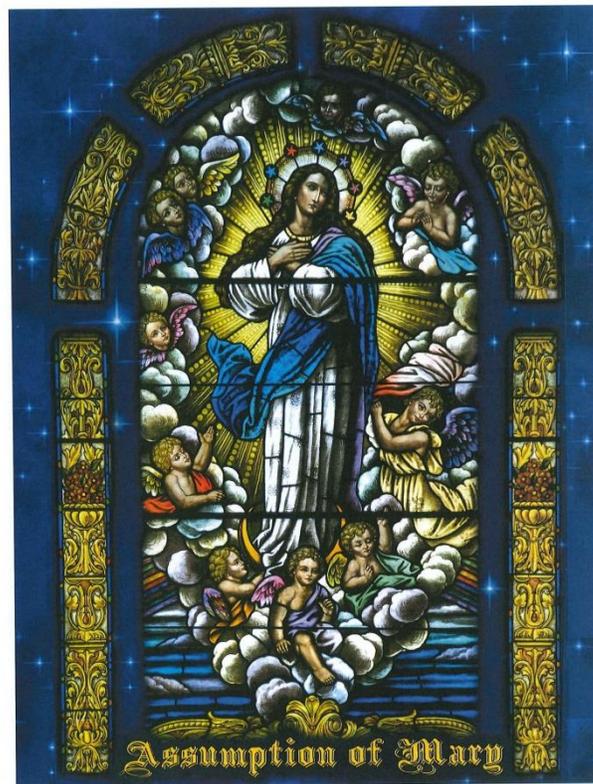


# Assumption Seminary



## ***COMMUNITY RULE OF LIFE***

*August 2017*



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# List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

GPA	Grade point average
MACC	Mexican American Catholic College
OST	Oblate School of Theology
PDV	Pastores Dabo Vobis
PPF	Program of Priestly Formation
TFE	Theological Field Education
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
UIW	University of the Incarnate Word
USCCB	United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

# *Assumption Seminary*

## *Mission*

*Assumption Seminary is a bilingual and multicultural community of priestly formation. This seminary exists for the personal, spiritual, theological and ministerial preparation of diocesan seminarians for the Roman Catholic Church.*

*Assumption Seminary's goal is to enable Christ-centered men to grow and develop as collaborative and culturally sensitive pastoral leaders committed to the Gospel.*

*"Go out to the whole world;  
proclaim the Good News to all creation."*

*Mark 16:15*

## *Vision*

*Forming outstanding priests as servant leaders in the image of Christ the Good Shepherd for an evangelizing Church.*

*The seminary is “above all an educational community in progress...established by the Bishop to offer to those called by the Lord to serve as apostles the possibility of re-living the experience of formation which our Lord provided for the Twelve.”<sup>1</sup>*

## SEMINARY COMMUNITY RULE OF LIFE

The essential work of Assumption Seminary takes place in an atmosphere of community where personal growth and character development progress together within a deepening spiritual life. The *Program of Priestly Formation* explains that the seminary community “must be a school of human virtue, of growth in honesty, integrity, intellectual rigor, hard work, and tolerance, where the common good is built with solidarity and discipline—all leavened by humor and healthy enjoyment.”<sup>2</sup> By fulfilling the activities, schedules, and rules of the seminary community, individuals have the opportunity to become more of the person they are called to become for the Lord and His Church. The *PPF* describes the reason for seminary living:

The give-and-take between those who share the priesthood as a common vocation sets the right context for formation. Such interaction provides mutual support, promotes tolerance and fraternal correction, and gives an opportunity for the development of leadership and talent among seminarians. It also can motivate the seminarian to develop a sense of self-sacrifice and a spirit of collaboration. Community also should provide the context in which those qualities necessary for ministerial leadership can be nurtured and demonstrated: “emotional maturity, personal faith, moral integrity, and social concern.”<sup>3</sup>

Christ prepares men to be future priests through the practical details and duties in the seminary community and the faithfulness of each person.

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<sup>1</sup> *PDV*, no. 60

<sup>2</sup> *PPF*, no. 260

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, no. 262

## **Section I. Purpose**

The purpose of this section is to provide guidance and information to the seminarians as it relates to the Community Rule of Life. Assumption Seminary has designed its rule of life in order to provide the men of today with one of the best frameworks within which he can give evidence of his ability to live a healthy lifestyle that includes generous service, good social interaction, and virtuous habits.

## **Section II: Norms, Policies and Procedures**

### **Alcohol**

The storage and consumption of alcohol on the Assumption Seminary campus is strictly forbidden, unless permission is given by a Dorm Father or Resident Faculty Priest. Seminarians are not permitted to consume or store alcoholic beverages in their private rooms.

