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Formation of Priestly Vocation through the Evangelical Counsels in the Context of the Indonesian Catholic Church: A Spiritual-Theological Evaluation of Pastores Dabo Vobis

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Abstract

This article offers a spiritual-theological evaluation of priestly formation through the evangelical counsels in the light of John Paul II's post-synodal apostolic exhortation Pastores Dabo Vobis (1992), with particular attention to the Indonesian Catholic Church. Using qualitative theological hermeneutics and document analysis, it reads Pastores Dabo Vobis alongside Lumen Gentium, Presbyterorum Ordinis, Optatam Totius, the Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis (2016), and relevant canonical norms. The analysis distinguishes the evangelical spirit expected of diocesan priests from the public vows professed by members of religious institutes, and considers celibacy within the Latin Church as an ecclesiastical discipline with a specific theological meaning. The article argues that obedience, evangelical poverty, and celibate chastity should be interpreted through the unifying principle of pastoral charity and integrated across the human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral dimensions of formation. Its contribution is a contextual evaluative framework linking Christological identity, pastoral charity, the evangelical counsels, and four formation dimensions. Because the study relies on documentary sources rather than interviews or institutional data, it does not claim to demonstrate a nationwide crisis or to establish deficiencies in Indonesian seminaries. Instead, it identifies theological criteria and practical indicators that formators and ecclesial authorities can adapt for contextual evaluation.

Keywords: priestly formation; evangelical counsels; Pastores Dabo Vobis; pastoral charity; Indonesian Catholic Church

1. Introduction

Priestly formation is not simply preparation for a professional role in a religious institution. In Catholic theology, it is a process of discernment and transformation through which a candidate is gradually configured to Christ the Head and Shepherd and prepared to serve the

People of God.[1] John Paul II's Pastores Dabo Vobis (PDV) presents this formation as an integral journey in which human maturity, spiritual life, intellectual preparation, and pastoral practice mutually inform one another (PDV 42–59).[2] The document's continuing relevance lies not only in its description of priestly identity but also in its insistence that formation must shape the whole person for a life of pastoral charity.

This vision is especially important when considering obedience, poverty, and chastity. These expressions are often grouped under the term "evangelical counsels," but their meaning for diocesan priests must be stated carefully. Unlike members of religious institutes, diocesan priests do not ordinarily profess public vows of the evangelical counsels. Nevertheless, the Church teaches that priests are called to embody the evangelical spirit of obedience, detachment from possessions, and celibate chastity in a manner appropriate to ordained ministry (PDV 27–30; Presbyterorum Ordinis [PO] 15–17). The distinction is not merely terminological: it protects the theological specificity of diocesan priesthood while preserving the formative value of the counsels.

The Indonesian Catholic Church carries out priestly formation within a plural, culturally diverse, and rapidly changing society. Digital communication, consumer culture, changing patterns of social relationships, and unequal economic conditions can raise questions about attention, affective maturity, simplicity of life, public credibility, and ecclesial communion.[3] These pressures should not be treated as proof that Indonesian priests are experiencing a uniform crisis. Rather, they provide contextual questions for theological discernment: how can formation prepare candidates to live their identity faithfully amid contemporary conditions, and how can the evangelical counsels be translated into observable habits of ministry?

The article addresses two questions: (1) How do PDV and related magisterial documents interpret the evangelical spirit of obedience, poverty, and chastity in the formation of diocesan priests? (2) What evaluative criteria can be derived from this teaching for priestly formation in Indonesia, without making empirical claims unsupported by documentary evidence? The article's contribution is a constructive framework in which Christological identity grounds pastoral charity, pastoral charity integrates the counsels, and the counsels are cultivated and evaluated across the four dimensions of formation. This framework moves beyond a summary of doctrine by connecting theological principles to formative practices and indicators that can be adapted by seminaries, spiritual directors, formators, and diocesan leadership.

