

Building Healthy Presbyterates: It Starts in the Seminary

Virtual Live Workshop – Thursday, August 13, 2026

Workshop Overview

Across the country, Bishops, seminary formators, and priests are asking the same question: *How do we form future priests who will flourish not only through ordination, but throughout a lifetime of ministry?* The lived experience of today's presbyterates offers an important answer, as the tensions increasingly faced in priestly life point to the need for an even stronger emphasis on human formation.

The Program for Priestly Formation identifies human formation as the necessary foundation of priestly formation. Yet many seminaries continue to wrestle with the practical question of how to intentionally cultivate the human maturity, leadership, and relational capacities that undergird the spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral pillars of formation.

This workshop presents a practical framework for strengthening human formation. Rather than focusing solely on discerning readiness for ordination, participants will explore concrete strategies for helping each seminarian become the priest God is calling him to be.

Participants will leave with practical tools for strengthening human formation, implementing individualized formation plans, and cultivating seminary environments that prepare men not only for ordination, but for a lifetime of healthy, holy, and fruitful priestly ministry.

Program Schedule

9:30 AM – 10:00 AM

Welcome & Introductions – Matt Robinson & Fr. Patrick McDevitt

10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Understanding Today's Presbyterate – Fr. Patrick McDevitt

Today's presbyterates reveal both the strengths of seminary formation and the areas that deserve renewed attention. This session examines what the lived experience of priests and recent sociological data are teaching us about the growing importance of human formation.

Participants will explore:

- Current realities facing priests today
- Why human formation deserves renewed attention
- Takeaways for seminary formation

11:00 AM– 12:00 PM

Operationalizing Human Formation – Matt Robinson

Human formation requires intentional development. But how? This session presents emotional intelligence as a practical framework for developing the human qualities described in the *Program for Priestly Formation*.

Participants will explore:

- Emotional intelligence and priestly formation
- Practical human formation competencies
- Strategies and tools for intentional growth in human formation

12:00 PM – 1:00 PM

Lunch Break

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

From Gatekeeping to Growth: Individualized Formation Plans – Fr. Patrick McDevitt

Formation is not simply about determining readiness for ordination—it is about intentionally helping each seminarian grow. But how do seminary formators assess, measure, and implement growth strategies for each seminarian? This session introduces practical strategies for individualized formation planning.

Participants will explore:

- Moving beyond evaluation to proactive formation
- Identifying strengths and growth areas
- Creating individualized formation plans
- Accountability and measurable growth

2:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Building Seminary Cultures That Form Healthy Priests – Matt Robinson

Culture often forms seminarians as much as curriculum. This session examines how seminaries can intentionally create the institutional conditions that cultivate human maturity, leadership, and holiness.

Participants will explore:

- How culture shapes formation
- Building healthy formation environments
- Key leadership behaviors for formators

3:00 PM – 3:30 PM

Wrap-Up & Implementation Takeaways – Matt Robinson & Fr. Patrick McDevitt