### **Attendance**

Every seminarian is required to attend and participate in all of the events of the seminary program. An unpermitted absence occurs a seminarian must report it immediately to his Dorm Father and Advisor. In the cases of an unpermitted absence from academic or language class and tutoring a seminarian must also report it immediately to the Director of Studies. In the cases of a pastoral ministry assignment, a seminarian must also report it immediately to the Director of Pastoral Formation.

Events include all those published in the Seminary Calendar and the following:

- Academic classes
- Language classes
- Pastoral Ministry Assignments
- Formation Week and Formation Days
- Community Mass, Liturgies and Prayer
- Rector Conferences and Formation Conferences
- Advising sessions
- Spiritual Direction sessions
- Priestly Formation Groups
- Community Time and Socials
- Community Meetings and Committee Meetings
- Community Service Days Human Growth and Celibate Life Workshops
- Installation Ceremonies
- Retreats
- Days of Prayer
- Liturgical Formation Sessions
- Liturgy Rehearsals
- Work Order

- Other events added to the calendar by the formation faculty
- All graduating students are required to participate in the Commencement Ceremonies of the Mexican American Catholic College and Oblate School of Theology.

### ***Permissions for Excuse***

Seminarians must make a written or email request in advance to obtain permission in order to be excused from any norm or policy stated in the Handbook/Rule of Life, a required seminary event, duty, assignment or class.

- To be excused from a required event, duty or assignment, a seminarian must ask for and obtain permission of his Dorm Father in writing or by email. When permission is granted he must communicate this information to his Formation Advisor and to the person responsible for the activity.
- To be excused from any requirement, norm, or policy stated in the handbook, a seminarian must ask for permission of his Dorm Father in writing or by e-mail. When permission is granted he must communicate this to his Formation Advisor.
- To be excused from academic or language class and tutoring, the seminarian must ask for and obtain permission in writing or by email from his instructor. When permission is granted he must communicate this information to the seminary Director of Studies and his Advisor.
- To be excused from pastoral ministry assignment the seminarian must ask for and obtain permission in writing or by email from his supervisor. When permission is granted he must communicate this information to the seminary Director of Pastoral Formation and his Advisor.

### **Breaks and Free Weekends**

MACC, UIW, OST, and other Catholic institutions of higher learning ordinarily schedule a midterm break.

Pastoral Ministry Assignments must still be fulfilled during free weekends and breaks unless permission has been granted according to policies outlined in the Rule of Life.

When Assumption Seminary schedules a “break” or a “free weekend,” the seminarian may leave campus after he has completed all academic work, pastoral assignments and community activities.

A “free weekend” is meant to be a break from academic studies and a time for relaxation, recreation and reorientation. It is not a time to take a “mini-vacation” and to make extended travel or international travel plans.

Seminarians departing the campus during the break must return to the seminary at the time prescribed in the schedule or at least one day prior to the end of the break. Men with extended travel or international travel itineraries should plan to return one day prior to the end of the break, to allow flexibility should travel plans be disrupted.

## **Curfew**

Curfew is 10:00 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 11:00 p.m. on Friday and Saturday.

- After curfew, seminarians are to be in their rooms or in the common areas of the residence hall. They may be in the library and St. John Hall. They are not to be in different residence halls.
- Should a seminarian be running late, he must inform his Dorm Father as soon as possible by text message or phone call.
- Curfew hours are to be honored during free weekends.

## **Damage or Loss**

A seminarian will be held responsible for damage or loss that he causes to seminary property.

## **Discipline**

Seminarians whose conduct violates the standards of the community at Assumption Seminary, and/or the Archdiocese of San Antonio will be counseled by their Advisor. Consistent violations will be referred to the Vice Rector for discipline, consequences and correction. Such discipline may include a disciplinary warning, formation probation, suspension, or dismissal from the seminary.

In addition, seminarians who are under any unresolved disciplinary action at the seminary will not be advanced or recommended for installation to ministries, called to candidacy, or called to the orders of deacon or presbyter. The seminarian's diocese will be informed in writing by the Rector of the following disciplinary actions along with stipulations that accompany them.

- **Disciplinary Warning** – a written warning given to the seminarian and placed in the seminarian's file. (Example: for 4 unpermitted absences)
- **Formation Probation** – a specified time period during which the seminarian will be evaluated further.
- **Suspension** – a specified time period during which a seminarian is not permitted to attend Assumption Seminary
- **Dismissal** – the termination of a seminarian's relationship with Assumption Seminary.

