

# Teaching Seminary Theology<sup>1</sup>

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“Those aspiring to the ministerial priesthood are called to a profound personal relationship with God’s word; particularly in *lectio divina*....Such attention to the prayerful reading of Scripture must not in any way lead to a dichotomy with regard to the exegetical studies which are part of formation. The Synod recommended that seminarians be concretely helped to see the relationship between biblical studies and prayer....Great care should be taken to ensure that seminarians always cultivate this reciprocity between study and prayer.”<sup>2</sup>

There are few more basic elements to priestly formation than prayer and study. Such basics, however, do not always exist together in peace. Many a seminary faculty has itself been torn apart by the ideological sundering of these two elements. We are so close to our own biases that we normally cannot see them, and therefore we cannot recognize the harm they do when concretized into a seminary’s policy or vision. In recent history there have been seminaries whose reputations are reduced to these half truths, “Oh, *Holy Prayer* seminary that is a pious place,” or, “Oh *Holy Logos* seminary that is tough academic place.” These popular descriptions of seminaries carry with them the very illness that befalls generation after generation, the separation of prayer and study. This separation seems to be a value<sup>3</sup> on the pragmatic level even to the point of having discrete seminary buildings and staff where the spiritual side of formation is “taken care of,” and other buildings and staff where the academic side of things occur. With such physical separation comes a message promoting the idea that a seminarian’s real “work” is to occur over at the academic building and what happens at “home” (the “spiritual\formation house”) is less vital, rigorous, important. In self-sustaining seminaries this dichotomy would reflect the opinion that the “classroom” is most vital but spiritual direction is a useful addendum. This separation reflects the perennial battle within priestly formation, mirroring the secular academic world, that exalts academics as “real” and “objective,” and spiritual affections and

intimacy with God as “soft” and ‘subjective.’<sup>4</sup>

This separation between intimacy with God and academics has real effects upon the Church in analogous ways to a person who exalts intellect over his own bodily identity (“he lives in his head”), or when a person refuses to undergo the pain of self-examination and settles instead to define himself by his passing moods (“he is an enthusiast”). Persons who live such severed lives carry about a vast amount of psychic and affective pain until such pain either leads them to integration (a conversion, a healing) or to a complete breakdown (a closing of self in upon a portion of the self alone).

To use a domestic analogy about the separation of prayer and theology, one could say that prayer was to remain “at home” and separate from “work”(study). A man is to be affectively intimate with God “on his own time.” “After you are done thinking, and suffering the work of discovering truth in a discursive manner, then you can talk to God and receive His love. But right now get to work!” Having prayerful intimate communication with God became something you do after your study and teaching time was complete. Over time it became more difficult to justify an intellectual method for theological learning that actually welcomed prayer when it arose right within it. Today, however, what is keeping seminary theologians from bridging this divide right within their own study and teaching?

## The Faculty

Certainly some of the problem that we have in keeping intimacy with Christ connected to our study about Him is simply the fact that we exist in time. Time demands that we take the goods of this world successively. Time prevents me from thinking about Gabriel Marcel’s philosophy while playing a football game, or playing football while I am having dinner. So, no matter how valuable one may think the integration of prayer and study is for the proper formation of seminarians the reality of time and finitude plays a role in diminishing such an achievement. Of course there are other reasons why some find it difficult to imagine a seminary that promotes the study of theology flowing from prayer and into prayer: sin, fear of intimacy with God, fear that other professors will reject such

a method as not being intellectually rigorous, ideology, fatigue, laziness, the pull of habit, the lethargy and weight one feels when imagining both a new way of teaching and a new *horarium* to support such change. But we need to note here what Benedict XVI says about study and prayer, clearly promoting their interpenetration as good for *the science of theology*.

