

SUGGESTIONS TO PREPARE A PLAN OF FORMATION IN SECULAR INSTITUTES

SOME GENERAL ASPECTS

- The different periods of formation: approach/discernment, initial formation and continuous formation; and for each period: its length (that may change according to the persons), its contents for each period (that may also change according to the persons) and evaluation criteria.
- The formation of formators is very important, and cannot be confined to a general formation; it has to take into account the different fields of the formation of members.
- It is absolutely necessary to take into account the diversity of cultures and persons.
- Each Institute has to work out a *Ratio institutionis (Vita consecrata, 68)*, that remains open to changes in the formation programs.
- These programs of formation have to be frequently modified according to the rapid socio-cultural changes that modify the life and the way of thinking of persons under formation.
- Each member is also responsible for her/his formation.

SOME FUNDAMENTAL ASPECTS TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT

- Personal and community prayer.
- Individual support and brotherhood.
- Life in the Church community and inside the Institute.
- Support of each member thanks to a frequent and well scheduled dialogue.
- Practice of discernment as an ability to discover the action of the Holy Spirit and the signs of the times, and as a way to develop a capacity to make decisions.
- Capacity to live alone and autonomous in the world, free of prejudices.
- Open-mindedness to an international dimension and ability to welcome.

SOME FUNDAMENTAL FIELDS FOR ANY FORMATION

- Human maturity.
- Spiritual life.
- Bible, theology, ecclesiology and pastoral.
- Consecrated life in the world.
- The mission of laypeople (and diocesan priests) in the world.
- The charism of the Institute.

The Bible, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, Vatican II and *Vita consecrata* are fundamental texts and means of any formation.

SOME WAYS OF FORMATION

- Any formation has to be personalized, fitted to each person, to his history, his culture, his way of faith, his age, etc.
- The means of support and training: formation can be delivered on the very spot where members live, in some places – partly – with digital means (according to their ability to use them); but personal contacts remain essential.
- Various kinds of gatherings can be organized for formation periods.
- Practical means have to be adapted to local possibilities; and local opportunities of formation may also be used, for example initiatives of local Churches (theological or biblical classes) or national Conferences of Secular Institutes.
- It might be interesting to start various ways of cooperation between secular institutes in the field of formation; it might be especially useful for the formation of laymen and priests to cooperate with women.

A wonderful biblical illustration for any formation: Moses at the burning bush: “Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.”