

What Catholic Seminaries Are Omitting

A Guide to Ending the First-World Pastoral Crisis

We've lost Europe. Now Ireland. America has been losing Catholics for decades. How could we let this happen?

Our pastoral crisis is no one's fault. By creating seminaries, Trent radically reformed pastoral training due to a revolution in society, Protestantism. So why doesn't a new revolution, secularism, call for a new reform of pastoral training? After Vatican II, technology undermined the context assumed by Trent's pastoral plan so quickly that we could not see the long term effects. Trent could, but we cannot, assume that the society supports belief in Christian basics. The sacraments' goals depend on our appreciating a few underlying truths that pastors are not stressing enough for our environment. (2 P 1:12-15) Sound doctrine cannot defeat unsound if pastoring is out of balance. The authors of the epistles can teach us the proper balance.

Please judge for yourself whether our current pastoral life reflects the apostolic principles this guide explains.

N.B. Some quotes from Scripture and elsewhere are **paraphrased** to save space in a booklet meant to be small, but all sources are identified for the sake of verification. All the quotes from the Magisterium and Scripture that are referenced but not contained in this booklet can be found at www.joyfulshepherdretreat.org; click on “Evidence from the Magisterium.” At that location, you can also refer to “Pastoral Principles Taught by the Apostles.”

This guide is based on the *Joyful Shepherd Retreat* for priests, a program for pastoral reform that has been accepted as satisfying a priests canonical requirement for a yearly retreat by the Archdiocese of Boston and the Diocese of Pittsburgh. The guide is authored by some of the retreat’s leaders, who are a group of priests, deacons and lay people. For more explanation of the ideas summarized in this booklet and of The Joyful Shepherd Retreat, please visit the web site and click on “Retreat Outlines” or “Theological background.”

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Introduction: Pastoral Formation's Outdated Assumptions

Responding to grace is up to each of us, but for us to do that fully, pastoring must properly dispose us. (Ezk 3:17-19; 33:1-9; Ep 4:11-16; 1 Cor 12:28-30) Today's wonderful priests are taught to pastor in ways that worked modestly well in social conditions, including most of society's having a beginning of Christian faith, that no longer exist.

- Priests didn't need to learn the most basic pastoral tool: how to evangelize for a personal relation to Jesus. Families could do the primary evangelizing without technology inside the home and children's environments outside promoting secularism.
- Against Protestantism, Trent's seminaries needed to put stress that would otherwise be unbalanced on academic *theology*, in contrast to how the apostles *pastored* for discipleship; and on specifically Catholic/Orthodox doctrines, in contrast to the Church's foundational "Hierarchy of Christian Truths" (HCT). That worked, for maintenance though not for growth, but only when most of society supported belief in the Christian basics.
- The Church could Christianize local communities that gave marriages the environmental support of lasting close relationships. Technology has now severely weakened local community. The Church is growing in nations where technology is less advanced—but for how long?—and local community can still support families and their initial evangelizing of children.

The Church's Hierarchy of Christian Truths

- "Remember that in Catholic doctrine there exists a 'hierarchy' of truths, since they vary in their relation to the fundamental Christian faith." (*Unitatis Reintegration*, II, 11; *Mysterious Ecclesia*, 4; *Catechism*, 90, 234; *Ut Unum Sint*, 37; *General Directory for Catechesis 1997*, 97, 114, 132, 197, 241; *Evangelii Gaudium*, 36-38, 246)

- ***”A catechesis that neglects this interrelation and harmony of its content can become entirely useless for achieving its end.”*** (Congregation for the Clergy, *General Catechetical Directory* 1971, 39; emphasis added)
- “Some Christian beliefs have a higher priority because the other beliefs are based on them and so need to be illumined by them.”

“In the message of salvation there is a certain hierarchy of truths, which the Church has always recognized in creeds or summaries of the faith. This does not mean that some truths pertain to faith less than others, but some truths [e.g., the Church’s institutional structure and sacramental system, which are barely mentioned, if at all, in the creeds. Ed. note.] are based on others as of a higher priority, and are illumined by them.”