## **Dismissal Procedures**

A seminarian who has been dismissed from the seminary must:

- Obtain agreement from the Rector on an official withdrawal date.
- Clean out his room and return all keys and seminary property, including books and other supplies, by the withdrawal date.
- Fulfill all the requirements for withdrawal from the academic institutions in which he is enrolled.
- Notify the registrar of his academic institution(s) of his dismissal.
- Fulfill the obligations listed in the Guidelines for Housing and Building Use.

In addition, the Rector will follow the directives from the USCCB:

If [a former seminarian] applies to a program of priestly formation in the future, relevant information will be communicated to the diocesan bishop, major superior, and if necessary, the seminary rector, who is responsible for admission. If an applicant has been dismissed from a program of priestly formation or from an institute of consecrated life or a society of apostolic life, no subsequent application will be considered in the two years following such dismissal. If the departure was other than a dismissal, sufficient time should be allotted to evaluate carefully his application and background.<sup>4</sup>

## **Dress Code**

The dress code varies according to formation level, to academic institutions and pastoral placements.

### *Deacons and Theologians*

- **Mass, Morning and Evening Prayer:** Clerics (clergy shirt with roman collar.) Unless otherwise indicated, casual attire is permitted at Saturday Mass.
- **Class:** Clerics.
- **Friday programs and Retreats:** Nice slacks and collared shirts or nice sweater. No blue jeans.
- **Pastoral ministry assignment:** The dress code for Theologians is guided by the policies for Theological Field Education at OST, the particular circumstances of the site and the seminary's Director of Pastoral Formation.

### *Pre-Theologians*

- **Mass, Morning and Evening Prayer:** Nice slacks and shirt with collar. No blue jeans. Unless otherwise indicated, casual attire is permitted at Saturday Mass.
- **Class and Friday programs:** Nice slacks and collared shirt or nice sweater. No blue jeans.
- **Pastoral ministry assignment:** The dress code is guided by the particular circumstances of the site and by the seminary's Director of Pastoral Formation.

### *Collegians*

- **Mass, Morning and Evening Prayer:** Nice slacks and shirt with collar. No blue jeans. Unless otherwise indicated, casual attire is permitted at Saturday Mass.
- **Class and Friday programs:** Nice slacks and collared shirt or nice sweater. No blue jeans.
- **Pastoral ministry assignment:** The dress code is guided by the particular circumstances of the site and by the seminary's Director of Pastoral Formation.

For other seminary events, the seminary faculty will announce the dress code in a timely fashion.

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<sup>4</sup> PPF, Norms Concerning Applications for Priestly Formation from Those Previously Enrolled in a Formation Program, "Norms for Evaluation of Applications in These Cases," Nos. 1, 2.

## **Emergency/Accident or Medical Illness**

In case of an emergency or accident, the incident should be reported immediately to his designated seminary superior or to a member of the resident seminary faculty. If unable to contact any of the resident faculty, please call the Rector on his cell phone.

Seminarians are authorized to call 911 or proceed to a hospital emergency room in case of a major medical emergency.

## **Exiting or Withdrawing from the Seminary**

Considering withdrawal from a Seminary is not an unusual part of a seminarian's personal growth. It can be a normal part of personal discernment. Such discernment should take place over a period of time and include discussion with persons from the external forum. This includes the vocation director/diocese, seminary advisor and Rector.

### ***Standard Exit***

When a seminarian completes his course of studies and period of formation at Assumption Seminary, he must:

- Fulfill all the requirements for exit from the relevant academic institutions in which he is enrolled.
- Fulfill the obligations listed in the Guidelines for Housing and Building Use.

### ***Voluntary Withdrawal***

A seminarian who decides to withdraw from the seminary must:

- Submit a personal letter to his Bishop and/or Vocation Director stating his reason for leaving seminary formation.
- Submit a personal letter to the Rector.
- Obtain agreement from the Rector on an official withdrawal date.
- Fulfill all the requirements for withdrawal from the relevant academic institutions in which he is enrolled.
- Fulfill the obligations contained in the Guidelines for Housing and Building Use by the agreed-upon withdrawal date.

### ***Leave of Absence***

A seminarian who wishes to withdraw temporarily from the seminary may ask for a leave of absence. If the leave of absence is no longer than one year, he may ask to be readmitted without having to fulfill the standard requirements for new admission. While on leave, he must fulfill the basic requirements that the Rector communicates to him.