2. Research Mentod

Research on priestly spirituality and formation has addressed several dimensions of the present topic. Korain (2020) examines pastoral charity as the soul of priestly spirituality according to PDV, providing a direct point of reference for the claim that ministry must be animated by charity rather than reduced to function.[4] Simon (2020) considers the influence of social media on priestly pastoral ministry, a relevant contribution for contextual reflection on digital culture.[5] Tinambunan (2021) emphasizes ongoing formation and the need to interpret

[1] Matthew D Walz, "Study , Truth , and Personal Formation : Reflections on John Paul II ' s Pastores Dabo Vobis," *Sage: International Journal of Christianity & Education* 12, no. 2 (2021): 1–13, https://doi.org/10.1177/20569971211008930.

[2] Yohanes Paulus II. *Pastores Dabo Vobis* terj. Hardawiryana. Jakarta: Departemen Dokumentasi dan Penerangan KWI, 1992).

[3] Gaspar Hernandez, "El Ministerio Apostólico a Los Treinta Años de Pastores Dabo Vobis," *Seminarios* 68, no. 232 (2023): 5–8.

[4] Yulianus Korain, "Cintakasih Pastoral Sebagai Jiwa Spiritualitas Imam Menurut Pastores Dabo Vobis," *Studia Philosophica et Theologica* 20, no. 1 (2020): 52–79, https://doi.org/10.35312/spet.v20i1.178.

[5] Avelinus Moat Simon, "Pengaruh Media Sosial Bagi Tugas Penggembalaan Imam Pada Era Revolusi Industri 4.0," *Studia Philosophica et Theologica* 19, no. 2 (2020): 190–212, https://doi.org/10.35312/spet.v19i2.177.

priesthood in contemporary circumstances.[6] Pasati (2023) discusses the theological vision and management of priestly formation in relation to the Ratio Fundamentalis.[7] These studies support the relevance of integrating spirituality, pastoral identity, and formation structures.

Other studies illuminate particular aspects rather than the full question addressed here. Baumann et al. (2019) examine spiritual dryness and celibacy through relational and psychosexual considerations, underscoring the importance of mature discernment and accompaniment.[8] Hankle (2010) studies psychological processes involved in discerning priestly vocation.[9] Walz (2021) reflects on study, truth, and personal formation in PDV,[10] while Gabriel and Moreira (2023) discuss the concern for priestly formation in recent Church teaching.[11] These works help clarify the formative and personal dimensions of priestly life, but their distinct aims should not be conflated with a comprehensive evaluation of the evangelical spirit of diocesan priesthood in Indonesia.

A correction is also necessary regarding Peters (2024). His article, "The Necessity of Monastic Asceticism: A Case for Retrieval in Contemporary Evangelicalism," addresses asceticism in Protestant evangelicalism.[12] The word "Evangelicalism" in that title does not refer to the Catholic theological category of the "evangelical counsels." It can therefore be used, if at all, only for a carefully delimited comparison concerning ascetic practice, not as direct evidence about Catholic priestly obedience, poverty, or celibacy.

Author / source	**Focus**	**Approach / type**	**Contribution**	**Limit in relation to this article**
Korain (2020)	Pastoral charity in PDV	Theological analysis	Shows charity as the animating principle of priestly spirituality	Does not develop a cross-dimensional evaluation matrix for formation in Indonesia
Simon (2020)	Social media and priestly ministry	Pastoral-contextual study	Identifies digital media as a pastoral consideration	Does not comprehensively analyze the evangelical counsels or the four formation dimensions
Tinambunan (2021)	Ongoing priestly formation	Theological-pastoral reflection	Highlights the continuing nature of formation	Does not focus primarily on obedience, poverty, and chastity as an integrated framework
Pasati (2023)	Theological vision and management of formation	Theological and formation-oriented discussion	Connects formation principles with institutional	The present article further specifies theological criteria and indicators linked to the