“On all levels [So we can never take it for granted. Ed. note.] catechesis should take account of this hierarchy.” (ibid., 43; emphasis added)

- “The truths to be believed include God's love. He created all things for Christ and restored us to life in Christ. The various aspects of the mystery are to be explained so that Jesus holds first place and that from Him other truths derive their educational order and priority.” (ibid., 16)
- “The object of faith is complex, God in His own mystery and His saving intervention in history. Christ has central importance in God’s saving intervention.” (ibid., 39)
- “What unites Catholic and nonCatholic Christians is greater than what divides us.” (St. John XXIII, *Ut Unum Sint*, 20) “How little divides Catholic and nonCatholic Christians in comparison to what unites them.” (St. John Paul II, ibid., 22) [How do ordination and the sacraments requiring it fit into “what unites” or “divides” Christians? Ed. note.]

- “The aim of catechesis is to put us in intimacy with Jesus: only He can lead us to the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the Trinity’s life.” (St. John Paul II, *On Catechesis in Our Time*, 5)
- “The structure of the whole content of catechesis must be theocentric and Trinitarian: through Christ, to the Father, in the Spirit.” (*General Catechetical Directory*, 41; and see *Catechism*, 234)
- “The Eucharist presupposes that communion already exists, which it brings to perfection. The sacrament is an expression of this communion. Invisible communion, though always growing, presupposes the life of grace, by which we become “partakers of the divine nature” (2 P 1:4), and the practice of faith, hope and love. Only in this way do we have communion with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.” (John Paul II, *The Church of the Eucharist*, 35-36; and 58 says “the wonder that surpasses them all” is **not** the Eucharist.)

The Eucharist’s purpose is to preserve and perfect real presences “infinitely dearer” (see p. 11 below) to Jesus: His presences by grace and His communal body. The Eucharist is “the summit” as the highest way we live **the** “Gift of God” (Jn 4:10), the Trinity’s own life.

Judge for yourself if the five key truths that follow, with support from Scripture and the Magisterium, are stressed enough by pastors for discipleship to flourish in secular society. Are our self-sacrificing priests taught to pastor this way? For their ministry to succeed, don’t they *deserve* that? Sound doctrine is not enough without the HCT.

We place Truth I first as the most neglected of them and the earthly **goal** pastoring must aim at. Please consider the evidence for it carefully. Truth III is the most important as the *sine qua non* initial pastoral **means**, but we put it third to show that Truth II belongs between I and III; II is needed to connect the initial means with the end. Truth IV puts the three together. Truth V is a neglected reason why we must evangelize though nonChristians can be saved.

The Visible Unity That Makes the Church a Sacrament

- I. *Jesus has a pastoral plan: pastors fostering visible Christian brother/sisterhood, familial love between **Christians**. Grace is meant to bear fruit in contexts of mutual love, so that Christians get the environmental support we need to love **all** people.*

“I am praying for my disciples, not for the world: . . . May they be one as We are one (read: love each other as you and I do), **so that the world may believe that you sent me!**” (Jn 17:9, 21-23)

The world-saving “unity” of John 17 is brother/sisterly love (visible love, not just “spiritual”) of disciples for disciples. You never heard that? **Vatican II teaches it.** (*Gaudium et Spes* 21, at “*Ad praesentiam Dei manifestandam .maxime*”; and see *Evangeliu Gaudium*, 92, 99-100)

“One as We are one”: God is a family of persons totally in love. The Church’s visible *sign* as a *sacrament* is being a loving family.

“. . . that the world may know that you sent me”; read: “This is how the goal of my pastors’ ministry will be achieved.” (And see 1 Co 10:16-17; 11:17-20 on the *communal* goal of priests’ *Eucharistic* ministry.)

Pastors must explain why mutual Christian love isn’t discrimination. There is only one love, the Holy Spirit, in our hearts. But He gives us obligations to love different people, e.g., our families, in different ways. Isn’t the family’s unique context of love for **each other** the place where we learned to love **all** people as ourselves?

