

Proposals: Specific Formation of the Salesian Brothers in the East Asia - Oceania Region¹

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Spiritual-Pedagogical Principles --- Analysis of Salesian Brothers in Formation --- Program --- Vision

----- Formative Needs -----

Spiritual-Pedagogical Principles:

A. Theological foundations

1. Vocation perspective

The life of everyone is a vocation. Hence, one's vocation should be accepted and fulfilled. The signs of a vocation can be identified. It is manifested in the everyday. The Salesian vocation can be identified if one's personal vocation fits the way of life of the Salesians of Don Bosco.

2. Faith attitude

Vocational discernment is spiritual discernment. Therefore, faith perspective should be vigorously cultivated. It requires that the Salesian Brother be responsible for one's discernment. It also requires that the Formators be attentive and respectful as companions. Openness to the Holy Spirit is a requirement in order to be in harmony with the Father's will.

B. Orientation

1. Starting point and goal

a. Our Identity as Salesians, Formation at its service

The starting point and goal of our formation is our identity as Salesians. A Salesian is a sign and bearer of God's love for the young. It requires from the formand a heart patterned after the Good Shepherd that goes to meet the young where they are.

Specifically, our constitutions state that the specific formation of the Salesian Brother should offer him the opportunity to deepen his knowledge of the spiritual heritage of the Congregation. He receives an adequate theological preparation appropriate to his consecrated lay status, and completes the formation with a view to his subsequent apostolic work of education (Constitutions 116; FSDB 447; *See Attachment 1 – The Specific Formation of the Salesian Brother dated January 9, 2004*).

Seen within the context of a definitive option for Salesian life, the period of specific formation is for the Salesian Brother an opportune time (FSDB 448):

- To assess and complete his progress in his vocation and formation;
- To reaffirm his own identity, which he lives in a complementary manner with priests, and also his own motivations;
- To reflect, study and qualify himself in the theological and pastoral aspects of his Christian faith and in his Salesian consecrated life;
- To consolidate an attitude and a pedagogy of continuing formation.

- b. Aspects of formation
The formation encompasses the different aspects of a person namely: human, spiritual, intellectual and formation to youth pastoral ministry in order to acquire the values and attitudes needed to be a SDB.

2. Process

- a. A life-long process
The formation process is a lifelong process.
- b. Characteristics of the formation process
The formation process is a personalized, communitarian, comprehensive and diversified, continuous and gradual, inculturated in the Salesian spirit.

Furthermore, it is complemented by a psycho-spiritual approach to the formation process (*See Attachment 2 and 3 - Framework*).

3. Duration

Specific formation for the Salesian Brother takes two years following the academic school year starting in June of the first year and ending March of the second year (4 semesters and one summer).

C. Formative Experience (Dimensions of the Program)

1. Formative interventions/ Activities

The formative interventions revolve around the following areas: Human formation, Intellectual formation, Spiritual formation (liturgical, sacramental, Salesian, communal), Youth-pastoral formation which is taken from the Formation of the Salesians of Don Bosco (FSDB), Project and Animation of the Rector Major and Council for the next six years, Experiences of a Multi-cultural formative community, Inculturated Understanding, Servant Leadership, Vision of the different FIN Commissions. The last three aspects of the formative interventions are specific for the needs of the Filipino Salesian Brothers but not exclusive for them.

Furthermore, the following formative interventions complement the two-year **Biennium** on religious and pastoral studies as proposed by the General Councilor for Formation (*See Attachment 4 – October 26, 2011*).

The needs of the Salesian brothers and of the province have to be identified in order to make the formation program more responsive to them and to the Salesian Brother ideals.

