ST. MARY'S
SEMINARY & UNIVERSITY

Founded 1791

The Center for Continuing Formation

Forming Supervisors for Vocational Synthesis

A PROGRAM FOR PASTOR-SUPERVISORS AND THEIR COLLABORATORS

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ON THE COVER: Mosaic of Christ and the disciples on the road to Emmaus, by Viktor Paul Mohn, above the entrance of Emmaus-kirche (Emmaus Church), Berlin.
(Photo reproduction by Renáta Sedmáková, Adobe Stock # 162390238).

Welcome

REV. PHILLIP J. BROWN, P.S.S.
PRESIDENT-RECTOR

St. Mary's Seminary & University is pleased to offer a comprehensive formation program of training, resources, and ongoing consultation/support for pastor-supervisors and their collaborators as they accompany and supervise transitional deacons during the Vocational Synthesis Stage of their priestly formation. Our hope is that this program will benefit the pastor-supervisors and their collaborators in the following ways:

1. Training in accompaniment and supervisory obligations and expectations.
2. Insight into the pastoral team's involvement in the transitional deacon's formational accompaniment.
3. Ongoing formation in ministry supervision and leadership.
4. Greater confidence and competence in helping the deacon achieve his formational goals and benchmarks.
5. Growth in missionary discipleship and pastoral charity.

I look forward to welcoming you to St. Mary's in 2025.

Why Do We Need This Program?

WHY *Does the Church Need This Program?*

The *Program of Priestly Formation* (6th edition) offers a new vision of the final stage of preparation for the priesthood: the Vocational Synthesis stage.

WHO *Needs This Program?*

> *During this stage, the primary formator of the newly ordained cleric is the pastor of the parish where the deacon is assigned.... The pastor—who should be an exemplary model of the priesthood, aware of his formative task and of his duty to accompany the transitional deacon—should ensure that there are opportunities for discussion of pastoral situations and opportunities for priestly fraternity that will help the deacon transition well to active ministry and ongoing formation.*
>
> [*Program of Priestly Formation* (6th edition), #140]

WHAT *Is Needed?*

The pastor-supervisor and his collaborators need the *training*, *resources*, and *ongoing consultation and support* to embrace their responsibilities, further develop their skills, and expand their understanding of:

ACCOMPANYING
SUPERVISING
EVALUATING
ASSISTING

} the deacon to achieve his formational goals and the benchmarks of the Vocational Synthesis Stage (see page 5).

ON WHAT *Is the Program Founded?*

The spiritual foundation of the program is the art of *accompaniment* (see page 2).

HOW *Will the Program Be Offered?*

The program is built upon a *comprehensive model*, combining training (onsite and online), resourcing (print and digital), and ongoing support (see page 3).

WHEN *and* WHERE *Will It Be Done?*

Over six months, from June through November, the program will offer onsite learning on campus in Baltimore, MD (June 16-19, 2025) along with online meetings (August-November 2025), print/digital resources and personal consultation and support. (see page 4).

Accompaniment Is the Foundation

Accompaniment: a Spiritual Discipline

In his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis challenges the entire Church to learn again the importance of "walking with" each other:

> *"The Church will have to initiate everyone—priests, religious and laity—into this 'art of accompaniment' which teaches us to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other."* (#169)

The "art of accompaniment" is the hallmark of the pastor-supervisor in the Vocational Synthesis stage. The practice of accompaniment is spiritual practice and pastoral skill. It is grounded in the pastor-supervisors' experience of being accompanied by Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit like the disciples on the road to Emmaus. This experience has been fostered by spiritual directors and mentors over the years. When a pastor is invited to supervise a deacon during the Vocational Synthesis stage, he is being asked by Christ and the Church to accompany these men through the power of the Holy Spirit. This requires prayer and discernment to discover how the Lord wants the pastor to be with the deacon. It also requires a set of skills that include the ability to listen, ask questions, encourage, challenge, support, and offer insight when needed.