The demand for a scientific method is not sacrificed when theological research is carried on *in a religious spirit of listening to the Word of God.... Spirituality does not attenuate the work of scholarship, but rather supplies theological study with the correct method so that it can arrive at a coherent interpretation.* Theology can develop only with prayer... This is a road that is worth traveling to the very end.”<sup>5</sup>

If spirituality provides theology with the correct method, then any approach to priestly formation has to begin at the gate of the seminary and not within its halls. To begin an age of contemplative seminaries which bear fruit for the new evangelization we need to first look at how *future seminary theologians are trained.*<sup>6</sup> Do these future doctors learn how to receive the love of God right within their study and within any mentored teaching that they might undergo? The sooner we explore the possibilities of new ways to form seminary professors the sooner seminarians will benefit from intellects that have been purified by an active faith.<sup>7</sup> The seminary is a community utilizing scholars to form shepherds of souls,<sup>8</sup> not simply other scholars. To pray unceasingly, even in the midst of research, is not to evade reality; it is to enter it with a clear mind and strengthened will.<sup>9</sup> Noting what I said above about time, I would argue that discursive reasoning itself can be a prayer especially as it flows from the specific vocation of a theologian. The theologian is called by God to find his or her holiness within the discipline and ascetical ways of thinking about faith. In being faithful to this call the theologian is, in a broad sense, praying. To be intimate with Christ, both affectively and intellectually, and simultaneously to think about some foundational point of theology may not be possible because of the limitations of time and the finitude of our minds, but certainly thinking and praying can be open to one another. Pope Benedict wants to invite the theologian to consider spirituality as a method of doing theology in this way: let the truth you are pondering bring you to intimacy with the Logos, and let the intimacy of your prayer with the Trinity clarify your discursive thought. Such interpenetration is possible because what the theologian is pondering, the truth apprehended by faith, is already ordered toward

communion with Christ

Pope Benedict has been meditating deeply upon the meaning of theology since his pontificate began and, of course, long before.<sup>10</sup> How he understands theology is deeply amenable to healing the rift between spirituality and theology. Note what he has to say about St. Bonaventure.

To respond to the question if theology is a practical or theoretical science, St. Bonaventure makes a threefold distinction—hence he lengthens the alternative between theoretical (primacy of knowledge) and practical (primacy of practice), adding a third attitude, which he calls “sapiential” and affirming that wisdom embraces both aspects. And then he continues: Wisdom seeks contemplation (as the highest form of knowledge) and has as its intention that we become good (cf. *Breviloquium, Prologus*, 5). Then he adds: “Faith is in the intellect, in such a way that it causes affection. For example: to know that Christ died ‘for us’ does not remain knowledge, but becomes necessarily affection, love” (*Proemium in I Sent.*, q. 3). Love ... sees what remains inaccessible to reason. Love goes beyond reason, sees more, and enters more profoundly into the mystery of God.... All this is not anti-intellectual: it implies the way of reason but transcends it in the love of the crucified Christ.<sup>11</sup>

One goal of seminary theology should be to assist seminarians to consider how the truth of faith tutors their affections, to assist them to recognize the affective movements of the heart as theology is studied. Wouldn’t such recognition combined with the content of the lecture and reading material promote a deeper, more sustained reception of truth? Pedagogical studies report that learning is internalized more securely when the whole person is involved in study. Since most diocesan priests have not been tutored in an integrated learning process, might this be the reason why so few continue a committed study of theology after ordination? What if their love for Christ was engaged as they studied, encouraged by professors to receive Christ as He emerges from the text or the lecture? The intellect is more generous in its receptivity to the fullness of truth than we have been made aware by the reductionist vision of the Enlightenment. If professors can welcome prayer as it emerges from the truth grasped by the affectively imbued intellect, then they can pass this “method” on to seminarians. This more generous intellect does not host the cramped view of learning methods that scientism does. Within a more generous definition of reason the habit of study inheres within a mind concentrated in the

heart. As the *Program for Priestly Formation* directs, “the seminary study of theology...must flow from prayer and lead to prayer.”<sup>12</sup>

## The Correct Method for Studying Theology: Spirituality

The academic content of what professors are to teach seminarians has been specifically outlined by the Church.<sup>13</sup> But notice what *more* Benedict XVI is unveiling in the passage above: a call to integrate mind and heart as the result of the professor and student *suffering the beauty of the Crucified Christ*. This suffering results in wisdom. Seminaries ought to hold the *birth of desire for wisdom* as a key academic goal, an intellectual formation process aimed at ordering the entire person anew. To have such a goal is not to undermine the urgency of formation in effective pastoral ministry. In fact, to secure for the Church a contemplative priest seeking wisdom is to secure effective ministry, since *all contemplation of the Paschal Mystery leads to pastoral charity*. To contemplate means to behold the beauty, the radiating truth of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ within the affectively imbued intellect. If a man allows such beauty to affect his identity then he will become free to serve the other as shepherd. Any unhealed affective pain that might turn him in on himself inordinately will be healed in the light of such contemplation and the ascetical features that surround and facilitate it (study, spiritual direction, human formation, sacramental participation, fraternal correction, etc.). To encounter Christ’s beauty in the mystery of crucifixion and resurrection is to become both awakened spiritually and sent by Him into ministry. *Interiority is no threat to ministry, but its absence is.* Absent such interiority the seminary formation produces men who serve only out of their own natural gifts and strengths, or worse, who serve themselves.

