



Priestly Formation

BACKGROUND

Statistics

On May 9, 2009, seven men will be ordained to the priesthood at St. Michael's Cathedral for service in the Archdiocese of Toronto. Five candidates are diocesan priests and two are from the Neocatechumenal Way (see Redemptoris Mater Seminary). After ordination, all seven will serve in parishes in the Archdiocese of Toronto.

St. Augustine's Seminary is the Major Seminary of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto. It was established in 1913 as the first major seminary constructed in English-speaking Canada for the training of diocesan priests. Its primary purpose is the preparation of candidates for ordained priesthood in the Catholic Church. This preparation for diocesan ministerial leadership embraces and promotes spiritual formation, theological education and field training. The Seminary is also mandated to form men and women aspiring to other ministries in the Church. For admission into the Seminary, a candidate for ordination to the priesthood must contact the Bishop or Vocations Director of the diocese of sponsorship to begin the application process.

Redemptoris Mater Seminary, located on the grounds of St. Augustine's Seminary, the priests' of the Neocatechumenal Way have been in Toronto since 1999. Their students receive the same theological formation as the seminarians of St. Augustine but are ordained to serve where the bishop feels there is a need, either in mission to another location or within their own diocese as need arises. A defining characteristic of the Redemptoris Mater Seminary is that it is international: the priests ordained are for the whole world and at the service of the Church.

Academic Programs

Candidates for the ordained priesthood participate in the Priestly Formation Programme in conjunction with the Pontifical Baccalaureate of Sacred Theology/Master of Divinity degree, depending on their academic eligibility. Candidates must have a Bachelor's degree, preferably a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.), or its equivalent from an accredited institution and be proficient in the English language before entering the Seminary.

Curriculum

There are thirty required courses for both the S.T.B. and M.Div. In addition to the thirty courses, pastoral formation incorporates a field education placement for one semester. Candidates complete a one-year parish internship and an eighth semester of Pastoral Practicums in the spring term of their 4th year. Typically, there is a minimum of five years of formation before a candidate is ordained.

Spiritual Formation

The Spiritual Formation program focuses its efforts on developing the religious identity of the candidate within the understanding of the priest as one who grows in his commitment to become:

- a disciple of Jesus
- a servant of God's people
- a representative of and leader within the faith community
- a presider over the celebration of the Church's sacramental life
- a prophet of God's justice in the world.