

Vinayasādhana

Dharmaram Journal of Psycho-Spiritual Formation

VOL. X, No. 2, JULY 2019

Last but not the Least: Tips for Psycho-spiritual Integration

There are various psychological and spiritual tips for formators to enable their formees to initiate their conscience to establish contact with the Holy Spirit for guidance in their vocation and ministry:

Managing emotions: Formators can help their formees become aware of their own experiences of emotions and find a channel to articulate this verbal and non-verbal expression of emotions. It is essential to learn that there are appropriate and inappropriate ways of expressing emotions and help the formees be able to find an outlet in prayer, peer support, mentoring and counselling sessions, and in constant dialogue with the Spirit to guide their behaviour. Secondly, they can come to realise that they need not react based on their emotions and look into their past experiences that might have triggered such a feeling in the present. Such activities can help them accept their past and live in the here-and-now. Thirdly, they need to learn to realise and accept the emotions of other people and empathise with them so as to build good interpersonal relationships which are critical in ministering to people. Lastly, managing emotions involves building emotional resilience and working towards emotional maturity. The ability to rise above the situation by falling on the knees in prayer, and the capacity to forgive others and letting go of the burden that blinds us to the glory of God would enable the formee in their vocation.

Tapping into the spiritual resources: The vast spiritual resources available to us through the Word of God and the Sacraments need not be limited to Church timings or limited time schedules. The daily walk with the Word can be empowered with meditation and group discussions of various issues and challenges faced by the Church and how they think they can overcome these hurdles. Prayer and quiet time can be further empowered by spiritual guidance and counselling by the formators who can share their experiences. St. Chavara, known as a man filled with the Holy Spirit, said “*Kanakenam*”- I long to see Christ, a mantra which often accompanied his prayer. His prayerful conscience was able to observe all pleasant and unpleasant events as the opportunities to experience God. The formees who enter the seminary should be able to tap into the vast spiritual resources so that their conscience can be lead by the Holy Spirit to fulfil His kingdom on Earth.

Vocational discernment: The personal journey of a formee while asking God to reveal the plan for their lives involves prayer, self-reflection, thinking about their talents and skills, engaging in conversations with people they trust, seeking spiritual direction and entering into the process of religious formation.

Guidance from well-balanced formators: A psychologically, spiritually, and theoretically well- balanced formator would be a man of justice and openness. A person in such a position of responsibility should ensure that they maintain frequent supervision and counselling sessions for their formees along with spiritual guidance sessions. They require the skills required to be proactive, be of forgiving nature and become men of integrity. It is imperative that the formators also go for regular supervision sessions and ensure that their psycho-spiritual growth is also taken care of. Since they act as leaders or guides to the formee, it is also

essential that the formators are in charge of their own emotions and know how to manage them effectively. Modelling an observant, empathetic, non-judgemental figure accompanied by sharing self-reflections can encourage emotional growth and maturity in formees.

Our conscience illuminated by the Holy Spirit as we search the Scriptures will show us in every circumstance the right way-

Richard Wurmbrand