Contemporary graduate education in universities is aimed not at wisdom or contemplation, but the commerce of effectively passing on to students discrete information in a chosen field of study. In contrast, contemplative formation will involve the ongoing reception of the gifts of the Holy Spirit,<sup>14</sup> the love of doctrine as a result of such habitual receptivity, and *the flowering of the contemplative mind*<sup>15</sup> wounded by the Paschal Mystery and summoned by the same to execute the charity of Christ. It is this same Paschal Mystery, consistently beheld in the mind of the theologian,

that will order the way formation is established in any seminary community. In this age of the new evangelization it will not do to simply have academics concerned with critique and elegantly argued debate, still less the reduction of theology to liberal or conservative political ideology. Critique and argument will have its place, of course, but the success of a seminary professor of the new evangelization will be known in his or her oversight of each seminarian’s capacity to *suffer the integration of study with the love of the Crucified*.

This integration of its very nature will not come easy, because it is a taste of eternity in time and needs to be received within and through the grace of intentional prayer. It is crucial that faculty modeling be vigorous and continual since it is inevitable that some will become weary of such “integration” and simply cry out for the seminary to be a “graduate school” or alternately a “retreat house.” The new evangelization demands that these contrasting models, born of psychic and affective exhaustion, ought not to define priestly formation.

## The Seminarian

A seminarian sustained in the Holy Spirit, in love with the truths of orthodoxy while all the time welcoming contemplation of the Crucified will become the man whom the Church needs for the new evangelization. Such a formation is what Bonaventure meant when he said that theology is ordered to form a good man, one able to suffer in his mind and body who Christ is in truth. To take on this suffering is to take on the ascetical features of human, spiritual, and academic formation. A man who welcomes such suffering does so with the generous heart of a spouse, making himself a selfless gift to the Bride of Christ. If such contemplative formation becomes normative in seminaries, then priests can lead the laity to a similar kind of formation to prepare them to withstand the suffering needed to evangelize culture.

Some may say that contemplative formation for seminarians is “idealistic.” Charging one with idealism just about guarantees that his ideas will be dismissed. No one wants to be idealistic since it is a contemporary synonym for “unworkable, irrelevant.” In fact, to be idealistic is not to be in the same league with “unworkable” ideas but to be *with and for the Church*. It is the Church herself who carries ideals in Her heart. The Church promotes exemplarism in her very core when

she canonizes saints and bids her members to rise up and live in holiness as well. The idealistic Church does not trade in impracticalities but in *what is most fitting for those who would receive the wound*<sup>16</sup>, the character of sharing in the priesthood of Christ. To be idealistic in the ecclesial imagination is to search for that formation which is fitting for each vocation. In promoting the new evangelization we cannot simply *speak of it*, perhaps study its grammar, we are called, instead, to generate men to bear its coming *in their own bodies*. What is the oxygen the Church breathes when it dreams of a fitting formation for such a man, a formation of spiritual and theological integration?

## The Oxygen for Priestly Formation: Contemplation, Orthodoxy, and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit

In the formation of priests there lies a hope that time spent in seminary will gift the Church with a new man, a man who receives his identity from his own deep participation in the love Christ has for his Bride, the Church. Such a hope is not without foundation, as the Church does not so much trust in methods, ideologies, and skilled competencies producing efficient managers of people; rather it trusts in the power of the Holy Spirit to bring about a surrender to truth, to beauty, and to holiness within each seminarian.

