

National Association of Catholic Theological Schools

Fr. Jorge Torres
Executive Director

October 4, 2025

Secretariat of Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations



United States
Conference of
Catholic Bishops

Agenda

- Who We Are
- USCCB/CCLV Recent Projects and Priorities
- National Database
- “Model D ”
- Links to CCLV webpages



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Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations



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CCLV Committee & Staff

CCLV Committee

- Bishop Earl Boyea (Chairman)
- Bishop Ronald Hicks (Chairman-elect)
- Archbishop Charles Thompson
- Bishop Juan Miguel Betancourt, SEMV
- Bishop François Beyrouti (Melkite)
- Bishop David Toups
- Bishop Austin Vetter
- Bishop William Wack, CSC

CCLV Secretariat Staff

- Rev. Jorge Torres, Executive Director
- Associate Director, vacant
- Ms. Fatima Godfrey, Administrative Assistant

Bishop Hicks to begin his term as chair following the November meeting.



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CCLV Committee Mandate

Assisting bishops in promoting, supporting, and educating about the Church's pastoral needs and concerns for the priesthood, diaconate, and consecrated life within culturally diverse communities of the United States;

Addressing issues concerning the life and ministry of bishops;

Developing foundational documents and appropriate resources that promote the effective ministry of the clerical state, consecrated life, vocations, and priestly formation.



Asociación Nacional de
Sacerdotes Hispanos en
Estados Unidos

Clergy

National Association of
Diaconate Directors

Association for the Ongoing
Formation of Priests



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Institute for Priestly
Formation

