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LIVING GOD'S DREAM OF COMMUNION: COMMUNITY IN SEMINARY FORMATION

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Today is the great feast of Christ the King, and perhaps this morning is a sign that the Kingdom of God is near: an unworthy Jesuit has been invited to speak at a major celebration of a Dominican-run institution. More seriously though: I would like to congratulate the UST Central Seminary on the occasion of its Diamond Jubilee as an interdiocesan seminary. I echo the admiring sentiments of Archbishop Quevedo's opening homily: this Seminary has contributed a great deal to the life and mission of the Church in the Philippines. I am very honored to be part of your celebration.

I am also edified by the way you have chosen to begin your celebration. There is celebration and thanksgiving present, but you have chosen *not* to indulge in triumphalism and self-congratulation. Rather, your emphasis has been to reflect on your life and mission as a seminary, and you have even invited other seminaries to join you in reflecting on their life and mission. So I thank you too for modeling for us, for teaching us, the way to celebrate anniversaries: as occasions for thanksgiving and renewal. I hope that all present here will learn from your example: when it is our turn to celebrate an anniversary of our parish, diocese, seminary or even priesthood, may we engage in similar grateful reflection and discernment, towards renewal of identity and mission!

I have been asked to speak about community formation, the significance of the life of community in the formation of future priests. There will be three parts to my presentation. First, we shall investigate what a community is in the first place. How does one know that a group of people is, in fact, a community? Secondly, we shall ask why community is such an important—indeed, in some sense, *the most important*—part of seminary formation. Thirdly, we shall try to identify some qualities of a truly formative community.

What is community?: Elements of community

I base my reflections here on the ideas of the theologians Bernard Lonergan and Joseph Komonchak, and the reflections of the founder of *L'Arche*, Jean Vanier.[1] What is a community? What makes a community different from a crowd? Both are groups of people who happen to be together. What is the difference? A crowd is a group of people who are bound only by temporal and spatial bonds, who simply happen to be in a particular place at a certain time, like people riding a jeep together, or in a mall or in an airport. What transforms a crowd into a community?

Two interrelated bonds transform a crowd into a community. First, **relationships of mutual knowledge, love and responsibility:** the deeper, the more personal the level of relationship, of mutual knowledge and love, of responsibility for one another, the stronger the community. Jean Vanier writes: "So many people enter groups in order to develop a certain form of spirituality or to acquire knowledge about the things of God and of humanity. But that is not community; it is a school. It becomes community only when people start truly caring for each other and each other's growth."[2] It might be good to ask: do you experience your seminary as a crowd, as a school, or as a community?

A second bond is that of a **common culture. Culture** is a complex reality composed of various levels. First, it involves *a common set of meanings and values.* The people who live together are bound not only in concern for one another, but also share a sense of what life is for and what is truly important. Again, listen to Vanier: "The difference between a community and a group of friends is that in a

community we verbalize our mutual belonging and bonding. We announce the goal and the spirit that unites us."[3] Again, it might be good to ask: do you experience your seminary as simply a group of friends, or as a community bound by "a goal and spirit," as Vanier puts it?

Second, this common set of meanings and values is "captured," celebrated, and communicated in *paradigmatic symbols, stories, words, symbolic events.* In San Jose Seminary, for example, we have, in front of the Seminary building, a magnificent statue of San Jose with one arm around Jesus and the other arm holding an ax. It has become a great symbol for us: just looking at it evokes a sense of our seminary and our spirit. In the past few years, when a Josefino hears the words "Virtue, Learning, Spirit, Service," he remembers the goals of our seminary formation, the founding of the Seminary to form men of *Virtud y Letras* who will work in *opus ministerii.* These "great words" in English and Latin express and evoke the common vision of our life together. Our seminary life too is punctuated by symbolic events. For example, one of the most powerful is the culmination of the initiation or welcome of our new members: by the sea, the neophytes are led blindfolded into the water; then they climb out and are made to crawl under the legs of all the members of the community, passing, as it were, through a new birth canal; and as each new member emerges, as though reborn, he is embraced in welcome by the rector and all the members of the community, sometimes with fireworks exploding in the background! These are rich, constantly evocative bearers of the vision, meanings and values of our community.