Christian brother/sisterhood is where we learn to love **all** people as Jesus does. But we can’t take for granted today that Catholics know they have this special call to love their fellow Christians. **Do seminaries teach priests Jesus’ pastoral plan?**

Brother/sisterhood requires pastors to teach and lead. Didn't Jesus announce the New Law **only** to His first pastors (Jn 13:34-35; 17:9, 11, 20-23), from whom alone other disciples would learn it and its purpose? Why else did those pastors repeat the call for Christian love specifically for fellow Christians over and over and over:

- “Since I have heard of . . . your love for **the saints**, I do not cease to give thanks.” (Ep 1:15-16. And Col 1:3-5; Phm 4; 2 Co 9:12; Ep 6:18; Rm 12:13; 1 Tm 5:10, 6:2; Ga 6:10, 6:2; Hb 6:10; etc.)
- “**The person who believes** that Jesus is the Christ is a child **begotten** of God. Now everyone who loves the father loves the **child He has begotten.**” (1 Jn 5:1; and 3:1; 4:20-21)
- “About love of *the brethren*, you have been taught by God to love **one another**, and indeed you do love all *the brethren* throughout Macedonia.” (1 Th 4:9-10; and 3:12; 5:15)
- “Honor all men. Love *the brotherhood.*” (1 P 2:17) “Purify your hearts to love *the brethren*, . . . **one another.**” (1:22; 3:8)

Our individualistic culture reads “love **one another**” to refer to all human *individuals*. In Scripture it refers to all members of the *community* that is being addressed. (Jn 13:34-35; 1 Th 3:12; 4:9-10; 5:15).

Grace works with nature. God designed us to need environmental support. Wouldn't Jesus plan Christian pastoring accordingly?

“Love your neighbor” is a law for each of us as individuals.
“Love one another” is a law for the life of the Church (*Lumen Gentium* 9, at “*Habet pro lege*”), Jesus’ “pastoral commandment.” He says the evangelization of all people depends on it. (Jn 17:21-23)

Christianity's Essence: Living the Trinity's Life

II. *Pastors have to regularly reinforce—especially in secular society—the main motive for Christian behavior in the epistles, appreciation of the infinite glory of “the Gift of God” (Jn 4:10; Ac 8:20; Rm 6:23; 2 Co 9:14-15; Hb 6:1-6; 2 Tm 1:6-7) received by Christians: the Trinity’s real presence in us.*

- “I have given them our glory **so that** they may love each other as we do.” (Jn 17:22; see *Gaudium et Spes*, 21, at “*Ad praesentiam Dei manifestandam maxime*”)
- “Other Christians long for you and pray for you **because of the surpassing grace of God in you**. Thanks be to God for His *inexpressible gift*.” (2 Co 9:14-15; 6:16-7:1; 2 Pt 1:3-7; 1 Jn 3:1-3)

Don't the pastors who wrote the epistles repeatedly call on an appreciation of our glory to motivate Christian behavior:

- “Examine yourselves. Do you not know that Jesus is in you?—unless you fail to meet the test.” (2 Co 13:5)
- “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?” (1 Co 3:16; and 6:15; 6:19; 1 Jn 3:1-3; Col 1:27)

The Trinity’s life really lived in and among human beings is what Christianity is, its essence. (By the HCT; see *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 35-36)

Catholics’ appreciation of their glory is now too weak to be the motive for Christian behavior in our secular society. Too many misunderstand God’s being in all people, and that all are His children, and do not need to be Christian to be saved (Truth V); too many think that God is “in our hearts” subjectively, or that grace

starts as a small thing and grows, or is a white mark on the soul; or that priests act *in persona Christi* in the most important way and that the Eucharist is the most important real presence (Truth IV).

Such pastoring keeps Catholics from appreciating our deification.

- It is true that God is in all people, but doesn't baptism, by water or desire, alone give us the Trinity's own infinite life?
- Today "God's children" means all people. It usually means the *opposite* in Scripture: how those in grace (by water baptism or desire) are **infinitely different** from others. (1 Jn 3:1; 5:1)

We grow in grace, as Jesus did (Lk 2:52), since the way the Trinity lives its life in us develops, at the human level. But isn't the whole Trinity really present in us from baptism or reconciliation on?

To appreciate your glory, I have to appreciate mine. And only Christians who know the glory for which all people are created can love nonChristians as they deserve and need, with Jesus' love.

To fully cooperate with actual grace, we must hear the glory of the Great News and Gift of God, regularly proclaimed, even if we already know it. (2 Pt 1:3-5, 12-13) The fear that must always be part of our motivation is fear of losing the great gift we already have.