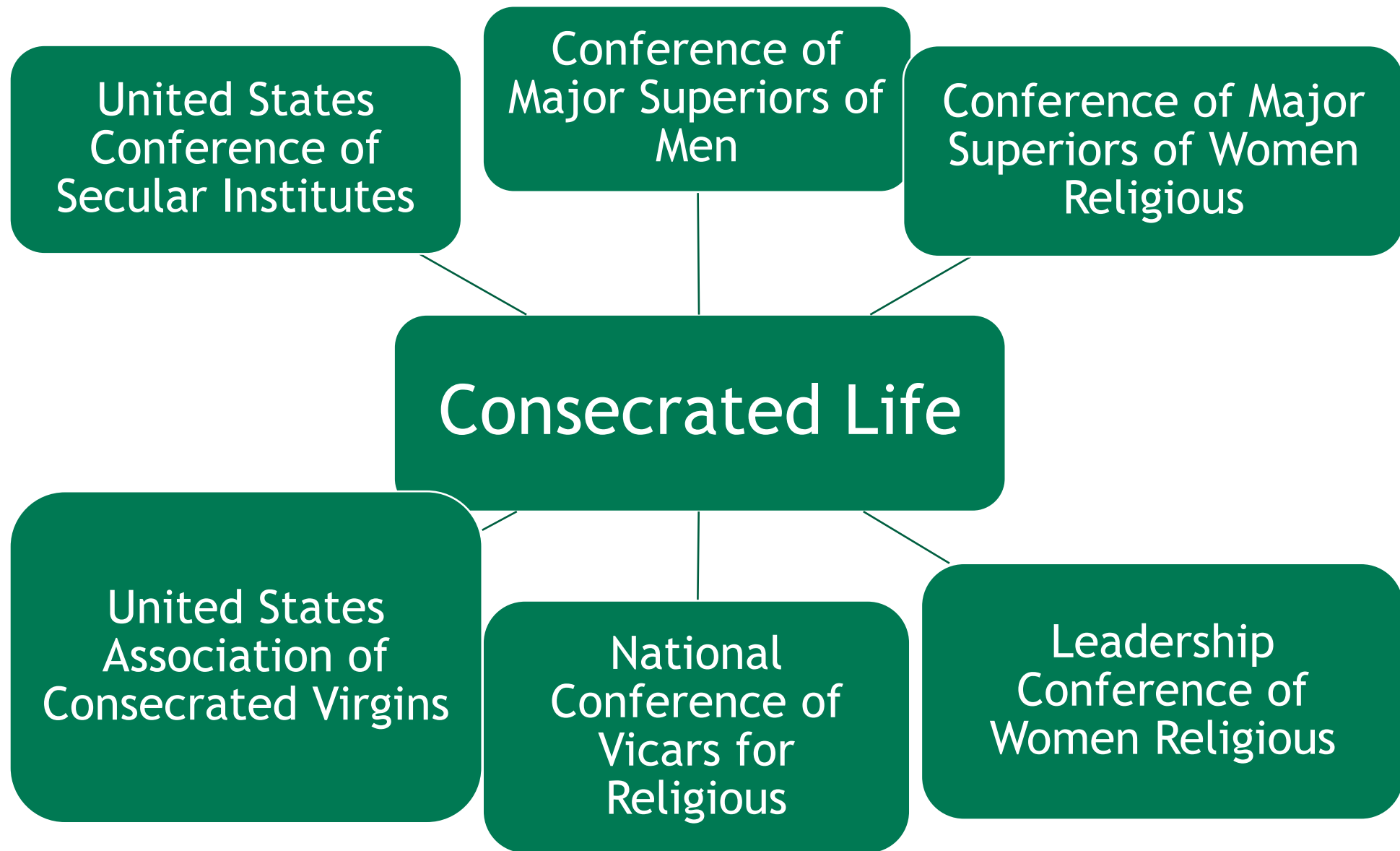
Priestly Formation

National Association of
Catholic Theological
Schools

National Association of
College Seminaries



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Serra International

Vocations

National Conference of
Diocesan Vocation Directors

National Religious Vocation
Conference



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USCCB/CCLV Recent Projects and Priorities

- Religious Worker Protection Act
- Charter Review Update
- Strengthening Bishop-priest relationships
- Promotion of Hispanic Vocations
- Eucharistic Revival/Congress- 20??
- World Youth Day- August 6, 2027
- Guadalupe 2031- 500 year anniversary
- Second Milenia of the Paschal Mystery- 2033



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Religious Worker Protection Act Toolkit

This resource is produced by the USCCB Department of Migration and Refugee Services. Page 4 of the document (page 6 in the PDF) shares the following information:

The bill has three substantive sections:

Section 2: Grants the Secretary of Homeland Security the authority to extend temporary R-1 status for a religious worker beyond five years until he or she receives a decision on an EB-4 application, so long as (1) a qualifying religious institution has petitioned for the worker's lawful permanent residence under the EB-4 category, and (2) the worker is otherwise eligible to become a lawful permanent resident (i.e., not subject to any existing visa eligibility bars) but for the EB-4 visa backlog.

Section 3: Corrects a discrepancy between religious workers and other employment-based immigrants by allowing for limited job flexibility while religious workers are awaiting permanent residence. This would prevent religious workers from having to restart the entire process from the beginning because, for example, they moved from one church to another or received a new title. However, they must continue to serve as religious workers.

Section 4: Makes it clear that religious workers who were already forced to depart the United States before the bill became law, but who could have extended R-1 status if the bill had been enacted, are not required to be outside of the country for one year before they can return in R-1 status. This will allow American communities to reunite more quickly with beloved religious workers.

Wave Two of the National Study of Catholic Priests

- Will be released on October 14 at 1 pm EST.
- The Catholic Project will also release ten essays entitled *Rebuilding Trust - Clergy Morale in the Wake of the Abuse Crisis*, based on the First Wave of the National Catholic Priest Study, focusing on the bishop-priest relationship.

Charter Rewrite Update



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Vulnerable Adults



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Resources

[Fully Equipped for Every Good Work: A Proposal of Twelve Core Competencies in Ministering to Survivors of Sexual Abuse for Seminary Formation Programs.](#)

[McGrath Institute invites seminaries to commit to sexual misconduct policy benchmarks](#)

In the [Further Insights from the National Study of Catholic Priests](#), further insights, 9% of priests reported yes to the following statement: “I personally experienced sexual harassment or abuse or suffered sexual misconduct,” while another 6% were unsure or declined to answer. (Pg. 13)

“Model D”



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PPF 6 is particular law for the US.

The Dicastery, however, encourages continual dialogue on seeking ways to implement the current stages, particularly those of configuration and vocational synthesis.

The vocational synthesis stage of formation is meant to assist the transition to ongoing formation, that is, the transition from seminary life to parish life. It also hopes this stage will lead to fewer petitions for laicization.

It was to be observed in all seminaries effective August 4, 2023.