[6] Edison R.L. Tinambunan, "Formasi Berkelanjutan: Membermaknakan Kekinian Imamat," *Studia Philosophica et Theologica* 21, no. 1 (2021): 24–44, https://doi.org/10.35312/spet.v21i1.295.
[7] Yohanes Dwi Penta Pasati, "Visi Teologis dan Manajemen Pembinaan Calon Imam Berdasarkan Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis." *Felicitas* 3, no. 2 (2023): 89–104. https://doi.org/10.57079/feli.v3i2.108.
[8] Klaus Baumann et al., "Spiritual Dryness and Celibacy in Catholic Priests – Discernment of Ongoing Spiritual Journeys from Relational and Psychosexual Immaturities," *Pastoral Psychology* 68, no. 6 (2019): 605–17, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11089-019-00886-1.
[9] Dominick D. Hankle, "The Psychological Processes of Discerning the Vocation to the Catholic Priesthood: A Qualitative Study," *Pastoral Psychology* 59, no. 2 (2010): 201–19, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11089-008-0190-6.
[10] Walz, "Study , Truth , and Personal Formation : Reflections on John Paul II ' s Pastores Dabo Vobis."
[11] Andrés Gabriel and Ferrada Moreira, "La Preocupación Por La Formación Presbiteral En El Reciente Magisterio de La Iglesia," *Seminarios* 68, no. 232 (2023): 11–25, https://doi.org/10.52039/seminarios.v68vi232.2234.
[12] Greg Peters, "The Necessity of Monastic Asceticism: A Case for Retrieval in Contemporary Evangelicalism," *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 17, no. 1 (2024): 71–82, https://doi.org/10.1177/19397909231193759.

			organization	counsels
Baumann et al. (2019); Hankle (2010)	Celibacy, relational maturity, vocational discernment	Psychological / empirical studies	Draw attention to affective maturity and discernment	Different scope; cannot establish the condition of Indonesian seminaries as a whole
PDV; PO; LG; RFIS (2016)	Priestly identity and integral formation	Magisterial / normative sources	Provide authoritative criteria for theological evaluation	Require contextual interpretation and operational indicators

The gap is therefore not that PDV or the evangelical counsels have been ignored. Rather, the available literature considered here does not, in one integrated argument, distinguish the canonical status of diocesan priests from religious profession, interpret the counsels through pastoral charity, and translate this synthesis into evaluative criteria across the four dimensions of priestly formation for contextual use in Indonesia. This is a bounded claim based on the literature reviewed for this article, not a claim that no such study exists anywhere.

3.Findings and Discussion

3.1. Method: Theological Hermeneutics and Document Analysis

This study uses qualitative theological hermeneutics and analysis of ecclesial documents. Its principal source is PDV, read in conversation with Lumen Gentium (LG), Presbyterorum Ordinis (PO), Optatam Totius (OT), the Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis (RFIS, 2016), and relevant provisions of the Code of Canon Law. Secondary literature is used to contextualize specific themes, not to replace the interpretation of primary sources.

The corpus was selected according to three criteria: (1) authoritative Church documents that directly address priestly identity, holiness, formation, the evangelical counsels, or clerical obligations; (2) sources that clarify the distinction between diocesan priesthood and religious life; and (3) scholarly studies relevant to pastoral charity, ongoing formation, digital ministry, celibacy, and discernment. The central textual units are PDV 12–18 (priestly identity and ministry), 19–33 (spiritual life and the evangelical counsels), and 42–59 (integral formation); LG 10 and 39–44 (common priesthood and universal call to holiness); PO 12–17 (priestly holiness and obligations); and RFIS's account of integral and ongoing formation.

The analysis proceeds through four operations inspired by Bernard Lonergan's transcendental method: experience, understanding, judgment, and decision.[13] "Experience" here means attentive encounter with the selected texts and their historical-ecclesial setting, not fieldwork or interviews. "Understanding" identifies recurring theological categories: configuration to Christ, pastoral charity, obedience, poverty, celibacy, and the four dimensions of formation. "Judgment" evaluates their coherence and clarifies distinctions, especially between vows in religious life and the obligations of diocesan clergy. "Decision" formulates constructive implications and indicators for formation practice. This use of Lonergan is an interpretive structure, not a claim that the study has measured institutional outcomes.

For transparency, the principal analytical categories are: (a) Christological identity; (b) ecclesial and apostolic communion; (c) pastoral charity; (d) obedience; (e) evangelical poverty and simplicity; (f) celibate chastity and affective maturity; (g) human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation; and (h) contextual challenges. The synthesis is limited to normative theological evaluation. Since the study does not analyze seminary curricula, KWI policy documents, national vocation statistics, or interview data, it cannot establish that Indonesian

[13] Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972.

formation programs generally prioritize academics over spirituality, nor can it prove a nationwide crisis of priestly identity.

