

some limitations are inevitable and do not detract in the least from its success in achieving its ambition to “serve as a primer to engender conversations about this approach in both the church and academy” (13).

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Seminary Formation: Recent History—Current Circumstances—New Directions.

By Katarina Schuth, OSF. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2016. xx + 191 pages. \$24.95.

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Few scholars rival Katarina Schuth’s knowledge of Catholic seminary formation and its changing patterns over the past fifty years. In *Seminary Formation: Recent History—Current Circumstances—New Directions* she brings this knowledge to bear in a manner that is balanced, historically contextualized, and insightful in its reading of pedagogical, theological, and cultural currents. History and context are essential for an understanding of where Catholic seminaries stand and where they are headed, and an opening chapter focusing on the developments that have taken place in seminary formation since the end of the Second Vatican Council provides a framework for the rest of Schuth’s book, both fitting the past five decades into the broader spectrum of the history of the formation of priests, and establishing a launching point to address how such formation can be strengthened to attain the vision of priestly formation articulated at Vatican II.

The next two chapters outline the remarkable diversity of enrollment patterns among lay candidates and diocesan and religious seminarians, as well as the changing dynamics of faculty and governance structures in American seminaries. Schuth’s description of these is helpful in that she explains the connection between the structure of seminaries’ enrollment, leadership, and oversight and the gradually changing missions they serve. She notes in particular an increased focus in mission statements during Pope John Paul II’s pontificate on priestly identity and formation being distinct from lay ministry formation. Schuth writes that these statements “reveal a continuing uneasiness ... about how to best prepare both priesthood candidates and those lay men and women seeking formation for ministry.” Consequently, there is an “often underdeveloped opportunity to create environments in which the distinctive needs and vocational outlooks of seminarians and lay students can become a powerful resource ... in the critical work of proclaiming the Good News” (41). Schuth thus identifies root factors and

trends at the foundation of seminary formation and traces their relevance at the ecclesial level far beyond seminary campuses.

In her fourth chapter Schuth offers a carefully documented description of the substantial decline in American seminarian numbers from the late 1960s to the present. She also offers a snapshot of current seminarians, noting that factors such as the theological, liturgical, and personal perspectives of seminarians, as well as the number of seminarians who speak English as a second language, will have an impact on the future shape of Catholicism in America. Steering clear of simplistic explanations, Schuth notes not only the empirical data concerning projected numbers of future priests and lay ministers, but the corresponding challenge of finding ground for collaborative ministry after formation, which increasingly separates seminarians from lay students.

The fifth and sixth chapters are given to an analysis of the *Program of Priestly Formation (PPF)*, noting how contemporary seminary formation follows a pattern established in Pope John Paul II's 1992 schema *Pastores Dabo Vobis*. Schuth's explanation of the *PPF* would be especially helpful for Catholics and other readers unfamiliar with the workings of seminaries but interested in gaining an understanding of how priests are trained. Schuth points to societal and familial changes regarding religion, variation in the educational and personal backgrounds of seminarians, and the often limited understanding of human maturity and ecclesial teaching on the part of seminarians among the challenges that the *PPF* seeks to address. Changing approaches to the issues of celibacy, healthy relationships with women, and mature friendships, as well as the evolving nature of seminary academic curricula are described and connected to the future pastoral ministry of priests.

Schuth introduces her seventh and final chapter, "New Directions," and then bows out of the picture, leaving her work to be extended by five essays by contributors experienced in seminary formation. Focusing on the keys of generational differences being overcome through respectful listening and dialogue, awareness of cultural change as a factor in formation and ministry, the danger of a growing gap between seminarians and lay ministry students, and encouraging a good dose of humility on all parts, these essays carry Schuth's work forward on a hope-filled note, complementing her own wealth of experience with the views of others. In all, Schuth has produced an informative work that puts in perspective the challenges and needs of seminary formation in the coming decades.

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