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THE LIFE STORIES OF THE NDMU OLPHS SEMINARIANS

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Abstract

This study aimed to understand the narrative of the Our Lady of Perpetual Help Seminarians, their thoughts about becoming a seminarian, the challenges they encountered in the seminary with their coping strategies, and their dreams and aspirations in life. This study was intended only for the OLPH Seminarians at Notre Dame of Marbel University – Senior High School. The qualitative methodological approach was designed to describe the essence of the phenomenon of the seminarian's experiences at the seminary. The study only focused on the seminarian's life stories. An interview guide was used as a tool to gather information. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to determine the emergent themes from the interviewees' data. Therefore, the information gathered and analyzed is subjective. In addition, the information gleaned from this study and the life stories of the individual participants are not necessarily indicative of the outcomes and conclusions for other educational settings. This study focused only on the life stories of seminarians in the Diocese of Marbel OLPH. The life stories of the study participants were unique to the context of each participant's life stories. Based on the findings, it was found out that their views and thoughts of becoming a seminarian vary from each other; it was also stated that becoming a seminarian means being a good person, and it means to be a holy person in line with the responsibility on God's "call". Meanwhile, the results provided that most of the trials encountered by the seminarians are misunderstandings among their fellow brother seminarians about the different characters that vary from the background of their lives. Negative thoughts among seminarians can also be considered a challenge. Every seminarian has dreams and ambitions in life, portraying the true essence of a symbol as a priest in the future. One of their dreams and aspirations is to become an excellent example of what a priest is, being compassionate and considerate to others by giving the symbol of love and empathy. The study benefitted in terms of its contribution to students pursuing seminary leading to the priesthood. In addition, future seminarians will be guided and informed about the obstacles and adjustments they may face.

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INTRODUCTION

A calling to the sacred priesthood of Jesus Christ is one of the most beautiful gifts that a Catholic man can receive. Moreover, humans can accept the call only because of the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. Rulla (2003) defines Christian Vocation as the call of God to the Human person so that the latter might cooperate as a partner in the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:21; Ezekiel 36:26), which God willed to establish himself and man. A seminary is where men discerning their vocation undertake discernment and formation. Once a man enters the seminary, the discernment process continues as he begins preparation for the priesthood, especially the first few years. Entering the seminary is the optimum environment for a man to grow deeper in his spiritually and earnestly as God.

Several universities worldwide offer related course work to religious track, even though most of the education is secular. This means that seminarians who acquire incentives also have the most immediate and evident form of intellectual formation. Classes include dogmatic theology, philosophy, canon law, moral theology, homiletics, and scriptures – All courses are vital to the ministry of priests. Also, the intellectual habit that passing these courses requires time management, attention to detail, logical thinking, and research skills. According to Beattie (2012), pursuing seminary requires sacrifice, but youth worldwide find seminary participation worth every effort. She added that more than going to a seminary often means you'll have to give up something you enjoy doing to find the time to pursue it. It has been a problem today why there is a decline in the number of priests in different countries and the population of seminarians also decreasing. We have this redistribution of priests from one country to another to regain balance among the continents. Romano (2014) emphasized that if the decreasing number of Priests and seminarians continues, difficulties could arise shortly in the priestly framework to replace priests, necessitated by the going factor.

Astonishingly, in the Philippine context of the priesthood vocation, interestingly, a survey shows that 75.4% of Filipinos still place "a great deal or complete confidence in churches and religious organizations". However, the accelerated decline under Pope Francis's pontificate may have affected the number of senior high school and college seminarians in the locality. Therefore, this study is intended to show the life story of seminarians, to explore and describe the thoughts and feelings of becoming and seminary, and the challenges they encountered that will help anyone to know the great motivation to pursue their dreams in life.

