

CHRIST THE KING SEMINARY

**THEOLOGICAL  
FIELD EDUCATION  
HANDBOOK**



AN INTERDIOCESAN GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND PASTORAL MINISTRY



# INTRODUCTION

The Second Vatican Council affirmed that each of the baptized is called to proclaim and help bring about God's reign in the world. (LG 4) Those who lead and teach the baptized to live that mission are themselves educated, which includes supervised pastoral education. Christ the King Seminary provides theological field education that responds to Pope John Paul II's words, "To set high standards, means both to provide a thorough basic training and to keep it constantly updated. This is a fundamental duty, in order to ensure qualified personnel for the Church's mission." (Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, *Guide for Catechists* – Washington, DC: USCCB, 1993, no. 19)

Field Education at CKS follows the standards of its accrediting bodies: the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) and Middle States Association (MSA) and the formation priorities of The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) outlined in *Program of Priestly Formation, 5th edition*; *Directory for the Ministry & Life of Permanent Deacons*; and *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*.

In Part I of this handbook are found the goals and objectives, components and requirements of field education. Part II outlines field education course credit, the placement process and field education components. Part III highlights certain priorities related specifically to the life and ministry of the priest, the deacon, and the lay minister. Part IV focuses on outcomes assessed, and Part V on expectations of supervision. Part VI lists examples of ministries and placements.

Parish-based formation for the presbyterate in summers and pastoral year are described elsewhere.

## FIELD EDUCATION AS PASTORAL FORMATION

Theological field education enables students to experience pastoral situations, and provides "an initial and gradual experience of ministry" which "open(s) their mind and heart to the missionary dimension of the church's life." (*Pastores Dabo Vobis* 58) On-site supervision, as well as on-campus peer-group theological reflection assists the student to increasingly recognize, adopt, identify with and commit to the values and standards of the profession, as well as commit to ongoing growth in ministry.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops emphasizes field education in its documents not only for priesthood, but for lay and deacon ministerial formation as well. "For many lay ecclesial ministers who come to formation programs with much ministry experience, ...it does not diminish the importance of continuing to develop all areas of formation" (*Co-workers* p. 51) Pope John Paul II's statement, quoted in the *Guide for Catechists*, "To set high standards, means both to provide a thorough basic training and to keep it constantly updated. This is a fundamental duty, in order to ensure qualified personnel for the Church's mission."

# I. GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THEOLOGICAL FIELD EDUCATION

The Goal of Theological Field Education is to foster pastoral and personal integration of theology, and develop knowledge, attitudes and skills to effectively minister in the Church.

The objectives:

1. Provide structured, supervised pastoral experiences that 1) teach and foster identification with and commitment to gospel mission; 2) develop personal identity as a minister; and 3) build a sense of structure for, and habit of accountability.
2. Introduce students to a range of settings and ministries, provide the knowledge for making referrals, encourage zeal to promote ministry by the lay apostolate in various settings, and promote insight and skill to supervise in ministry settings.
3. Teach, practice and encourage a habit of theological reflection.

# II. FIELD EDUCATION CREDIT, THE PLACEMENT PROCESS AND COURSE COMPONENTS

## CREDIT

Three credits are earned per semester, through successful completion of supervised ministry (one day per week for the 14-week semester) and theological reflection. Each placement includes two semesters of supervised ministry in the field, and theological reflection on campus.

## PRE-REQUISITES

- ◆ full matriculated status
- ◆ 21 credits of foundational theology including Theology and Methodology of Christian Ministry
- ◆ completion of or enrollment in a Pastoral Counseling course
- ◆ signing and submitting of the Diocesan Code of Conduct
- ◆ completion of diocesan training on abuse reporting and prevention.

Students matriculated in the program of Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry (M.A.P.M.) earn six credits in field education, usually in one placement. Students matriculated in the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) I or II earn twelve credits in theological field education in two distinct placements. The first placement is typically in the second year of theological study, after completing 24-30 academic credits, and the second placement is during the equivalent of the third year of theological study.

