

APPLICATION AND
ADMISSION GUIDELINES
FOR THE
PRIESTLY FORMATION PROGRAM



NOTRE DAME SEMINARY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Table of Contents

The Order of Presbyter: Ministry to the Church.....	4
A Period of Pre-Discernment	4
Discerning the Call	6
Admission Guidelines.....	7
Applicant Requisites.....	9
Maturity and Faith Development	9
Proper Standing and Stability	10
Irregularities/Impediments for Reception of Holy Orders.....	10
Canon 1041:	10
Canon 1042:	11
Initial and Responsible Discernment	11
The Application Process	12
Application Forms	13
Supporting Information	15
Admission Interviews.....	16
Seminary Admissions Board.....	17
Admission Notification/Next Steps.....	17

Dear Friend:

The enclosed norms and guidelines for the application and admission process to the priestly formation program at Notre Dame Seminary reflects the Church's commitment in preparing men for discernment of a possible vocation to the diocesan priesthood. Since 1923, Notre Dame Seminary has provided men the opportunity to discern if the Lord is calling them for ordained ministry in the Church. The discernment process involves direction and guidance to assure the integrity and development of a priestly vocation which is always at the service of the Church. The Universal Church has given seminaries very specific directives not only in the establishment of priestly formation programs but also in the selection of candidates for seminary formation. The bishops of the United States regularly evaluate the design of priestly formation programs to assure that men are properly being prepared for ordained ministry.

The application process to Notre Dame Seminary is in itself a contributing factor in a man's discernment of priesthood. The Sacred Scriptures are replete with stories of how Divine Revelation unfolds within the context of the human condition. Moreover, the divinely inspired call of the Apostles by Jesus Christ was in the context of a human mediation. So it is with discernment – applicants consider their own human abilities to determine if they are ready and capable of embracing the demands and joys of priestly formation.

As the Church continues her pastoral mission in leading the faithful to the heavenly Kingdom, let us pray that more men will be open to the Lord's call in serving the Church as priests. May the application process be a time of serious discernment, good prayer, and an affirming experience as you deepen your relationship with God and the Church.

Sincerely yours in the Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. J.A. Wehner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Very Reverend James A. Wehner, S.T.D.
Rector/President

Application and Admission Guidelines for the Priestly Formation Program at Notre Dame Seminary

The Order of Presbyter: Ministry to the Church

1. A vocation to the Order of Presbyter involves a journey of discernment, prayer, learning and growth. The call to serve the Church as a priest is confirmed by the diocesan bishop who shepherds the local Church with all of its pastoral needs, gifts, and its unique character. A diocesan priest is ordained to assist in carrying out the mission of the Church which has been entrusted to the Apostolic College. The seminarian and diocesan priest, therefore, is to develop an ecclesial spirituality of service to the Church which is expressed in a most profound way in his relationship to the diocesan bishop. The theological identity of a priest is intrinsically linked to an ecclesial service and loyalty manifested through the ministry of word and sacrament.

2. Notre Dame Seminary has implemented a priestly formation program in conformity with the governing documents on priestly formation issued by the Second Vatican Council, the Magisterium of Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II, and from the Sacred Congregations of the Holy See. In a particular way, the priestly formation program at Notre Dame Seminary has implemented the guidelines of the Program of Priestly Formation (1992) which provides specific directives for seminaries in the United States. The priestly formation program is predicated on the willingness and commitment of the seminarian to dutifully observe all the norms, requirements, and processes of the application process.

3. Those who are interested in ordained ministry, who have cultivated a spirituality of service, and are loyal to the Tradition, teachings, liturgy, and Magisterium of the Church, begin a journey of discernment that often precedes admission to the seminary. These inquirers seek knowledge about the priesthood and discuss their sense of call with their pastors, family, parish community, and friends. The inquirer is also encouraged to participate in programs sponsored by their diocesan Office for Vocations to gain a further understanding of seminary life and ordained ministry. If the inquirer comes to understand a call to pursue discernment in the seminary formation program, he must be prepared in a spirit of commitment, dedication, and fidelity, to devote himself to the requirements of the application process and the priestly formation program housed at Notre Dame Seminary.

