

# THE INSTITUTE FOR PRIESTLY FORMATION

*A Public Association of the Faithful*



*“I will give you shepherds  
after my own heart”*

Jeremiah 3:15



January 2010



*...To Mary, Spouse of the Holy Spirit*

**THE INSTITUTE FOR PRIESTLY FORMATION:  
A PUBLIC ASSOCIATION OF THE FAITHFUL**



**THE MISSION OF  
THE INSTITUTE FOR PRIESTLY FORMATION**

The Institute for Priestly Formation was founded to assist bishops in the spiritual formation of diocesan seminarians and priests in the Roman Catholic Church. The Institute responds to the need to foster spiritual formation as the integrating and governing principle of all aspects of priestly formation. Inspired by the biblical-evangelical spirituality of Ignatius Loyola, this spiritual formation has as its goal the cultivation of a deep interior communion with Christ; from such communion the priest shares in Christ's own pastoral charity. In carrying out its mission, the Institute directly serves diocesan seminarians and priests as well as those who are responsible for diocesan priestly formation.

Dear Friend,

With this booklet, we invite you to join us in praising our heavenly Father and His Beloved Son for sending the Holy Spirit who inspired the founding of the Institute for Priestly Formation in 1994. Our mission of helping diocesan seminarians and priests deepen their relationship of communion with the Blessed Trinity has blossomed since that founding: over 1,100 seminarians have been served by our seminarian program and hundreds of priests have benefited from our other offerings from that time until the present.



A new chapter in our history began on March 25, 2008, when the Institute became a Public Association of the Faithful. This designation by the Church through the Archbishop of Omaha has drawn us closer to the heart of the Church and has allowed us to welcome members, i.e., individuals who sense a call to support, nurture and promote the mission of the Institute in a variety of ways. These members, designated as “Friends” or “Associates,” come from all of the calls to holiness in the Church, including laymen and laywomen.

Details about our mission, our vision and an explanation about membership in the Association are provided in the following pages. As you read through these pages, we invite you to consider prayerfully the possibility of becoming a “Friend” or an “Associate” member of the Institute.

May Mary, Spouse of the Holy Spirit, continue to intercede for us as we seek to form priests after the heart of the Good Shepherd and to draw more individuals into this vital mission in the Church.

Sincerely in the Lord,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Richard J. Gabuzda". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Richard J. Gabuzda  
Executive Director  
The Institute for Priestly Formation

# PROMULGATION



## ARCHDIOCESE OF OMAHA

Office of the Archbishop

100 NORTH 62ND STREET  
OMAHA, NEBRASKA 68132

### *DECRETUM*

In the Name of God.

Being desirous of the spiritual development of seminarians and priests in our Archdiocese and beyond, **I, Elden, by the Grace of God and of the Apostolic See Archbishop of Omaha, hereby erect, in accord with canon 312, §1, 3° of the *Codex Iuris Canonici*, a Public Association of the Faithful called “The Institute for Priestly Formation,” according to its statutes.**

The edition of the statutes to be found in our Archdiocesan Archives shall be the definitive edition, with authentic copies provided to the Institute as they may request.

*Datum Omahae, die XXV mensis Martii, anno Domini MMVIII.*

Handwritten signature of Elden Francis Curtiss.

✠ Elden Francis Curtiss  
*Archiepiscopus Omahae*

Handwritten signature of Joseph C. Taphorn.

Joseph C. Taphorn  
*Cancellarius*

## WHAT IS A PUBLIC ASSOCIATION OF THE FAITHFUL?

A “public association of the faithful” is an officially recognized body in the Church which receives a mission from the Church to achieve the purposes of its “charism” (the gift which the Holy Spirit has given to it). “In the Church there are associations distinct from institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life, in which the Christian faithful, either clergy or laity, or clergy and laity together, strive by common effort to promote a more perfect life or to foster public worship or Christian doctrine or to exercise other apostolic works, namely to engage in efforts of evangelization, to exercise works of piety or charity and to animate the temporal order with the Christian spirit” (canon 298).



Because associations of the faithful have a common purpose congruent with the mission of the Church, only the local bishop, the Holy See or the Bishops’ Conference has the authority to establish a public association. The Institute for Priestly Formation has been established as a Public Association of the Faithful by the Archbishop of Omaha so that it may carry on its mission to assist bishops in the spiritual formation of diocesan seminarians and priests.

## **IPF's SPIRITUAL VISION**

The founding graces of the IPF charism are represented in the Institute's logo: Mary, Spouse of the Holy Spirit, teaches that the most fruitful activity of the human person is to be able to receive God.