## PROCESS FOR AN INDIVIDUAL STUDENT

1. Student contacts field education director (“director”) Prior to completion of all pre-requisites, and no later than February for summer and fall placement, or October for spring placement, the student requests an individual meeting with the director. They review the individual student’s experience, knowledge and skills for ministry, and insights from available sources such as peer and self-assessment, pastoral evaluations, and the Profile of Ministry. Taking into account the student’s learning goals and needs and class and work schedule, the director contacts potential supervisor(s) to determine feasible placement options, and recommends one or more supervisor(s) for the student to contact. Only then does the student contact these individuals, and set appointments to interview with them to discuss the feasibility of the placement. (See next item.)
2. Interview of potential supervisor with student At this meeting, the supervisor describes the placement and explores with the student his/her compatibility of goals and schedule for ministry and supervision, after which the student informs the director of whether the student and supervisor agree that this placement is feasible. Once the director, student and supervisor concur on a placement, the student registers for the appropriate field education course with the Academic Office.
3. Syllabus, and Learning Agreement form The student secures a course syllabus from the instructor (director), studies the syllabus, and follows it to establish an initial schedule and a meeting with the supervisor to prepare a Field Education Learning Agreement.
4. The Learning Agreement The learning agreement is developed by reviewing student goals, tailoring learning goals appropriate to the particular ministry and setting, and naming distinct objectives to reach overall goals. Objectives are behaviors that are, given the student’s prior experience and training, appropriate and attainable through this assignment. Specific tasks are noted to reach objectives. This agreement becomes a guide for the student and supervisor, with clear expectations and a plan to achieve goals.
5. The supervised ministry The student is guided into ministry experiences. The tasks are spelled out in the learning agreement and the job description is understood. The student responds to ever-expanding opportunities to see him/herself as a ministerial leader.
6. Ministry is active service, not second-hand or limited to observation. The student acts in the role of minister, doing what the situation requires.
7. Theological Reflection Both in regularly-scheduled site-based supervisory meetings, and in faculty- moderated student group on campus, the student reflects on particular ministerial events, and identifies the faith assumptions and convictions underlying both the event and the ministerial response. Theological reflection is an opportunity for personal integration. The process helps to clarify motivations, and discern directions for life and ministry. As noted in PPF 239, The student returns “to the ministry or pastoral situation, but now with more knowledge and ability and a better inner sense of direction because of an enriched spiritual life and a more deeply grounded sense of priestly identity.”

### III. THE CHURCH'S EXPECTATIONS OF FIELD EDUCATION

The Church identifies the “location” of ministry that distinguishes ordained and lay vocations. For priesthood candidates, formation is for a particular presbyterate. Lay ecclesial ministers are formed for particular ministries. Permanent deacon candidates are focused on ministries of word, table, and primarily charity – often a particular charity. Throughout this section are expectations directed to one or the other, but we should remember that many of the following qualities and skills are expected of all preparing to minister.

As the Second Vatican Council notes: “The church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel so that in a language intelligible to every generation she can respond to the perennial questions which people ask about this present life and the life to come, and about the relationship of the one to the other. We must therefore recognize and understand the world in which we live, its expectations, its longings and its often dramatic characteristics.” (GS 4) Our ministerial response leads to the encounter with Christ among us. As Pope Francis, notes, “How many men and women of faith have found mediators of light in those who suffer!” (*Lumen Fidei*, 57)

The Council says of graduate level seminary education that “The whole training of the students should have as its object to make them true shepherds of souls after the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, teacher, priest and shepherd.” “The Council text insists upon the coordination of the different aspects of human, spiritual and intellectual formation. At the same time it stresses that they are all directed to a specific pastoral end.” Like all other branches of formation, pastoral formation develops by means of mature reflection and practical application. Knowledge, attitude and skills are the focus, with students and supervisors addressing growth in specific theological, professional, and personal areas. Noting that a pastoral concern “should characterize every feature of the students’ training”, the goal of formation for priesthood “as well as for all ministries in the Church” is to prepare individuals to “assume the pastoral duties which their service to the community requires.” (OT 19, PDV 57-59)

