

## Priesthood Exam – Study Guide for Candidates

The candidate is to be examined on his knowledge of the nature and role of the Presbyter in the Roman Catholic Church, and on his ability to explain how that knowledge may be employed in pastoral situations. The successful candidate will :

- a) communicate simply, accurately, and effectively the theological tradition of the Roman Catholic Church [DSPT MDiv Outcome 1];
- b) analyze and assess ministerial/apostolic situations through scriptural, historical, and systematic theological approaches, according to the theological tradition of the Roman Catholic Church [DSPT MDiv Outcome 3];
- c) articulate clearly how he will fulfill his responsibilities with the moral, intellectual, psychological, and emotional maturity that grounds vigorous discipleship of Christ and priestly service to others [DSPT MDiv Outcome 4];
- d) understand the role of the priest in leading a faith community in prayer, worship and theological reflection, centered on the Eucharist, respecting both the liturgical tradition of the Church and the pastoral needs of the local community [DSPT MDiv Outcome 5];
- e) apply the principles of Catholic and Thomistic theology (including systematic, moral, spiritual, canonical, and pastoral principles) to ministerial/apostolic situations [DSPT MDiv Outcome 6];
- f) articulate clearly the role of the priest in both leading and working collaboratively with others in a just, charitable, and generous manner, respecting the relevant cultural, social, and ecclesial circumstances, all the while maintaining professional, ethical boundaries [DSPT MDiv Outcome 7].

The candidate's responses are to be doctrinally sound and pastorally focused, reflecting moral, intellectual, psychological, and emotional maturity.

### 1. The sacraments in general

- Explain the relation of the sacraments to Christ.
- Explain the teaching of the Church that all of the sacraments were instituted by Christ. (Trent, Seventh Session, March 3, 1547)
- Can one be saved without the explicit reception of the sacraments?

### 2. Priesthood

- What are the duties and responsibilities of ordained presbyteral ministry as found in the document *Presbyterorum Ordinis*?
- Explain the important implications of the Church's teaching (particularly in *Presbyterorum Ordinis* and in *Pastores Dabo Vobis*) that the priesthood concerns not only the priest's function (his ministry) but also the priest's being (his life).
- What is the relationship between Holy Orders and the common priesthood of all believers?
- Explain how the priest's action *in Persona Christi Capitis* distinguishes it from others' roles in

the Church.

- Give some theological justification for the particularly hierarchical character of the ordained ministry in the Catholic Church.
- Why is ordination reserved to males alone?
- What is the relation of celibacy to ordination? What are the reasons (theological) for requiring celibacy for candidates for priesthood?

### **3. Matrimony**

- Explain the theology of matrimony.
- Explain who the minister of matrimony is.
- What are the requirements for validity of the sacrament?
- Review the impediments to matrimony.
- Explain what is meant by “dispensation” and the types of dispensation.
- Explain the meaning and practicalities of delegation.

### **4. Eucharist**

- Explain the meaning of transubstantiation and the belief in the real presence of Christ in this sacrament.
- In what way is the Eucharist both a meal and a sacrifice?
- Review the rubrics for the celebration of the Eucharist.
- Explain the matter and form of this sacrament.

### **5. The Sacrament of Reconciliation**

- Recite the words of absolution.
- Briefly trace the historical development of the practice of this sacrament.
- Explain what is meant by the seal of confession.
- Explain why, if God is the one who forgives sins, it is necessary to confess one’s sins to another human person.
- Explain how sins may be forgiven without the explicit reception of this sacrament.
- Explain what it means to have “faculties” to hear confession. From whom does one receive faculties?
- Explain procedures for absolution from censures and excommunication.

## **6. Anointing of the Sick**

- Explain the purpose and nature of this sacrament. What are its primary and secondary effects? For whom is the sacrament intended? What are the guidelines on how often this sacrament may be received? What changes in the Church's understanding of this sacrament have occurred since Vatican II? How would you explain these changes to a lay person?
- Recite the words used in administering the anointing.
- List the elements of the rite of this sacrament, in order. How can the rite be adapted depending on circumstances, such as the stamina of the recipient?
- How would you respond to questions surrounding suffering and death? (For example, what would you say if asked by a recipient of this sacrament, "Why am I suffering?")

## **7. Others**

- Explain the church law on Mass stipends and stole fees, as well the particular legislation of the candidate's sponsoring body. In particular, what rules apply to those who trinate, either for pastoral necessity or on Christmas or All Souls day?
- Explain what is necessary for a priest to witness a marriage (validly), as well as which impediments can and cannot be dispensed.
- Explain the current legislation and practice concerning faculties to hear confessions, including the principle of the "common error."
- When may a Christian not in communion with the Holy See receive Catholic communion?