Third, these common meanings and values, expressed in symbols, words and events, are *lived out in ordinary life in common practices and lifestyles.* This is important: sometimes there is a contradiction between the meanings and values put down on paper, in mission statements and the like, on the one hand, and the way people actually live together and relate to one another, on the other. We shall say more about this later. At this point, let me simply point out that the common practices, the "rule of life," the schedules and required tasks and responsibilities that form a community's actual day-to-day life are powerful bearers of the community's common meanings and values.

To summarize then: what is a community? A community is not just a crowd, a group of people simply bound together by time and space, but rather people who are bonded to one another in relationships of belonging and care, and by a common culture, vision, way of life. A *Christian* community is a group of people who are related, in the Spirit of Jesus, in friendship with God and with each other, and who are committed to the vision, the meanings, the values, the lifestyle of the Gospel.

As we end this first part of our reflection then, let me suggest some questions for a preliminary reflection on the quality of your community life. First, what is the quality of relationships in your community? Are you happy in your community? Do people feel they belong? Is there trust? Are relationships functional or personal? Would members of the community choose to come back and undergo seminary formation in that community again if they had a choice? Second, what is the culture of the community? What are the great symbols of the community's ideals? Are people bound by a common vision? Is it the vision of the Gospel? Is there a discrepancy between the official vision, values, symbols, practices—and the real and operative visions, values, practices?

The importance of community for seminary formation

Having clarified what community is, we might now ask a further question: why give such importance to community in seminary formation? Do we want to build community only in order that seminarians can study with a minimum of aggravating circumstances? Are we aiming simply for a pleasant environment for individual growth? After all, seminarians are not permanently in the seminary. Why bother to build ties or community? *Magsisiuwian din naman sila sa pinanggalingan!* Why not just a pleasant, harmonious boarding house and school? I would like to suggest three reasons why attention to building community in the seminary is *not* just a "frill," an additional but non-essential aspect of diocesan seminary formation.

First, if one looks at the Scriptures, from Abraham to Jesus to the new Jerusalem of the book of Revelation, one sees that the plan of God for our salvation is constant: *God saves by building*

community, salvation involves insertion into community. God is the great community-builder. In our limited time, we might just focus on Jesus: Jesus proclaims the Kingdom of God, but he does it by building up and gathering a People of God.[4] *Lumen Gentium* No. 9 says it very well: "At all times and in every race, anyone who fears God and does what is right is acceptable to him. He has, however, willed to make men holy and save them, not as individuals without any bond or link between them, but rather to make them into a people who might acknowledge him and serve him in holiness." We might recall too John 11:51, where Caiaphas says it is better for one man to die for the people, and the evangelist comments that the high priest spoke prophetically, for Jesus died "to gather together into unity the scattered children of God." On the eve of his death, Jesus asks his Father to grant to his friends the gift of community, but the kind of community that is like the community of Father and Son: that "they might be one, just as he and his Father are one" (Jn.17). The point is: the whole history of salvation is aimed at forming community, especially the kind of community, which is the very life of the Trinitarian God: *communio.* The seminary, as with any Christian community, must be a foretaste of the communion God desires for the world. As with any Christian community, it is called to be a radiant sign, in the midst of a broken and fragmented world, of the *communio,* which is God's dream for humanity.

Secondly, the seminary however is not just any Christian community. It has its finality in the formation of future priests. In the *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* it is surely significant that the sacrament of Holy Orders (along with that of matrimony) is described as a sacrament *"at the service of communion"* (*Cf. CCC,* Nos. 1533 and 1534). *Presbyterorum Ordinis* No.6 teaches: "The pastor's task is not limited to individual care of the faithful. It extends by right also to *the formation of a genuine Christian community."* PCP-II, No. 518 declares: "The priest is to build up Christian community!" This is vital to keep in mind. The priest's ministry of preaching the Word and the celebration of the sacraments is aimed at shaping and nourishing *a people* who will live as God's people. At every Eucharist that the priest presides over, the priest does not only demonstrate his power to "confect" the Eucharist; rather, he makes the body of Christ present so that *a people may become the body of Christ in the world!* The finality of his priesthood, symbolized in his Eucharistic role, is not only the

cultic consecration of the bread into the body of Christ but the pastoral transformation of a people into the body of Christ.[5] The point is: How can he build Christian community except from his positive experience of Christian community? The community life he experiences in the seminary will, for better or for worse, probably be the kind of Christian community he will build up as a future priest.