The Spirit given in confirmation will make that proclamation fruitful. Scripture says that receiving the Holy Spirit is meant to

- Give us a personal appreciation of God's glorious real presence in us by grace. (Jr 31:34; Jn 14:16-20; Ga 4:6)
- So that we will obey God out of love and joy, not just out of fear of punishment (Ezk 36:26-27; Jr 31:31-33)

The Gift of God Is Entirely Free--We Don't Have to Earn It

III. *But first pastors must regularly preach (2 Pt 1:12-13) the two dispositions needed for responding to the Spirit: repent of sin and believe the Great News of what Jesus did, and does, for me.*

Isn't sincerely allowing God to work in us, as Mary did (Lk1:38), all we can, do? That calls for two basic ongoing dispositions (Mk 1:15):

- A firm purpose of amendment, i.e., repenting of sin, which means personally accepting Jesus as *Lord* over my life.
- Belief in the kerygma, the Great News that Jesus living in me will accomplish my reformed intentions for me (Rm 8:3-4), which means consciously accepting Jesus as my personal *Savior*.

All Catholics need to know that we must sincerely repent of sin, but also that we don't make ourselves better. We don't have the power to overcome the evil in and around us. That is what Jesus does, has done, and will do for us, if we simply permit Him to.

Since salvation is a free gift, all we have to do to let the Spirit work is sincerely want to change (repent) and ask Jesus to change us trusting that He will do it (believe). (Ezk. 36:26-27)

All other virtues come from ongoing repenting of sin and faith in the Great News, i.e., receiving Jesus as personal Lord and Savior, not just as God's teacher or head of His religion. (By the HCT)

Operato, my relation to Jesus comes from the Church and the sacraments. But *operantis*, the quality of my relation to them comes from my conversion to the person, Jesus. (1 Co 1:17; 3:10)

In whatever words, ongoing repentance and faith in Jesus' free salvation are the foundational *spiritual "exercises"* that allow my other acts to be Christian, not works of my own virtue. We can't assume that all—or even most—active Catholics understand this.

Personal evangelization is “**pre-catechesis.**” (General Directory for Catechesis, 61-62) The *operantis* effects—conversion of heart not just mind—of the sacraments and catechesis depend on it. (*Catechism*, 1072) Are pastors taught how to lead Catholics to conscious personal conversion to Jesus, not just to the Church? (By the HCT)

Doesn't St. Paul's justification by *faith*, not “works of the law,” (Rm 3:28) mean by personal faith *and repentance*? (2:4-5; 6:17) From these two don't works of the law follow by Jesus' power, not my intention of repentance, causing them in me? (7:18-8:4; Ga 5:17)

If we don't use all the help Jesus gives us through His Church, we haven't truly repented of our sins and/or truly believed.

Still, we Catholics have to be aware that salvific repentance and faith are first a relation to an historical person, Jesus of Nazareth, and secondly to the Church and its sacraments. (By the HCT) The sacraments' power is unleashed by our relation to Jesus of Nazareth and what did for us. (1 Co 1:12-17, 3:10)

Most priests are among the minority whose family evangelizing and catechesis worked. Such priests may not see that our **greatest pastoral need** is the personal conversion to Jesus of already sacramentalized and catechized adults. **Do seminaries stress that the goals of the sacraments depend on this?** (*Catechism*, 1072)

We can learn much about conscious personal conversion to Jesus from our Evangelical brothers and sisters, who are succeeding at it.

Balance in Our Pastoral Priorities: Putting First Things First

IV. *Our pastoral agendas should reflect that Jesus' real presence in each of us and in His Communal Body are foundational, more important than anything else.*

Catholics are becoming Evangelicals or secularized because the sacraments are given without the pastoral context they are normally meant to empower, a context of

Christians striving to be a brother/sisterhood (Truth I),
due to mutual appreciation of the Gift of God in us (Truth II),
received by repenting of sin and faith, i.e., ongoing acceptance of
Jesus as personal Lord and Savior (Truth III).