This stage should be less evaluative since “suitability was judged previously during the scrutiny prior to diaconate ordination (PPF 138).” In this stage, “the deacon may experience the life of clerical ministry in an environment of openness and dialogue with the pastor, who should accompany him personally and directly regarding his ministerial experiences. This would be accomplished through fraternal and formal exchanges (PPF 141).”

The CCLV Committee cannot speak on behalf of the Dicastery for Clergy. Perhaps the best path forward for seminaries and (arch)dioceses grappling with how to move forward, is to do as your sponsoring bishops or major superiors wish as indicated in the *Ratio Fundamentalis* and PPF 6. Certain variations from PPF 6 might place a seminary program outside of PPF 6’s particular law, though there is at present there is no vehicle to enforce PPF 6.

Vocational Synthesis Pastoral Stage Benchmarks

As in the other stages, during this stage the pastoral dimension of formation can be presented in terms of **pastoral knowledge**, pastoral skills, pastoral discernment, and pastoral charity.

Regarding pastoral knowledge, the deacon demonstrates “a capacity for critical observation” so that he “can discern true and false values, since this is an essential requirement of establishing a constructive dialogue with the world of today.” 457

It is essential that he demonstrates the **ability to celebrate the sacraments and liturgies of the Church validly, licitly, and confidently**, and that he also develops a knowledge about **and understanding of the role of various movements and apostolates** that are so essential to the pastoral life of the Church. **He understands and knows how to encourage and support consecrated life.** He sees the **importance of various ecclesial movements in the evangelistic life of the Church.** He understands the **centrality of the apostolate of Catholic education.** He is open to the various unique and beautiful ways the Holy Spirit is working to bring about a new evangelization in our time. 380



The pastoral skills he demonstrates prior to ordination to priesthood include the ability to **craft and successfully deliver homilies**, the ability to **plan and execute pastoral projects**, the ability to **accompany engaged couples** (e.g., marriage preparation) and newly married couples, 459

the ability to **assist those seeking a declaration of matrimonial nullity**, and the ability to work in an **ecumenical and interreligious context** in the United States. 381

Central to the vocational synthesis stage is learning the prudence of discernment. This **discernment is twofold, both personal and pastoral**. 460



Having first experienced how God leads him interiorly as he has sought his own conversion and grown in a life of prayer, the transitional **deacon must now learn how God will lead him in his pastoral ministry**, learning “to listen to the conscience that judges his movements and the interior urges that motivate his actions. In this way, the priest learns to govern himself using the spiritual and mental powers of mind and body.

He grasps the sense of what can be done and what it would be better not to do, or what should not be done?”⁴⁶¹ Ultimately, he learns to coordinate the many obligations of his office by growing in union with Christ’s pastoral charity. ⁴⁶²

382. This personal discernment moves to pastoral discernment, through which the future priest learns to “listen deeply to real situations and [is] capable of good judgment in making choices and decisions.” An “evangelical style of listening. . . . frees the pastor from the temptation to abstraction, to self-promotion, to excessive self-assurance, and to that aloofness, that would make him a ‘spiritual accountant’ instead of a ‘good Samaritan.’” 463

This discernment is especially important today because of **the complexity of situations in which people come needing the help of the Church.** “The gaze of the Good Shepherd, who seeks out, walks alongside and leads his sheep, will form a serene, prudent and compassionate outlook in him. He will exercise his ministry with a disposition of serene openness and attentive accompaniment in all situations, even those that are most complex, showing the beauty and the demands of Gospel truth, **without falling into legalistic or rigorist obsessions.**”⁴⁶⁴ (PPF 379-384)

383. Finally, pastoral formation must lead the transitional deacon to the **desire to make a gift of his life for his people in pastoral charity**, in imitation of Christ, the Good Shepherd. This will lead to an **ability to convey the teachings of the Church in pastoral settings** (e.g., teaching, preaching, and pastoral counseling) **with charity and zeal at all times** and to embrace a **preferential option for the poor in pastoral settings**. This desire will strengthen him, over the years of priestly ministry, to make a **generous gift of himself without counting the cost** 384.

This stage, which leads to the **transitional deacon's public expression of his free, conscious, and definitive intention for the priesthood**, must also encourage him to find a suitable time for his **spiritual preparation to priestly ordination** 465 and to show **his positive disposition for ongoing formation** with his future brother priests after ordination.

