

## GENERAL FORMATION PROGRAM SOCIETY OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

### **General Observations**

1. The “Congregation of Missionaries of the Most Precious Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ” (C.P.P.S.) is a Society of Apostolic Life founded by St. Gaspar del Bufalo that includes both priest and brother members.
2. The spirituality of the Blood of Christ is central to their identity as members and is at the heart of their spiritual, community and apostolic life. The Eucharist is a privileged moment for celebrating their spirituality and from the Eucharistic table the members take the courage to proclaim the liberating and redeeming love of God in the Blood of Christ. The members are called to promote the kingdom of God through the apostolic and missionary activity of the ministry of the Word (C3).
3. The Society invites others who are called by God to share in this missionary task and provides for their formation in an environment which facilitates the candidate’s growth to maturity and fullness of life in Christ.
4. This maturity requires a formation that addresses all the dimensions of the person: human, Christian, communitarian and apostolic. It likewise promotes the development of values conducive to living and proclaiming the Gospel.
5. Basic formation for membership in the Society is the same for priesthood and for brother candidates, since all members are called to life in community and to share in its apostolates.
6. The task of formation takes place within the concrete cultural, social, political and ecclesial reality. This context challenges and enriches the entire formative process.

### **GOALS AND VALUES IN FORMATION**

7. The Society values and affirms the documents of the Church which call for the human and spiritual development of the candidates. Among those documents which serve to orientate our formation process are: current orientations issued by the Magisterium of the Church concerning formation of priests and religious, the Instructions of the respective National Conference of Bishops, National Conferences of Religious, our Normative Texts, and our C.P.P.S. Formation Program.
8. Some of the values to be developed during the formation process include: honesty and truth, capacity for self-disclosure, ability to listen and to value other’s perspectives, ability to live in community, a deep appreciation of personal and community prayer, a capacity to live a simple life-style, the evangelical counsel of celibate life and love, self-denial, compassion, social

awareness, solidarity with the world, concern for justice, endurance under difficulties, cross-cultural sensitivity, a capacity for collaborative ministry with laity and with religious women and men, initiative in ministry, obedience, and a respect for C.PP.S. traditions.

9. Along with those qualities of life required by the Church for all ordained or consecrated ministers and members of Institutes of Apostolic Life, the Society calls for a distinctive formation which develops those qualities and virtues seen as enabling the candidate to share in the mission of the Society.

10. One of the essential goals of the formation program is to discover and to appropriate our C.PP.S. identity. Some of the distinctive sources wherein members discover their identity as Missionaries of the Precious Blood are: the spirituality of the Blood of Christ; the missionary charism; the life of St. Gaspar; the Normative Texts; and their community history. These distinctive sources need to be utilized at all levels of formation, especially in the period of Special Formation, in order to shape C.PP.S. identity.

### **STAGES OF FORMATION**

11. Each province is encouraged to develop a vocational promotion program and to designate the personnel needed for the Vocation Ministry. All prospective candidates, assisted by the vocation personnel, are to undergo a process of discernment before entrance into the INITIAL PREPARATION stage of formation.

During this period of inquiry, the candidate undergoes assessment through comprehensive interviews and psychological testing to discern if he is suited for life in an apostolic institute.

12. The formation program within the Society has three principal stages: INITIAL PREPARATION, SPECIALADVANCED, and CONTINUED. The formation in these three areas is to be progressive and adequate to the stage in which the candidate is living.

### **INITIAL PREPARATION**

13. In this stage, mentioned in article S19 of the Normative Texts, an individual prepares for entrance as a candidate of the Society. Some of the elements stressed during this period of formation are:

- a) Growth in human and religious development and in basic Gospel values;
- b) Initiation in spiritual direction, liturgical life, and the celebration of the sacraments;
- c) Identification of the individual's gifts, as well as his strengths and weaknesses;
- d) Development of personal prayer life and initiation into community prayer;
- e) Introduction into community life;
- f) Basic introduction into the patrimony of the Society;
- g) Gradual involvement in apostolic formation according to age and previous pastoral experience.

## **SPECIAL-ADVANCED**

14. Referring to C35 and C38 of the Normative Texts, this is a stage that in some provinces is done separately or simultaneously.

### **SPECIAL**

It is a definitive period of time prior to incorporation into the Society in which the candidate undergoes a special program of religious formation to deepen his spiritual life and to experience more intensely the Paschal Mystery. Special attention is given to:

- a) The patrimony of our Society: the theology and the spirituality of the Blood of Christ, the missionary charism, the life of St. Gaspar, the Society's history and its Normative Texts. The candidate is urged to confront this Patrimony within his cultural, social, political and ecclesial context in order to discover its vitality in today's world;
- b) The experience of community living on a local level and a practical knowledge of the apostolates of the Society;
- c) The deepening of the "Bond of Charity" which forms the foundation for our common life;
- d) The celebration of the Sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation which hold a central place in the life and development of the community.

### **ADVANCED**

In this period of training, the individual deepens his formation and education necessary to enable him to be a part of the life and mission of the Society, and he refines more clearly his identity as a future priest or brother.

- a) Preparation for priestly ministry in the Society is to be given at a seminary or school of theology which meets the needs both of the Society and of the candidate.
- b) Brother members are entitled to all the preparation and professional or vocational training necessary for their ministry in the Society.
- c) Special attention is given to preparation for the Ministry of the Word.
- d) A growing integration of the individual's gifts into the Society's ministries is sought.
- e) The member is gradually introduced into the apostolates of the Society and of the local Church.
- f) The member discerns his entrance into the mission of the Society as a priest or brother.

### **CONTINUED FORMATION**

15. Special support is given to the recently ordained priests and definitively incorporated brothers as they begin their ministries. The on going formation of all members is essential. Therefore, opportunities are afforded to the membership for continued growth in our Patrimony, in theological study, in spirituality, and in pastoral skills which enrich them as persons and which enhance their ministry.

## **FORMATIVE ELEMENTS**

16. Each Province designates the personnel needed to accompany the candidates in their process of formation throughout the various stages. These designated persons are afforded an

adequate on going formation in those skills and understandings needed to accompany and to guide the candidates; namely, in the area of human development, the spiritual life, pastoral skills, and the C.P.P.S. Patrimony.

17. The Formators enable the candidates to discern God's call by providing a Gospel-based environment that is open to faith and sharing.

18. Formators need to be persons with a capacity to listen, to communicate, and to challenge the candidate to growth. He respects the individual's needs and stages of growth and knows how to integrate them with the needs and rhythms of the community.

19. Throughout the formation process, the formator facilitates peer group interaction as an important formative element.

20. Spiritual direction plays a significant role in helping the candidate discern his vocation and deepen his spiritual life and his commitment to following Christ in the Society.

21. Given that we are called to minister to and with lay people and are in turn ministered to by them, it is encouraged that the wisdom and the perspectives of the laity be integrated into the Formation Program.

22. Even though there is a formation team directly involved in the day-to-day accompaniment of the candidates, the task of formation is the responsibility of the entire community. All members are called to be a part of the "formative community" who give witness in their lives and create a hospitable and inviting atmosphere wherein the candidates feel motivated to respond to God's call to community and to ministry as members of the Society of the Precious Blood.

*Approved at the meeting of the Moderator General and General Council with the Major Superiors---January 14, 1992, Valdivia, Chile*

Observations:

Each Province is authorized to translate this General Formation Program using its own terminology.