The formative interventions are given as seminars, conferences, programs and activities outside of the two-year **Biennium** program of studies. They are the following:

Human:

- a. Develops a gentlemanly behaviour and societal values (*Siya ay makatao*)
- b. Able to form patterns of relationship – a brother to all particularly to the Salesian priest (*Marunong makipagkapwa-tao*)

- c. Serene affectivity (hospitable and able to empathize)
- d. Able to meet different kinds of people (May paggalang sa ibang tao)
- e. Deep sensitivity to world of work and its culture (Marunong makiramdam)
- f. Able to size up situations and adopt a professional approach (able to listen & foresee realities in an immersion-awareness process and able to do his part in a spirit of tiyaga at sipag)
- g. Address needs at one's psycho-social stage
- h. Cultural dialogue – personal issues vis-a-vis cultural mentality and its interactions
- i. Formation towards celibate life and vow of chastity
- j. Media formation - Educate to the values of information technology & communication
- k. Healthy lifestyle - recreation, arts, music

Intellectual:

- a. To reflect, study and qualify himself in the theological and pastoral aspects of his Christian faith and in his Salesian consecrated life by taking up the two year **Biennium** Program on Religious and Pastoral Studies (*See Attachment 5 – Proposed Program of Studies*)
- b. Adept at evangelization and Catechetics particularly towards the young – working young and laity
- c. Knowledgeable of Don Bosco and the historical development of his brother vocation
- d. Educated to/Aware of social realities and be suitably prepared to take his place in the world of work (able to share himself (stewardship) and the truths that he embodies (conceptualization)
- e. Qualifies himself in his specific field/roles assigned to him (humble, commitment to quality and excellence)

Spiritual:

- a. Able to share in the pastoral love of Christ the good shepherd (Maka-Diyos at Mapag-katha, radical holiness and prophetic witnessing, calling)
- b. Grows in his attachment to the person, style and spirit of Don Bosco (fidelity to Salesian charism)
- c. Deepens his consecrated lay identity (mature, responsible freedom)
- d. Joins characteristics of his lay state with his pastoral concerns
- e. Able to offer himself and his ministry to God for his good and the good of the Church (man of deep prayer experience: deepens his personal prayer life, develops a discerning spirit and fosters communion)
- f. Appreciation of spiritual direction and prayer
- g. Appreciation of the Salesian charism in the Salesian family
- h. Monthly recollection and Annual retreat

Youth pastoral:

- a. Sensitive to the needs of poor youth, and particularly the working youth/class (life-giving environment)
- b. Able to evangelize culture through witness of life and active involvement (healing, available for dialogue)

- c. Identified with his mission of educator and evangelizer of the young particularly in his field of work/ministry (persuasion)
- d. Collaboration with the laity – involvement of the laity in the formation of the formands as collaborators in the apostolate, family, friends, clergy, support staff of seminary (growth, participatory, common formation process, bayanihan)
- e. Pastoral sense – acquire the values, attitudes and skills needed for pastoral discernment and action
- f. Summer pastoral exposure and processing of experiences
- g. Weekends can be for pastoral exposure or updating in one's field of specialization

2. Formative environment (physical structures)

The Salesian Brother community will live in the same house with the Community of Professors (Rinaldi community) but with separate rhythm of life. The Rinaldi community has sufficient facilities to accommodate the Salesian Brothers' community. It may not be the ideal set up nevertheless, it is the most acceptable set up now in terms of cost, feasibility, and accessibility to the studentate of theology as well as interaction with the clerics.

There are varied areas for apostolate. The school of theology is adjacent to the Rinaldi community. There are sufficient facilities such as a school chapel, big dining hall, sufficient rooms, and a common kitchen, sports facilities (2 basketball courts and 1 football field).

There is also access to other services such as communication (telephone and internet), medical and dental facilities, as well as joint activities with the clerics.

There is a need for some facilities to be renovated in order to accommodate the Brothers' community such as a separate dining hall, an audio-visual room, laundry facilities, offices for the formators, conference room. These facilities have to be determined together with the Rinaldi community as well as the cost the community has to share for their use.

Furthermore, there is a need to acquire some equipment for the community such as laundry machine, multi-media (computer and printer, TV and DVD player, newspaper subscription), liturgical materials (mass kit, liturgical books, and vestments).

The need for a vehicle for the use of the community will have to be discerned.

There is an immediate problem of the lack of sufficient and regular supply of water, which needs to be addressed immediately.