Checklist



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In response to a special mandate from the Holy See in 1996, the Conference published the Norms Concerning Applications for Priestly Formation from Those Previously Enrolled in a Formation Program (Norms). It is currently available for download here: [Norms Concerning Reapplication for Priestly Formation](#).

After reviewing and discussing the Norms, the Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations determined that a checklist would be most helpful for bishops, major religious superiors, vocation directors, directors of seminarians, rectors, and seminary personnel when processing these applications. A checklist for those reapplying to formation programs is now available via the [CCLV website](#) as a tool for your continued work accompanying discerners

Commentary on Norm 2: **Reconsideration of a decision to dismiss should rarely, if ever, be undertaken, and only if demonstrably clear and positive reasons to the contrary can be established.**

Commentary for Norm 4: Diocesan formation programs and other seminaries are encouraged to complete a final “exit” evaluation for departing students in order to have information on record regarding students at the time of leaving. This information (positive and/or negative) could be most helpful at a time of subsequent application

Norm number 5: **Once the release has been executed and received**, all seminaries attended and dioceses and/or institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life with which the applicant was affiliated must be contacted in written form and should, if possible, be contacted **through an oral, confidential interview** with those persons responsible for the applicant's formation at that time. Those contacted should provide the pertinent information in a timely manner so as not to delay the process. For the sake of an accurate account of the interview, **written notes should be taken and included in the applicant's confidential, permanent file.** **A record of calls or inquiries received by a diocese or seminary regarding a former student should be maintained.** If any such institution or person responsible **is not contacted** with respect to a given application but nevertheless learns of it, **all relevant information should be disclosed to the proper ecclesiastical authority.**



Norm 6 must write a formal letter to the seminary or religious formation program where he is sending the applicant, with a copy to the bishop(s) of any diocese for which the applicant was previously in formation,

- a. the applicant has been evaluated according to the norms outlined above;
- b. b. a thorough investigation of the applicant's background has been undertaken, including conversations with officials from the prior formation program in which he was enrolled including the current diocesan bishop(s) and major superior(s); and,
- c. c. it is his prudential judgment that the applicant is fit for seminary studies.

National Database



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CCLV survey require- list of new ordinands or perpetually professed from the vocation director. Emails go out three times to get to about 60% response. Phone calls lead to about 80% response rate. Would vocation directors, seminaries or others do better in responding?

Child and Youth Protection can get to all but one diocese responding but that has a dedicated person with less turnover than vocation directors, where 30% of them are new each year of those that participate in NCDVD. Some dioceses historically have never participated in NCDVD.



- Response rate for your surveys? How do you know what the non-respondents is doing or not doing?
- If NACTS or NCDVD or any entity wish to take this on that is also a possibility.
- Legal liability could remain for the duration of the ministry of the priest or seminarian or religious.
- Response rate for your surveys? How do you know what the non-respondents are doing or not doing?

Entities or steps to consider

Bishops and Major Religious Superiors

Diocesan propaedeutic programs

Seminaries/Formation houses

Vocation Directors (Religious and Diocesan)

Legal counsel for the various entities

Commonly approved release

Measuring response rates and reaching out to non-respondents

Defining terms and using them consistently?



National Entities that would need buy-in from their membership

Conference of Major Superiors of Religious Men

National Association of College Seminaries

National Association of Catholic Theological Schools

National Conference of Diocesan Vocation Directors

National Religious Vocations Conference

450-Religious Communities of Men (Superiors are elected for three years or so)

197-Dioceses (30% turnover rate for vocation directors per year)

647 more or less possible respondents

It is possible to do it by region as a start, similar to letters of Good standing in Region I, transgender policy in Region II, Region XIV one diocese allows electronic letters of good standing.

CCLV Webpages

- To access previous CARA reports on ordination classes:
<https://www.usccb.org/committees/clergy-consecrated-life-vocations/ordination-classes>
- To view or purchase all CCLV's recent documents:
<https://www.usccb.org/committees/clergy-consecrated-life-vocations/listing-cclv-documents>
- To get the full listing and contact information for CCLV's consulting organizations:
<https://www.usccb.org/offices/clergy-consecrated-life-and-vocations/cclv-national-consulting-organizations>



Rectors' Lunch



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