase-Final-Report-5-october-2021-english-version.pdf.

and challenges in the development and affectivity of children and young people; an access to specialists with diverse profiles as well as access to “extra muros” teaching spaces for seminarians; university-backed courses and externalized training in mixed situations with members of the public and groups of students; work on the development of critical thinking, particularly with regard to questions of authority and obedience; and training sessions on the prevention of sexual violence, co-organized with victim support groups and with the participation of health professionals.²⁴ The report points out “that there is clearly no causal link between celibacy and sexual abuse”²⁵ but warns that celibacy may contribute to the overvaluation of the person of a priest as “a man ‘apart’ belonging to the category of the ‘sacred.’ This can reinforce a self-image of an almost ‘superhuman’ nature, whose ideal reaches so high that if it one day cracks, the whole personality comes crumbling down. The person may build up a self-image that is out of sync with reality and when it collapses, some cannot cope.”²⁶

All three reports recommend the implementation of proper training to live a celibate life in a mature way; preparation of a more precise and in-depth protocol of screening and admission of candidates; and prevention of clericalism and the culture of secrecy, as well as opening space for women and contact with the wider community and civil society. Faggioli’s assessment of the French final report states that a new challenge for theology is the inclusion of the voices of victims and survivors. He claims, “It is a reminder of the transformative nature, at the level of empathy but also cognitive, of any sincere effort to study and understand the abuse crisis in the Catholic Church.”²⁷ He also identifies that the recommendations challenge the Catholic Church to reform its power structure as well as

²⁴ French Independent Commission, *Sexual Violence*, 43–44.

²⁵ French Independent Commission, *Sexual Violence*, 231.

²⁶ French Independent Commission, *Sexual Violence*, 232.

²⁷ Massimo Faggioli, “What the CIASE Report Says to Theology,” *Concilium*, October 18, 2021, concilium-vatican2.org/en/conversations/transforming-the-church/ciase/.

challenging theology to “bridge the gap between academic elaboration and preparation for ministry.”²⁸

An Experience from St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Košice, Slovakia

In contrast to the reports cited earlier, there is no comparable investigation at the national level in a post-communist country, except for Poland, where a short statistical report was published in 2021 without specific details about individual or systemic factors.²⁹ However, Czech theologian Tomáš Halík, while addressing an international conference on Safeguarding in Warsaw in September 2021, critically reminds us that “many seminaries (especially in post-communist countries) do not provide candidates for the priesthood with sufficient spiritual and psychological preparation for a life of celibacy. This must include an honest discussion of homosexuality, including the homosexual orientation of many priests.” In terms of intellectual formation, Halík claims that “the Church has paid the price for having resisted for too long the insights of cosmology, evolutionary theory and literary and historical criticism in biblical exegesis; it should not repeat these mistakes by ignoring the insights of neurophysiology in its approach to homosexuality and of cultural anthropology in its understanding of the development of family life.”³⁰

Another useful source of information about the situation in post-communist countries is the book *The Joy of Gospel in Slovakia II*, which

²⁸ Faggioli, “What the CIASE Report Says to Theology.”

²⁹ Sławomir Nowotny, Wojciech Sadłoń, and Piotr Studnicki, *Wyniki kwerendy dotyczącej wykorzystywania seksualnego osób małoletnich przez niektórych inkardynowanych do diecezji polskich duchownych oraz niektórych profesów wieczystych męskich zgromadzeń zakonnych i stowarzyszeń życia apostołskiego w Polsce. Raport obejmuje zgłoszenia z okresu od 1 lipca 2018 r. do 31 grudnia 2020 r. dotyczące lat 1958–2020* (Instytut Statystyki Kościoła Katolickiego: Warszawa 2021), episkopat.pl/prezentacja-badan-dotyczacych-wykorzystania-seksualnego-maloletnich-w-kosciele-w-latach-1958-2020/.

³⁰ Tomáš Halík, “‘With a Sorrowful Heart ...’—the Scandal of Abusive Priests,” *The Tablet*, September 29, 2021, www.thetablet.co.uk/features/2/20735/-with-a-sorrowful-heart-the-scandal-of-abusive-priests.

reflects thirty years of freedom for the Church in Slovakia. In the chapter “The Church Issues,” Moravčík identifies seven important issues. First is the danger of infantilizing young clergy. He argues that a solid reevaluation of celibacy and of the institution of the seminary is needed because the safe and secure environment of seminary does not prepare candidates properly for the real challenges of pastoral work.³¹ He briefly mentions clericalism in connection with sexual abuse and abuses of power and claims that, in Slovakia, clericalism “is related to the perceived superiority of priests over laity, their judgmental attitude in confessionals, bureaucratic behavior in parish offices, as well as taking recourse into an outdated lifestyle and liturgy.”³²

Dušan Škurla studied the human formation of future priests in Slovakian seminaries using data from 2011–2012. Alongside positive trends, he uncovered problems in communication and a lack of trust among seminarians as well as towards formators. He also found insufficient levels of preparation for the celibate style of life and a low internalization of values.³³ The results of the study were confirmed later when, for example in the Archdiocese of Košice between 2013 and 2019, three out of eight priests ordained in 2011 had left the priesthood and three of twelve priests ordained in 2012 had left.

In St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Košice, a transformation has slowly begun by using an integral model to evaluate the suitability of candidates before entering the formation process. This integral model is interdisciplinary and incorporates both the natural and spiritual dimensions of personality. The integral model was first introduced to the process of candidate admission in 2008. Forgáč depicts the model on two

³¹ Karol Moravčík, “The Church Issues,” in *The Joy of Gospel in Slovakia II*, ed. K. Moravčík, J. Žuffa (Bratislava: Petrus, 2019), 52–53.