In her Annunciation, Mary's active receptivity permits Jesus and His saving activity to enter the world, expressed especially in His cross, which radiates the glory of the Father. By way of her "yes," Divine love became incarnate in time. Now, through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, all have access to the intimate love of the Trinity. Participation in this Trinitarian love is our salvation. Christ wills that we all come to share in the knowledge that He possesses of the Father's great love, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (Mt 3:17).

By surrendering in faith to the Father's love for us and leaving sin behind, we can come to share in the intimacy Christ has with the Father as His adopted sons and daughters. This faith, however, cannot remain inert or simply a comforting idea; it carries the power to awaken each heart to live a dynamic interior life. Christ told us that He came to bring us life and life abundant! (John 10:10). This awakening of the heart is ours to know, if we look to Mary. She is our teacher in how to receive God within, our teacher in how to live the abundant life of Trinitarian love.

### ***The Way of the Priest***

This appropriation of the divine indwelling, of communion with the Holy Spirit, is the personal wellspring of priestly ministry. Such communion will sustain him as he enters the lives of his parishioners and their experiences of conversion. From such interiority will flow a deep pastoral desire, a desire that finds its only rest in charity. Truly, for the priest, it is the love of Christ that compels him (2 Cor 5:14). The life of pastoral charity is irresistible to the priest who invites Christ to define his interiority and fashion his affections and conscience according to the mysteries of salvation.

Pope Benedict XVI wrote: “This is the central task of the priest: to bring God to men and women. Of course, he can only do this if he himself comes from God, if he lives with and by God... The priest must truly know God from within and thus bring him to men and women: this is the prime service that contemporary humanity needs” (*Address to the Roman Curia*, December 22, 2006).



He further addressed this topic: “Therefore the time spent in direct encounter with God in prayer can rightly be described as the pastoral priority par excellence: It is the soul’s breath, without which the priest necessarily remains breathless, deprived of the oxygen of optimism and joy, which he needs if he is to allow himself to be sent, day by day, as worker into the Lord’s Harvest” (*Address to Clergy*, September 14, 2006).

### *The Way of the Laity*

Living within these depths of communion with Christ is not only for the priest; rather it is the very gift God gives to the laity in and through the sacramental ministry of priests. As John Paul II noted in his apostolic exhortation, *Christifideles Laici*, “The ordained ministries...express and realize a participation in the priesthood of Jesus Christ



that is different, not just in degree but in essence, from the participation given to all the lay faithful through Baptism and Confirmation. On the other hand, the ministerial priesthood...is ordered toward the priesthood of all the faithful” (22).

In this relationship, the priestly vocation stands as a gift to the laity who feed on the mystery of Christ at the Eucharist for their sustenance. In the Eucharist, the vocation of the laity and the vocation of the priest have their deepest communion and exist together in Christ.

### ***Conclusion***

“Yes...our Christian communities must become genuine ‘schools’ of prayer, where the meeting with Christ is expressed...in thanksgiving, praise, adoration, contemplation, listening and ardent devotion, until the heart truly ‘falls in love.’ Intense prayer, yes, but it does not distract us from our commitment to history: by opening our heart to the love of God it also opens it to the love of our brothers and sisters, and makes us capable of shaping history according to God’s plan” (Pope John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 33).

Both the mission of the priest and the mission of the laity draw from the well of deep, interior prayer. The pastor is called to be the dean of the school of prayer which is the parish. In affiliating with the mission of the Institute for Priestly Formation, both priests and laity share the desire to see that Christian charity flows from and is sustained by a rich, interior life of communion with the Mysteries of Christ.

### **IPF’S LIVING PRINCIPLES**

The life and mission of the Institute are based upon these fundamental presuppositions:

- The Holy Spirit is the source of life and holiness.
- Scripturally grounded relational prayer is foundational to an integrated Christian life: an inquiring intellect, a balanced affect and a healthy psychological and sexual development.
- A devotion to Christ’s presence in the Eucharist is the source of Christian maturity lived in gratitude.
- Mary’s life is the model of discipleship in the Holy Spirit’s joy.
- All teaching must be faithful to Christ’s teaching authority as prophetically heard through the Catholic Church’s Magisterium.
- Apostolic spirituality requiring an interior solitude with God alone shapes a priest’s heart to lead as Chaste Spouse, Spiritual Father, Spiritual Physician and Good Shepherd.