A Period of Pre-Discernment

4. How does one know they are called to the priesthood? Any vocation in the Church presumes a conversation between God, the individual, and the Church. The living out of a vocation is a

continual path of discernment. A vocation to ordained ministry requires a special discernment involving the individual and the Church. “Anyone who thinks he recognizes the signs of God’s call to the ordained ministry must humbly submit his desire to the authority of the Church, who has the responsibility and right to call someone to receive orders” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1578). Those who experience a call to possibly discern a vocation to the priesthood should examine themselves spiritually and personally to determine if they should pursue the application process.

5. The priestly formation program is structured to provide the seminarian a formation addressing four areas: human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral. These four pillars of formation are rooted in the ecclesial foundation of service. Ultimately, a man who is ordained to the priesthood must be seen as a “man of the Church.”

6. The pre-discernment period that an individual goes through is an experience of personal accountability and evaluation. He begins to ask some basic questions: How is my prayer life? What is my understanding of pastoral ministry? Is my understanding of priesthood realistic? What is my loyalty to Church teaching? How long have I been living a holy, moral life? How do other people see me? How involved am I in my parish? Do I have a proper understanding of obedience? Am I approaching celibacy as a God-given gift? The Church presumes that a man interested in formal discernment will have addressed these questions with his family, pastor, and friends.

7. The identity, life, and ministry of any baptized Catholic are discovered first within the life of the Church which is the Body of Christ and the sacrament of salvation. Since the priest is an ordained minister and has a specific participation in the ministry of Jesus Christ, the Church takes a special interest in calling forth men who truly understand ministry to service, are loyal to sacred scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium of the Church.

8. The priest is a visible sacramental sign of Christ as Head of the Church. It is his role, therefore, to be a teacher of the faith, a sanctifier of the soul, and a shepherd that leads with authority yet in charity. Candidates for ordination to the priesthood will necessarily undergo a formation and evaluation process to determine suitability for ordination.

9. The applicant will already begin to discern during the admission process his willingness to eventually carry out ministry assigned by the diocesan bishop in a spirit of loving service to the people of God, in humble obedience to the bishop, and in a selfless manner.

10. A candidate for ordination to the priesthood will eventually need to cultivate an ecclesial spirituality involving the promise of obedience to the diocesan bishop, the promise to pray the Liturgy of the Hours as prescribed by particular law, and live the God-given gift of priestly

celibacy. The applicant to the priestly formation program must include at the earliest stages of discernment a formation to these requirements.

Discerning the Call

11. A call to discern in a seminary formation program begins at a personal level and will eventually involve the inquirer to seek information and make contact with his diocesan Office for Vocations.

12. Entrance and admission to the priestly formation program does not necessarily determine readiness for ordination. Rather, it expresses the commitment of the individual to be in dialogue with Christ and his Church in determining if there is a call for ministry as a diocesan priest. It is clearly understood, therefore, that discernment involves both the seminarian and the Church. “No one has a right to receive the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Indeed, no one claims this office for himself” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1578).

13. Applicants to the formation program at Notre Dame Seminary will already have been in constant contact with their vocation director, their pastor, and others who assist in the promotion of priestly vocations.

14. Since the pastor has an integral role in the application process, the applicant will need to be in regular contact with him discussing the discernment process and all of the factors that are related in determining a priestly vocation.

15. Applicants to the School of Theology are presumably seminarians completing a college or pre-theology formation program and are therefore familiar with the formation process. The application process will still require recommendations from non-family members and others to demonstrate the applicant’s readiness and seriousness to begin formation in the School of Theology.

Applicants who have not earned an undergraduate or graduate degree, make application to the Pre-Theology Program.

16. A vocation to serve the Church is to be fostered, supported and nurtured by the Church. Hence, the applicant should be open-minded, enthusiastic, and sharing in his discernment of entering a priestly formation program. He should involve as many people as possible in the process since it is to the Church he might be called to serve and it is from the Church a vocation to Holy Orders is eventually confirmed.