3. Formation community

The ideal number of formators is three made up of one Salesian priest who will be the Rector/In-charge and Catechist of the community, and two Salesian brothers wherein one will be the Economer and the other the Prefect of Discipline. The ideal number of brothers in formation will be nine with a ratio of 1- formator: 3 –

formands. The formators do not necessarily have to be all Filipinos. One Filipino formator is sufficient to assist the community. Formators from other provinces is necessary because of the multi-cultural nature of the formative community, for greater collaboration among the provinces and better accompaniment of the formands.

Furthermore, the community will not employ support staff. The community will share in the housekeeping duties.

4. Regular structure (schedule/calendar/policies/evaluation)

Programming will be done at the start of the school year to determine the daily timetable, calendar of activities for the year, the community schedule, province schedule, national and liturgical schedule, and school schedule. The structures of community will provide a formative, flexible and rhythmic way of life. However, there will be other activities that need to be added and activities that need to be strengthened. The mid-year and end year evaluation will provide the necessary control. House rules and policies as well as job descriptions will all be in black and white. Policies need to be clear and well articulated.

5. Budget (finances)

The proposed board and lodging for each formand will be Php 387 per day (three hundred eighty-seven pesos)/ USD 9 per day or Php 12,000 per month (twelve thousand pesos)/ USD 279 per month. Minimum wage in Metro Manila is Php 426 pesos per day (four hundred twenty-six pesos)/ USD 9.9 per day or 13,200 per month (thirteen thousand two hundred pesos)/ USD 307 per month.

School fees on the other hand would depend on the number of units enrolled per semester (*See Attachment 6 – School Fees*).

D. Conclusion/Points for Consideration

1. The program is envisioned to be for two years. No one will be accepted into the program until one batch has finished the two years. This will ensure that the group is focused into specific formation.
2. It presupposes that participants into this program has a mastery of the English language in order to be able to fully participate in the academic demands of the program as well to be able to live in community.
3. The program presupposes also that the participants are already perpetually professed brothers or are at least preparing for perpetual profession.
4. If the brothers are preparing for perpetual profession, there is a separate program for them which they can join with the clerics (*See Attachment 7 – Perpetual Profession Program*).
5. The two year specific formation program follows a psycho-spiritual process approach.
6. There are formative needs of the formands that will not be addressed by the academic nature of the two year studies. Hence, there is a need to incorporate into

the two year program of specific formation the other formative programs/interventions. The specific formation program is good only in as much as it addresses the formative needs of the formands. It is recommended that the formators know the vision of each province in relation to the formation of their Salesian Brother.

- What are the brothers' needs?
 - What are the provinces' needs?
 - How do we envision our brothers to be in the future?
7. The **Biennium** program on religious and pastoral studies is on a two year cycle. The professors of the program are made up priests, brothers, sisters, lay single/married/male/female in order that the nature of the contents reflect the richness of the expression of being Church specifically the lay element of the Salesian Brother vocation.

However, there are some points in the academic program that needs serious consideration such as: the absence of canon law for religious and lay as a course; the theological terminology of the subject offerings which can be associated with a clerical content as well as a need for a process oriented set of courses covering the area of psychology and sociology.

8. The Salesian brothers as a community will have opportune moments to interact with the community of the Seminario ng Don Bosco made up of priests and clerics for common formative experiences.
9. Finally, what are the commitments of the different provinces? In my experience, the commitment of the provinces has been limited to providing formands for the program but not formators. Formators are essential to the program as the formands because we are not forming them to be Filipino Salesian brothers nor are we forming them to be generic Salesian Brothers. There is the huge factor of cultural influence and differences that need to be considered and Filipino formators are hampered by this limitation. Second, when formators are provided by other provinces for the program, they stay only for a year which is also short changing the program and specifically the formands because the Formator also goes through his own dynamics as he enters into a community. It takes time for the community members to adjust to each other. It takes time for a Formator to be acquainted with the running of the program. One year is not enough. There is a need for stability of formators.