Pastores Dabo Vobis Number 60 stresses the point being made above this way:

> It is essential for the formation of candidates for the priesthood and the pastoral ministry, *which by its very nature is ecclesial,* that the Seminary should be experienced not as something external and superficial, or simply a place in which to live and study, but in an interior and profound way. *It should be experienced as a community, a specifically ecclesial community,* a community that re-lives the experience of the group of Twelve who were united to Jesus.

Finally, I would like to argue that community is the most powerful formative element in the seminary. Formation can and does take place through programs and classes. But the way a spirit is handed on, the way the interiority of a person is truly changed is not primarily through classes or lectures but by immersion and participation in a milieu, a common life and culture. The way the lectures and conferences make the "longest journey" from the head to the heart is in the life of the community.

I think it is only fitting, as I am speaking in a great Dominican university and seminary, to support my argument with ideas from three great Dominicans! First, St. Thomas Aquinas, who asked: Why did Jesus not spread his teaching by the written word? One answer Aquinas gives is this: Christ is greatest teacher, and thus, he did not teach by written lectures or books because he wanted to "engrave his doctrine in the hearts of his listeners."[6] We might follow up Aquinas' answer by asking: how precisely did Jesus do that, how did he teach in such a way that his lessons were inscribed directly onto the hearts of his friends? How did he reach, not just their minds, but the core of their persons? John Paul II points out that "the experience of formation which our Lord provided for the Twelve" involved *"a*

prolonged and intimate sharing if life with Jesus as a necessary premise for the apostolic ministry." *(PDV,* 60) Surely, here we find our answer. Jesus engraved his lessons directly onto the hearts of his disciples, not simply by giving lectures, but by inviting them to share life, to live in community with him. This common life of Jesus and his friends was marked by distinctive words, like "kingdom," "forgive," and "service"; by distinctive prayers, like the "Our Father"; by distinctive practices, such as preaching and healing. In this day-in and day-out living of common life, a spirit, a new interiority was formed in the disciples.

The great Yves Congar makes a similar point. In speaking about tradition, Congar points out that a child does not learn goodness by being given lectures on ethics, but by living within a milieu, a culture, a community, where he witnesses goodness, is made to practice fairness, sharing, respect for others, etc.[7] Finally, my "idol," the former Master General of the Dominican Order, Fr. Timothy Radcliffe explains that Gospel values are fragile and need an ecosystem. Just as some forms of life cannot live without the right mix of sun and air and water and plants, so with Gospel values. They can only come to life in people when a kind of ecosystem promoting their growth in the hearts of people exists, and community is this ecosystem.[8] All these writers agree in the importance they give to life in community as the privileged means for the formation of the hearts and interiorities of people.

To recapitulate this section of our reflection then: why is community so important an element of formation? We have proposed three reasons: Because God's dream is to build community; because the priest's mission is to participate in this dream by building up Christian community; because the transformation of the inner man takes place by immersion and participation in the life and culture of a community.[9]

Qualities of formative seminary community

Having explained community and its importance for seminary formation in general, can we now further identify some desirable

qualities of such a formative and transformative community? In this last section of our reflection, I will not propose an exhaustive list of qualities, but will specify six qualities, drawing primarily from my own experience at San Jose Seminary. I do not propose the contours of our communal life at San Jose as ideal, but am simply seeking to stimulate your reflection, by illustrating how one seminary seeks to build and nourish a formative/transformative community.