## SHARING IN IPF'S MISSION AND SPIRITUALITY

IPF invites Catholics to consider becoming members of the Institute by embracing the Mission Statement and Living Principles stated above. These members may represent any call to holiness in the Church, including laymen and laywomen. Members of the Public Association of the Faithful are called to support, nurture and promote the charism of IPF, offering a concrete expression of availability and co-responsibility for its mission.

All members are to embody and cultivate receptivity to the Living Word of God, joyful, humble and obedient acceptance of the Church's Magisterium, transforming devotion to Jesus' Real Presence in the Eucharist, frequent celebration of the Sacraments of Eucharist and Penance and sincere love for the diocesan priesthood.

Those affiliated with IPF's mission are invited to benefit from the living principles at the level of **Friend** or **Associate**. The Institute:

- Pledges to pray for all members and their intentions daily in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.
- Fosters fellowship and a network of relationships among members.
- Communicates IPF's activities and development on a regular basis and offers forms of spiritual assistance to cultivate a life of prayer.

### *IPF Friends endeavor to:*



Cultivate a heartfelt desire to support the charism and mission of IPF and its programs. They enter a specific and prayerfully considered commitment of support and availability to IPF as an expression of this desire. The form of such commitment is worked out individually by each Friend in prayer and consultation with the Moderator or his delegate in light of vocational responsibilities.

Examples:

- Offer intercessory prayers.
- Provide financial support on an ongoing basis.
- Remember IPF's mission through planned giving.
- Volunteer time and talent and promote IPF's mission and programs.

Friends are invited to cultivate deepening interiority within Trinitarian prayer and discernment in their daily lives, according to their vocation (IPF Statutes, 6.3.1.3).

This commitment as a Friend is to be determined on a tri-annual basis in writing.

The specific content of the tri-annual commitment can take a multitude of forms. The Institute is to receive with gratitude the widest possible array of commitments from its Friends.

***IPF Associates endeavor to:***

Commit themselves to cultivating a growing Trinitarian intimacy for mission in their daily life according to the way of spiritual formation espoused by IPF, with due regard to their vocations and conditions. Associates are encouraged to commit themselves to develop familiarity with the biblical-evangelical spirituality of St. Ignatius Loyola and desire to grow in the practice and appropriation of this Christian way of holiness.

This desire is to reflect a specific “call within a call” by the Associate. Thus the Associate understands his or her own vocational call to holiness as one that fosters, either as priest or lay person, the interiority, identity, and mission of the diocesan priesthood. This commitment is renewed annually and is reviewed every three years by the moderator or his delegate.

According to the IPF Statutes (6.3.2.3), the specific means by which Associates incarnate their commitment include:

- Daily relational prayer in the tradition of Ignatian meditation/contemplation.

- Practice of the daily Consciousness Examen.
- Receiving ongoing contemplative spiritual direction.
- An annual directed Ignatian retreat of 3 to 8 days in length or an analogous annotated format.
- Living daily the dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises, with the Rules for the Discernment of Spirits and the Rules for Right Thinking with the Church as a foundation.
- Frequent reception of the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Penance.
- Intercessory prayer for the mission of the Institute for Priestly Formation.
- An availability to assist in the programs and/or other needs of the Institute according to his or her vocation and ability.

*In consultation with the Moderator or his delegate, a substantial parallel to any of the means listed above can suffice for Associates (Statute 6.3.2.4).*

**Thank you for prayerfully reading IPF's Public Association booklet. May God guide you in your discernment and hasten your participation in His holiness. If you would like more information about becoming a Friend or Associate in the Institute for Priestly Formation, Public Association of the Faithful, please contact:**



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The Institute for Priestly Formation  
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Omaha, NE 68178  
402-546-6384  
ipf@creighton.edu  
www.creighton.edu/ipf**

## OFFICIAL IPF MISSION PRAYER

Father of All Desire and Love, hear our prayer. In the Holy Name of Your Son, Jesus Christ, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, we pray for all our seminarians and priests. Watch over their formation and heighten their awareness of Your love in their hearts. Give them the courage to go ever deeper into their hearts to receive Your indwelling love: a love of healing, consolation, and mission.

Give to all seminary formators a love of prayer, the gift and skill of a discerning heart, and intellects fired for truth alone. We pray for all priestly formation to arise from a deeper reception of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. With Mary to intercede, pour forth Your Gifts in a new Pentecost for priestly life. As the Gifts and Love of the Spirit are conceived, may each priest radiate Jesus' Love to the world. Amen.