To speak of such things raises cynicism in some, a painful reminder of their own lost optimism not in the Spirit, but in perfectionism or some self-willed vision of utopia. To those who dwell in the Church, however, such a vision fires the imagination leading one to desire a strong participation in reality. Such a vision flows from the knowledge we have in faith that all things of this earth are summoned to be sublated<sup>17</sup> into the coming of the Kingdom. More specifically, the grace of the Resurrection and its perennial hope carries a call and a capacity for reforming the structures of priestly formation.<sup>18</sup>

To order the seminary toward the making of a new man is to take seriously *the kernels of truth* that lay at the heart of what Joseph Ratzinger discovered in his study of St. Bonaventure. Some Franciscans, living in the wake of St. Francis of Assisi looked for a new age to come, one in which the Spirit would guide all things interiorly. St. Bonaventure saw the danger of this be-

ing a subjectivist vision, one disconnected from the sacramental and visible Church, and so he put his mind to work at correcting these ideas. There is indeed a new age coming in the eschaton, but it will not arrive through any rejection of the Church, her teachings, offices, and sacraments. Such an age is the fulfillment of all the Church has been about IN CHRIST. It will, when complete, be the very end the Church is seeking and tasting even now. Hints of this new age are seen in the lives of the saints. In fact to be a saint is to share in the holiness of Christ, a holiness that inaugurates the hope of a future full of truth, beauty, and holiness. The perennial content of this present and coming age encompasses three elemental characteristics, according to Joseph Ratzinger in his commentary upon the thought of St. Bonaventure:

When this age arrives, it will be a time of contemplation, a time of the full understanding of Scripture and, in this respect, a time of the Holy Spirit who leads us into the fullness of the truth of Jesus Christ.<sup>19</sup>

Here we have the three elements that secure a context in the seminary for the spiritual formation of the new man: contemplation, orthodoxy, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Such elements have been with the Church since her beginning and as such stand as perennial points of orientation and renewal when formation processes lose their way or decline into stagnancy. All of our desires for perfection, once purified of the neurotic and sinful, lay bare a stunning continuity among Catholics, and indeed all men. We are made to receive what is God's deepest desire to give: participation in perfect, divine love.

This current epoch is not heaven, this time is far from perfect. However, what God wants to give to us in the eschaton *must already* be filtering into our minds, hearts, and will, otherwise the new heavens and earth would have no continuity with the human order, and one's hope for heaven would be vain. Hence, the seminarian needs to be tutored in this hope and formed within parameters that are hospitable to his receiving the fullness of divine love. The seminary is a community of hospitality toward God enabling it to receive His healing (the gifts of the Holy Spirit), His formative love (contemplation), and His truth (orthodoxy). The three realities mentioned by Joseph Ratzinger—contemplation, orthodoxy and the gifts of the Holy Spirit—have the gravity to secure and order a formation in theology that has spirituality as its method.<sup>20</sup> To see that these

realities are the oxygen of seminary life is to envision a way of assuring that seminarians become contemplative-pastoral priests leading the laity in their evangelical call to transform culture. Without this foundation of deep interiority neither priest nor people could suffer the public resistance to the Gospel and remain faithful to its call.

## Holding the Foundation together

No doubt the last 45 years of ecclesial life have been divisive ones, so deeply divided, in fact, that theological language and imagery were superseded by political ones (left, right, conservative, liberal, progressive, etc). The foundational realities of contemplation, orthodoxy, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit were severed from one another and politicized as well. When these are torn apart and made to stand alone or made to relate to ideologies and not the sacramental Church, a certain beauty, unity, and spiritual power vacates the Church. Only if contemplation, orthodoxy, and the gifts stay unified can they truly order priestly formation effectively, and in turn enable priestly ministry to assist the Church to reach her potency in publicly witnessing to the Gospel.

The aberrations that occur when the three are torn apart from one another are easy to see. During the last forty-five years many in Catholic universities shunned orthodoxy and shied away from the “spiritual,” and there developed a sterile academic atmosphere of “scientific objectivity.” The mission of Catholic universities was reduced to bland platitudes about politically correct “service to society.” Orthodoxy was shunned, and contemplation was emptied of its Christological core and related to politically acceptable studies of Eastern religions. The gifts of the Holy Spirit were not applicable because there were few spiritual connections made to academic study on Catholic campuses; there was simply the “availability” of Mass, and service trips to poverty stricken Caribbean nations.