1. *A formative seminary community is a sacrament of God's unconditional hospitality: it is a community in which members feel they belong, are known deeply and accepted as they are, and are therefore free to be who they are in their irreplaceable uniqueness.*

Early on in my term as rector of San Jose Seminary, I read a book on the virtues by the American moral theologian Richard Gula. In discussing the virtue of hospitality, Gula shared a metaphor used by a former mentor to describe this virtue:

> Each of us is like rock with walls and barriers that keep others out and keep us secure. But year after year God keeps carving away at our rock. One day we discover that God's hand has created some empty space in our rock. . . . We have space to welcome people in, people who are also weary, tired. . . .They come in and say to us, 'Oh. . . I see you have some empty space. Perhaps I might come in. You know what I have been through. Perhaps you can hear me. Perhaps you won't force your plans on me, manipulate me, or try to control me. Perhaps you will offer a place where I can be me.'[10]

I was very moved by these words, and found that they expressed beautifully both what I wanted to be for my brothers in the community, and what I felt our community as a whole was called to be for each member of the community. Our seminarians come to us very wounded, in need of healing. I have discovered that one of the most healing experiences is a community where one experiences unconditional acceptance, a sense of being welcomed and loved for who one is, a sense that is deepened into the foundational experience of God's unconditional love and acceptance. Frankly, I might add, I do not know how one can be a good priest without a powerful

experience of this unconditionally accepting love of God.

In other words, it seems to me that the most basic reality of a formative seminary community must be that it is a sacrament, a mediation of God's welcoming, accepting love. The opposite of such a community is one marked by intrigue, distrust, caution and suspiciousness, politicking and favoritism, exclusion and fear. While no community, insofar as it is composed of sinful human beings can ever be completely free of these pathologies, I am deeply grateful to belong to a community of hospitality and acceptance in our seminary.

It should be added, furthermore, that the atmosphere created by hospitality makes possible the minimum conditions for formation: *honesty and openness.* There can be no formation without these, for how can one form seminarians when they are not trusting, open, honest and self-disclosing enough to present their real selves? A seminary with a rigid focus on external compliance of rules will do no real formative work. It will create a "colonial consciousness" in which formands show formators the behavior the formators desire, but go on living in hidden, untransformed ways. Formators will not be dealing with the real person of the seminarian, and so neither formation nor transformation takes place. Thus, it is crucial to ask the question: is the atmosphere of the seminary community one in which people feel accepted and valued enough to be vulnerable?

Finally, the atmosphere of belonging, trust, "at-homeness" of a community creates the possibility for the emergence of distinctive charisms of seminarians. Hospitality is deepened when these charisms are celebrated, and when there is a culture, not of competition, but of mutual appreciation for each other's gifts. These can and should be developed for the service of the Church.

> 2. *A formative seminary community is a community of dreaming, that draws its members to share Jesus' dream of the Kingdom for our time, challenging its members to self-transcendence in pursuit of this dream.*

A radical acceptance of persons does not mean not challenging them to grow in the Spirit. Jesus unconditionally loved sinners, yet called them to conversion and discipleship. Jesus' call to conversion was precisely an expression of the unconditional love that desires

fullness of life for the beloved; that longs to draw people away from the areas of death in their lives, and to allow them to become life-givers, in turn, for the world.

Thus, it is important that the atmosphere of the community be one not only of hospitality and acceptance, but one too that is permeated with dreams, ideals, vision, passion, inspired by Jesus' own dream of and passion for the coming of the Kingdom of his Father. Seminary community life cannot be "cozy" and self-absorbed: it is usually a danger signal when all the community discussions in a seminary revolve around improvement of lifestyle or interpersonal relationships, without any similar passion to speak of the great challenges and concerns facing the Church and the world today and the community's response to these challenges. The quality of a community's life should not allow seminarians to experience priesthood primarily as a means of self-promotion, fulfillment of ambitions or improvement of status and lifestyle. This is a real danger, given that our seminaries are usually much more materially comfortable than many of the home environments of our seminarians.

Does the community encourage seminarians to be bold in dreaming dreams, not for themselves, but with God, for the Church and the country? Are self-transcending ideals of service, self-gift, of generous and creative response to the many hungers of the world outside the seminary presented in an inspiring and "contagious" way in the life of the community? Do seminarians support, challenge, and correct one another, in view of these ideals and dreams? Are there venues for the realities of the world today—the erosion of faith and hope among the young; the heartbreaking struggle for basic survival of the poor; the blight of widespread corruption in public life, to name just a few—are there venues for these realities to "disrupt" the life of the community, to challenge seminarians and to inspire them to respond in self-transcending service as Jesus did?