3.2. Theological Foundations: Priesthood, Holiness, and the Counsels

3.2.1 Common Priesthood and Ministerial Priesthood

A sound account of priestly formation begins with the relationship between the common priesthood of the baptized and the ministerial priesthood. LG 10 teaches that these forms of participation in Christ's priesthood differ essentially and not only in degree, while remaining ordered to one another. The New Testament's language also requires care: hiereus is not ordinarily the title for Christian presbyters in the New Testament; it is used for Christ's unique priesthood and, in a participatory sense, for the holy people (cf. 1 Pet. 2:9).[14] The term presbyteros, by contrast, belongs to the emerging vocabulary of ecclesial ministry. The ordained priest does not replace the priesthood of the baptized but serves the Church through the ministry entrusted to him.

PDV 15–16 describes priestly identity in terms of sacramental configuration to Christ the Head and Shepherd. The expression in persona Christi Capitis is therefore more precise than a general reference to acting "in the person of Christ": the priest serves sacramentally in Christ's name and for the Church, especially in the Eucharist, while his entire life is called to correspond to the pastoral form of Christ's self-giving. Ordination is not a privilege detached from service; it is a sacramental configuration that entails responsibility for communion, proclamation, sanctification, and pastoral care.[15]

3.3. The Evangelical Counsels and Diocesan Priesthood

The evangelical counsels are rooted in the Gospel's invitation to follow Christ. LG 39–44 situates the universal call to holiness within the life of the Church and gives particular attention to the evangelical counsels in consecrated life. For diocesan priests, however, the language must be applied with theological and canonical precision. Members of religious institutes publicly profess vows according to their constitutions; diocesan priests do not ordinarily make the same religious profession. Nevertheless, PDV 27–30 and PO 15–17 teach that priests are to live the evangelical spirit of obedience, poverty, and chastity in a way proper to their ordained ministry.

This distinction changes how "poverty" should be described. For a diocesan priest, it is not ordinarily a religious vow but a Gospel-shaped detachment, a simple way of life, responsible stewardship, and solidarity with the poor.[16] Canon 282 §1 directs clerics to simplicity of life and avoidance of what smacks of vanity; §2 calls them to use surplus goods for the good of the Church and works of charity. Likewise, canon 273 requires clerics to show reverence and obedience to the Supreme Pontiff and their own ordinary, while canon 277 addresses continence and celibacy for clerics in the Latin Church. These are not interchangeable with the public vows of religious institutes.

Celibacy also needs a precise account. In the Latin Church, celibacy is an ecclesiastical discipline and a commitment required of candidates admitted to the presbyterate under the applicable norms; it is not simply one optional counsel alongside poverty and obedience.[17] PDV

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[14] Surip Stanislaus and Parningotan Kevin Mahulae, "Kesetiaan & Pengharapan Dalam Krisis Panggilan Kenabian Uraian Eksegetis Dan Refleksi Teologis Yer 15:10-21," *Logos Jurnal Filsafat Teologi* 23, no. 1 (2026): 112–24.

[15] Yanto Kristoforus Kansil, "Martabat Dan Tugas Imam Menurut De Ordinatione Episcopi, Presbyterorum, et Diaconorum. Pontificale Romanum (1968)," *Media Jurnal Filsafat Dan Teologi* 1, no. 1 (2020): 23–47.

[16] Yahya Wijaya, "Kepemimpinan Yesus Sebagai Acuan Bagi Kepemimpinan Gereja Masa Kini," *Jurnal Jaffray* 16, no. 2 (2018): 129, https://doi.org/10.25278/jj71.v16i2.287.

[17] Kansil, "Martabat Dan Tugas Imam Menurut De Ordinatione Episcopi, Presbyterorum, et Diaconorum. Pontificale Romanum (1968)."

29 nevertheless interprets celibacy theologically as a gift and sign of undivided dedication to Christ and the Church. Its spiritual meaning must be accompanied by human and affective maturity, prudent relationships, prayer, fraternity, and ongoing accompaniment. This avoids both reducing celibacy to a rule and treating it as though it were identical to a religious vow.