Research Questions

This study aimed to describe and explore the life stories and experiences of the NDMU senior high school seminarians of the Our Lady of Perpetual Help Seminary. Specifically, it answered the following questions:

1. What are their thoughts about becoming a seminarian?
2. What are the challenges encountered in the seminary?
3. How did they cope with the challenges they encountered?
4. What are their dreams and aspirations in life?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Seminarians

The Camden Priest Organization explained that a seminarian is a man who observes the Lord's call to the Roman Catholic priesthood. It was stated that by the excellence of his absolution, he is an individual who is a member of the priesthood of all believers. Moreover, a seminarian hears the Lord addressing him and calling him to full support in the organization by turning into a cleric of Jesus Christ. While the brotherhood has numerous components that make it like an occupation, it is primarily a vocation: a calling from the Lord. In addition, the seminarian should be available to hear the Lord's call in his life and be eager to respond to it.

Not to mention, the seminary is a domain that endeavors to frame Christian men portrayed by an existence of heavenliness, human uprightness, and excellent service. It was mentioned that life is nurtured by a profound inside existence of supplication and sound devotion, obedient dedication to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and a significant love for the general and neighborhood Church. The seminary gives a situation that structures men to be conferred devotees of Christ who can react to God's call to the ministry, including the call to the celibate life. In addition, seminarians live in the network. This implies they work together, cooperate, take their dinners together, and examine together. While the seminary is where individual men go to observe what the Lord is asking of them, at last, as ministers, they will have a place with society; the result of this brotherhood is sown during their seminary formation.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Seminary (OLPHS)

As expressed in OLPH Seminary BlogSpot (2010), the Our Lady of Perpetual Help theological school is located in the southern part, around one and a half kilometers from the city legitimate of Marbel. Additionally, the roadway to General Santos City is on the left side and around four hundred meters away; the evaluated zone starting now is four hectares. Then again, when the secondary school and seminarians had their classes, every one of the structures had a place with the theological school. On the other hand, because of the absence of assets to help educators and considerably higher mortality or dropouts in secondary school, all seminarians were sent to Notre Dame of Marbel School (1972).

Generally, the structures which can be called that of the seminary are an organization building; quarters building made out of the diversion lobby, residence, library and study corridor, little sanctuary, solace, and shower rooms; refectory building, sisters 'convent; specialists' home and the vast house of prayer. Overall, the present rector of the Our Lady of Perpetual Help Seminary, who manages the seminary and administers the priesthood discernment through their academic and spiritual discernment, deals with the theological college and oversees the organization's understanding through their scholastic and profound wisdom.

Priestly Vocation

According to the Holy Trinity Org website, since priestly vocation is the heavenly beauty that elevates a man through the laying-on-of-hands to be a cleric, the ministry is not like some other vocation open to men. Indeed, even utilizing the expression "vocation" can be misleading since there are different vocations, and the ministry isn't on an indistinguishable level from those different livelihoods. In a critical sense, the priesthood joins most of the reasons for living to which man may react and can't be thought of as only one.

As per the appointment ritual, the priest is exceptionally appointed to "remain in honesty before God's holy altar, to proclaim the Gospel of His reality, to offer unto Him otherworldly endowments and sacrifices, and to reestablish His kin through the laver of regeneration." While delegated, he is given part XC of the Holy Bread to hold until it rises. While giving it, the cleric says to him: "Get this vow, and protect it entire and safe until the point that thy final gasp, since thou shalt be held to an accounting therefor in the second and terrible coming of our powerful Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ." This demonstration and these words are a sign that it is the point at which the cleric manages the festival of the Holy Eucharist, the completion of his priesthood, and his duty is both acknowledged and made evident.

Priestly, Human, Spiritual, Intellectual, Pastoral, and Apostolic Formation

Pastores Dabo Vobis and Pope John Paul II described the principal foundations for priestly formation as human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral. Every area, while particular in itself, is usually connected to the others. The four dimensions shape the comprehensive structure of formation that guides the candidate's development toward Priesthood. These four dimensions were mentioned on the Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary Website.

As stated on the Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary Website, the motivation behind Human Formation is to help the seminarian become a man of integrity with the identity necessary for clerical service in the Church. It "tries to plan men to be bridged for, not obstacles to, the spread of the Gospel." (Program of Priestly Formation, 83) The people group life of the theological college and the different administrations and co-curricular projects of the Human Formation Program are requested to help the seminarian to develop evident flexibility, build up a good strong character, be all around situated to reality, end up a man of fellowship, to affective evidence maturity, to be aware of each individual, to practice proper consideration for his physical prosperity, to be a good steward for temporal goods, and to be a sure pioneer.