Don't pastors need to know that these truths are how grace is meant to work at the level of personal spiritual psychology—in reverse order, of course: from Truth III, to II, to I? (Catechism, 1072)

Shouldn't pastors be taught to regularly reinforce these truths, as Paul learned he had to—to his surprise! (Ga 3:1-5:12; 2 Cor 13:5; 1 Co 3:16, 6:15, 6:19). If seminaries omit stressing that, won't the other things they teach bear less fruit than they should? (2 Pt 1:3-13)

In “The Liturgy is the source and summit of the Christian life,” aren't the most important words “**the Christian life**,” the Trinity's own life really present and lived in and among Christians? (By the HCT) That is the “one thing necessary” (Lk 10:42), the “pearl of great price” (Mt 13:46) and **the Gift** of God. But are most priests taught to read “the source and summit . . .” this way?

Popes have repeatedly said “What unites Catholic and nonCatholic Christians (grace) is greater than what divides us” (as the Eucharist and ordination sadly do.). (*Ut Unum Sint*, 20, 22)

The Liturgy is the highest way we live the Trinity's life. The Eucharist is Jesus' greatest real presence; for the Eucharist is God and must be worshiped. But just as the greatest sacrament is not the most important—baptism is—it is not the real presence of greatest importance to Jesus or to us. Isn't preserving and perfecting Jesus' real presence in us by grace the Eucharist's sole purpose?

“Jesus does not come down from Heaven each day to lie in a ciborium, but to a heaven which is infinitely dearer to Him, our souls.” (St. Therese of Lisieux, *The Story of a Soul*, Google online edition, p. 43)

And without Jesus' prior real presence by His communal body, the Church, could there even be a Eucharist? To be ordained, don't priests first have to belong to the social body that is Jesus?

Since grace is the Trinity itself living its life in us, doesn't your royal priesthood infinitely transcend your presbyterate—and everything else—in dignity, glory and importance. (*Catechism*, 1547)

Don't those in grace act *in persona Christi* in the greatest way by sharing in the Son's personal life of worshiping the Father (*Catechism*, 1361), while the presbyter in mortal sin does not?

“*In persona Christi Capitis*” refers to Jesus' functional role as head of his community. But doesn't being living members of His community give us immeasurably greater dignity than our function in it? (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 104)

Despite all liturgical reforms, we will not see the Mass's full *operantis* fruits until it is offered as the highest act of bodies of personally evangelized Christians formed into brother/sisterhoods conscious of each others' divine glory by elder brothers performing the headship functions Jesus performed for His community.

The Glorious Mission in Life All Catholics Are Given

V. *All disciples need to appreciate that they have the glorious privilege of sharing divine life with others. **Evangelizing joyfully depends on our appreciating that mission's glory.***

NonChristians can be saved, but we must evangelize since the grace saving nonChristians comes *from Jesus through the prayer, sacrifice, example and testimony of Jesus living in us*. That mission requires all the Christians we can get. And the Church's being a sacrament of love includes visible suffering for witnessing to Jesus.

- “First of all I urge that prayers be made for all people. . . . For God wants all people to be saved.” (1 Tim 2:1-4)
- “I make up what is lacking in Christ's sufferings for the sake of the Church” (Col. 1:24). . . . “ . . . attaining its full stature.” (Ep 4:13).

Don't Catholics need to be made aware that any success in a priest's work comes from the prayers and offerings of all?

Grace comes to others mainly from our holiness. (Vatican II, *Ad Gentes*, 36) Apostolic work does not excuse serious sin.

Not all have the *ministry* of evangelist (Ep 4:11; Ac 21:8). But aren't all are called to explain their Faith when the opportunity arises? (1 P 3:15)

We need to know that our suffering can become Jesus' own, for others. We can now offer past and future struggles. But before we undergo acute suffering, shouldn't pastors have regularly reinforced our call to offer it up, and explained its purpose *as follows*:

Like any good parent, God doesn't directly will our suffering.

He only permits it for a greater good: our eternal salvation. A person's, e.g., a baby's, suffering may be for others' salvation not their own. That is unknown; the ultimate good God draws from all our temporal struggles is **not** unknown (1 Co 2:7-8, 10): He must know that all the finite suffering He permits helps save us from infinite, eternal suffering, which is the only goal He has.

Didn't our first pastors *prepare* Christians for suffering as belonging to our call? Don't all Catholics *deserve* that?