#### PRESBYTERAL FORMATION

Following the 1980 Synod of Bishops, Pope John Paul II issued his Apostolic Exhortation, “I will give you shepherds” (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*) which gave clear direction for the preparation of seminarians for priesthood. In pastoral formation, “The seminary which educates must seek really and truly to initiate the candidate into the sensitivity of being a shepherd, in the conscious and mature assumption of his responsibilities, in the interior habit of evaluating problems and establishing priorities and looking for solutions on the basis of honest motivations of faith and according to the theological demands inherent in pastoral work.” (PDV 58)

The Pope states: “Thanks to an initial and gradual experience of ministry, future priests will be able to be inserted into the living pastoral tradition of their particular church...They will get practice in some initial forms of cooperation with one another and with the priests alongside whom they will be sent to work.

These priests have a considerably important role, in union with the seminary program, in showing the candidates how they should go about pastoral work. When it comes to choosing places and services in which candidates can obtain their pastoral experience, the parish should be given particular importance, for it is a living cell of local and specialized pastoral work in which they will find themselves faced with the kind of problems they will meet in their future ministry.” (PDV 58)

Therefore, in addition to specialized placements for academic credit, seminarians gain considerable experience in non-credit extended parish assignments during summers and the Pastoral Year.

As part of credit-earning placements, the church recommends to seminarians such ministries as “visits to the sick; caring for immigrants, refugees and nomads; and various social works which can be expressions of charitable zeal. Specifically, the Synod of Bishops states: ‘The priest must be a witness of the charity of Christ himself who “went about doing good.” (Acts 10:38) He must also be a visible sign of the solicitude of the church who is mother and teacher. And given that man today is affected by so many hardships, especially those who are sunk in inhuman poverty, blind violence and unjust power, it is necessary that the man of God who is to be equipped for every good work (cf. 2 Tim. 3:17) should defend the rights and dignity of man.” (PDV 57) “Above all it is necessary that he be able to teach and support the laity in their vocation to be present in and to transform the world with the light of the Gospel, by recognizing this task of theirs and showing respect for it. (PDV 59)

## **PERMANENT DEACON FORMATION**

In the case of pastoral formation for the permanent diaconate, “The National Directory encourages candidates to experience “a variety of different settings to gain pastoral experience during their formation, but with a special emphasis on non-parish sites. Pastoral formation for the deacon, it urges, should focus on the diakonia, or service of the Word, the liturgy, charity, and justice.” (Ann Garrido, *Supervising a Ministry Student*, p. 172)

“In addition to identifying and developing the gifts already at work, the pastoral dimension of formation should aim at helping the participant to discover talents, perhaps unrecognized, and to develop the skills...” (Directory, 128) Deacon formation guidelines call for “Outreach through relationship-building and witness” together with “preaching especially in the marketplace and at home, and bearing witness to the Gospel with one’s whole life.” Theological field education helps deacon candidates learn to make known God’s presence and discern God’s will. Skills develop in such areas as social analysis, interreligious dialogue, direct service, making referrals, employment of various forms of communication, as well as activities directed to serve social justice and special populations who may be marginalized or underserved. Attitudes are demonstrated through genuineness, empathy, respect, and sensitivity to cultural diversity (Directory 131)

Candidates should be assessed regarding their ability to lead prayer, demonstrate moral leadership, and “form others in a convincing, sound manner” (Directory 220) This includes peer and self- evaluation (Directory 221) especially through theological reflection.