Catholic retreat houses as well began to turn from Western-style contemplation (Church Fathers, monastic, and mendicants) toward the eastern non-Christian religions. Contemplation, in isolation from the other foundational realities, can descend into ersatz self-help methods, subjectivist meditation, syncretistic tolerance of world-consciousness movements, impotent naming of emotions, and more.<sup>21</sup> With the rise of the “charismatic movement” in the Catholic Church in the 1970s

the gifts of the Holy Spirit were welcomed as well as, for the most part, doctrinal orthodoxy. Not so in the parishes where perhaps the charismatic gifts were given a “place” in parish prayer groups but orthodoxy was anemically embraced from the pulpits and in the confessionalists. Likewise, formation in contemplation and orthodoxy in both parishes and lay movements were not richly integrated. Usually contemplation stood alone, and orthodoxy was anemically understood as being sufficient if parishioners held Catholic “sensibilities.” With the pontificate of John Paul II orthodoxy<sup>22</sup> came roaring back but since it had been in short supply for a decade or so in the pastoral and priestly formation settings, it was seized upon as *the answer* to all the church’s woes. It was held up *on its own* without the tempering that it needs from contemplation and the active reception of the Gifts.

Orthodoxy disconnected from the other foundational elements can lead to rigidly imposing doctrine without any sense of a person’s capacity to receive it as truth (contemplation) under the movement of the Holy Spirit’s love. The gifts can spin off into introspection, subjectivism, and fantasy if a person is not grounded in the truth of orthodoxy and a love that beholds the mystery of the cross and resurrection in contemplation. Contemplation can simply become escapism and syncretism if it is not guided within truth and enlivened with the real and active presence of the Indwelling Sprit of Christ. *Held together* these three foundational realities keep the human mind and heart tethered to the heart and mind of Christ.

The seminary is not interested in forming men simply to become experts in academic content; rather, it promotes a *charismatic* theology that is *orthodox* and *contemplative*, and thus forms men who can courageously preach the living Gospel.<sup>23</sup>

## Priestly Formation Settings

We have entered a time of relative peace regarding the faithful teaching of doctrine in diocesan seminaries. Priestly formation in some religious orders still promotes a more progressive theology than that found in their diocesan counterparts.<sup>24</sup> The promotion of the love of theology as flowing from orthodoxy in its life-giving truth is the first commitment of any diocesan seminary faculty. The mysteries of Christ’s life and message do not need the idiosyncratic innovation drawn from political, femi-

nist, gay, and other sociological and ideological sources. Doctrine has *a depth of its own* that makes it capable of drawing seminarians into something radically new: the transfiguration of their own lives and of those whom they will serve as shepherds. The grasping of theological truths will be better secured within the mind and heart of each seminarian the more he allows himself to be grasped by the beauty of doctrine, contemplation, and the living movement of the Spirit that “broods” over and within the sacramental life. Seminarian formators are the custodians and facilitators of a radical integration process that needs to be suffered within each seminarian before his ordination day: welcoming the habitual reciprocity between study and prayer.<sup>25</sup> Rendering the isolation of these two realities moot is a seminary that breathes in as its atmosphere the gifts, contemplation, and orthodoxy. This atmosphere is sustained only by the formators themselves and their own love of living within such.

Once a formation faculty wearies of the discipline of becoming holy and they reduce the seminary to a “manageable” endeavor, it becomes primarily an academic center, a counseling center, a workshop for worship, a pastoral skills institute, and so on. Strong resistance to forming men in the habitual reciprocity between prayer and study might be present in some faculty members because it calls them to moral and intellectual conversion, an interior life disposed to receive Christ’s own self offering upon the cross as *the matter to be received*. Here the sacrifice which is the priesthood defines the service given by the faculty thus ordering minds and hearts to a truth that transcends scientific method. Such truth can only be glimpsed in the beauty seen within those lives affected by the mystery contemplated. In witnessing such beauty a desire is born to tell others of its source, one wants to evangelize. Breathing the air of contemplation, orthodoxy and the Gifts can be better achieved if we understand that theology *has an order within itself toward spirituality or communion with Christ, and spirituality, has an order within it toward theology*. This, in part, may be what Benedict XVI meant when he said *spirituality provides theology with the correct method*.