- “**Do not be surprised** at the ordeal that comes on you as if **something strange** was happening.” (1 P 4:12)
- “**It was for this** (suffering for doing right) **that you were called**, since Christ suffered for you in this way and left you an example to follow.” (1 P. 2:21-22)

Before teaching about suffering, pastoring must first foster our appreciation of the Gift of God's glory and our trust that Jesus' grace is sufficient for us (Truths II and III). Otherwise, how can we be joyful Christians in our hostile secular environments as we need, and those environments need us, to be? (Ph 4:4: 1Th 5:16)

If the way you pastor takes these five truths for granted because you assume that catechesis succeeded, you are ministering in a world that no longer exists. (Visit www.joyfulshepherdretreat.org; click on *Theological Background*; read the Introduction and Chapter 1.)

After 2000 years we should know that the Church always needs reform as Paul VI said, though that may be no one's fault. Must not seminarians be taught, in homilies, retreats, days of renewal, etc, not just in class, not to be complacent but to let God show them what their pastoring may be wrongly taking for granted? The clergy **owes** the laity better pastoring; the laity owes them prayer.

Conclusion: Sound Doctrine Is Not Enough for Pastoral Wisdom

Response to grace is my responsibility, but not solely. (Ezk 3:17-21, 33:1-9). We are social beings; so grace produces its *operantis* effects by first empowering the kind of pastoring the sacrament's goals need. (1 Co 1:17; 3:10; 12:28-30; Ep 4:11-16) Pastoring can unleash the sacraments' power or stifle it. (1 Th 5:19-20) We once discouraged frequent communion but always had the same Eucharistic doctrine. So God has shown us in no uncertain terms that dogmatic theology is not enough for pastoral wisdom, which is knowledge of a practical kind.

It is possible, then, that we have misinterpreted—pastorally—Vatican II's teachings that presbyters act *in persona Christi Capitis*, and that the Liturgy is the source and summit of the Christian life (which is primarily an invisible life and so harder to focus on than what is visible). There must be a reason why Pope Francis' first words were that the Church needs rebuilding—only 50 years after Vatican II! At the least, we must be erring by omission.

If the Eucharist is to support *discipleship*, unqualifiedly uppermost in every pastor's consciousness, as it was for the authors of the epistles, must be Jesus' real presence by grace, his own glory in us, our deification, our acting *in person Christi* by our royal priesthood. Has the post-Trent seminary's need to teach the specifically Catholic/Orthodox against Protestantism, but not to teach how to lay spiritual foundations, since most of society accepted them, made us unintentionally substitute the greatest real presence, the Eucharist, for the most important, grace, by neglecting the HCT?

Or has it led some priests to see the Church's life in terms of their service, not their service in terms of the priesthood that all Christians share? If so, it has diminished the clergy's true glory: restoring and perfecting God's surpassing, inexpressible (2 Co 9:14-15) Gift. God's self-sacrificing chosen leaders deserve much better.

Or has it led to an imbalance of the ordained priest as *hiereus*, a performer of sacred acts, over the *presbyter*, the elder on whom a community relies for sound leadership? The Church is supposed to be an extended family more than a delivery system for spiritual good and services. (By the HCT) That is the goal of priests' sacred acts. Until Catholics experience the Church as an extended family and priests as elder brothers, that goal has not been achieved.

In the past, pastoring has swung from one extreme, like discouraging frequent communion, to another, like forcing daily Mass on college students in the name of the *operato*. Pastoring concerns the *operantis*. Baptism is the most important sacrament, but St. Paul says he was not sent to baptize but to do the more basic pastoral work its *operantis* fruits require: evangelism. (1 Co 1:17; 3:10). The catechumenate's history shows that the Liturgy of the Eucharist is not normally meant for evangelism. "The liturgy . . . must be **preceded** by evangelization, faith and conversion. It can **then** produce its fruits." (*Catechism*, 1072; emphasis added.)

Homilies at Mass can help foster an evangelistic culture, and Eucharistic adoration is powerful intercession. But if God gives us programs for evangelism or ecumenism, do not include the Eucharist except for reasons specific to particular situations, rather than on general principles. We need religious programs where Catholics not in grace and nonCatholics can feel entirely welcome. Healing services attract all kinds of people; either do not have Mass at them or firmly discourage improper communion. (1 Co 11:27-30)

When charismatics included Mass, most forgot that their purpose was the pastoral work God was doing in prayer meetings and other activities. That Mass became more important than work needed for the goals of Sunday Masses. Mass, or benediction, took their focus off a more important real presence, in His communal body, Jesus was revealing. "Spiritual gluttony," seeking the uplifting experience of that Mass's enthusiasm—which was just a by-product of their

pastoral work—more than spiritual meat, even occurred.

