



CHRISM

FOR A THRIVING PRIESTHOOD

INTEGRATED FORMATION & SUPPORT
FOR A THRIVING PRESBYTERATE



HUMAN FORMATION
& LEADERSHIP



MENTAL HEALTH
& HEALING



SPIRITUAL DIRECTION
& RENEWAL

“The world looks to the priest, because it looks to Jesus! No one can see Christ; but everyone sees the priest, and through him they wish to catch a glimpse of the Lord! Immense is the grandeur of the Lord! Immense is the grandeur and dignity of the priest!”

-St. John Paul the Great

THE THREE PILLARS OF GROWTH: THEIR PROBLEMS AND THEIR SOLUTIONS

PILLAR 1: HUMAN FORMATION & LEADERSHIP

In *Pastoro Dabo Vobis*, John Paul II acknowledged human formation as critical for the priesthood, saying, “The whole work of priestly formation would be deprived of its necessary foundation if it lacked a suitable human formation.”

THE PROBLEM: Seminary provides men with built-in fraternity, mentorship, and formation, but post-ordination, many priests feel as if they “went off a cliff” when suddenly they don’t have these supports and also find themselves lacking leadership skills they did not learn in seminary. As one young pastor put it, “All of a sudden, I was the CEO of a multimillion-dollar organization and had a line of people at my door looking to me to solve deep problems in their lives that as a priest, I don’t always know much about.”

THE SOLUTION: Build authentic fraternity and practical skill development through leadership cohorts of priests. Within a couple of years, these groups can provide a critical mass of priests and leaders in the diocese with a long-lasting path to brotherhood, and a set of leadership skills that gives them more confidence and zeal in their ministry. This demonstrates a commitment to positive priestly support from the bishop and aids in building unity and collaboration among the presbyterate.

PILLAR 2: MENTAL HEALTH & HEALING

The life of a priest is unique in that his personal life and priestly ministry are deeply intertwined. Success in one’s ministry flows from a priest’s spiritual and psychological grounding.

THE PROBLEM: Priests are just as prone to mental health problems and burn out as the average person, but their unique calling and vocation as well as complicating factors such as being in positions of high authority and responsibility calls for a specialized response. Many solutions, such as treatment centers for priests are cost-prohibitive and often create their own set of problems, as they pull a priest out of his diocese for services and may end up creating tension and division between the priest and diocesan hierarchy.

THE SOLUTION: Specialized psychological care grounded in Church teaching. We provide an ongoing partnership to provide evaluation, treatment, and consultation for struggling priests, allowing them to receive treatment locally. Starting with an initial assessment, our goal is to create a plan to lovingly support a priest’s rehabilitation and healing based on the three pillars of human formation, spiritual growth, and mental health care. This approach will allow priests to remain present in their diocese, be supported by their family and brother priests, and apply their counseling treatment in real-time.

PILLAR 3: SPIRITUAL DIRECTION & RENEWAL

A priest must always be growing in Divine intimacy. His relationship with God however, is not just for him. A priest's heart and spirituality are contagious to his flock, and he is therefore responsible for cultivating a heart that is pure and open to God's will. But this is not accomplished alone. Priests are in great need of ongoing formation from others through spiritual direction.

THE PROBLEM: A surprising number of priests do not engage in regular spiritual direction. There are several reasons for this. One reason is that priests don't know who to turn to for spiritual direction. Another issue is that priests don't always trust other clergy from their own diocese due to fears of judgment or gossip.

THE SOLUTION: Chrism provides an inter-diocesan network of spiritual directors so that priests across the country have access to effective spiritual direction. Chrism will also provide a compatibility assessment and make several recommendations of potentially compatible directors and directees for effective spiritual direction.



**"The priesthood is the love of the heart of Jesus.
When you see a priest, think of our Lord Jesus Christ."**

-St. John Vianney

DETAILS FOR THE HUMAN FORMATION & LEADERSHIP TRACK

With the Chrism model, all of the priests in the diocese would have the opportunity to participate in a Human Formation and Leadership Cohort. This group would teach priests essential leadership skills in an atmosphere of authenticity and openness. Over the course of the nine month cohort, a strong culture of shared experiences, language, and camaraderie will be cultivated among disparate groups of priests (young/old, conservative/liberal, foreign/local, etc.) In order to set the vision for a united presbyterate, Chrism will lead a priest retreat or convocation to share the model and support the Bishop's commitment to building up healthy priests. Over the course of a few years, all of the priests of the diocese would have the opportunity to go through a Chrism Cohort group. Over the course of nine months these cohorts will teach priests essential leadership skills in the context of an atmosphere of authenticity and openness. These groups help form a common language and experience for the men to fall back on as they build fraternity amongst the disparate groups of priests (young/old, conservative/liberal, foreign/local, etc.). In order to set the vision for a united presbyterate, Chrism would run a retreat at a priest convocation to begin showing your commitment to healthy priests.