3.4. Pastoral Charity as the Integrating Principle

PDV 23 describes spiritual life as an essential element of priestly ministry, and PDV 27–30 relates the evangelical counsels to the priest's spiritual life. Pastoral charity gives these dimensions their unity. Obedience without charity can deteriorate into passivity or authoritarian compliance; poverty without charity can become performative austerity; and celibacy without charity can be reduced to mere prohibition or isolation.[18] Integrated with pastoral charity, they become forms of self-gift that shape the priest's relationship with God, the bishop and presbyterium, the poor, and the wider community.

The theological pattern is Christological and paschal. Philippians 2:5–8 presents Christ's self-emptying and obedience unto death; Matthew 19:21 connects detachment from possessions with following Jesus; and the Gospel narratives portray Jesus' undivided availability for the mission of the Father. These passages are read here as theological foundations, not as proof that the New Testament presents diocesan clergy as having professed religious vows. The priest's task is to embody the Gospel's form of life within the specific vocation and obligations of ordained ministry.

3.5. Reading the Counsels as a Formation Process

3.5.1. Obedience: Apostolic, Communal, and Pastoral

According to PDV 28, priestly obedience is not merely administrative submission. It is apostolic because it serves the mission received from Christ; communal because it is lived in communion with the bishop and presbyterium; and pastoral because it directs the priest toward the good of the People of God. Canon 273 gives this obedience a concrete ecclesial form. Yet obedience must not be confused with uncritical compliance that suppresses conscience or legitimate dialogue. Properly formed obedience includes listening, discernment, accountability, willingness to collaborate, and a readiness to receive assignments for the Church's mission.[19]

In formation, obedience should therefore be cultivated through communal decision-making appropriate to each stage, reflection on pastoral assignments, honest dialogue with formators, and learning to receive correction without defensiveness. An evaluative indicator is not simply whether a seminarian follows rules, but whether he can explain the ecclesial purpose of a decision, cooperate responsibly, raise concerns appropriately, and place personal preference in dialogue with the mission of the Church. For ordained priests, fraternity with the bishop and presbyterium remains a lifelong practice rather than a competency completed at ordination.

3.5.2. Evangelical Poverty: Simplicity, Stewardship, and Solidarity

Evangelical poverty for diocesan priests is best understood as freedom from possessiveness and status-seeking, expressed through simplicity, transparent stewardship, and solidarity with people who experience economic vulnerability.[20] It does not require romanticizing deprivation or neglecting legitimate needs for health, rest, and adequate living conditions. Nor does it deny the material resources required for pastoral service. Its criterion is whether possessions and

[18] Wijaya, "Kepemimpinan Yesus Sebagai Acuan Bagi Kepemimpinan Gereja Masa Kini."
[19] Baumann et al., "Spiritual Dryness and Celibacy in Catholic Priests – Discernment of Ongoing Spiritual Journeys from Relational and Psychosexual Immaturities."
[20] Walz, "Study , Truth , and Personal Formation : Reflections on John Paul II ' s Pastores Dabo Vobis."

resources remain ordered to ministry, communion, and charity rather than becoming sources of privilege or control.

In the Indonesian context, economic circumstances differ significantly among dioceses, parishes, and regions. The article therefore avoids generalizations about priests' living standards. Instead, it proposes questions for local discernment: Are parish and personal finances managed transparently? Does the priest's lifestyle remain intelligible in relation to the community he serves? Are resources shared responsibly? Do pastoral priorities include people experiencing poverty, exclusion, or displacement? These questions make simplicity observable without turning poverty into a superficial aesthetic or assuming that every local context is the same.

3.5.3. Celibate Chastity: Affective Maturity and Pastoral Integrity

PDV 29 places celibacy within a theological vision of undivided dedication. Such dedication is credible only when integrated with human maturity. Chastity involves the ordering of desire, respect for the dignity and freedom of others, the capacity for friendship, healthy boundaries, and non-manipulative pastoral relationships. It is not hostility toward sexuality or emotional life. A formation process that speaks about celibacy only in prohibitive terms risks neglecting the affective and relational capacities needed for faithful ministry.

Studies on celibacy and spiritual dryness suggest that spiritual, relational, and psychosexual dimensions require careful discernment and accompaniment.[21] These studies do not establish the prevalence of any particular problem among Indonesian priests, but they support the need for formation that integrates prayer, self-knowledge, emotional literacy, supervision, fraternity, and access to appropriate professional support. Digital environments add questions about privacy, boundaries, attention, and the management of online relationships. These are legitimate formation topics, although the available documentary method cannot determine how widely particular digital risks occur.