Normally, the sacrament's *operantis* fruits come from the sacraments first empowering charisms (Ep 4:11-16; 1 Co 12:28-31; and 1 Co 12:4-22, 3:5-6, 10) by which all in the brother/sisterhood:

“Teach and admonish one another.” (Co13:16) “Stir up one another to love and good works.” (Hb 10:24) “Encourage one another and build one another up.” (1 Th 5:11; Hb 10:25) “Admonish the idlers, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak.” (1 Th 5:14) “Comfort one another with God’s words.” (1 Th 4:18)

Our theology of the *operato* is true as far as it goes but incomplete. Ignoring the role of pastoring, charisms and community (whose effects we can stifle—1 Th 5:19-20) in the *operantis* leads us to expect too much from the *operato*. Grace assumes our God-given nature that normally needs our environments’ support. *Operantis* effects mainly come, not from responding to the sacraments directly, but responding to influences from Christian brothers and sisters.

Movements can be channels for the grace of our prior sacraments to produce the environmental support we need. Future seminarians should learn the evangelization tools, like Alpha, *The 4 Spiritual Laws*, etc., that are then succeeding in their culture. Such tools sometimes come from Protestants who, due to their very limitations, have learned to carry on Paul’s mission (1 Co 1:17) of laying the “one foundation,” Jesus, “like a skilled master builder.” (3:10-11; and the HCT)

Are we losing priests in part to learn not to overuse the Liturgy, which would be a great though unintended disservice to what is most holy? If so, let us **not** go to any opposite pastoral extreme, as we sometimes have after councils and major documents. A personally converted Christian brother/sisterhood needs to appreciate the Liturgy as the font and summit of its familial life and priests as functioning in the person of their first brother. (Rm 8:29)

Even the most exalted calling can unconsciously spawn a “professional” culture. All cultures include both good and bad and can skew perspectives. Sex-scandal hidens and Inquisitors **were probably in their own worlds, unable to imagine that they weren’t pastoring correctly.** Knowing this, our leaders are obligated to be ever vigilant and open to criticism from outside their professional culture, which can make the only ones who can correct its faults unconscious of them. All future seminary formation must work to create a priestly culture open to correction from others.

Since omissions can undermine the good things in pastoral formation, in the future seminaries must never forget that:

- Pastoring requires more than theology. It requires understanding how grace is meant to work at the *operantis* level.
- Priestly training can misinterpret or overemphasize a council or document, and just by omitting the needed background.
- The Church’s institutional structure and sacramental system are not at the top of the HCT. Jesus of Nazareth is.
- But today’s pastoring shows that visible aspects, like structure and sacraments, are easier to focus on than the invisible essence, the Trinity’s indwelling; so that must be regularly reinforced.
- As in the past, future seminarians can innocently acquire a culture that makes them unaware of the culture’s defects.
- God often renews the Church by movements that are not just frosting on the cake but supply what is missing or out of balance in our pastoring. But a movement’s quality depends on local leadership. Although well intentioned, an unbalanced pastoral agenda (e.g. putting frequent communion above evangelizing or building brother/sisterhood) can stifle a movement’s purpose.

How To Use This Guide

This guide is for priests, deacons, seminarians, religious and all who are formed by the Church's normal pastoral life. It can be used for group discussions—held weekly or monthly, and on days of renewal or retreats.

By reading the guide together, people can show each other important connections they might otherwise miss. The five main truths can be fully appreciated only by reading their entire sections. The compact paragraphs are designed to teach more than they say, but only in concert with the others. Discuss the paragraphs within a section *one-by-one*, pausing after each to ensure everyone understands it. When done with a section, re-read the title and main truth.

1. Discuss the front cover, Introduction and Hierarchy of Christian Truths in the first session.
2. Discuss each of the five main truths, using “Evidence from the Magisterium” at the web site to reference the supporting quotes from Scripture and the Magisterium, in separate sessions.
3. Discuss the Conclusion and the supporting quotes, preferably in two sessions.

Please send comments and questions to the principal author:

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