Seminarians try to develop their association with Christ through prayer and thought in spiritual formation. In this relationship, they experience the overwhelming affection of God in their lives and offer his merciful compassion. In the area of intellectual formation, the seminarians look to develop their confidence through the study of theology and philosophy with the goal that they may genuinely announce Jesus as the Way, Truth, and Life to the faith communities they serve. The seminarians learn the skills and develop the disposition necessary to be priests of the Gospel in every way and constantly. Each Thursday during the academic year, seminarians in the College and Theologate participate in managed field instruction assignments. Situations include Parishes (changed social encounters), nursing homes, senior resident centers, specialized curriculum schools, social administration organizations, hospices, soup kitchens, clinics, secondary schools, and penitentiaries.

It was stated on the Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology Website that academic formation starts a long-lasting quest for a more profound comprehension of divine mysteries. This understanding improves the confidence of the minister, as well as the network he serves. In addition, essential learning of Catholic teaching and tradition is the establishment after that, all theological study and pastoral ministry are based. In addition, ministers must be able to relate the intellectual heritage of Catholic teaching and tradition to the factual circumstances of the general population they serve. This implies that seminarians must study systematic theology to get a handle on the meaning of faith, dogmatic theology to interface with the tradition's philosophical sources, and good

philosophy to wrestle with the complexities of decision-making and conscience formation. Lastly, priests represent the Church Universal to the specific communities they are called to serve. They should be compelling evangelists and instructors, understand the laws and regulations that bind the community together, be knowledgeable in pastoral care and counseling techniques and theories, understand leadership theory and practice, and be delicate to the catechetical concerns present in their communities.

Priesthood

As shown on The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints' website, the priesthood is the unceasing force and authority of our Heavenly Father. Through the ministry, God made and administered the sky and earth. Through this power, He recovers and commends His kids. He gives commendable priesthood holders authority to regulate mandates of salvation. All of Heavenly Father's children can meet all requirements to get these laws and access the power and blessings of the priesthood.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Participants

This research used a phenomenological qualitative research design. The researchers used this design to explore and describe the life stories and experiences of the seminarian students living in the OLPHS. Particularly those seminararians living in the seminary are the participants of this research. They may write about their experiences, but the information is generally obtained through interviews. In this research study, participants are the seminararians of the OLPHS- NDMU. In addition, this method was used because the nature of the study that the researchers conducted was timely. Still, only a few researchers are interested in studying these phenomena because they are willing to use the allotted time the study needs to accomplish.

The participants of the study were the NDMU-SHS OLPHS Seminararian. They were selected purposively based on a set of inclusion criteria:

1. A bona fide student from NDMU-SHS OLPHS
2. The age is from 16-18 years old
3. Voluntarily participate in the study in a one-on-one interview
4. Must have at least 85% average.

Site of the Study

This study was conducted at the Diocese of Marbel University located at Brgy. Poblacion, City of Koronadal, South Cotabato. Our Lady of Perpetual Help Seminary is one of the known seminaries in Koronadal City. This institution coordinates with a well-known university in South Cotabato, the Notre Dame of Marbel University – a religious institution that the Marist Brothers established. Seminararians of OLPHS were spiritually formed inside the seminary as part of their discernment and priestly formation. They were facilitated and administered by OLPHS Administrators and Priests for this formation.

On the other hand, these seminararians not only form spiritual discernment inside the seminary but to develop them academically. That's why seminararians of the institution were put into school, particularly in the Notre Dame of Marbel University, as mentioned, to coordinate with to develop these seminararians in their academic performance, regardless of the co-curricular that the administrators ought to be restricted.

Research Instrument

The researchers prepared and used an interview guide based on the specific research problems. It consisted of essential questions that would answer the state of the problem of the researchers. An audio recorder and note-taking materials were utilized with the consent of the participants. The audio recorder captured the total responses for each question verbatim and transcribed it with integrity.