## LAY MINSTER FORMATION

*Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord* proclaims that “The same God who called Priscilla and Aquila to work with Paul in the first century calls thousands of men and women to minister in our Church in this twenty-first century.” (*Co-Workers* p. 66) As Pope John Paul II noted in *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, “The program already exists: it is the plan found in the Gospel and in the living tradition, it is the same as ever. Ultimately, it has its center in Christ himself, who is to be known, loved and imitated, so that in him we may live the life of the Trinity, and with him transform history until its fulfillment in the heavenly Jerusalem. This is a program which does not change with shifts of times and cultures, even though it takes account of time and culture for the sake of true dialogue and effective communication. This program for all times is our program for the Third Millennium...(that)it must be translated into pastoral initiatives adapted to the circumstances of each community. (*Co-Workers*, p.66)

The role and mission of the Christian family guides lay ecclesial ministers. Lay ministers attend to the social factors impinging on responsible parenthood, family life, the various contemporary forms of family configuration, and families within diverse cultural communities. “Lay ecclesial ministers need to be prepared to guide others through periods of change and conflict pastorally and effectively.” (*Co-Workers*, p. 50) Leadership in ministry requires being able to articulate the mission, help bring people into relationship with God, celebrate their life as part of the reign of God, and foster community. Leaders learn to assemble a team, maintain it, learn the elements of authentic collaboration, and develop skills in conflict management that bring people into active participation with one another.

*Co-Workers* calls for strengths in areas also identified for ordained ministry, such as basic counseling skills, active and compassionate listening, spiritual companionship, patient presence, prudent advice, and making referrals. Likewise language and cultural knowledge relevant to their ministries is encouraged. (*Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity*, USCCB, 37) Additional pastoral priorities are good stewardship, short- and long-range planning based on systematic analysis and theological reflection, personnel and human resource skills, budget development and management, planning and conducting meetings, and an ability to work with diocesan and parish systems and structures. Leadership and organizational development are to be cultivated on the example of Jesus’ servant leadership. Importantly, lay ecclesial ministers should know the code of ethics applicable for their ministry, abide by it, and contribute to its ongoing refinement.

## IV. SPECIFIC OUTCOMES SOUGHT

Through parish and field education experiences, M.Div. and M.P.M. students gain knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable them to be effective ministers in their particular roles. The following are assessed:

### THEOLOGICAL

1. Demonstrates personal of Gospel values and challenges (ie. dignity, respect, charity, justice, forgiveness, self-giving, healing, simplicity, trust, peace)
2. Can discuss issues of this ministry in terms of the above virtues and gifts
3. Demonstrates knowledge of Scripture and Doctrine, ie. Trinity; Christ; Church; Grace; Sin; Sacraments; Eschatology; Mortality; Other
4. Is aware of and sensitive to different faith perspectives
5. Brings prayer into ministerial and meeting situations
6. Recognizes the church's mission as multi-faceted, intercultural and multicultural
7. Has a sense of whole church in each situation
8. Interprets and applies principles of Canon Law with pastoral sensitivity and wisdom

### PERSONAL

1. Acknowledges both personal strengths and challenges
2. Is adequately self-confident
3. Listens attentively
4. Values and practices ministry of presence
5. Accurately interprets communication
6. Communicates well with others in authority
7. Communicates effectively with supervisor
8. Can recognize and wrestle with complex or contradictory messages
9. Evidences both respect and enthusiasm
10. Doesn't let mood determine his/her actions
11. Stays with a task, is guided by a sense of commitment
12. Respect other persons or values; willing to sacrifice own preferences
13. Works as a member of a team, committee, or staff
14. Is reliably present and available
15. Is flexible
16. Is generous with time and talents

## PASTORAL

1. Demonstrates a heart for and commitment to marginalized constituencies such as those who are poor, oppressed, youth, elderly, sick and dying, imprisoned
2. Recognizes and respects own cultural influences
3. Sets priorities; communicates concerns
4. Takes responsibility for actions
5. Communicates effectively with persons served in ministry
6. Recognizes, appreciates, and values collegial relationships
7. Respects confidentiality
8. Understands and honors the responsibilities related to protecting the vulnerable and reporting suspected abuse
9. Is able to work effectively within ecumenical, interfaith, and diverse social, educational, language and cultural contexts
10. Integrates; readily draws on more than one source to discern and guide appropriate ministerial action
11. Demonstrates prudential judgment
12. Demonstrates ongoing growth and development
13. Is accountable; reliably completes work
14. Presents oneself appropriately in dress and manner
15. Can lead public prayer in a competent, poised, prayerful and pastorally sensitive manner
16. Preaches or offers reflection that is scripturally and theologically sound, and pastorally applicabl.
17. Is a servant leader, demonstrates commitment, humility, openness, ability to engage and enable others to contribute their gifts
18. Works collaboratively; recognizes appropriate goals and practices
19. Is a collaborative leader who identifies and calls forth the gifts of all, does not discriminate
20. Can make and accept difficult decisions, set limits. Creatively and effectively works through situations of conflict
21. Can design, implement, and assess the given area of ministry
22. Can reflect theologically in a systematic, critical and constructive way on the content and processes of this area of ministry