## Conclusion

**C**learly, then, the ‘mind of Christ’ is not some kind of alien rationality that displaces native human reason, but is rather a pattern of

rationality that is constantly held open by faith....[P]articipation in the mind of Christ is fundamentally a relational activity, a noetic event that transpires in the communion of love.<sup>26</sup>

Here is how spirituality provides theology with a correct method: it allows the Church’s communion with the mystery of Christ to affect the mind’s search for truth. Christ is not trapped in a past culture of ancient Palestine.<sup>27</sup> To have one’s reason tutored by the Logos, the mind of Christ, will ultimately show us a new way of thinking, studying, and teaching. When seminary professors live their lives as a sacred exchange between their freedom and God’s own self-offering in Christ, then they will begin to move from the mind they have now to a new mind. Such professors will allow the mind of Christ to possess them, they will *welcome Christ thinking in them*, as Jean-Pierre de Caussade so radically phrased it.<sup>28</sup> If such is our vision then the theme with which I began this essay can be joyfully jettisoned: we will no longer separate intimacy with Christ from study. In fact, in the near future the interior structures of such intimacy will “unceasingly”<sup>29</sup> guide the external structuring of seminary academics. ♣

*My thanks to Father Peter Ryan, S.J., for his comments on earlier drafts of this essay.*

## ENDNOTES

- 1 An alternative version of this essay appears in *Seminary Journal* (2011)
- 2 Benedict XVI, Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Verbum Domini* (September 2010) n. 82
- 3 Of course there is a great value in distinguishing between those formation activities that involve internal forum and those that exist in the external forum. But even preserving this value has an unintended effect: spiritual intimacy with the Trinity can appear to be an exclusively “private” reality, whereas academic discourse holds sway in public fora.
- 4 See one source for the rise of the scientific method in universities, Walter Rüegg, (Ed.) *A History of the University in Europe: Volume 3, Universities in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries (1800–1945)* Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2004.
- 5 Pope Benedict XVI *October 6, 2005*; see also Gregory La Nave, “Is Holiness Necessary for Theology?” *The Thomist* 74 (2010): 437–59 for some excellent meditations on the relationship between being a theologian and the call to holiness. This essay is especially helpful in raising questions about the nature of affect and intellect in the study of theology. Do my affections prompt knowledge and will to attend to God, or does affection arise from a cognitive act directed toward God? We have to distinguish between love as part of the intellectual appetite and love as an affection arising from our perception of God as our good.
- 6 See the following for more meditations upon the theme of forming seminary theologians: James Keating, *Resting on the Heart of Christ: The Vocation and Spirituality of the Seminary Theologian* (Omaha: IPF Publications, 2009); James Keating, ed. *Seminary Theology: Teaching in a Contemplative Way* (Omaha: IPF Publications, 2010). On the new evangelization see John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio* (1990) 3,33. See also Ralph Martin and

- Peter Williamson, *John Paul II and the New Evangelization: How you Can Bring the Good News to Others* (Cincinnati, Ohio: St. Anthony's Messenger Press 2006).
- 7 See, Benedict xvi, *Deus Caritas Est* (2005) n28
  - 8 See, Maximilian Heinrich Heim, *Joseph Ratzinger: Life in the Church and Living Theology* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2007) 164
  - 9 Benedict XVI, Angelus, March 4, 2007
  - 10 Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *The Nature and Mission of Theology* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1995)
  - 11 Benedict xvi, General Audience, March 17, 2010
  - 12 USCCB, *Program of Priestly Formation* (5th ed. 2006) n163.
  - 13 John Paul II, *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (1992); and USCCB, *Program of Priestly Formation* (5<sup>th</sup> ed. 2006) ns.199ff
  - 14 "As for the Holy Spirit, his action in teaching the truth is especially connected to love....It is through the ardor of love that knowledge of the truth is given, for love moves the mind to grasp the truth and give it assent." See pages 105-110 in Gilles Emery, *Trinity, Church, and the Human Person: Thomistic Essays* (Ave Maria, Fla: Sapientia Press, 2007) for an excellent description on the role of the Holy Spirit in facilitating one's reception of truth.
  - 15 For the purposes of this essay, to contemplate means to behold the beauty, the radiating truth of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ within the affectively imbued intellect. The contemplative mind is one that seeks the face of Christ in discursive study; it is a mind that studies truth *because* it is fully embodied only in the person of Christ. To have a contemplative mind , in the Christian sense, is to have a mind that holds intimacy with Christ as the foremost goal of theology and engages all rational power as a vocation of surrender to Him as Truth. The contemplative mind "beholds" as its first love and analyzes and critiques only out of a desire to behold Him even more securely.
  - 16 The character received at ordination has been likened to a brand or wound that signifies "ownership." Then Cardinal Ratzinger noted that this wound or brand "calls out to its owner." In this way the cleric stands in relationship to the one who has placed his brand mark upon him. "From now on let no one disturb me as I bear on my body the brand marks of Jesus"(Gal. 6:17). A further scriptural understanding of character might be summed up in this Pauline teaching:"I no longer live, not I, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). Here the scripture underscores the interior self-surrender of the cleric. He is the one who eagerly hosts the mystery of Christ's public service of charity *as his own*, as his new life. See, David Toups, *Reclaiming our Priestly Character* (Omaha, IPF Publications, 2008), 82.
  - 17 "What sublates goes beyond what is sublated, introduces something new and distinct, yet so far from interfering with the sublated or destroying it, on the contrary needs it, includes it, preserves all its proper features and properties, and carries them forward to a fuller realization within a richer context." (Bernard Lonergan, Method in Theology, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972) p. 241.
  - 18 Benedict XVI reminds us of what is possible in the new dimension we all live in: "Why shouldn't Christ be able to rise from the dead? When I myself determine what is allowed to exist and what isn't I define the