CHRISM COHORT STRUCTURE

Highlights

3 cohorts every 9 months

4-6 priests per cohort

Cohorts meet monthly for 90 minutes

Content consists of a combination of prayer, brotherhood, instruction, practical application and accountability

Sample Cohort Topics

- Leading a culture of prayer and reliance on God
- Leading a culture of teamwork and unity
- Leading a culture of discipleship and evangelization
- The 6 Working Genius
- Having difficult and uncomfortable conversations
- Managing direct reports (staff, key volunteers, etc.)
- Running effective and dynamic meetings
- Over-communicating as a leader
- Addressing and overcoming your wounds as a leader
- Discerning and communicating a clear vision for your parish
- Virtues required of a heroic priest



Goals and Results

- At the end of each monthly cohort, the goal is to have priests feeling encouraged, supported and more confident in their role as a spiritual father and leader.
- When a 9 month cohort is complete, there will be a group of unified priests who have grown in brotherhood, self-awareness and in the practical leadership skills required for a thriving priesthood.
- Priests will have practiced and applied leadership principles, resulting in greater confidence when continuing to implement them at their parishes.

Logistics

- 3 cohorts would run every month
- 5 hours of individual coaching would be provided to select priests as needed
- Hours beyond agreed amount would mutually agreed upon and would be billed at a per diem rate

DETAILS FOR THE MENTAL HEALTH AND HEALING TRACK

Chrism provides you with a seasoned clinician who has the competency to guide and coordinate the healing in all of these areas. We help foster a positive relationship between the struggling priest and the diocese so that a priest feels supported without having to leave his diocese for treatment.

How the Process Works

Healing and human formation is multidimensional, and as such, no one aspect of it (counseling, spiritual direction, rehab centers) is typically sufficient to transform an individual on its own. A suffering priest often needs to understand and find healing in all aspects of their personhood, including:

Skill deficits in leadership
Psychological and spiritual wounds
Undiagnosed mental health problems
Addiction
Isolation and loneliness
An empty interior life

1. A priest who is identified as needing acute support receives a comprehensive and useful evaluation from the lead psychologist (LP) that assesses him from multiple perspectives, including his mental health, interior life, leadership, and human formation.
2. This helps generate a rehabilitation plan for the priest to grow in key dimensions of his life including:
 - The right type of mental health care, including therapy and/or medication
 - Building fraternity
 - Rejuvenating ministry
 - Interior life development
 - Learning appropriate boundary setting
 - Assessing what is the right assignment and living situation for the priest
3. Priests would be connected with a local Chrism certified therapist and spiritual director who are a good fit for their particular needs. When appropriate, priests may work with a Chrism coach specifically on human formation and leadership.
4. The LP would coordinate with the therapist, coach and spiritual director to ensure that healing is an integrated process. This key point allows each discipline to work within their scope of practice and focus on their expertise.
5. The LP would meet with the priest as a mentor and advocate twice a month to help integrate all dimensions of growth. The LP would also work closely with the bishop and vicar for clergy office to help foster good communication between the chancery and the priest to ensure continued progress and support

Chrism provides the added benefit of a psychologist who is at the service of the diocese, who is grounded in Catholic teaching and will also provide the following supports:

- Immediately available consultation around priest personnel issues and mental health issues in the diocese
- Consultation for creating a mental health ministry in the diocese
- Seminary and religious life application evaluations
- Review and creation of clergy misconduct policies
- Retreats and training for diocesan staff
- Tribunal annulment expert witness reports
- Victim Assistance Coordinator consultation

Logistics

- Chrism provides 20 hours a month of psychological care plus an additional 5-10 hours for communication, administration, and documentation
- Hours beyond agreed amount would be mutually agreed upon and billed at a per diem rate



“An intimate bond unites our priesthood to the Holy Spirit and to his mission. On the day of our priestly ordination, by virtue of a unique outpouring of the Paraclete, the Risen One accomplished again in each of us what he accomplished in his disciples on the evening of Easter, and set us in the world as those who continue his mission (cf. Jn 20:21-23).”

-St. John Paul the Great

Letter to Priests, 1998

DETAILS FOR THE SPIRITUAL DIRECTION AND RENEWAL TRACK

Our spiritual direction network connects priests to one another for spiritual direction across the country, ensuring that spiritual direction is available and confidential. This also allows priests the ability to find a spiritual director who fits their specific spiritual temperament.

Logistics

- Each diocese would nominate a small percentage of priests to be available to priests of other dioceses
- Using our app/website, priests would complete a confidential spiritual temperament questionnaire that would help pair them with spiritual directors
- The cost of the program is incorporated into the human formation and mental health tracks

PACKAGE OPTIONS

- Full Chrism Project, including the Human Formation & Leadership, Mental Health & Healing, and Spiritual Direction & Renewal components
- Full Chrism Project plus intensive leadership coaching for Diocesan leadership team
- Mental Health and Healing component plus intensive leadership coaching for Diocesan leadership team
- Mental Health and Healing component only
- Intensive leadership coaching for Diocesan leadership team only

"The priest is not a priest for himself; he does not give himself absolution; he does not administer the Sacraments to himself. He is not for himself, he is for you. After God, the priest is everything."

-St. John Vianney