Admission Guidelines

17. Given the age and diverse background of many candidates, the admission procedure is crucial, indeed central, to every dimension of priestly formation. In regard to personality and disposition, candidates admitted are very similar to the seminarians who only a few years later will be recommended for Sacred Orders.

18. Applicants must give evidence of an overall personal balance, moral character, and proper motivation. This includes the requisite human, moral, spiritual, intellectual, physical, and psychological qualities for priestly ministry.

19. Admission to the seminary program also assumes an ability to accept personal responsibility in all aspects of formation. For this reason, great emphasis is placed on the freedom of the individual to act responsibly and to enhance his life through accountability and appropriate maturity. Seminarians are expected to enter the formation program in a full and meaningful manner and to demonstrate a commitment to the values which underlie the priestly formation program. The willingness and capacity to undertake such a demanding formation program is essential in the discernment process which is central to the seminary program.

20. Applicants will undergo a thorough screening process. Personal interviews with the applicants, evaluations from their pastors and fellow parishioners, academic records, and standardized test scores are all components of the admission process that begins with the vocation office.

21. The admission process will include a thorough physical examination in order to assure that the applicant possesses the good health necessary for seminary training.

22. The psychological assessment is an integral part of the admission process. The psychologist uses guidelines to assist in describing objectively those traits and attitudes which give hope of a true vocation as well as those characteristics which indicate that a priestly vocation might not be present. The tools used for the psychological assessment as well as the interpretation of their results will scrutinize the applicant according to the Church's expectations regarding chastity and priestly celibacy.

23. In the admission process, the life experience of the applicant is carefully reviewed. The applicant's level of insight and motivation to address areas such as interpersonal relations and psychosexual development are important criteria for admission.

24. The application process will also pay attention to the family background of all applicants. Those from particularly dysfunctional families require careful evaluation before admission. The

priestly formation program addresses through formation advising and spiritual direction those issues related to family upbringing and their impact. Therefore, the applicant must demonstrate an openness to discuss all issues accordingly.

25. Those applicants who are older bring a rich and varied background to the seminary formation program. Some of these applicants have conversion experiences but lack strong ecclesial and sacramental consciousness and are uninitiated into Catholic tradition and practice. At times, their own complex backgrounds can bring complicated personal and professional situations. The application process will be sensitive to these unique situations, however, evaluation will be no less rigorous, thorough, or comprehensive.

26. The School of Theology also houses pre-theologians. These men are able to identify and relate to peers of their own age and experience. Older theologians bring a wisdom and experience that benefits the program while they often feel stimulated in their vocation with the zeal of younger seminarians.

27. The Rector will consult all previous seminaries/religious congregations about the past record of the applicant. If such records indicate difficulties, the Admissions Board will prudently weigh admission making sure the problems have been overcome and positive growth has taken place.

28. Notre Dame Seminary, as a national seminary, considers the various expectations of each diocese while also maintaining adherence to the requirements of particular and universal canonical law.

29. A careful evaluation will be made before accepting applicants who have been dismissed or who seek transfer from another diocese. It is required that consultation take place between the administration of seminaries or dioceses with the necessary documentation about previous records being provided. This will be done in every instance when the consideration is made to accept an applicant who has been dismissed from a previous formation program. Similar criteria will be applied to applicants who have been in religious formation programs and now are applying to the formation program at Notre Dame Seminary.

30. Applicants whose marriages have been annulled will be screened carefully. While these men have the canonical freedom to pursue the possibility of priesthood, it is important to ascertain if and how previous obstacles to a marriage commitment would affect their viability as candidates for Holy Orders.

31. The application process will also evaluate carefully those applicants who are recent converts to the Catholic faith. Applicants will not be considered unless they have been fully initiated Catholics for at least two years. Moreover, a suitable period of time should pass for those

applicants in whom a sudden conversion experience appears to precipitate a priestly vocation. Likewise, those who return to the practice of the faith after an extended period will not be considered for entrance into the formation program until there has been a sufficient time for that individual to have practiced his faith.

