

Appendix 5:
**Excerpts from the "Norms Concerning Applications for Priestly
 Formation From Those Previously Enrolled in a Formation Program"**
 USCCB, December 8, 2000

- 1) Preface
 - a) The matter of readmission to the seminary of ex-religious and ex-seminarians is governed by canon 241 of the Code of Canon Law and the Instruction from the Congregation for Catholic Education to the Episcopal Conferences, "The Admission of Seminary Candidates Coming from Other Seminaries or Religious Families." The decree outlined below was mandated by the above Instruction.
- 2) "Norms Concerning Applications for Priestly Formation From Those Previously Enrolled in a Formation Program"
 - a) Recognition of the General Decree of the Episcopal Conference of the USA, November 8, 2000
 - b) Decree of Promulgation, December 8, 2000
 - c) Effective February 1, 2001
- 3) "Diocesan... application forms must include a question which specifically asks whether an applicant has ever been accepted or rejected by, or been dismissed from a diocesan formation program, seminary, institute of consecrated life or society of apostolic life."
- 4) Regarding applicants dismissed from a seminary or formation program:
 - a) "...No subsequent application will be considered in the two years following such dismissal."
 - b) "If the departure was other than a dismissal, sufficient time should be allotted to evaluate carefully his application and background."
- 5) "At the time of future application the applicant must permit the release of all relevant information concerning his departure from any previous program of priestly formation or institute of consecrated life or society of apostolic life to the diocesan bishop, and, if necessary, the seminary rector to whom he is applying. This release that the applicant signs must clearly state that he:
 - a) Consents to the sharing of all relevant information from previous formation programs with the diocesan bishop or rector to whom he is applying, and
 - b) Understands that no person has a right to be accepted into a program of priestly formation."
- 6) An applicant's refusal to provide the release of all relevant information provides sufficient grounds to reject the application. Likewise, inaccurate, incomplete, or misleading information provided by the applicant also provides sufficient grounds for rejection of the application.
- 7) It may be expected that the diocesan bishop, or his delegate, will share the information with the seminary rector and/or other seminary admissions personnel.
 - a) All persons who receive and/or review this information are reminded of the confidentiality required in these matters, and of the applicant's right to privacy and a good reputation (see *CIC*, c.220).
 - b) The applicant should be advised of the information thus communicated that influences the admissions process.

- 8) Once the release has been executed and received:
 - a) All seminaries attended and dioceses and/or institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life with which the applicant was affiliated must be contacted in written form and should, if possible, be contacted through an oral, confidential interview with those persons responsible for the applicant's formation at that time.
 - b) Those contacted should provide the pertinent information in a timely manner so as not to delay the process.
 - c) For the sake of an accurate account of the interview, written notes should be taken and included in the applicant's confidential, permanent file.
 - d) A record of calls or inquiries received by a diocese or seminary regarding a former student should be maintained.
 - e) If any such institution or person responsible is not contacted with respect to a given application but nevertheless learns of it, all relevant information should be disclosed to the proper ecclesiastical authority.
- 9) The diocesan bishop, or his delegate, who decides to accept an applicant who was previously enrolled in a program of priestly formation or who belonged to an institute of consecrated life or a society of apostolic life:
 - a) Must write a formal letter to the seminary or religious formation program where he is sending the applicant, with a copy to the bishop(s) of any diocese for which the applicant was previously in formation, or the major superior(s) of any institutes of consecrated life or society of apostolic life to which the candidate belonged.
 - b) The letter should clearly state that:
 - i) The applicant has been evaluated according to the norms outlined above;
 - ii) A thorough investigation of the applicant's background has been undertaken, including conversations with officials from the prior formation program in which he was enrolled including current diocesan bishop(s) and major superior(s); and,
 - iii) It is his prudential judgement that the applicant is fit for seminary studies.
- 10) A seminary or other priestly formation program may not accept a student if such a formal letter has not been submitted by the diocesan bishop or major superior who recommends the applicant.
- 11) It is understood that seminaries retain the authority not to accept students judged by their admissions procedures to be unsuitable, even when such a formal letter has been received.
- 12) If, after the evaluation of the application has been completed and the applicant is not accepted, it may be helpful for the proper authority to disclose to him the basic reasons why he was not accepted into the seminary or formation program.