

**SESSION FOR NEW FORMATION  
PERSONNEL  
1996-1997  
SOME CONVICTIONS  
(2/2)**

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**8. All vocations must be lovingly accompanied from their beginnings in their human and Christian dimensions.**

Personal accompaniment on the informal level includes many facets and it is realized by means of presence, dialogue, interchanges... Personal accompaniment on the formal level is realized through interviews and by other means.

Formal personal accompaniment is one of the most central points in many Districts and even within committees and formation staffs. Formal personal accompaniment is probably one of the areas in formation where the Brothers' "particular vision" is having great impact. This is happening perhaps because there are few who have had a formal experience of personal accompaniment in the process of vocational growth and there are others who have had negative experiences in the type of accompaniment that they have received.

But those persons who in their own history have not had good luck in this area cannot serve as the norm for decisions made regarding formal personal accompaniment in formation. Perhaps they could serve as watchdogs in order to take it more seriously in the sense of using the best means available for the fullest possible growth of those in formation.

If the Institute wants to be on the cutting edge in formation, we have to support the process of formal personal accompaniment, which is a decisive phase in the formation process. This normally begins already in the process of pastoral ministry and it intensifies during the vocation ministry phase which is the first phase in the process of vocational discernment. The first meetings with the Brother during this period of vocation ministry already played an important role in the period prior to formation as he dealt with personal accompaniment.

The person in formation is one who asks to be admitted into the "Society" of the Brothers and views the fact of being accompanied as part of the normal course of events. If problems arise that have to do with accompaniment then it is necessary to identify the causes and work to overcome them so that the young person attains the maturity necessary for trust and for creating links, because we are an Institute in which we pronounce a vow to carry out the mission "to-

gether and by association". The very problem facing accompaniment is a reason for having personal and group accompaniment during the stages of initial formation.

The formation team personnel are responsible for the process of vocational growth (on the human, Christian and Lasallian levels). Vocational growth meetings with the Brother in charge of various phases are a privileged means for meeting, educating and forming.

Personal accompaniment includes all those areas of the person, the physical, psychological and the spiritual and all potential in this regard.

**9. The model of integrated formation includes solid professional training.**

Formation education is the integrated fostering of the person and it is manifested by:

- the capacity to discover the meaning of life (in a world full of confusion);
- taking on one's own station in life in a responsible manner (in a world which is in many ways irresponsible);
- guiding one's own options based on an appropriate scale of values, thus attaining true freedom (in a world which highly prizes economic values based on hedonism).

These three abilities are inextricably linked in a causal relationship.

If the formation path demands careful attention being paid to one aspect more than another in certain phases, the concern of formators should offer guidance, nevertheless, towards an integrated formation. Each particular aspect should be seen within the whole, from the basis of a "unity of life", given by the person of Jesus to his disciples, within the founding charism. All educational interventions and formation programs always have as their objective the whole man, the complete person, body, mind and spirit, with all their potential. Interventions of an educational nature cannot be partial, that is, favoring only one area, for example, the spiritual one, because this will increase the fragmentation that young people are experiencing today.

If we want to help build up the builders, mature men who take action in history according to their vocation as members of the Church and humanity we have to accept the challenge of searching for an integrated formation:

-human: the intellectual, cognitive, values-based, with the ability to assign values, to unify facts in a conscious manner; the ability to know oneself, the profound dynamics of the human being, to be able to handle difficult experiences, relationships with the other...

-Christian: to know what a Christian vocation is, the person of Jesus, the basic elements of Christianity... We have to color this human and Christian basis in a manner that is Lasallian and which includes the life, work, spirituality and pedagogy of Saint John Baptist de La Salle, the charism of the Institute...

The formation model that emerges from VC is the integrated model. It opens its content and dynamics of maturation and qualification of all of life's aspects according to the traits proper to the various phases of chronological and spiritual age. Formation should involve the whole person "in every aspect of the personality, in behavior and intentions" (VC 65). The Rule tells us that the Brothers *constantly seek to improve their competence* (Rule 21).

**10. The animation of vocation ministry is the responsibility of all the People of God.**

Healthy and mature relationships in the heart of the People of God allows vocation ministry to become a concern that involves everyone, in a “choral activity” of the entire ecclesial community. This implies that the ministry teams in our schools become involved in Church ministry as much as possible and that the vocation ministry of the Brothers should be in line with that of the Church community in order that there is mutual support since we are all working for the same Kingdom.

**11. The life of our communities is a point of departure for all vocation ministry and a point of reference for our formation programs.**

In the apostolic exhortation continuing formation takes center stage. There is a change in the way of looking at formation. It is not enough just to look at the young person who needs to be formed. It is necessary to study formation from the point of view of a reality that should be faced in the fullness of life and not seen only in the initial stages. This is a reversal in terms of what was in practice: it means that each community should rethink the concept of vocation in a certain way, in the sense of updating it in response to the forces that are coming from the great changes in the world today. Continuing formation must respect each person and keep in mind the various phases of life and the different cultural and Church contexts. That is necessary for the growth of persons and the inculturation of the charism and above all for the credibility of initial formation.

Therefore we cannot think of vocation ministry and formation without also considering the communities in the district. We can say that a district that does not have a continuing formation process in the context of communities and ministries neither has a viable initial formation process. Unfortunately there is considerable dissonance between formation models and the life of communities, between the codi-

fied ideals in our documents and “adjustments” that are tolerated because of factors that are not always coherent with the formation model that is put forward in the districts.

**12. “Together and by association”, journeying together, is a key element throughout the process of vocational accompaniment.**

It is not orientations and prescriptions that are formed from outside, but the quality of the relationship that is established. A relationship that not only has the function of facilitating interpersonal communication, but also has the function of passing on needed behavior to those in formation so that they can flesh out their own personal identities.

Inasmuch as the logical and the technological have a privileged place in terms of a strict rationalism among the planned formation goals, it is a common conviction that the catalyst of all this and of all human growth and all educational processes is the **relationship**, that is, the unique and one-and-only encounter with a guide, a teacher capable of being a significant presence, a carrier of values, capable of creating links.

**13. Shared mission is a grace from God to the Institute and to the Church and it involves the position of a continual listening to the Spirit.**

If we understand, accept and live the Rule in its totality, we will know how to live our lives as Brothers with meaning, and shared mission will be perceived as a gift of the Spirit. Reality itself necessitates that we share tasks and responsibilities with our lay colleagues. Establishing other levels of interpersonal **relationships** that help us share natural and spiritual values inherited from the Founder and from the history of the Institute will permit us to carry on with confidence towards the future. •