32. Admission to the seminary program also assumes the candidate's ability to accept personal responsibility in all aspects of formation. For this reason, great emphasis is placed on the freedom of the individual to act responsibly and to enhance his life through accountability and appropriate maturity. Seminarians are expected to enter the formation program in a full and meaningful manner and to demonstrate a commitment to the values which underlie the priestly formation program. While the seminary formation program is directive and supportive, much of the initiative for growth rests with the seminarian himself. This requires appropriate disposition, energy, and responsibility. Willingness and capacity to undertake such a demanding formation program is essential in the discernment process which is central to the formation program.

Applicant Requisites

Maturity and Faith Development

33. The Church will only promote to Sacred Orders men who have sound faith, are motivated by right intention, are endowed with the requisite knowledge, enjoy a good reputation, who have moral probity, proven virtue, and physical and psychological qualities appropriate for ordained ministry (cf. CIC 1029).

34. The applicant must be able to demonstrate human and evangelical virtues necessary for ordained ministry. An applicant's fidelity and loyalty to the Church implies his ability to offer a selfless contribution to advance the mission of the Church. Applicants for the priestly formation program must be active members of the Christian community with membership in a particular parish. It is presumed that the applicant will enjoy a good reputation among the faithful and be seen as a man of faith and prayer.

35. The applicant must be properly motivated and give evidence of an overall personal balance and moral character. He should be a frequent participant in parish activities and spiritual enrichment opportunities, i.e. retreats, days of recollection, spiritual direction, study of scripture, etc.

36. Applicants to the School of Theology must have completed a college formation program or pre-theology formation program.

Proper Standing and Stability

37. Two or three years must elapse between a convert's initiation into the Church or a returning Catholic's reconciliation to the Church before application to the priestly formation program. As already stated, special evaluation will be given to someone in whom a sudden conversion experience seems to precipitate a priestly vocation.

38. An applicant to the formation program must demonstrate he has lived a life of chastity according to the moral teachings of the Catholic Church. He must demonstrate his ability to live a stable and mature life of chastity and understand the gift of priestly celibacy. His lifestyle shall not be in contradiction to the Christian faith and the moral teachings of the Church.

39. Notre Dame Seminary requires that all dioceses provide information about the legal status of applicants.

40. At first inquiry and upon receiving any information of Eastern Catholic or Eastern Orthodox background of seminary applicants, dioceses must confirm that all canonical processes will be in place to confirm the licit ordination of candidates to ordination.

Irregularities/Impediments for Reception of Holy Orders

Canon 1041:

41. The application to the priestly formation program cannot be accepted and promotion for ordination to Holy Orders cannot proceed for one who labors under some form of insanity or other psychic defect due to which, after consultation with experts, he is judged incapable of rightly carrying out ordained ministry.

42. An application cannot be accepted and promotion for ordination to Holy Orders cannot proceed for one who has committed the delict (offense) of apostasy, heresy, or schism.

43. An application to the priestly formation program cannot be accepted and promotion for ordination to Holy Orders cannot proceed for one who has attempted marriage, even a civil one only, either while he was impeded from entering marriage due to an existing matrimonial bond, sacred orders or a public perpetual vow of chastity, or with a woman bound by a valid marriage or by the same type of vow.

44. An application to the priestly formation program cannot be accepted and promotion for ordination to Holy Orders cannot proceed for one who has committed voluntary homicide or who has procured an effective abortion and all persons who positively cooperated in either.

45. An application cannot be accepted for the priestly formation program and promotion for ordination to Holy Orders cannot proceed for one who has seriously and maliciously mutilated himself or another person or a person who has attempted suicide.

46. An application to the priestly formation program cannot be accepted and promotion for ordination to Holy Orders cannot proceed for one who has performed an act of orders which has been reserved to those who are in the order of episcopacy or presbyterate while the person either lacked that order or had been forbidden its exercise by some declared or inflicted canonical penalty.

Canon 1042:

47. An application to the priestly formation program cannot be accepted and promotion for ordination to Holy Orders cannot proceed for one who holds office or position of administration. A sufficient amount of time ought to pass between the time an applicant has held those positions and when the application process begins. In such cases, the applicant will be asked to render an account demonstrating he is free from all irregularities relating to this stipulation.