Data Collection Procedure

In gathering necessary data, the researchers first had a tracing activity that would tell them who would be the study participants. After the tracing, the researchers had an ocular visit on August 24, 2018, to ask permission from the coordinator of OLPH, Fr. Ronald Plumillo, to conduct the study. After the approval had been approved, the researchers consulted the participants about the questions. On (date) the next visit, the researchers will conduct an in-depth interview with (no. of participants). On that day, also the researchers will ask permission from the (coordinator of OLPH) to conduct a study. The researchers will conduct one-on-one interviews with the participants at his/her convenient time. The interview protocol will be read before the interview, and the researchers will ask to record the participants' responses through an audio recorder. The quality of the audio recorder will be checked after the interview after the interview. The interview will last for (no. of minutes) per participant.

Data Analysis

The researchers used Thematic Analysis in analyzing the data. It emphasizes pinpointing, examining, and recording patterns (or "themes") within data, as per Magulod et al. (2021). Themes are patterns across data sets that are important to describe a phenomenon and are associated with a specific research question. Also, the study is designed to explore and describe the life experiences of the Seminarians. The data was arranged systematically to get a specific response from the participants. When the researchers finished gathering the data, they listened to the records to capture the participants' responses. After that, the researchers transcribed the responses of the participants. After transcribing the participants' responses, the data were proofread many times. The significant statements were highlighted from the highlighted statements; the concepts were clustered and categorized according to their emergent themes. Double-checking was conducted to make sure the result was consistent and accurate.

RESULTS

Seminary is the place where a man is formed mind, body, and soul into the image of Jesus Christ. Seminaries are not places where men walk around in silence all day. Instead, they are places of joy, camaraderie, and deep learning. Primarily, expectations and thoughts in this vocation create a framework for the insights and possibilities that may arise. A person gives a clue that may determine the vocation field; it can be an important way to predict the building of the knowledge that a person may experience and overcome a given aspect. These thoughts and feelings about becoming a seminarian could share different insights into what the image of the seminary brings to other persons, especially those planning to become a seminarian. Most men who become priests think about the glamorous bits, like serving in front of the Holy Altar or providing wise counsel to those humbled by sin. The more mundane bits, like sitting through endless meetings or being patently ignored by most of the congregation.

Thoughts and Feelings of being a Seminarist

Table 1 presents the thoughts and feelings of the seminarists before they enter the seminary. God's call, spiritual formation, family, church, one's self, and personal decision emerged from the seminarists' interviews. A calling to the sacred priesthood of Jesus Christ is one of the most beautiful gifts that a Catholic man can receive. Accordingly, a seminarist discerning the Lord's call to the Roman Catholic priesthood. However, a man who enters the seminary does not possess the answers from God's command... (Ivany, 2017). That's why the participants shared their thought about becoming a seminarist. In addition, participant 1 shared:

"Ang pagiging seminarista ay siguro masasabi ko na kumbaga isa ito sa importanteng biyaya ng Panginoon. Tinawag tayo upang maging isang banal at sa pamamagitan siguro ng pag, ahh, tugon sa kanyang panawagan at bilang isang seminarista ay may ma, ahhm, masasagot yung, yung pagtawag niya sa iyo. Nakuha kami na formation ng pagiging isang mabuting tao..." (Participant 1)

A seminary is a place where a man is formed mind, body, and soul into the image of Jesus Christ... (NY Priest, 2014). In addition, Christian spiritual formation is the process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the glory of God and the sake of others... (II Corinthians 3:17-18). According to the experience shared by participant 1:

"Isa itong, ahh, kumbaga tinatawag na formation kasi, ahh, gina porma o gina form kami bilang isang mabuting pari, at gina form kami bilang kahit na hindi kami maging pari sa, sa sunod eh mas, ay may nakuha kami na formation ng pagiging isang mabuting tao." (Participant 1)

To be a seminarist is a commission offered to God; thus, entering a seminary is a responsibility to be accomplished. One must have the dedication to offer his own life by his will in the priesthood vocation, be willing to show his passion for service in sharing God's words, and love work with the sincerity of one's heart. In entering any vocation, there is a natural phenomenon that a student faces, referring to why they entered a given vocation and the factors that affect their choice and decision in life on why they chose that specific vocation. In line with this, motivation can be an alternative way of coping with challenges inside the seminary. The interpretation of the seminarists relates to the experiences they encountered before entering the seminary. It is evident in the lines below:

"Unang-una masasabi ko na sa sarili ko talaga kasi ito yung gusto ko na maging mangyari sa buhay ko paglaki ko. Pangalawa is sa pamilya. Pangatlo sa siguro kasi, active ako sang sa simbahan, so dahil dun, ahh, mas na motivate ako na magpasok ng seminary at hanggang sa napatunayan ko sa sarili ko na kaya ko pala pumasok sa seminary." (Participant 1)

Furthermore, participants 2 and 3 also shared that the motivations can also be influenced by the family members, specifically the parents. Thus, the church members can be a factor in pursuing such motivations in priesthood vocation, specifically the priests working on the same vocation. This can be supported by the statement below:

"Gin hambal niya ko nga pwede daw ko ma pari, ti daw amo to na motivate ko kag hambal pa gid sang mga lolo ko, ante ko, mama ko, nga pwede daw ko magsulod kag basi ma pari man gid daw abi ko." (Participant 2)

Before entering a priesthood vocation, specifically in the seminary, motivations, as stated above, can incline on the supernatural phenomena that a person who was chosen to be a priest someday and the "Call" from God can be a factor in strengthening one's connection to the religious community. Not all of the seminarians who were involved in the seminary recognized the "Call" before entering the seminary; some seminarians already recognized the "Call" before going into the seminary through dreams, signs, and supernatural events. While other seminarians were motivated by their passion and self-decision. Others recognize the "Call" while they are in the seminary. This is supported by the statement below:

"Hindi ko masasabi na talagang may nakita ako na senyales o sign galing sa Panginoon na kumbaga ano talaga yung kumbaga anong tawag nito, di literal oo hindi ko talaga masasabi na kanang nakakita ako ng literal na senyales galing sa Panginoon." (Participant 1)

Some seminarians don't recognize if the sign they apprehended was indeed a "Call" from God, which means that some seminarians have struggles or difficulties recognizing the sign or call from God. This is evident in the statement below:

"Di ko abi bal an kung call gid abi kay ano bi kay una abi daw wala man gid sa isip ko mag amo ni pero dugay dugay gali umm na feel ko nga daw gina tawag ko ni God, ti nagsulod na lang ko." (Participant 2)

Seminarians have their own decision in entering seminary with the connection of the influence of their family members, administrators, religious community, and especially the signs that came from God. A seminarian also asks for the signs to be given by God; it takes time to recognize that call. On the other hand, some seminarians recognize it as their willingness to enter the priesthood vocation. This is supported by:

"Uhhh, kasi oo galing talaga ito sa akin decision kasi noong una, nung time na nag exam ako dito sa OLPHS sa seminary, di ko pinaalam sa aking mga magulang, kahit ni isa wala akong pinagsabihan at talagang pursigido akong mag exam at desisyon ko talaga na pumasok hanggang sa napasa ko yung entrance saka ko pa sinabi sa aking pamilya." (Participant 1)

Table 1. Statements of Participants as to Their Thoughts of Being a Seminarian

Concepts	Theme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importanteng biyaya ng Panginoon • Maging isang banal, tugon sa kanyang panawagan • A good person and to form myself well to the seminary. • Holy nga tao 	The blessing of God to be a holy person that recognizes the call of God through spiritual formation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation • Magpari 	Spiritual formation to become a priest.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sa sarili ko • Pamilya • Active ako sang sa simbahan • Lolo ko, ante ko, mama ko • Si mama kag Father Sulpicio Francisco 	Family, church and one's self.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literal na sinyales galing sa Panginoon • Feel ko na ginatawag ko ni God 	A sign or calling from God.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Akin decision. • Desisyon ko talaga na pumasok. • Yes, naghinggi ako ng sign kay God. 	Personal decision through signs from God.

