

## LETTERS TO PROVINCIALS - 2008-2014

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DIREZIONE GENERALE OPERE DON BOSCO  
Via della Pisana 1111 - 00163 Roma

*Il Consigliere generale per la formazione*

Rome, 5th March 2013  
Prot. 13/0061

To the **Reverend Provincials**  
at their respective addresses

*For information*

To the **Reverend Provincial Formation Delegates**  
at their respective addresses

**Subject: Fourth year studies for the Theology students at Gerini**

Dear Provincials,

I am writing to you in connection with the fourth year studies of the students who form part of the “Zeffirino Namuncurà” community of Gerini and frequent the Faculty of Theology of the UPS.

Noting a lack of theological and pastoral preparation, the GC26 had issued the following guideline: “*Let the Rector Major with his Council encourage, through the Formation Department, a more consistent theological and pastoral preparation in curricula for specific formation*” (GC26 40). Accordingly, after consulting the Faculty of Theology of the UPS, the Vice-Province, the formation community and the “Curatorium” of Gerini, the Rector Major with the General Council took the decision to pay special attention to pastoral theology for the fourth year students of Gerini.

After a trial period of two years, it seems right to spell out more clearly the aims and the proposal concerning the studies of the 4th year. In what follows I am presenting to you the ways that are considered appropriate for carrying out the fourth year of theological studies.

The intellectual formation of the student confreres of the 4th year of the Rome “Gerini” community has a twofold *aim*:

1. Since the Church requires four years of the study of theology for the formation of its priests, and since pastoral theology is lacking in the first three years of the Baccalaureate, the first aim of the 4th year is to complete the study of theology by giving space to pastoral theology; as a matter of fact, the norms of “Sapientia Christiana” require that the study of theology in Theological Faculties be accomplished in three years only.
2. The second aim is to evolve a methodology that will enable one to carry out a pastoral reading of situations and devise a suitable pastoral strategy for dealing with them.

Here is an outline of the *proposal* for the study of pastoral theology:

### **1. Basic obligatory activities for all**

*Courses arranged specifically for deacons*

Salesian youth ministry 3 ECTS

Homiletics 3 ECTS

Pastoral ministry of the Sacrament of Penance 3 ECTS

*Courses offered from other curricula of the Faculty of Theology*

Youth ministry 6 ECTS

Fundamental catechetics 5 ECTS

Spiritual accompaniment of the young 5 ECTS

### **2. With the basic obligatory activities assured, there open up two possibilities:**

**A first possibility** is enrolment in the 1st year of a Licentiate in a curriculum of the Faculty of Theology or in the three-year curriculum of a Licentiate in Canon Law.

All the curricula of the Faculty of Theology are of a two-year duration: youth ministry, catechetics, pastoral ministry concerning the Bible and the liturgy, dogmatic theology, spiritual theology - salesian studies, spiritual theology – youth spirituality, spiritual theology - formation of formation guides and vocation animators. The Provincial, in dialogue with his student confrere, chooses one of these curricula.

Courses of basic obligatory activities drawn from other curricula, such as courses in youth ministry, fundamental catechetics and spiritual accompaniment can, in the judgment of the Directors of the curriculum chosen, be considered optional courses in the same curriculum. In addition to the curricula of a Licentiate in the Faculty of Theology, a three-year curriculum of a Licentiate in Canon Law can be chosen, in line with the aforesaid conditions.

**A second possibility** is enrolment in a Diploma course in pastoral theology.

The Diploma is of a one-year duration and offers the possibility of an integrated vision of the special disciplines of pastoral theology; this Diploma is advisable for those who do not immediately continue their studies for a Licentiate at the UPS. In the attachment you will find a presentation of this Diploma course.

Concretely speaking, the 4th year students will have to frequent the basic activities obligatory for all; and decide with their Provincial whether (1) to enrol in the “*First year of the Licentiate programme mentioned above*”, which would mean continuing their stay at the UPS after their priestly ordination to complete the two-year or three-year programme; or (2) to pursue a “*Diploma in pastoral theology*”, after which they would reenter their respective Provinces and continue with a Licentiate later on.