3.5.4. One Formation, Four Interrelated Dimensions

PDV 43–59 and the RFIS present formation as integral, bringing together the human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral dimensions. These dimensions are not separate tracks that can be evaluated in isolation. Human formation provides the basis for responsible relationships and freedom; spiritual formation deepens communion with Christ; intellectual formation enables theological judgment; and pastoral formation prepares the candidate to serve real communities. The evangelical counsels should be cultivated across all four.

Formation dimension	Connection with the counsels	Possible indicator	Formative practice
Human	Affective integration, responsible freedom, mature relationships	Can articulate emotions and boundaries; demonstrates reliability and respectful conduct	Accompaniment, community life, reflection, appropriate psychological support
Spiritual	Prayer, sacramental life, discernment, union with Christ	Regular and reflective prayer; connects spiritual discernment with choices and service	Spiritual direction, Scripture, Eucharist, retreat, examen
Intellectual	Theological understanding of priesthood, celibacy, stewardship, obedience	Explains the theological and canonical distinctions accurately	Integrated courses, case analysis, theological reflection
Pastoral	Communion, service, simplicity, care for vulnerable people	Receives feedback; collaborates; handles resources transparently; respects boundaries	Supervised ministry, pastoral review, community engagement

[21] Agustina Jenatte Idal Eka and Yudi Tri Harsono, "Gambaran Regulasi Diri Dorongan Seksual Imam Katolik," *Gadjah Mada Journal of Psychology (GamaJoP)* 10, no. 1 (2024): 71, https://doi.org/10.22146/gamajop.75262.

These indicators are proposals for local adaptation, not validated instruments or claims about existing Indonesian seminary practice. They are intended to help formators connect the normative language of Church documents with practices that can be discussed, observed, and reviewed over time.

3.5.5. Contextual Evaluation for the Indonesian Catholic Church

The Indonesian context should not be treated as a single, uniform pastoral environment. Cultural expectations surrounding the social status of priests, family hopes, local economic conditions, religious diversity, and the realities of digital communication may vary across dioceses and communities. Such factors can shape how candidates imagine priesthood and how priests experience ministry, but their effects require local study rather than assumption. A responsible theological evaluation distinguishes contextual questions from empirical findings.

Three areas are especially relevant for contextual discernment. First, public esteem for priests can support vocation but can also create pressure to associate ministry with prestige or authority. Formation should therefore cultivate servant leadership and accountability, not merely public performance. Second, unequal economic circumstances require a nuanced practice of simplicity and stewardship: a priest's living arrangements and resources should be assessed in relation to legitimate pastoral needs, transparency, and solidarity, not by a uniform external standard. Third, digital communication creates opportunities for evangelization and connection while raising questions about attention, privacy, boundaries, and the performance of identity. Simon (2020) offers a relevant Indonesian discussion of social media and priestly pastoral ministry, but further empirical work is needed to establish how particular patterns affect formation and ministry.[22]

Pluralism is another important setting. In a religiously diverse society, the counsels can support a form of priestly presence characterized by dialogue, restraint in the exercise of power, and solidarity across social boundaries. Obedience becomes service to ecclesial communion rather than factional loyalty; poverty becomes responsible solidarity rather than contempt for material goods; and celibacy becomes a sign of freely offered availability rather than social distance. These interpretations connect priestly spirituality with public credibility without reducing the priesthood to a social function.

A critical evaluation must also acknowledge the limits of PDV as a document published in 1992. Its theological foundations remain substantial, but new pastoral conditions especially digital communication, safeguarding, contemporary understandings of psychological accompaniment, and the emphasis on synodality require careful application and further development. The document should not be treated as a ready-made operational manual for every contemporary issue. Rather, it supplies theological principles that must be interpreted alongside later universal norms, local Church guidelines, and evidence from the actual formation context.

The present article does not conclude that seminaries in Indonesia generally privilege academic or administrative achievement over spirituality. Such a conclusion would require analysis of current curricula, formation policies, institutional reports, and interviews with seminarians, formators, and recently ordained priests. It likewise makes no claim that modernity has been proven to cause a national crisis of priestly spirituality. The more defensible conclusion is that contemporary social and digital changes raise questions to which formation must respond through discernment, integral development, and ongoing evaluation.

