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1. INTRODUCTION

The Second Theologian finds himself in a crucial year of formation. Having completed a year of theological studies, by the end of Second Theology he will most likely be one year from Ordination to the Diaconate. Therefore, the Second Theologian should be moving from discernment of a priestly vocation to an increasing certainty of commitment to this vocation. Whatever his age, he should display growing maturity and greater ability in being self-governed and in doing what is right, not because another commands it, but because he understands and recognizes the intrinsic value of virtuous conduct in the likeness of Jesus. Another sign of his maturity should be growth in the ability to accept and integrate constructive criticism in the on-going formation process. He should also be attaining a consistent level of time management, setting reasonable and voluntary limits on his use of television, the internet, telephone, and the gym. He should accept the fact that time is not his own to use as he pleases, but is a gift from God to be used as a good steward.

The Second Theologian, in anticipation of the reception of the Ministry of Acolyte, should be evermore integrating his prayer and spirituality as foundations for his entire future priestly service. Growth in his love for the Eucharist is imperative. He should also be increasing in fidelity to praying the Liturgy of the Hours. His personal and communal prayer should be becoming more and more interior, and his use of Scripture and lectio divina for prayer should be both regular and formative. Since he is one year closer to the promise of celibacy, this issue should become one of increasing attention, both in the internal and external forum. He should be consciously growing in awareness of the sacrifice of priestly celibacy and, simultaneously, should be learning to live a consistent and joyful celibate life with increasing ease. The Second Theologian should have a strong consciousness of himself as a “man of the Church,” and thus should have a deep appreciation for the place of obedience in his life.

Having completed a year of seminary studies, the Second Theologian should have a substantial degree of comfort with the language of theological discourse as well as with the kinds of demands expected of seminarians in the second year of formation. He should be able to assess the success of his study habits. Where necessary, he should take initiatives in making appropriate adjustments. In Second Theology, the seminarian should experience an increased capacity for integration of course content across the curriculum, and should be able to see the relationships between his courses more clearly. Second Theology students should choose their electives carefully in light of the M.A. (theology) or S.T. B. degree programs, the Hispanic Ministry certificate program and the expectations of the home diocese for Spanish, the needs of the people they will serve, and their own personal interests and needs for intellectual growth. They should also sense a growth in awareness of how their academic...
endeavors relate to the other areas of formation, including their spiritual life, pastoral responsibilities, and personal relationships. By the end of the year, they should have a good understanding of what is involved in the Ministry of Acolyte.

The focus on Health Care or Social Justice Ministry for Second Theologians will very likely provide opportunities for each seminarian to extend himself to God’s people in new ways. They should accept these challenges as a source of new pastoral skills. They should also see them as genuine opportunities to learn more about themselves in the face of all sorts of human sorrows, which are, for the most part, inexplicable without a solid foundation of belief and firm trust in the ultimate goodness of God. Through his second year field placement, the Second Theologian will come to a deeper appreciation of himself as an instrument of God’s healing and of the establishment of God’s justice in the world.

2. EXPECTATIONS

a. Human Formation

The Second Theologian should have internalized the house liturgical schedule and be able to meet its expectations with ease, faithfully reporting any lapses in consistency. He should be recognizing that his capacity to obey the seminary directives indicates a potential to fulfill his promise of obedience at Ordination. Confronting any tendency to exempt himself from common obligations, he should set an example for Pre-theologians and First Theologians, displaying a positive attitude toward formation and respect toward those in authority. He should be appropriately receptive to “peer evaluations,” incorporating necessary adjustments for growth into his on-going formation. He needs also to increase his genuine respect for the seminary faculty and staff, and to develop appropriate relationships with them. In his behavior towards others he should avoid (or correct) any attitudes or expectations of being “served” and should be growing in concrete expressions of other-directed charity. The Second Theologian should feel at ease in social situations and should give evidence of his ability to relate to all different kinds of people in a mature way.

The Second Theologian should be especially concerned to cultivate a close relationship with his diocese and he should have a growing sense of being called by God to ministry in that diocese. He should become familiar with the structures, the services, the human demographics, and pastoral needs of his diocese through reading, discussion, and time actually spent there. In short, recognizing that the commitments of incardination are serious, he should be experiencing a sense of truly being “at home” in the diocesan Church which he is preparing to serve.