Initial and Responsible Discernment

The Admissions Board will review all application materials to ascertain the level of discernment that has already taken place before the admission process. It is presumed that a candidate for seminary formation is already a practicing Catholic who demonstrates maturity, spiritual development, and who possesses a basic catechetical understanding of the faith. The diocesan Office for Vocations can serve as an important instrument for an individual who is discovering his priestly vocation. Activities or programs sponsored by the diocese as well as those in the parish can be very important in guiding an inquirer in the discernment process.

48. Active Involvement in the Parish: It is assumed that every applicant is a practicing Catholic who is registered in a parish. The initial discernment of a candidate often demonstrates his involvement with parish activities particularly those surrounding the sacred liturgy. Members of the Admissions Board will need to take into consideration the age and life experience of the applicant in determining the appropriate level of involvement an applicant should have at his parish. Applicants often demonstrate in their desire to discern a priestly vocation behavioral attributes manifested in parish or liturgical activity.

49. Frequent Reception of the Sacraments: An applicant to the priestly formation program should demonstrate by way of action and knowledge a proper standing in the Church including the frequent reception of the sacraments. Often applicants attend daily Mass, express interest in

popular piety, and belong to associations that promote sacramental activity. The Church already provides guidelines regarding those applicants who express an interest in the priesthood after the conversion experiences or even initiation into the Catholic Church. The Admissions Board will take caution and be deliberate in its evaluation of candidates to the priestly formation program.

50. Contact with the Office for Vocations: Applicants to the priestly formation program at Notre Dame Seminary are nominated by vocation directors, religious superiors, or diocesan bishops. Each diocese/religious congregation also has their own application process. Notre Dame Seminary recognizes these processes and will work to minimize the paperwork required by applicants. However, Notre Dame Seminary follows closely the requirements of the Church's governing documents which stipulate the necessary steps that need to be followed before one can enter the seminary.

51. Discernment Programs: Applicants often find programs sponsored by the diocese or other ecclesial programs as helpful in confirming one's readiness to proceed with theological studies.

52. Conversations with the Pastor/Other Priests: It is important for the applicant to be in conversation with his pastor in expressing an interest in the possibility of discerning a priestly vocation. The pastor is eventually involved in the application process. The pastor can offer encouragement during this phase of the applicant's discernment. It is also beneficial for the applicant to speak with other parish priests about the journey to the priesthood and joys of pastoral ministry.

53. Conversations with Family/Friends: Often the people closest to the applicant provide the most support and insight when a person expresses their interest in a priestly vocation. The applicant can obviously find it most beneficial when he shares that interest with the people around him. However, with the dynamics of society in the present day, the reaction of family and friends to such an announcement is not always positive or affirming. Nevertheless, the reality of discernment and the eventual commitment of a candidate to the priestly formation program are often evidenced in how he shares the joy of his desire to discern a priestly vocation.

The Application Process

54. An individual who pursues application to the priestly formation program will have already considered the dynamics discernment discussing with his pastor, family and friends, and those associated with the Office for Vocations his desire to continue formation in the School of Theology.

55. The Vocation Director will review with the applicant all of the materials and processes involved with application to the seminary formation program. The applicant can also contact the Rector's Office to have his questions answered.

56. The applicant will notify all those who are required to offer recommendation letters as required by his vocation director.

57. All completed application materials will become the property of Notre Dame Seminary. The applicant will sign the consent forms acknowledging the right of the seminary to possess and maintain the application materials of the inquirer.

58. It is expected that the applicant approach the application process in the spirit of honesty and humility. He will be asked that all information submitted is complete, without error, and all questions answered honestly.

Application Forms

59. The applicant must submit application materials to the Vocation Office or directly to Notre Dame Seminary depending on the preference of the Vocation Director. All materials must be thoroughly completed and submitted before any review can be undertaken by the Seminary Admissions Board. The forms can be accessed through Notre Dame Seminary's website at www.nds.edu or mailed to the applicant by the admissions office.