## **Horarium and Calendar**

The seminary community regulates its life together by a schedule for daily life, the *horarium*, which includes periods for communal prayer, optional prayer periods, programs, and quiet time. The seminary faculty also produces a calendar which lists all of the events and activities for the year. The seminarian is expected to participate in the seminary's daily life and in the events and activities noted on the calendar, as evidence of his active embrace of life in the seminary.

## **Housekeeping Duties**

All seminarians are assigned tasks (such as work order) pertaining to campus living and the functions of community life. Seminarians are expected to demonstrate their dependability and generosity by contributing to the order and organization of these areas of community life.

Seminarians are required to follow the Guidelines for Housing and Building Use.

Dormitory rooms are to be kept in the highest standard of cleanliness. Thus, the seminarian will be responsible for cleaning his room on a daily basis. Announced inspections or walk-thru may be conducted by resident seminary faculty on a periodic basis.

Seminarians are required to keep campus facilities, furnishings, and seminary vehicles clean and in good condition at all times.

## **Individual Files and Vital Information**

A complete file containing information and records for each seminarian is required of all Catholic seminaries. Assumption Seminary must also have access to certain important information in order to serve each seminarian well. It is the responsibility of each seminarian to provide the information required and necessary in order to keep seminary records current and complete.

## **International Seminarians**

It is the responsibility of the seminarian himself to obtain and manage the legally required documentation necessary for study in the United States. The seminary faculty is happy to help seminarians find resource persons who can be available to help them manage this personal responsibility.

## **Maintenance and Administration Issues**

The Assumption Seminary receptionist or the Business Manager is to be notified promptly, about any maintenance and administrative issues during business hours. For after-hours maintenance needs, please notify a resident faculty member.

## **Privacy**

Seminarians are encouraged to make use of the common areas for social interaction as well as group work and study after curfew. No one is permitted to be in another seminarian's private room after curfew and never when the door to that room is closed.

## **Professional, Courteous Conduct**

Although Assumption Seminary is primarily a house of formation for men in training for priesthood in the Roman Catholic Church, it is also the home of the Archbishop of San Antonio, resident seminary faculty, and other priests. The Pastoral Center for the Archdiocese of San Antonio, and the Mexican American Catholic College are neighbors of the seminary who make frequent use of our facilities. The seminary also often receives guests from the wider community. For this reason, appropriate, professional and courteous conduct is required of every seminarian at all times.

## **Public Appearance**

A seminarian's appearance (attire and grooming) is a reflection both of his personal maturity and of the community. Since a seminarian is learning how to be a "public person" who represents the Church, he is strongly discouraged from adopting tattoos, body piercing or any other decoration that would detract from his professional appearance. Furthermore, a seminarian should make every effort to appear neat, groomed and clean at all times.

## **Self-Reporting**

Seminarians are obliged to self-report to their Dorm Father and to their Advisor unpermitted absences. This is for purposes of communal responsibility, personal growth and polite consideration. The responsibility for tracking accountability is not only the duty of seminary faculty. It is also the duty of a seminarian who aspires to be qualified for ordained ministry in the Church.

## **Simplicity of Life and Transparency**

Simplicity of life is rooted in detachment and manifested in generosity in the use of time, treasure and talent. "Human formation should cultivate a spirit of generosity, encouraging the seminarian to become a man for others and to curb expectations of entitlement. Manifestations of undue materialism and consumerism in a seminarian's behavior should be confronted and corrected."<sup>5</sup>

While in the Archdiocese of San Antonio, seminarians are not allowed to solicit or receive financial/monetary support from persons other than their family without the knowledge of the Rector or their Vocation Director/Director of Seminarians.

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<sup>5</sup> PPF., no. 97

- Financial support that a seminarian receives from anyone other than his family is expected to be within the limit and reason appropriate for simplicity of life.
- Gifts or stipends received ought to be reported for the sake of transparency and integrity by the seminarian to the Rector and Vocation Director/Director of Seminarians.
- Accumulation of material possessions is also expected to be within the limit and reason appropriate to simplicity of life.
- In cases of financial needs or burdens, seminarians are encouraged to approach their Vocation Director/Director of Seminarians and the Rector.

### **Smoking**

Smoking is not allowed inside any building or near an entrance or pathway to any dormitory building.

### **Vehicle Parking**

Student parking is available in the enclosed parking lot across the street from the seminarian dormitories on the MACC side of French Street.

Seminarians are reminded to store keys and personal valuables out of sight and to park and lock the vehicle in the designated parking areas. The seminary administration parking area is reserved and for the use of seminary administrators, faculty and office personnel only. Parking is not allowed in areas designated as fire lanes or in the circle drive in front of the dormitories on French Street.