³² Moravčík, “The Church Issues,” 64.

³³ Dušan Škurla, *Ludská formácia budúcich kňazov. Požiadavky dokumentov, pohľady odborníkov a situácia na Slovensku* (Vienala pre Kňazský seminár sv. Karola Boromejského: Košice 2013), 214–217.

levels.³⁴ First is the spiritual dimension of vocation, a genesis of feeling of God's call, an ideal of priesthood, and other details such as the circumstances of practicing spiritual life. Second, the integral model focuses on detecting the psychological condition of the candidate. At this level, it is necessary to utilize common and standardized psychodiagnostic methodologies to identify whether there are serious psychopathologies in the candidate. Forgáč points out that the objective of the integral model is "to correctly interpret the interrelationship between these levels and find whether the motivation is the matter of a personal relationship to God or whether and in so far psychological factors have a significant impact on the motivation and decision of the candidate to enter the formation."³⁵ The first seminarians, to pass through the integral model were ordained in 2013. From the ordination in 2013 until 2021, out of forty-four ordained priests only one left the priesthood.

In 2017, a study was published on how Greek Catholic and Roman Catholic seminarians managed to solve crises during their stay in seminary.³⁶ Roman Catholic and Greek (or Byzantine) Catholic priests are trained in different seminaries (Košice and Prešov) with different organizations, rituals, and legal traditions. The most well-known difference between the two rites is voluntary celibacy in the Greek Catholic rite, while the Roman Catholic rite has obligatory celibacy. The eastern part of Slovakia is a melting pot of these two Catholic rites. This study shows that, in both groups, the crises concerned the question of whether a seminarian should become a priest.³⁷

³⁴ Marek Forgáč, "Kríza povolání a nevyhnutnosť integrálneho skúmania súcosti kandidátov pre formáciu do kňazstva," *Studia Theologica* 23, no. 1 (2021): 135–158, doi: 10.5507/sth.20.042634.

³⁵ Forgáč, "Kríza," 143.

³⁶ Ján Knapík and Martina Kosturková, "Crises of Catholic Seminarians," *Ad Alta: Journal of Interdisciplinary Research* 8, no. 2 (2018): 124–130.

³⁷ In addition, part of the crisis of the Greek seminarians was the search for the meaning of the priesthood, as if they needed a strong motive to become priests. Roman Catholic seminarians, especially in the second half of their studies, had difficult struggles with personal justification

The authors discern four stages of crisis for the Roman Catholic seminarians. The first stage starts in the first year from idealistic notions of the priesthood and life in seminary. The second one is rooted in disappointment in themselves from facing their own weaknesses. The third stage of the crisis has its origin in a more realistic knowledge of the nature of priestly ministry after recognizing the difficult and unpleasant part of priestly life. The fourth stage of the crisis begins with awakening to a state in which a seminarian more personally realizes the burden of mandatory celibacy.³⁸ The authors conclude that

the most significant contribution of this crisis is the rebirth of traditional belief as lived (experienced): the internalization of faith. This involves the transformation of the foreclosed religious identity into an achieved religious identity. Our participants were led to believe by their parents from childhood. However, conscious, lived, and living faith needs a personal decision that arises or ends during a time of personal crisis. ... Overcoming a crisis brings stronger identification with the vocation, the internalization of beliefs, spiritual growth, the knowledge of the limits which must be respected in order for the seminarian to preserve the identity of his vocation, and help in finding the meaning of his vocation.³⁹

In comparison to Škurla's previous study, this study confirmed the improvement of internalization in St. Charles Borromeo Seminary. It also revealed a phenomenon in which, after three years of formation and after a special year of pastoral placement, some seminarians reevaluated their decision to enter the seminary which had been made at a very young age. For example, five seminarians did so in 2014 and 2015.

for the acceptance of lifelong celibacy. See Knapík and Kosturková, "Crises of Catholic Seminarians," 129.

³⁸ Knapík and Kosturková, "Crises of Catholic Seminarians," 128.

³⁹ Knapík and Kosturková, "Crises of Catholic Seminarians," 129.

Conclusion

In the aforementioned lecture, Halík shares a personal experience of speaking to victims of sexual abuse:

I spent long late-night conversations with many of them. Afterwards, I often found I was unable to sleep until morning. I did not learn much more than what had already been reported. But I looked these men and women in the eye, and I held their hand when they cried. It was very different from reading their statements in court documents. I have worked for years as a psychotherapist and I know about the proximity and the interplay of mental and spiritual pain, but this was something other than mere psychotherapy; I felt the presence of Christ there with all my heart, on both sides: in the ‘little ones, the sick, the imprisoned and the persecuted’ and also in the ministry of listening, consolation and reconciliation that I was allowed to give them.⁴⁰

The paradigm taken from John’s gospel has similar features: to see, to be present, to listen, to serve, to be generous, and to cooperate. A personal experience of this shift from a position of power to ministry can empower a priest or candidate and provide a cure against the virus of clericalism. The shift from power to ministry is an important dynamic not only in the ecclesiological reflection on the administration and management of the Church, but also in the theology of the ministerial priesthood and in the initial and permanent formation of ordained ministers. The first experience of this shift has to be provided to seminarians during their formation. It could correspond to the frame of formation proposed in the new *Ratio* and respond to recent challenges detected in independent reports in the field of the formation of future priests. Priests must internalize their faith and commitment and configure themselves to Christ, the Good Shepherd. The next generation of priests will hopefully emerge from the darkness like Nicodemus and surprise modern Pilates as Joseph from Arimathea did.

⁴⁰ Halík, “‘With a Sorrowful Heart.’”

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