60. **Seminary Application Form:** The applicant must complete all sections of the application form in an honest and truthful manner. The opening question on the application form requires the applicant to confirm that no information will be purposely withheld from the Notre Dame Seminary. If it is discovered that information was willfully withheld the application process will be terminated.

61. **Canonical Suitability Profile Interview:** The Vocation Director will complete the Canonical Suitability Profile Interview with the applicant to determine the maturity and faith development of the individual, his proper standing and stability in the Church, and ascertain if there are any irregularities or impediments for the reception of Holy Orders.

62. **The Rector's Interview:** The Rector will conduct a personal interview after the applicant has been accepted and the new seminarian has arrived at Notre Dame Seminary. The purpose of the interview is to confirm the readiness of the seminarian and what areas of formation will need to be addressed. The interview will follow the canonical suitability profile. The Rector will assure the seminarian of confidentiality while also respecting the internal forum. All information discussed relates to the external forum of priestly formation.

63. Chronological Form: The applicant is to list in chronological order his attendance at all educational institutions, i.e. elementary, middle, high school, college, other formation programs, etc. He is to list all major jobs and careers within the chronology. The applicant is to complete the log beginning first with recent information.

64. Spiritual Autobiography: The applicant is to write a detailed autobiography following the questions provided on the Spiritual Autobiography Form. The applicant is to address each section in the form by responding to the questions in the narrative. Since the autobiography provides the applicant an opportunity to present himself to the Admissions Board and those associated with the formation program, a considerable amount of time ought to be devoted to completing the document. All information shared must be honest and truthful.

65. Written Psychological Testing: The applicant will complete a written psychological examination that includes various tools.

66. Psychological Testing and Interview: The applicant will schedule a meeting with the psychologist for further psychological testing which includes an interview. The information exchanged in the interview is to be truthful and presented in an honest manner.

67. Follow-up Meeting with the Psychologist and Director: The psychologist will schedule a meeting with the applicant at the office of the psychologist. The psychologist will provide a written report to the Vocation Director summarizing the results from the written and oral psychological tests. The report will conclude with a recommendation from the psychologist regarding the suitability of the applicant to enter the priestly formation program.

68. Candidate Medical Form: The Medical Form must be completed by a certified and licensed physician and returned to Notre Dame Seminary with the other application materials. Included in the medical examination are the results of the blood analysis including testing for HIV-antibody status.

69. Information Consent Form: The applicant must sign the Information Consent Form giving permission for Notre Dame Seminary to conduct independent background checks or pursue any other information that might be relevant to the application process. It is understood that Notre Dame Seminary is not permitted or authorized to release any information about the applicant to outside agencies, organizations, or personnel without the consent of the applicant.

70. Consent Form for Scrutiny: The applicant must sign this form giving Notre Dame Seminary permission to confidentially exchange all application materials with officials at Notre Dame Seminary associated with the application and formation processes.

71. **Psychological Testing Consent Form:** The applicant must sign this form giving permission for Notre Dame Seminary to confidentially exchange the results from the psychological testing contained in the report given by the psychologist to those officials associated with the application and formation processes. It is understood that Notre Dame Seminary is not permitted or authorized to release any information about the applicant to outside agencies, organizations, or personnel without the consent of the applicant.

72. **Recommendation Forms:** The applicant must solicit recommendations from his pastor and four non-family members. The vocation director will also write a letter of recommendation.

Supporting Information

73. **Recent Photograph:** The applicant must submit two self color passport size photographs.

74. **Certificates of Baptism and Confirmation:** The applicant must submit documentation issued within the past six months.

75. **Birth Certificate:** The applicant must supply a notarized or official copy of his birth certificate and, if applicable, proof of adoption.

76. **Proof of Residency:** The applicant must supply some proof of residency (i.e. driver's license, tax information).

77. **Parents' Marriage Certificate:** The applicant must submit a copy of his parents' marriage certificate. Additionally, if the marriage ended in divorce a copy of the decree is to be provided. If one or both parents are deceased a copy of the death certificate is required. If one or both parents have remarried then a copy of this marriage certificate should also be submitted.

78. **Official Academic Transcripts:** The applicant is to provide high school, college, and all other academic transcripts.