boundaries of possibility....It is an act of intellectual arrogance for us to declare that [resurrection] is absurd....*It is not our business to declare how many possibilities are latent in the cosmos....*God wanted to enter this world. God didn't want us to have only a distant inkling of him through physics and mathematics. He wanted to show Himself....so *He created a new dimension of existence in the resurrection.*" (Peter Seewald, *Light of the World*, (San Francisco: Ignatius,2010) 168.

- 19 As quoted in Aidan Nichols, *The Thought of Benedict XVI* (London: Burns and Oates, 2007) 59.

20 See n.5 above.

- 21 For excellent insights on these tendencies see: Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith,

22 I would also say that John XXIII, qne Paul VI unleashed and promoted the spread of a "new Pentecost" with Vatican II, and now Benedict XVI is giving us the needed catechesis on authentic contemplation. So, within the ministry of Peter over the last forty-five years the three strands of charismata, contemplation, and orthodoxy have been protected and deepened for appropriation in our current age.

- 23 Joseph Ratzinger, *The Nature and Mission of Theology* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1995), 46. See, Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini*, n 87.

24 "The Congregation was pleased to note that the faculties of most diocesan seminaries show a remarkable amount of unity and harmony. This unity of vision is almost always due to the sound leadership from the rector and senior management, who are the fulcra of seminary life. A lack of harmony, on the other hand, is almost always due to one or more educators being less than faithful to the Magisterium of the Church. These people, therefore, are out of kilter with the rest of the faculty and with the seminarians themselves. In centers of priestly formation with an atmosphere of more widespread dissent — which is the case particularly in centers run by religious — there can be no possibility of a unity of direction.

Quite often, the Visitation discovered one or more faculty members who, although not speaking openly against Church teaching, let the students understand — through hints, off-the-cuff remarks, etc. — their disapproval of some articles of Magisterial teaching. In a few institutes, one even found the occasional non-Catholic teaching the seminarians." Congregation for Education, *Report on Seminaries*, 2008, n II,2

- 25 See, Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini* (2010) n. 82.

26 Mark McIntosh, "Faith, Reason and the Mind of Christ" in Paul J. Griffiths and Reinhard Hutter, eds.; *Reason and the Reasons of Faith* (New York: T&T Clark, 2005), 136.

- 27 See, Benedict XVI, *On the Way to Jesus Christ* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2005),61-2.

28 Jean-Pierre de Caussade, *Treatise on Prayer from the Heart* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1998),145, n.38.

- 29 "Spiritual formation...should be conducted in such a way that the students may learn to *live in intimate and unceasing union with God the Father through his Son Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit*.Those who are to take on the likeness of Christ the priest by sacred ordination should form the habit of drawing close to him as friends *in every detail of their lives.*" John Paul II, *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (1992), n. 45.