Pastoral activities form part of the formation programme and are the responsibility of the formation community; attention will be paid to the exercise of the diaconal ministry, not only with regard to aspects of the service of the Word and the liturgy, but also with regard the task of guidance and “leadership” of the community.

I thank you for your attention and greet you cordially.

Fr. Francis Cereda

## **ATTACHMENT**

### **DIPLOMA IN PASTORAL THEOLOGY**

#### **Initial remarks**

1. Beginning with the academic year 2011-2012, the Faculty of Theology has started a Diploma course in pastoral theology for the purpose of completing the theological and pastoral preparation of

candidates to the priesthood (cfr. *Sapientia Christiana* Art. 74.§1.2; *Statutes of the UPS* Art. 75.§3).

2. *Enrolment* in the Diploma course in pastoral theology in the Faculty of Theology of the UPS “requires the presentation of authentic proof of all the studies completed in the first cycle of studies and the marks obtained in each exam. The Diploma at the end of the course is conferred only on students who have concluded the first cycle of theological studies and secured the related academic degree of Baccalaureate” (*Ord.* Art. 150.§3).

3. The Diploma course in pastoral theology has *its own programme of studies*, aimed at an integration of the studies of the first cycle, particularly for what concerns pastoral theology (*Ord.* art. 151.§2).

### **Objective of the Diploma**

The aim of the Diploma course in pastoral theology is to offer a basic theological and pastoral preparation in view of the priestly ministry, by integrating it with courses offered for specializations in the Faculty of Theology of the UPS.

### **Courses of the Diploma**

1. To complete their formation for priestly ordination with the help of the Diploma in pastoral theology, students agree with the Dean of the Faculty of Theology on a *personalized study plan*, which comprises some obligatory courses known as *basic activities* and other complementary courses of their choice known as *specific activities*, to be taken in each semester, in compatibility with the schedule and without overlapping.

2. The basic activities comprise 25 ECTS; the specific activities are chosen from the curricula of the 2nd cycle of the Faculty of Theology and add up to a total of at least 25 ECTS. These courses are academically valid.

3. During the 4th year, pastoral activities are carried out, with attention focused on exercising the diaconate; these activities are the responsibility of the formation community. At the end of the year the student must present a *paper, 10-15 pages in length*, which he prepares under the guidance of a professor and which relates to the pastoral activities he has carried out in the light of the courses he has frequented; the paper is worth 10 ECTS.

4. The one responsible for the year of the *Diploma course in pastoral theology* is the Dean of the Faculty of Theology.

5. The *courses* necessary for obtaining the Diploma in pastoral theology are the following:

#### ***Basic obligatory activities: 25 ECTS***

These are the ones described in the letter above, and consist of the following courses:

##### *Courses organized specifically for deacons*

Salesian youth ministry 3 ECTS

Homiletics 3 ECTS

Pastoral ministry of the Sacrament of Penance 3 ECTS

##### *Courses offered from other curricula of the Faculty of Theology*

Youth ministry 6 ECTS

Fundamental catechetics 5 ECTS

Spiritual accompaniment of the young 5 ECTS

#### ***Specific activities according to choice: 25 ECTS***

Specific activities are chosen, in dialogue with the Tutor, from among the courses in the following curricula of specialization in the Faculty of Theology:

1. *Youth ministry*
2. *Catechetics*
3. *Pastoral ministry concerning the Bible and the liturgy*

4. *Spiritual theology – Salesian studies*
5. *Spiritual theology – Formation and vocation animation*
6. *Spiritual theology – Youth spirituality*
7. *Dogmatic theology*

***Written paper: 10 ECTS***

This is a written paper, 10 – 15 pages long, containing a description and assessment of the pastoral activities conducted during the fourth year together with the related pastoral strategy.