### **Visitors**

Visitors of seminarians are welcome on campus. Please note, however, that unless permission is granted by a Dorm Father, The Vice Rector or Rector, visitors are not allowed to enter the dormitory area, dorm lounges or a seminarian's private room.

## **Section III. Internet Safety and Computer Policies for Assumption Seminary**

### **Assumption Computers and Internet Service**

The seminary provides a limited number of computers for student use. These computers and internet service on the campus are provided primarily for academic and pastoral ministry work. The seminary computers are located in the Library in the Administration Building. Seminarians may use Seminary computers to check personal e-mail accounts provided no others are waiting to do academic work.

### **Internet Usage**

Assumption Seminary reserves the right to monitor access and review usage of the Archdiocese's Internet system. Use of this system and hardware constitutes consent to having the user's internet usage monitored. All seminarians will receive an account to access the internet and to access e-

mail. Others may request guest account access. Students are expected to check their seminary e-mail accounts on a regular basis.

Students and guests must not share account/passwords with others. Doing so is a violation of the internet policies of the seminary and the Archdiocese of San Antonio.

Seminarians and guests who access the internet via the seminary/archdiocese community server with their personal computers are required to have active and updated anti-virus software installed. Failure to maintain anti-virus software will be grounds for loss of internet privileges.

Unauthorized usage of the seminary internet includes accessing inappropriate sites and downloading illicit materials, including but not limited to the following:

- Accessing and/or storing obscene, pornographic, sexually explicit websites and/or material; gambling websites, or illegal web sites
- File, video, or music sharing
- Hacking, including installing illicit software using seminary/MACC equipment or internet access
- Physically damaging seminary computers
- Disrupting or obstructing of authorized use of the network
- Destroying the integrity of computer-based information
- Engaging in the public display of offensive sexual material
- Engaging in sexual harassment through the use of internet sites
- Infringing copyright or licensing agreements
- Using the connection with the intention of threatening, intimidating, or invading the privacy of others
- Any other illegal or illicit activity

#### **Section IV. Statement on Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct**

The Archdiocese of San Antonio will not tolerate sexual harassment or sexual misconduct of any form by its personnel, employees, seminarians and volunteers.

All faculty members, staff and seminarians are required to attend the workshops on Sexual Harassment and Safe Environment held each year. Certificates are issued upon completion of the workshops. The certificates of attendance are to be made available to the supervisors at the pastoral formation sites.

Violations of the archdiocesan policy will lead to disciplinary measures, dismissal from the seminary and possibly a criminal complaint or civil suit for monetary damages.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> See “Policy on Sexual Misconduct on the Part of the Church Personnel of the Archdiocese of San Antonio Revised October 2003.”

## **Section V. Student Government and Community Activity**

The student government consists of individuals elected by the community and classes of seminarians to serve and enhance community life. They organize, represent and lead the seminary community. All seminarians are expected to contribute to the life of the community. These expectations include:

- Participation at community meetings.
- Participation in one or more seminary committees.
- Election of student government leaders and class representatives.

## **Section VI. Commitment to Principles of Ethics and Integrity in Ministry**

Relationships among people are the foundation of Christian ministry and are central to Church life. Seminarians are called to promote the dignity and sanctity of all persons. This requires a commitment to growth by the seminarian. The role of Assumption Seminary and its partners in formation is to assist the seminarian in recognizing both the genuineness of his calling and the reality of his particular gifts for priestly service. The process of personal and professional growth for priestly ministry is a primary mission of the seminary and its collaborators, but it requires the seminarian's generous cooperation and stewardship.

A Seminarian will:

1. Exhibit the highest level of Christian conduct, ethics and responsibility expected of a gentleman in formation for ordained ministry.
2. Be truthful and honest.
3. Communicate politely and respectfully with everyone.
4. Treat all persons with respect and dignity, avoiding discrimination.
5. Communicate and collaborate with others in the process of learning and serving others.
6. Observe boundaries in relationships in a way that is expected of a professional minister called to a celibate life.
7. Respect the confidentiality called for in the environment of pastoral ministry and formation.
8. Observe carefully the policies against sexual misconduct, harassment and abuse of the Archdiocese of San Antonio and promote a safe environment for everyone, particularly children.
9. Observe carefully the policies and procedures of one's own diocese, the Archdiocese of San Antonio and one's academic institutions.
10. Express legitimate concerns one observes of another to the appropriate seminary superior or legitimate authority.
11. Be a faithful steward of the property of the seminary, academic institutions and pastoral ministry sites.