> 3. *A formative seminary community has an operative culture consonant with its articulated vision. It is attentive to the way it communicates the vision and values that it finds most important in its "great words," its heroes and witnesses, its use of time and space, its traditions and practices.*

A seminary community is formative not only when it *talks* of service, humility, generosity, and the like in its mission statement. Unless these ideals are embodied and encountered in the *operative culture* of the seminary, the mission statement remains empty talk. This means therefore that attention and care have to be given to the words people use in day-to-day conversation, to the "heroes" and witnesses lifted up for seminarians to admire and emulate, to the use of time and space in the community, to the ethos-defining traditions, symbolic events and practices of the community. Together, these words, persons, times, spaces and practices form the operative, influential culture of the community, and they can communicate or contradict the stated vision and ideals of the seminary

Simply by way of illustration, allow me to share some indications, somewhat arbitrarily presented, of our "operative culture" at San Jose. We have sought, for example, to reintroduce "great words" from our tradition into our day-to-day communications, words that capture our ideals, words like *"Magis," "Responsible freedom," "Agents of Renewal."* These are not just "mission statement" words but have become, by a "campaign of repetition," part of ordinary communication, and even of jokes, and thus, influence the planning, behavior, and evaluation of individuals and the community. Our imagination as a community is peopled with names and faces of alumni who are outstanding in their priestly zeal, simplicity, prayerfulness and ministerial effectiveness, men like Bishops Chito Tagle or Ted Bacani, Frs. Robert Reyes, Joey Martin, Eric Castro, Ben Villote, Manny Gabriel, among others. We hold these "idols" up to our men as models, or even apprentice seminarians to them in apostolates or spiritual direction. In our day-to-day life, these "heroes" serve to inspire and edify our seminarians, to help them shape their own dreams of their future. Furthermore, an apparently simple thing such as the structuring of space for eating, for example, also influences our culture: the formators do not have a separate room for eating major meals, nor is their food different from that of the seminarians. During our alumni homecoming, in fact, there are no special tables for our bishop alumni, nor in fact are they spared from having to line up for their food, along with seminarians, lay alumni, and clerical alumni! All of this is to emphasize our essential equality, as envisioned

by Vatican II, our oneness as brothers, who happen to be called to different forms of ministry. Also, at *every* community Eucharist, during the sign of peace, we spend a significant amount of time exchanging, not just a handshake, but a warm embrace of brotherhood; and this daily rite has effectively created an atmosphere of belonging. Finally, during the Christmas season, instead of simply caroling for fund raising, we have introduced two important symbolic events that define the meaning of Christmas for the community: a recollection and party with our seminary workers; and a communal "pilgrimage to the poor," in which part of the funds solicited during caroling by the classes is used in a day of service and solidarity.

The point of all of this is: generosity, simplicity, zeal, equality, belonging, care for the poor become operatively experienced in our life as community because they do not remain words, but are somehow embodied in conversation, people, and practices experienced in daily life.

A final point in this discussion of attentiveness to operative culture needs to be made. The community must also be sensitive to and honest enough to admit features in their operative culture *that go against* the vision and ideals of the seminary, and be ready to critique and correct them. This can often be a painful process, as when our community, for example, went through years of discussion and discernment concerning "un-evangelical" features of our process of initiation of new members. The process began when some members of the community had the courage to critique the prevailing culture. It was painful to admit that some of our time-honored practices did not, in fact, reflect or form the values of the Gospel. In the end, however, the critical attentiveness and the willingness of the community to engage in self-critique of its own culture resulted in a wonderful purification and renewal of the initiation process.

> *4. A formative seminary community has common structures that form the virtues through practice, but holds these structures in creative tension with a certain amount of responsible freedom.*

Structures and common schedules are important in a seminary community for the formation of virtues. Values are not enough:

values, which are ideals, have to become virtues in our men, stable dispositions towards authentic human good in the person. A formative seminary community needs structures of common life that form priestly virtues like prayerfulness, simplicity, accountability, pastoral zeal, solidarity with the poor. But, structures should allow some space for personal choice and discernment, so that values are truly chosen, internalized, appropriated and loved, rather than merely imposed from the outside and complied with for the sake of promotion and good evaluations.

