



SAINT CHARLES BORROMEEO SEMINARY, OVERBROOK

Theological Reflection Session

“Supervision, theological reflection, and evaluation are necessary components of an effective pastoral program. Although theological reflection can help the development of pastoral skills, its primary purpose is to interpret pastoral experience or activity in light of Scripture, church teaching, personal faith, and pastoral practices. Reflection of this kind should become a lifelong habit in priestly ministry.” - Program for Priestly Formation # 248

Parameters for Theological Reflection: during one of the class Human Formation Conferences each semester, the priest formator will moderate a discussion on the theological reflection of the pastoral experiences of the seminarians in the class. For the discussion, each seminarian will present a summary (no more than one page) Theological Reflection Paper.

The USCCB’s *Program for Priestly Formation* (5th Edition) requires theological reflection because it is imperative that candidates for the priesthood look at human experience through the prism of faith and theology.

What is Theological Reflection?

Descriptive definitions:

- **Theological Reflection** is a conscious reflection on life experience in ministry, accomplished in the light of faith. The purpose of the reflection is to assist the Seminarian in integrating the theology learned in the seminary with practical ministerial experience.
- **Theological Reflection** is the ability to bring the Christian tradition into fruitful dialogue with contemporary experience; the goal being to interpret the experience so as to understand God’s will and action in the world, and to formulate an appropriate pastoral response to a situation. In this context then, Theological Reflection is the critical and constant foundation at the heart of a parish priest’s ministry and prayer.

Theological Reflection Paper Guidelines

Please organize and execute the paper as follows:

- The Theological Reflection Paper is no more than one (1) page typed, double-spaced, 12 font.
- **Step I:** State your Name and Apostolate Assignment
- **Step II:** Explain the Critical Incident
- **Step III:** Present the Theological Reflection of the Incident
- Do not use real names.
- Avoid specific details that might compromise confidentiality.
- Be prepared to discuss your paper in further detail with your classmates and your class Formation Conference Leader who will lead the Theological Reflection Session.

THEOLOGICAL MEANING: WHAT RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE DOES IT HAVE?

Questions to be asked of the experience include the following:

- What theological questions does it raise?
- How does the experience tell us something about how God relates with us?
- How has God revealed Himself in this experience?
- How does the experience relate to the Gospel?
- What insights in pastoral ministry have been learned from this experience?

SOME GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATION:

- A firm basis in Scripture and Tradition
 - A capacity to help Christians in their efforts to believe in Jesus
 - A capacity to direct believers to fulfill their mission as members of the Church
 - Ability to foster a proper Christian anthropology
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