79. **Recommendation Letter from Seminary/Religious Congregation:** If the applicant is transferring into the priestly formation program from another seminary/religious congregation or has recently graduated from a seminary formation program, the rector or superior will need to write a letter of recommendation answering the questions supplied in the application packet.

80. **Background Checks:** The applicant must request clearances from the State Police, namely the Child Abuse History Clearance and the Criminal Record Check. This information can be sent directly to Notre Dame Seminary.

81. **Financial Disclosure Form:** The applicant is to complete the Financial Disclosure Form identifying outstanding debts and his plan to address those debts if accepted into the seminary formation program.

82. **Insurance Information:** The applicant is to provide medical insurance information that will be retained in his personnel file upon acceptance into the seminary formation program.

83. **Code of Pastoral Conduct:** The applicant is to thoroughly read and sign all and any diocesan policies which indicate his understanding of the behavioral norms expected for those who are involved with ministry in the Church.

84. **Previous Formation Reports:** The applicant is to give written permission for the rector or superior of any previous house of studies to release all pertinent reports to Notre Dame Seminary with explicit reference to evaluations of the candidate and votes rendered by the faculty.

85. **Ex-Religious:** If the applicant once was a member of a religious community, he must provide letters of recommendation from that religious community as well as a copy of his release from vows.

86. **Former Military:** If the applicant once served in the military, he is to provide a copy of discharge or retirement orders.

87. **Transfer of Documentation:** Since the applicant typically is coming from another formation program, Notre Dame Seminary will accept previously submitted documentation that either the seminary or the vocation office has on file. However, some documentation requires updated information. The admissions office can provide more direction to assist the applicant in order to reduce the duplication of materials.

Admission Interviews

88. Notre Dame Seminary presumes that dioceses/ religious congregations nominate applicants to the priestly formation program who are well-suited and well recommended. The Rector will interview new seminarians simply to confirm the candidate's readiness to begin formation.

89. Notre Dame Seminary may request an interview with an applicant if there are uncertainties or further clarification is needed based on the information contained in the application process.

90. Notre Dame Seminary may also interview applicants at the request of the Vocation Office.

Seminary Admissions Board

91. The Vocation Office must nominate to the priestly formation program only those applicants whom they have judged as possessing the necessary qualities for entrance into the priestly formation program.

92. The Rector serves as the Chair of the Admissions Board. The other members include the Vice Rector, Director of Pre-Theology, Director of Counseling Services, Academic Dean, and the Associate Academic Dean.

93. The Rector's Office is to supply all necessary application materials to each member of the board. The board will review the application, autobiography, the summary of the psychological report provided by the director of counseling services, the candidate medical form, and all recommendation letters and forms.

94. The Admissions Board is primarily a consultative body providing evaluation and assessment of each applicant according to the material provided. The benefit of such evaluation will assist the formation team at the seminary once the applicant has been accepted into the program.

95. Vocation Directors and the Rector will work closely to assure that all the standards of the application process have been satisfied before the applicant is accepted into the program.

96. Upon review of all of the application materials, each reviewer will offer an assessment and identify concerns which ought to be considered if the applicant is accepted into the seminary formation program.

97. The Rector will ask the board if there are any reasons why the application process should not proceed with the acceptance of the applicant into the seminary formation program.

Admission Notification/Next Steps

98. The Rector will notify the applicant in writing to announce if the application has been accepted or rejected.

99. If an application has been rejected, all application materials are the property of Notre Dame Seminary and therefore the Rector's Office may or may not return materials to the applicant.

100. The Rector will notify the applicant upon his acceptance into the priestly formation program outlining what steps need to be taken prior to entrance into the program. Information will also be

shared with the new seminarian about the living conditions at the seminary and what items he may bring or are necessary for moving into the seminary.

101. The Vice Rector will send a follow-up letter detailing other information related to the new seminarian's transition.

102. The Academic Dean will arrange a meeting with the new seminarian to determine what courses to register for and will answer all questions related to academics.

103. An orientation will be scheduled for all new seminarians the first week of the semester to address all matters related to community life.