> *5. In its decision-making processes, a formative seminary community lives out Vatican II's vision of a participatory Church, in which all, graced with the Christ life in baptism, are involved, through dialogue, participation and discernment, in the life and mission of the community.*

Vatican II ecclesiology sees all in the Church as ecclesial subjects by virtue of baptism, equal in dignity and mission. A formative seminary community will live this vision in the way decisions are arrived at in community. As much as possible, and particularly where important decisions are concerned, all in the community will have a voice in a process of dialogue, participation, and discernment. Issues facing the community will be discussed with maturity and freedom, with respect for differing views, as well as for the principle of authority. The formators may still have the last word, but they will not have the *only* word. This process also allows for self-correction or fraternal correction and mutual challenge; it also allows dialogues of reconciliation and forgiveness between seminarians themselves, and between seminarians and formators.

It must be noted that this process of dialogue towards communal discernment and decision-making requires two things. First, a great deal of patience with and respect for process, as contrasted with a desire for immediate results. In our community, for example, issues are usually discussed first in the seminarians' BEC's, then in the Steering Committee composed of seminary officers, then in a plenary session of the Seminary Assembly, and finally with the formators! Secondly, the fruitfulness of dialogical decision-making process depends on the ability of members of the community to engage in open, honest, and direct communication, an ability that

one cannot simply presume, given the often-distorted patterns of communication that we have learned and grown up with. Communicative skills must be formed for real dialogue and communal discernment to take place.

Finally, a dialogical process of community decision-making gives space for prophecy in the community! "Rebelliousness" is an accusation I often hear formators make of seminarians. Sometimes I wonder whether this accusation is simply an indication of the discomfort of formators with voices and points of view that differ from their own! A formative seminary community however allows seminarians, within the limits of civility and the convictions of the seminary and the Church, to speak and challenge, to correct and disagree at times. Sometimes it might be the "rebellious" in our midst who hold God's word for a community!

6. Authority in the formative community is exercised according to the charism of parenting, that is, it is aimed at nurturing life in the men. Thus authority figures in the formative seminary coomunity are not primarily disciplinarians or CEO's, but shepherds in the pattern if the Good Shepherd.

Thus far, we have specified five qualities desired in a formative seminary community. The community must be characterized by welcome and acceptance, on the one hand, yet dreaming and self-transcendence, on the other. Its operative, day-to-day culture and structures should promote its meanings and values, but it should also allow space for responsible freedom and self-appropriation and determination on the part of its members. Its decision-making processes should be characterized by dialogue and communal discernment. All of these characteristics have implications, of course, for the exercise of authority in the formative seminary community, and indeed, challenge the way authority is often actually exercised in many of our seminaries.

In a fine and often moving article, the American theologian Wendy Wright identifies some characteristics of what she calls the "charism of parenting."[11] This is a kind of loving which involves the exercise of authority over those entrusted to the parental figure, but

that authority is for the sake of nurturing life in them. We do not have the time to discuss all the qualities of this kind of "loving with authority," but I would simply like to suggest that the model for authority in a formative seminary community is not primarily administrative or disciplinary, but parental. It will be an exercise of authority that will involve much personal care and accompaniment, much visioning and discerning, much trust and empowering, much forgiving and reconciling.

Authority then, in the formative seminary community, will be patterned after the blending of love and power, which is exemplified in Jesus the Good Shepherd. One Protestant preacher correctly observes that: "If the shepherd loves the sheep but cannot protect them, the image becomes merely sentimental." We might add that if the shepherd exercises power without love, then the image becomes one of degrading and infantilizing dictatorship. "In the Good Shepherd," the author concludes, "power and love meet."[12] In the Good Shepherd, we see the model of the kind of personal, visionary, flexible, dialogical, empowering, and patient exercise of leadership that formators are called to.

Conclusion: The seminary community and the future of the Church

We have, in our reflection, sought to do three things: understand the nature of community; appreciate the importance of community for seminary formation; and finally, identify some characteristics of a formative seminary community.