The Second Theologian should be cultivating an attentiveness to “what needs to be done” in the community and should show a spirit of generosity in response to such needs. Willing generosity is an absolute requirement in parish ministry, and it can be effectively cultivated in the seminary community through serious, prayerful consideration of multiple service opportunities. During Second Theology, the seminarian’s friendships should be based less on his own needs than on a genuine spirit of fraternal charity. Relationships which might best help him grow in virtue, rather than those which may seem more comfortable but do not challenge him, should be fostered. In general, he should be growing in constructive and appropriate awareness of the needs of others and responding more maturely to such needs as is the constant pattern required for authentic priestly ministry. He should show a genuine interest in people of other cultures and strive to know them and their cultures as well. He should also continue to develop a personal health lifestyle, which includes a balanced diet, exercise, and recreation.
1. How am I developing wholesome friendships with other seminarians (for the common good and the benefit of others, beyond mere neediness and beyond competitiveness/jealousy/cliques)? Am I also developing good friendships outside the seminary?

2. How do I honor members of my family through regular communication while not demonstrating a dependence detrimental to future total service of the Church?

3. What appropriate efforts do I make (or might I make) to learn about and to become better known in the diocese to which I will be committed?

4. How do I display disagreement with those in authority (by internal rebellion?... denial?... behind-the-scenes complaining)? What might I do about such behaviors?

5. How do I plan to manage my daily and weekend time giving priority to prayer and study, followed by apostolic activity, leisure, and personal responsibilities?

6. In what ways am I really becoming a self-disciplined person; and in what ways do I depend inordinately on others to “measure up” in various circumstances?

7. How do I demonstrate willingness to serve others at some “cost” to my preferences? Am I generous in putting my time and talent at the disposal of others?

8. What aspects of my lifestyle might not be balanced and/or healthy?

9. How do I plan to demonstrate a Christ-like simplicity in clothing and possessions, maintaining neatness and observing the common norms concerning clerical/casual attire?

10. How might I adjust behaviors or attitudes that imply a personal “entitlement” for others to defer to my preferences and personal desires?

b. Spiritual Formation

To increase his appreciation for the Eucharist, the Second Theologian, in consultation with his Spiritual Director, should be spending time each week in Eucharistic Adoration. Sound Marian devotion should be integrated into his spiritual life. He should experience a deep commitment to participation in daily Mass, both during the academic year and during breaks and vacations. He should see his consistent desire for the Eucharist as a significant gauge of an authentic priestly vocation. His liturgical and sacramental spirituality should go beyond the potential rigidity of ritualism and/or formalism to a direct, practical, operative understanding of the profound theological relationship between the Eucharist, Eucharistic Adoration, Marian devotion, and those persons who are daily placed before him, those whom Jesus Christ saved at the cost of His Cross and in whom the Trinity has chosen to dwell by grace. The Second Theologian should no longer need to be convinced of the necessity of daily prayer; he should experience an ever-deepening, insatiable need for prayer. He should seek to become thoroughly familiar with all dimensions of the Ministry of Acolyte, in preparation for receiving it in good conscience.

The Second Theologian is still in the process of discerning the call to celibacy, but by this time he should find fulfillment and peace in living as a celibate, and he should be comfortable in embracing the concrete consequences of celibacy for himself. Any serious difficulties in living the celibate life at this point are a strong indication that a man is not yet ready to assume this way of life freely and joyfully. The Second Theologian will continue to foster mature relationships and friendships in and outside the seminary, and will give evidence of his affective maturity in his ability to act appropriately and to respect proper boundaries in his multiple relationships. He will increase in his level of identity as a
public person, responsible to Christ and the Church, recognizing that personal discipline, prudence, and restraint are necessary. He should be dealing honestly and constructively with any doubts or questions regarding the serious, long-term, practical implications of the obligation of clerical celibacy. His sense of “thinking with the Church” will manifest itself in an obedient attitude.

1. How might I strengthen my prayer life, being faithful to public daily prayer of the seminary community, the Liturgy of the Hours, Eucharistic devotion, *lectio divina*, etc.?

2. How might I be more faithful in spiritual direction and confession as well as in consistently reading good classical and contemporary works of spirituality?

3. How might I develop a more interior prayer life (in contrast to a primarily exterior or merely outwardly “devotional” level of prayer)? Have I developed a personal spiritual life to which I am faithful each day?

4. How might I be engaging in spiritual or liturgical practices to “be seen” or because I “am seen”?

5. Do I feel genuine ease and fulfillment in living the celibate life? Do I believe the Lord is giving me the capacity to live this life in a healthy and happy way?

6. How might I grow in understanding the need for at least some formative, mature, adult relationships/ friendships in order to live celibacy effectively?

7. Do I view myself as a man of the Church, filled with a deep sense of obedience toward my bishop and others who are responsible for my formation?

