

JUBILEE YEAR OF THE APPARITION

Monthly Recollection for Seminarians of La Salette Matha Province

February 2021

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1. Opening Song: Holy Spirit Song

2. Opening Prayer: PRAYER FOR THE MARIAN YEAR

(See the Prayer Card)

3. Scripture Passage

Joel 2:12-18

4. Theme of Meditation:

“Mary at La Salette Calls us to the Essentials of Faith”

5. Reflection

(This reflection could be either read out or explained as talk without losing the important thoughts of the reflection)

At La salette Mary recounts the basics of our faith life: an active faith in her Son, daily prayer, Eucharist and Lenten habits of faith. It's almost a catechism of evangelization, calling us back to the basics. Mary, of course, echoes the message of the scriptures, the message of her Son. Mary is entirely centered on Christ. She speaks of him, she speaks for him, she leads the young seers on their way to him. At La Salette she focuses primarily on the work of Christ – a cross-centered work. In this month let us meditate why our Lady encourages us to piety and the importance of having a filial devotion to her.

The studies on the Catholic religious practices as stress coping mechanisms and its effects on the well-being of seminarians proved that the prayers and religious practices help the seminarians to overcome stress and achieve well-being. The religious practices also helps to discern the vocation, to grow in virtues and to establish a deeper relationship with Jesus and Mary.

Since the Second Vatican Council, the veracity of the relationship between Mary of Nazareth and seminarians has been repeatedly confessed by the Church. The conciliar Decree on Priestly Training, *Optatam Totius* admonished seminarians to “love and venerate with a filial trust the most blessed Virgin Mary, who was given as mother to the disciple by Christ Jesus as He was dying on the cross. (N.8) The Second Vatican Councils Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, *Presbyterorum Ordinis* encouraged priests to love and venerate with filial devotion and veneration this Mother [Mary] of the



Eternal High priest, Queen of Apostles and Protector of their own [priestly] ministry. (N.18) The reform of ecclesiastical law in the 1983

Code of Canon Law drew attention to the link between Mary and initial priestly formation prescribing that veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary, including the Marian rosary, mental prayer, and other exercises of piety are to be fostered; through these, students are to acquire a spirit of prayer and gain strength in their vocation. (CIC /83, c. 246, § 3.)

The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Day, *Pastores Dabo Vobis* underscored at greater length still the Marian dimension of initial priestly formation: “Every aspect of priestly formation can be referred to Mary, the human being who has responded better than any other to Gods call. Mary became both the servant and the disciple of the Word to the point of conceiving, in her heart and in her flesh, the Word made man, so as to give him to mankind. Mary was called to educate the one eternal priest, who became docile and subject to her motherly authority. With her example and intercession, the Blessed Virgin keeps vigilant watch over the growth of vocations and priestly life in the Church. And so, we priests are called to have an ever firmer and more tender devotion to the Virgin Mary and to show it by imitating her virtues and praying to her often. (PDV, §82.)



The 2013 Directory for the Ministry and the Life of Priests affirmed the pedagogical value of Mary who because she is Mother, is also the most eminent formator of his priesthood, since it is she who knows how to model his priestly heart, protect him from dangers, fatigue, and discouragement, and, with maternal solicitude, watch over him so that he may grow in wisdom and grace before God and men. Most recently, The Gift of the Priestly Vocation, *Ratio fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* of 2016 voiced a contemporary appeal that priestly candidates ought to cultivate an authentic and filial devotion to the Virgin Mary, both through her liturgical celebrations and through popular devotions, particularly the recitation of the Holy Rosary and of the Angelus.

In this wide-ranging vision for human formation, Mary of Nazareth offers a perfect model of the human virtues, but more still Mary’s presence and mission can assist in the official inauguration of human formation within priestly formation. The exemplary presence of Mary, modeling authentic humility to seminarians in the propaedeutic stage, creates a healthy foundation upon which all other formation can build and thereby reaffirms with John Paul II that Mary is thus present in the mystery of the Church as a model.

In *Marialis Cultus*, Pope Paul VI calls attention to Mary's fortitude of character by selflessly embracing a life of perpetual virginity, as well as accepting according to the divine will the hardships of Mary's vocation as the Mother of God. Mary reveals the Christian vocation to discipleship as one sustained by not only humility, but by courageously following Jesus. In Mary's suffering with Jesus Crucified and all of humanity, the Virgin offers an authentic witness and impetus to courage in seminarians.

Mary's maternal presence offers healing to these wounds and an assurance of a maternal presence to men who have otherwise been deprived this natural relationship of the utmost importance. While Mary's maternal presence to the Divine Child arises as a true biological mother, Mary's adoptive maternity of the human race establishes a maternal presence to be cultivated by seminarians from the beginning of initial priestly formation.

(The Sessions breaks for half an hour. After the break the group gathers again in a prayerful atmosphere either in the Chapel or a hall. The Blessed Sacrament exposed, or a room is prepared for group sharing)

6. Meditative Music

7. Questions for Personal Reflection and Discussion:

- The Seminary has a wide array of religious practices that are aimed at the overall spiritual well-being of Seminarians. These are to be practiced with faith in order for its efficacy to be felt. What practices in the Seminary do you practice with faith?
- Are you regular in the spiritual direction, confession? Are you punctual for prayers? How serious are you in Bible reading, spiritual reading, and meditation? Do you experience Jesus in the Holy Mass and in the Eucharistic adoration? Did you make efforts to deepen your faith after entering into the seminary? Did you grow in the relationship with the blessed Mother?

8. Group sharing based on the questions above

9. Spontaneous prayers

10. Concluding Prayer

God Our Father, You who Continually invites us to Conversion,
give us today Your Spirit who enlightens us.

Who allows us to recognize Our sin,
to accept Your mercy and to sing of our freedom.

That way, we can live with more assurance in the spirit of service,
a faithful disciple of Christ,
the servant who lives with you forever and ever

11. Concluding Song: La Salette Song