As we come to the end of our reflection, let me recall a quotation from John Paul II already mentioned earlier. Of the seminary, John Paul writes: *"It should be experienced as a community, a specifically ecclesial community." (PDV,* 60) In other words, the seminary community is an experience of Church. Recalling these words led me to a realization. It dawned upon me that all six qualities of a formative seminary community listed above should, in fact, be the qualities of *every* parish and diocese, *every* local Church. Every parish, every diocese, should be characterized by hospitality, dreams and

ideals of the Kingdom, culture consonant with vision, formation in responsible freedom, participation and dialogue, and should be led by parental leaders who are hospitable, flexible, discerning, visioning, empowering and reconciling.

This realization underlines a point already alluded to above, in the second part of this paper, and which I wish to re-emphasize in conclusion. The kind of community our seminarians experience in their seminaries will probably be the kind of Church they will seek to build up as priests. The implicit warning is, if they experience a seminary community which does not possess in some way the six qualities mentioned above, if they experience an impersonal, self-preoccupied, inconsistent, oppressive, secretive and authoritarian community in their seminary formation, they may build such a Church in the parishes and dioceses, which they will lead. It cannot be overstated: the future of our life as Church depends very much on the quality of our community life in the seminary.

In 1914, an Anglican clergyman, during his installation as pastor of the small Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields in London, used some memorable words to describe his dream for his parish. I would like to end with his luminous words, with the hope that words like these might describe our experience of community in our seminaries, and consequently our experience of community in our parishes and dioceses:

> *"I stood on the West steps, and saw what this Church would be to the life of t he people. There passed me, into its warm inside, hundreds and hundreds of all sorts of people, going up to the temple of their Lord, with all their difficulties, trials and sorrows. I saw it full of people....It was never dark, it was lighted all night and all day)', and often tired bits of humanity swept in. And I said to them as they passed: 'Where are you going? And they said only one thing: This is our home. This is where we are going to learn of the love of Jesus Christ. This is the Altar of our Lord where all our peace lies. This is St. Martin's. 'It was all reverent and full of love and they never pushed me behind a Pillar because I was poor. And day by day they told me the dear Lord's Supper was there on His Altar, waiting to be given. They spoke to me two words only, one was the word 'home' and the other was 'love'."* (Dick Sheppard)

NOTES

[1] For Lonergan, see *Method in Theology.* For Komonchak, see "The Church: God's Gift and our Task," *Origins* 16 (April 2, 1987): 735-741. For Vanier, see *Community and Growth,* revised edition, (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1989).

[2] Vanier, *Community and Growth,* 20.

[3] Ibid., 18.

[4] For a recent scholarly and persuasive study of the communal/communitarian aspect of salvation, and of the inseparable links between Kingdom of God and People of God in the ministry of Jesus, see Gerhard Lohfink, *Does God Need the Church?: Toward a Theology of the People of God,* trans. Linda M. Maloney (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999). The classic work in this area is Henri de Lubac's *Catholicism.*

[5] John Paul's latest encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* precisely highlights what one might call the "ecclesiogenetic" function of the Eucharist: the Eucharist makes the Church, the Church comes from the Eucharist.

[6] *Summa Theologiae,* IIIq, qu. 42, art. 4, quoted by Yves Congar, O.P. in *Tradition and the Life of the Church,* trans. A. N. Woodrow (London: Burns & Oates, 1964), 27.

[7] Congar, *Tradition and the Life of the Church,* 26.

[8] Timothy Radcliffe, O.P., *Sing a New Song: The Christian Vocation* (Springfield: Templegate Publishers, 1999), 206-207.

[9] Jean Vanier also has a very helpful discussion on the transformative effects of living in community in *Community and Growth,* especially pp. 25-60.

[10] Richard Gula, *The Good Life: Where Morality and Spirituality Converge* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1999), 115.

[11] Wendy Wright, "The Charism of Parenting," in *Retrieving Charisms for the Twenty-First Century,* edited by Doris Donnelly (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 85-101.

[12] Fleming Rutledge, "Love and Power," in *Help My Unbelief* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 100.