## V. SUPERVISION

For “guided pastoral practice... The role of the mentor or supervisor is essential here, guiding the learner to reflect upon, understand, and grow from the lived experience of ministry. ...Theological reflection upon such ministry practice makes possible ‘a general and integral process of constant growth, deepening each of the aspects of formation- human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral-as well as ensuring their active and harmonious integration, based on pastoral charity and in reference to it.’ (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, no 71)

“....Competent, objective, and supportive supervisors will be required in order to achieve these goals. The diocesan Church must be committed to the (selection and) preparation of skillful...supervisors who possess pastoral experience, (training)...in the art of supervision (the ability to assist) mature men with (diverse) experiences...” (National Directory 219) “Supervision, theological reflection, and evaluation are necessary components of an effective pastoral program”. (*PPF* 248) Supervision is an extension of the seminary’s academic and pastoral programs.

“Pastoral formation depends in great measure on the quality of supervision. To serve as a supervisor of seminarians (ministry students) calls for experience, competence, and generosity. When onsite pastoral formation is seen as an integral part of priestly formation, then pastoral staffs must accept a special responsibility in the name of the Church for the direction and help they provide to seminarians. These priests and those associated with them must have certain qualities that include loyal commitment to priestly formation, patience, honesty, an almost instinctive way of thinking theologically in pastoral situations, and a habit of prayer that permeates the ministry.” (*PPF* 240)

### WHAT SUPERVISION IS AND DOES

1. Provides a structure for engaging in ministry – the supervisor challenges the student to take initiative and risks in order to learn, and helps the student recognize his/her potential. The supervisor helps the student reflect on the experience, and provides feedback, including recognizing achievement which encourages self confidence.
2. Is a process by which the supervisor helps the student find meanings in the activity that contribute to learning and competence – it calls both to authenticity.
3. Is a process of dialogue at regular intervals (one hour every week or every two weeks) between supervisor and student in which they commit themselves to reflect upon concrete processes of ministry in which the student is engaged in order to focus available resources upon the student’s personal development in a specific role in ministry – in other words, to develop competence.
4. Is a support system for the enrichment of personhood and to assist in the performance of ministry – it implies relationships (student, supervisor, persons served, others), goals, and structures (institution involved, administration, personnel, individuals served).
5. Is a relationship of trust in which the supervisor challenges the student to take initiative and risks in order to learn, helps the student recognize his/her potential, and conveys recognition of achievement which encourages self-confidence.

## QUALITIES OF A SUPERVISOR

“Onsite supervisors should be carefully selected with an eye to their dedication to the Church and respect for the priesthood. They should be taught the skills of pastoral supervision and evaluation. In choosing pastoral internships and summer placements and their supervisors, bishops and vocation personnel should consider carefully the particular needs of individual seminarians and the available time and supervisory skills of the supervisors. (PPF 249)

The supervisor:

1. Demonstrates enthusiasm for and commitment to formation of future ministers through field education
2. Has training and credentials appropriate to their profession
3. Stays current in their profession through ongoing educational and professional activities
4. Has sufficient length of services within the ministry site to be able to freely commit time to work with the student

Ideally the supervisor also has prior training in supervision, experience in supervision and theological reflection, and background in Church Tradition and Sacred Scripture