8. Am I preparing to assume the Ministry of Acolyte?

c. Intellectual Formation

If enrolled in either the M.A. (theology) or S.T.B. dual degree programs, the Second Theologian should be taking steps toward fulfilling the degree requirements. By this time, the Second Theologian should sense that he has the necessary tools and skills to complete theological studies. If any are lacking, he will take the steps needed to acquire them as soon as possible. He should have developed discipline in study habits and in note-taking, and he should be growing in the ability to express to various audiences in an effective and accurate manner whatever he has learned.

The Second Theologian should begin to see his studies, not as abstract or theoretical material existing in isolation, but as necessary, effective knowledge to be consistently and appropriately utilized in pastoral ministry. He should be able in an ever-increasing manner to see the integration and pastoral application of his studies in Scripture, Systematic and Moral Theology, Canon Law, etc. He should cultivate an appreciation for reading and study, not simply as a duty of the seminary curriculum, but as a necessary activity of any priest. In short, he should be developing a habit of continuing his theological education and of reflecting theologically on all his pastoral experiences.

The Second Theologian has done enough studies that he should be able to make a distinction between theology and doctrine, and he should have an appreciation of the value of theological pluralism. Through the study of the history of doctrine, he should also understand that doctrine develops over the course of the Church’s history, and he should be able to distinguish the various degrees of authoritative teaching in the Church.

The Second Theology student should develop the habit of keeping abreast of national, international, and church related current events. He should plan to take advantage of the cultural richness of the
Baltimore-Washington area. Study of modern church history should help increase his awareness of and interest in understanding the multiple cultures to which he will address the Gospel in his priestly ministry.

1. How might I articulate my academic goals for the next 2-3 years, in an area of special interest, the M. Div, the M.A.(theology), the S.T.B., JP II Institute, language study (Spanish, Latin, Greek, Hebrew), electives, etc.?

2. What skills can I hone to realize my intellectual abilities and work to my capacity?

3. What areas of my theological background are still lacking and what concerted effort (or practical plan) might I initiate to remedy these lacks?

4. In what ways are my studies becoming integrated or more meaningful? If such is not the case, what effort(s) is/are needed on my part to remedy this lack of integration?

5. How might I develop a pattern of genuine intellectual curiosity and serious reading?

6. How am I meeting the expectations of my diocese for preparation for Hispanic Ministry? Should I consider application to the Querétaro program?

7. If I have enrolled in the M.A. (theology) program, have I been able to complete the concomitant research projects in a timely manner? Have I participated in any “community of learners” activities in my area of concentration?

8. Am I keeping up with current events?

9. Have I taken advantage of the cultural richness of the Baltimore-Washington area?

10. Have I any plan to increase my understanding of the multiple cultures to which I will address the Gospel in my priestly ministry?

d. Pastoral Formation

The Second Theologian will reflect on his response to human suffering, and will seek to grow in genuinely other-oriented Christological compassion when dealing with those who suffer, whether the person is struggling with physical, mental, emotional illnesses, moral difficulties or economic deprivation. He will cultivate within himself a preferential option for the poor, learning especially to listen rather than to speak, to be empathetic rather than to give advice, and to abandon personal self-concern in circumstances of illness or poverty. He needs to be developing the capacity to deal with his own emotions courageously and honestly and to become increasingly aware of how his own needs may negatively affect pastoral relationships. It will be important for him to know how to initiate conversation with strangers, to pray spontaneously, to cultivate good listening skills, and how to be respectfully silent when appropriate in pastoral circumstances. The Second Theologian will aim at acquiring those pastoral skills and qualities that will help him in ministering to those who suffer from illness or deprivation of justice.

1. How am I developing skills necessary for positive relating in pastoral circumstances and how am I growing in ability to converse openly/easily with others?

2. Is my professional “self-control” increasingly natural, comfortable, and meaningful or overly “rigid” and “distant”? How might I address any lacks or difficulties in this area?

3. How might I be more friendly/gracious toward others, especially in my pastoral assignment, attending to the poor and disadvantaged, and those culturally diverse?
4. How might I grow in ability to explain or defend the faith, give spiritual counsel or direction, and make the most of brief human interaction in my apostolic service?

5. In what practical ways am I dealing constructively with any personal traits or limitations that impede my pastoral efficacy?

6. How might I assess whether I have a collaborative approach to ministry or if I might be primarily concerned about being in control of others in pastoral circumstances?

7. How do I genuinely display respect for supervisors and colleagues (men or women, clergy or laity), and do I really welcome their constructive criticism?

8. How do I handle crisis situations and personal conflicts in pastoral ministry?

9. What skills and qualities do I need to acquire to do effective ministry to the sick?

10. Do I have a strong commitment to the Church’s social justice ministry? How do I need to grow in my appreciation of the Church’s mission on behalf of a just society?