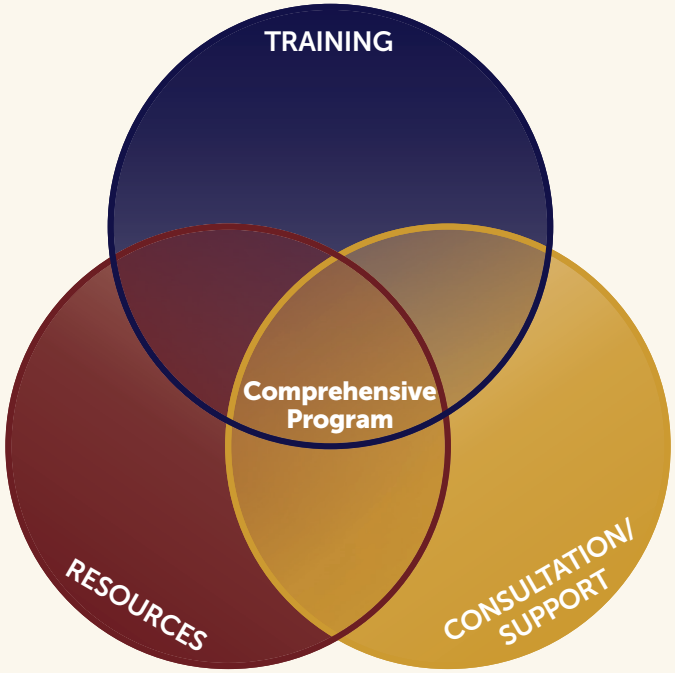
Christ with two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Rembrandt (c. 1655)

Forming Supervisors for Vocational Synthesis offers pastors an opportunity to understand the need for and power of accompaniment in the formation of transitional deacons. They will also be given the support needed to develop, practice, and grow the skills a pastor-supervisor needs to accompany and form transitional deacons in their new ministry.

Program Model

Training, Resources, and Consultation/Support

Forming Supervisors for Vocational Synthesis employs a unique program model. While many program models are training workshops or conferences, this process offers a comprehensive approach that combines training, resources, and consultation/support during and post formation training:



The Forming Supervisors for Vocational Synthesis *Model*

TRAINING
Promoting learning across cognitive, affective, and behavior dimensions.

RESOURCES
Materials for ongoing learning as well as guides and instruments for practical implementation.

CONSULTATION AND SUPPORT
Individual interaction to assure that participants' questions are answered, problems are solved, and processes are tailored to each unique situation.

Program Sessions

Training and Follow-Up

PART 1: A FOUR-DAY ONSITE SEMINAR (JUNE 16-19, 2025)

1. MONDAY: (arrival in afternoon, dinner, opening session) Exploring Church Documents with Facilitated Discussion.
2. TUESDAY: Supervision/Assessing Ministry.
3. WEDNESDAY: Teaching and Evaluating Homilies/The Final Evaluation.
4. THURSDAY: Overview/Transistion into the Zoom Series (departure after lunch).

PART 2: SUPERVISION/ACCOMPANIMENT FOLLOW-UP

(Four Zoom Sessions)

August 2025

1. Supervising. *Zoom Meeting 1*
2. Evaluating Ministry. *Zoom Meeting 2*

September 2025

3. Evaluating homilies. *Zoom Meeting 1*
4. Final written evaluation. *Zoom Meeting 2*

PART 3: PREPARING FOR THE SYNTHESIS STAGE

(Four Zoom Sessions)

October 2025

1. Implementing a parish-based program of formation, pastoral ministry, entry into the diocese. *Zoom Meeting 1*
2. Individual session with a priest-mentor/formator in seminary (on supervising/accompanying). *Zoom Meeting 2*

November 2025

3. Individual session with a priest-mentor/formator in seminary (on evaluations). *Zoom Meeting 1*
4. Conclusion, Final Q&A with Transition to Ongoing Consultation/ Support. *Zoom Meeting 2*

PART 4: ONGOING ACCOMPANIMENT

(Resourcing and Consultation)

Resources

Each participant will receive and have access to a variety of both print and digital resources, articles, sample forms, etc. concerning all content areas.

Consultation/Support

Each pastor will have access to ongoing support and consultation with a formation specialist as they exercise their ministry of accompaniment supervision for Vocational Synthesis.