[22] Simon, "Pengaruh Media Sosial Bagi Tugas Penggembalaan Imam Pada Era Revolusi Industri 4.0."

3.6. A Constructive Framework: Identity, Charity, Counsels, and Evaluation

The constructive contribution of this study can be expressed as a four-part framework. First, Christological identity is the theological foundation: the priest is sacramentally configured to Christ the Head and Shepherd (PDV 15–16). Second, pastoral charity is the integrating principle that directs the priest's whole life toward the service of God's people (PDV 23). Third, obedience, evangelical poverty, and celibate chastity are concrete patterns through which this identity and charity become visible in ecclesial life (PDV 27–30; PO 15–17). Fourth, the four dimensions of formation provide the developmental structure through which these patterns are learned, practiced, accompanied, and evaluated (PDV 43–59; RFIS 2016).

- Foundation — Christological identity: the candidate learns to understand priesthood as participation in Christ's mission, not as status or self-realization alone.
- Integrating principle — pastoral charity: prayer, decisions, relationships, use of resources, and ministry are assessed according to their orientation toward the good of the Church and the people served.
- Formative practices — obedience, simplicity, and celibate chastity: these are developed through discernment, stewardship, affective integration, communal life, and supervised pastoral experience.
- Evaluation — four dimensions: human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation are reviewed together, using narrative feedback and locally appropriate indicators.

The framework can be applied cyclically. At the beginning of a formation stage, formators identify goals connected to the four dimensions. During formation, spiritual direction, community life, academic work, and pastoral placements provide opportunities for practice. Periodic reviews gather observations from more than one setting and invite the candidate's own reflection. The team then discerns strengths, areas requiring support, and the next formative steps. The process repeats rather than treating a single evaluation as a definitive judgment about a person's vocation.

Possible implementation involves the rector and formation team, spiritual director, pastoral supervisors, the candidate, and where appropriate and with clear boundaries psychological professionals. These roles are complementary rather than interchangeable: spiritual direction attends to the person's relationship with God; the formation team evaluates readiness for the next stage; pastoral supervisors assess ministerial practice; and professional support addresses needs within its competence. Confidentiality and clear role boundaries are essential.

At the institutional level, this framework can be aligned with the RFIS and applicable KWI and diocesan guidelines. Before adoption, a seminary or diocese should map its current program against the four dimensions, specify observable indicators, determine who is responsible for review, and establish how findings inform individual accompaniment and program development. This article proposes that process but does not claim that a particular Indonesian institution has already implemented it.

4. Conclusion

The first research question asked how PDV interprets the evangelical counsels in priestly formation. The analysis shows that obedience, evangelical poverty, and celibate chastity must be read in relation to the priest's sacramental configuration to Christ the Head and Shepherd and integrated by pastoral charity. Their meaning is not exhausted by external observance: obedience is apostolic, communal, and pastoral; poverty is expressed in simplicity, stewardship, and solidarity; and celibate chastity requires mature, freely embraced self-gift. These commitments

must be distinguished from the public vows of religious institutes, even while sharing an evangelical orientation.

The second question asked how this teaching can inform formation in Indonesia. The article proposes that the counsels be integrated across the human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral dimensions of formation, with indicators adapted to local ecclesial and cultural contexts. The proposed framework Christological identity, pastoral charity, the counsels, and integral evaluation offers a practical bridge between magisterial principles and formation practice. It highlights contextual questions related to public status, economic difference, religious pluralism, and digital communication without presenting them as uniform or empirically established problems.

The study's principal limitation is its documentary scope. It cannot establish the prevalence of a spiritual crisis, evaluate the actual performance of Indonesian seminaries, or substantiate claims about national trends in vocation. Future research should compare formation policies and curricula, examine relevant KWI and diocesan documents, and conduct qualitative interviews with candidates, formators, and young priests in different ecclesial settings. Such work could test and refine the proposed indicators. The theological conclusion remains that priestly formation is most coherent when identity in Christ, pastoral charity, and the evangelical spirit are cultivated as one integrated process of lifelong conversion and service.

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