

Introduction

In the Spring of 2021, the faculty of the School of Theology at St. Mary's Seminary & University in Roland Park, Baltimore decided to embark on a common faculty writing project in collaboration with *Seminary Journal*. The project was coordinated by Fr. Dennis Billy, C.Ss.R. The purpose of this effort on the part of the faculty was to encourage its members in light of the new *Ratio Fundamentalis* from Rome (2016) and the sixth edition of the *Program for Priestly Formation* (approved 2019) to delve more deeply into the various academic disciplines offered at the seminary, with an eye to how those disciplines should be taught in a Catholic seminary. It was also hoped that such a project would encourage closer collaboration among the faculty, with the hope of seeing how those disciplines relate to one another and how classroom pedagogy has an impact on the content being both conveyed and received. Another hope was to offer the wider seminary community in the United States and beyond insights into how classroom pedagogy might impact the integration of the various dimensions of priestly formation.

Founded in 1791 by the Priests of Saint Sulpice (the Sulpicians), St. Mary's Seminary is the oldest Roman Catholic seminary in the United States and has prepared more men for priestly ordination than any other seminary in the United States. Animated by a core of dedicated Sulpician priests, the faculty consists of a unique blend of diocesan priests, religious, and laity, all of whom

are dedicated to forming young men for the Catholic priesthood for the Church of the twenty-first century. It trains seminarians from thirteen dioceses (as far apart as Portland, Maine and Louisville, Kentucky) and a number of religious or-

ders. It also maintains rigorous standards for human, intellectual, spiritual, and pastoral formation.

In the end, ten faculty members participated in this common effort that ultimately produced eight essays (one was co-authored by three faculty members) on the fields of English-language pedagogy and spirituality for beginners, as well as the disciplines of philosophy, liturgy, scripture, systematic theology, moral theology, and canon law. Each faculty member was given free rein to develop the assigned essay as he or she saw fit (hence the different styles and approaches taken), the only exception being that it fall largely within the general guidelines of the journal. Although the areas presented do not exhaust the wide range of disciplines taught in Catholic seminaries, they represent a large portion of those offered and

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provide beginning reflections on how they should be integrated into the seminary program. It is hoped that this initial effort will encourage others to fill in the gaps with respect to those disciplines not treated.

It should also be stated that, although the entire faculty expressed interest in this common project, commitments of time and other responsibilities precluded everyone from participating in it. That said, one way in which the faculty has gotten everyone involved was to use individual

essays for topics of discussion during faculty development luncheons. Such a discussion format may be a way for other seminaries to benefit from the fruit of these essays.

The goal of this project was to strengthen the intellectual bonds within our own faculty and to offer insights into how the intellectual formation of Catholic seminarians could move forward in the years ahead. May this project encourage other faculties to contribute similar offerings to *Seminary Journal* in the years ahead.

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