## DUTIES OF A SUPERVISOR

1. Gains organizational support for the placement
2. Identifies a place (desk, computer, phone as needed) for the student to work
3. Identifies the goals of learning in this setting
4. Identifies the learning and growth needs along with the strengths of the student
5. Prepares the learning agreement with the student
6. Attends semi-annual supervisors’ meetings and such field education events as the start-of-year blessing
7. Informs the student of and provides written materials describing the placement’s mission, history, services, ministerial goals, professional standards of service, workplace policies and protocol- such as those pertaining to security and health clearances
8. Describes policies related to handling of personal information, protecting rights of clients, students, and workers, reporting violations of policies and procedures, and reporting or addressing concerns
9. Informs student and other staff of the functions and duties of the student in relationship to others
10. Introduces the student to ministry situations
11. Participates in individual supervision with an agreed-upon agenda, encourage the habit of journaling, and partner in theological reflection
12. Shares ongoing assessment of student with the student
13. Communicates with the director with questions and concerns, and updates student progress
14. Hosts a site visit meeting each semester attended by the director, student and supervisor once each semester
15. Seeks to fulfill the recommendation that “In addition to onsite supervisors, others collaborating in the various ministries, as well as those served, should be asked to participate in the evaluation of seminarians in ministry.” PPF 250
16. Formally assesses the student’s progress by preparing an evaluation form provided by the seminary at the end

of each semester, which is shared and discussed with the student, who likewise is responsible for preparing and sharing a self-assessment with the supervisor

17. Signs both copies and keeps a copies before submitting a copy to the director, who is responsible for grading the student

## VI. EXAMPLES OF MINISTRIES AND PLACEMENTS

We conclude this handbook with a partial list of past or present ministerial settings used for field education assignments. Not all are available continually nor will necessarily serve a given student's need.

### **Parish-based ministries**

St. Ambrose, Buffalo, Religious Ed.; Confirmation  
St. Christopher, Tonawanda, Religious Ed.  
St. Gregory, Amherst, various ministries  
St. Joseph University, Buffalo, RCIA  
St. John Vianney, Religious Ed.  
Our Lady of Hope, Buffalo, Religious Ed.

### **Diocesan Ministry**

Mental Health day services, community pantries, public policy advocacy – Catholic Charities  
Youth ministry – with parishes  
Family Life ministry

### **End of Life care**

Crossroads House, Batavia  
Home Health Care and Hospice  
Hospice of Chautauqua County

### **Outreach, ministry to immigrants, migrants**

Catholic Charities Refugee Resettlement  
Migrant farm workers ministry, Albion  
VIVE, Buffalo

### **Service to persons in poverty**

Response to Love Center, Buffalo  
Genesee-Orleans Ministry of Concern

## **Prison ministry**

Peaceprints, Prison Ministry

Various correctional facilities in WNY

## **High School Campus Ministry and Religious Education**

St. Joseph Collegiate Institute

NativityMiguel Middle School of Buffalo

Youth Residential Ministry

Franciscan Center, Buffalo

Gateway-Longview, Williamsville

## **Interfaith service, education, organizing, advocacy**

Network of Religious Communities

VOICE Buffalo

## **Health Care**

Most local hospitals

Father Baker Manor

## **Summer intensive immersion practicum followed by a two-semester, ½ day placement**

1. Central City Practicum (PS 855) – 3 credits. Group activities: two to three days of events prior, 10 days live-in immersion in summer, and two days post-immersion theological reflection
2. Rural Practicum (PS 858) – 3 credits. Similar to Central City Practicum, except based in rural environment which involves significant traveling for living and ministry within a rural area in the Diocese

## **Clinical Pastoral Education**

Clinical Pastoral Education is an intensive ministerial learning experience involving supervisors with a group of students which includes instruction, supervision, ministry and group work. The Program of Priestly Formation indicates its use in many seminaries. This diocesan requirement is not credit-bearing, and is usually fulfilled as a summer assignment.

Those not preparing for ordained priesthood who are students in the M.Div. II or MAPM may ordinarily take one unit of CPE may take one unit of CPE to earn six academic credits in field education. A similarly accredited training program for campus ministers may also be applied for credit. A partial reduction of tuition is provided. See the director for details.