Benchmarks for Transitional Deacons

Outcomes of the Vocational Synthesis Stage

> *The goal [of the Vocational Synthesis stage] is not so much acquiring new pastoral skills—though these certainly will be gained—but more adjusting well to the life of ministry before advancing to priestly ordination. It is about the deacon's readiness to assume the duties of full-time priestly ministry.*
>
> [*Program of Priestly Formation* (6th edition), #138]

PPF 6 Benchmark Statements by Dimension of Formation

Human Formation

- "to be a bridge, not an obstacle, to pastoral ministry" [#200]
- to exercise healthy habits and good stewardship over his life of prayer, exercise, health care, use of technology, etc. [*cf.* #201]

Spiritual Formation

- to maintain "the solid foundations of prayer, discernment and solitude as he moves to full-time ministry in the parish" [#243]
- to continue "growth in the pursuit of holiness" and demonstrate "an obedient heart" [*cf.* #244]
- "to continue his growth in the virtue of chastity and strengthen his celibate commitment" [#245]

Intellectual Formation

- to"demonstrate a commitment to continued growth in intellectual formation" [#294]

Pastoral Formation

- to demonstrate pastoral knowledge [cf. #379]
- to demonstrate pastoral skills (*e.g.*, craft/deliver homilies, plan/execute pastoral projects, marriage preparation, etc.) [*cf.* #380]
- to demonstrate personal discernment [#381]
- to demonstrate pastoral discernment [#382]
- to "desire to make a gift of his life for his people...imitation of Christ, the Good Shepherd." [#383]
- to make "public expression of his free, conscious, and definitive intention for the priesthood" [#384]

Team

Deacon Edward J. McCormack, Ph.D.
Director of Human Formation
St. Mary's Seminary & University

Deacon Ed McCormack, a theology teacher since 1983, began formation work in 1999 as a theologian and formation advisor. With his Ph.D. in Systematic Theology, he taught in that area for years but gradually moved into Christian Spirituality with an emphasis on Ignatian Spirituality.

Since 2013, Dcn. McCormack has served as a permanent Deacon for the Archdiocese of Washington with a focus on regular preaching and adult faith formation. Concurrently, he has devoted his professional life to formation advising, publishing the first book on the subject while working with almost 190 seminarians as their formation advisor. During those years, he discovered how foundational human formation was for fruitful priestly ministry.

Ms. Leelamma Sebastian, M.A., M.S.
Director of Pastoral Programs
St. Mary's Seminary & University

Leelamma Sebastian, originally from Kerala, India, has lived most of her life in California and Hawaii. She has two adult daughters who live and work in the San Francisco Bay area.

Leelamma holds master's degrees in Counseling Psychology and Organizational Leadership. She has extensive leadership experience in various Catholic contexts, and was previously Asociate Director of the Pastoral Year Internship at St. Patrick's Seminary in Menlo Park, California.

Mrs. Patricia LeNoir, M.A.
Interim Director of Planning, Administration, and Promotion
Center for Continuing Formation
St. Mary's Seminary & University

Pat is the Interim Director of Planning, Administration, and Promotion for the Center for Continuing Formation and the Director of Youth Theological Studies at St. Mary's Seminary & University. Pat holds an M.A. in Liturgical Studies from The Catholic University of America. She has served in the Catholic Church as a lay women for over 55 years, working in liturgy, catechesis, evangelization, social action, clergy services, and education. She has served in schools, parishes, diocesan senior administration, seminaries, and as a consultant, with special dedication to the Ongoing Formation of Priests.

Rev. Steven Roth, M.S., S.T.L.
Director of Vocations
Archdiocese of Baltimore

Fr. Steven P. Roth was born in Pittston, PA. He earned a Master's degree in Community Counseling from the University of Scranton. His Clinical work focused on cognitive and behavioral issues, and he taught at the University of Scranton and Marywood University.

Fr. Roth began his studies at St. Mary's Seminary & University for the Archdiocese of Baltimore in 2008, and was ordained in 2012. He served as Parochial Vicar, Pastor, and Director of Vocations.

In 2024, Fr. Roth was appointed Associate Vicar for Clergy by Archbishop William E. Lori.

FAQs

Why create this program?

With the renewed vision of the final stage of priestly formation for transitional deacons in the PPF6, pastor-supervisors need refocused skills of accompaniment, evaluation, and supervision.

Participation in this program and as a mentor in the vocational synthesis stage will help pastors contribute to the future of the diocese and grow key skills needed for parish priestly ministry.

How is this different from accompanying a seminarian during pastoral year?

In this stage of formation, you will be accompanying and evaluating an ordained deacon who is moving towards ordination for the priesthood. He will have completed far more of the formation program than the seminarian on pastoral year and will be engaged in diaconal ministries and the adjustment to leaving seminary and living in the diocese as a deacon.

He will need someone to listen to him, offer pastoral feedback, feedback on his preaching, and evaluate him as he moves towards priesthood.

Can a staff person be part of the training?

Yes and we encourage this. A staff person from the parish can learn about the program and handle many of the administrative features of the vocational synthesis stage allowing the pastor to focus on accompaniment and formation.

What is the time commitment?

Eight Zoom sessions and a four-day in person training.

How will this program benefit my priestly ministry?

Three immediate skills the program offers that will benefit your priestly ministry are the skill of accompaniment, listening skills, and the skill of evaluating preaching that will improve your own preaching.

What are the key skills I will learn?

As mentioned above, these will include accompaniment, how to get to know a seminarian, listening skills, the skill of assessing preaching, writing evaluations, asking insightful questions.

Will there be training in writing an evaluation?

Yes. We will offer a process that leads to writing evaluations and a model for writing them.

Will there be ongoing support and resources after the program is completed?

Yes, the Center will offer resources and support for all pastors who complete the program. This will include books, articles, and one-on-one support.

Registration / Costs / Contacts

Register for the Program

Registration is completed online for all participants. Costs can securely be paid online with credit/debit cards. While payment at the time of registration is preferred, participants can also choose to be invoiced.

Register at stmarys.edu/center/supervising-vocsynthesis.

Costs

$ 4,500.00—per person for the full program

Costs are all inclusive:

- For the onsite seminar—meals, lodging, socials, snacks, meeting costs, and access to all facilities and services (*e.g.*, the fitness center, Knott Library, chapels, and grounds).
- For the follow-up online (Zoom) sessions.
- For all resources, both print handouts and electronic/digital materials.
- For all ongoing consultation contact and support post-seminar and online sessions.

Contact

For further program information—or to setup an online information session with Team member(s), contact
Patricia LeNoir *(*plenoir@stmarys.edu | 410-864-3676*).*

For registration information, contact
Colette Zyambo *(*czyambo@stmarys.edu | 410-864-4102*).*

Up-to-date information on the program, as well as online registration, is available on the dedicated webpage:
stmarys.edu/center/supervising-vocsynthesis

Facilities and Services

When you come to a program or retreat at St. Mary's Center for Continuing Formation you enjoy...

- A forty-acre campus with paths, mature trees, and a Marian grotto.
- Two chapels and an oratory for prayer and worship.
- Hospitality areas for networking and socials.
- Hotel-quality guest rooms, each with a private bath, climate control, study area, phone, voice-mail, and Wi-Fi.
- A state-of-the-art conference room.
- St. Mary's Knott library, including the Raymond Brown collection, the John Paul II Center, and the largest collection of resources for theological inquiry in the Baltimore area.
- The Associated Archives that comprise the combined archives of St. Mary's Seminary & University, the U.S. Province of the Society of St. Sulpice, and the Archdiocese of Baltimore (the latter including some of the earliest experiences of Catholics in the United States).
- A fully equiped fitness center.
- Outstanding food service.
- A community of faculty, formators, staff, and seminarians renowned for their hospitality and service.

a **NEW VERSION** *of the* Program for Priestly Formation *(6th edition)*

CALLS FOR

a **RENEWED VISION** *of the final stage of preparation for the priesthood*

WHICH REQUIRES

a **REFOCUSED SET OF SKILLS and UNDERSTANDING** *for pastor-supervisors*

INSPIRING

a **CREATIVE PROGRAM** *from The Center for Continuing Formation.*

Learn more at:
stmarys.edu/center/supervising-vocsynthesis

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