Challenges Encountered in the Seminary

Table 2 shows the challenges that emerged from the narratives. Referring to the answers of the seminararians, there are many challenges that a seminarian can encounter inside the seminary, and one of these is a misunderstanding with fellow seminararians because of their differences. It is natural to meet different people with different backgrounds, one has its own characteristics based on how their parents have molded the values and attributes on how a person sees that structural personhood, but as one entering a specific vocation, one has the responsibility to accept the natural environment and reality of a specific context. Priesthood vocation has the value of having these seminararians with different modes of coping seminararians encountered inside the seminary. Seminararians are called to the seminary to have this spiritual formation, encompassing the value of integrity, responsibility, and oneness. One problem is the attitude differences by having various perspectives and insights as shared by participants:

"Ah, mga problema na siguro masasabi ko na yung hindi pagkakaunawaan ng kapwa ko seminarista, yan ang una kong na naano dito sa seminary, kasi minsan iba iba yung ugali ng kapwa ko seminarista, minsan may mataas, minsan may mas tataas pa sa iyo kahit na tama ka, ganyan and then sa problema naman na kung baga sa spiritual na problem, talagang masasabi ko na, ahh, mahirap ang pagiging isang seminarista sapagkat kung may panahon na ikaw lang isa mag mumuni muni may mga negative na papasok sa iyong utak at kung baga masasabi ko na may mga hindi mo maintindihan na mga pangyayari na papasok sa iyong utak, bakit ba ako pumasok dito, ganyan, ganyan, ano yung makukuha ko dito, kung baga ganyan." (Participant 1)

One expected trial encountered by a seminarian is the feeling of boredom. Even an ordinary person living in a house could experience boredom even in a single day, portraying a yearly separation from your loved ones; one can feel alone and miss their family members, relatives, friends, classmates, and others. It is a common phenomenon that a person can bear in mind that they are longing for someone's presence. Still, others also encountered this kind of event in their lives and overcame this problem by adopting the environment's context. The statement of participant 1 supports it:

"Siguro ma consider ko siya kasi dito sa seminaryo auhhhhm mingaw. Kung baga nabagohan ako dito sa nature ng seminary, kung baga tahimik masyado tapos yun na consider ko siya na problem kasi hindi ako sanay na malayo ako sa aking pamilya, hindi ako sanay na sa pagtulog ko wala akong makikitang Ina at Ama, mga kapatid."

In connection to the environment, there is a degree of coping with a person's adjustment depending on the environment. Seminary is one of the environments where a seminarian can form its spiritual aspect. However, behind the positive image that other people have conceptualized, there are still negative images on the side of the seminarists, especially those who first encounter seminary. There is an atmosphere of being different, being alone, and adjusting to the view of the environment. These changes lead a person to have the proper configuration of a specific vocation environment. The statement of participant 2 supports this:

"Sa una ko nga adlaw ano bi daw wala ko labot kay amo abi da, sa amon abi sa balay permi ko gina bilin ako lang isa sa balay. pero dugay dugay daw namingaw ako nahidlaw ako sa family ko, sa mga friends ko sa gwa. Ti amo to nabudlayan ko di mag-adjust pero madugay man gyapon naka adjust naman ko."

Table 2. Statement about if the participants' encountered a problem and how to consider it a problem.

Concepts	Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hindi pagkakaunawaan ng kapwa ko seminarista. Spiritual na problem, may mga negative na papasok sa iyong utak. Iba-iba yung ugali ng kapwa. 	Misunderstanding and attitude differences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mingaw Namingaw ako, nahidaw ako sa family ko. 	The feeling of boredoms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nabagohan ako dito sa nature ng seminary, tahimik masyado. Nabudlayan ko di mag-adjust. Hidlaw gyapon sa family. 	Difficulty in Adjusting to the New Environment

Coping Mechanism

Due to the challenges that these seminarists encounter while in the seminary, for them to overcome it, they tend to seek the presence of the Lord using having time for rosary and praying. The power of trust, faith, and asking for strength from the Lord is one of the greatest potentials a seminarian can possess since the seminary offers the value of faith and a place for people who want to offer themselves wholeheartedly. The seminarists get their purpose through the challenges they encounter. These challenges tested the integrity through personal integration of one's soul. As shared in:

"Una masasabi ko na dahil saaking mga dasal, pananalangin sa Panginoon kasi araw araw kami may Misa tapos yun nagrosaryo ako palagi. Pinapanalangin ko na sana makayanan ko dito at syempre mga ilang buwan at linggo na ako rito so kumbaga uhmmm natanggap ko na adapt ko na yung nature dito sa seminary..." (Participant 1)

In addition to this statement is also supported by another shared thought:

"...trust lang gid sa God kag pray lang gid kung ano kung makaya ko gid man ni mapadayon ko pero kung hindi basi ma gwa man ko pero ambot lang kay God lang gid na bahala." (Participant 2)

Personal formation of one's being through physical activities belongs to the practices involved by seminarists. This is one of the processes in coping with the challenges inside the seminary, which involves sports activities like basketball and volleyball. This can lead to the transformation of every seminarist into healthy living through the service of the Lord. It is also an enhancement towards the relationship of every seminarist through bonding and forming themselves in competency and self-involvement. As mentioned by participant 2:

"Oo, siguro isa rin sa mga dahilan upang malimit, malimutan ko yung mga problema ko sa labas, dito sa loob is yung saya na mabuo naming bilang mga seminarist, mga brothers sa pamamagitan ng aming uuhhh paglalaro araw araw kung baga malimutan naming yung problema."

A phenomenon that usually happens inside the seminary is the process of adjustment that every seminarist partakes in; these include the longing for the presence of his family, boredom, misunderstanding of each seminarist because of the differences in character, and craving for the use of gadgets. But by the strength and dedication provided to the seminarists, it was instilled in them that they have to overcome these problems and cope with the different challenges that they encounter inside the seminary. There are different processes used by the seminarists, like finding a spiritual director, engaging themselves in outdoor activities and sports, bonding while singing, and having joke time sometimes to overcome those problems. It was said by participant 2:

"Ano na lang bonding na lang gid sa ila daw lingaw lingaw na lang gid kis a kanta kanta hampang sports para madula ang mingaw." (Participant 2)

Table 3. Statement of how did the participants overcome the problems

Concepts	Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panalangin sa Panginoon • Nagrorosayo ako palagi. • Trust lang gid kay God kag pray lang gid • Nasanay nalang. 	Prayer and Acceptance to the Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maghanap kami ng spiritual director. • Paglalaro araw – araw • Joke time 	Daily activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bonding, kanta kanta, hampang sports. 	Bonding with the co-seminarists

Dreams and Aspirations

As per the appointment ritual, the priest is exceptionally appointed to "stand in innocence before God's holy altar, to proclaim the Gospel of His truth, to offer unto Him spiritual gifts and sacrifices, and to renew His people through the laver of regeneration. In addition, as shown in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints' website, the priesthood is the unceasing force and authority of our Heavenly Father. Through the ministry, God made and administered the sky and earth. Through this power, He recovers and commends His kids. All of Heavenly Father's children can meet all requirements to get these laws and access the power and blessings of the priesthood. The participant shared this:

"Siguro masasabi ko sa ngayon na isang mabuti na Pari na naga tagapaglingkod noong bata pa ako is may nakita ako na isang pari na kung baga nahanga ako sa kanya dahil sa kagalingan niyang loob at sa the way siya na mag homily yan so masasabi ko na balang araw magiging ganyan

rin ako na kahit hindi man gaanong katalino or katulad ng ibang pari, syempre pero mas mabuti o uhmm kung бага karangal rangal na pari."

Table 4. Dreams and Aspiration of the Seminarists

Concepts	Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Isang mabuti na Pari mabuliganon sa tanan I-enhance ang Youth Encampment kag Knights of the Altar. 	Good Exemplary of a Priest and Compassionate Priest

DISCUSSION

The study describes the life stories of seminarists in terms of their thoughts about the seminary, challenges they have encountered inside the seminary, their coping mechanisms, and their dreams and aspirations in life, specifically in the locale of the study which is in the Diocese of Marbel, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Seminary. The bases of these findings are the results gathered from the in-depth interview conducted.

The participants have their thoughts about becoming a seminarist. Their views and thoughts of becoming a seminarist vary; it was also stated that becoming a seminarist means being a good person and being a holy person in line with the response to God's "Call". It was also considered that to be a seminarist is an essential and sacred blessing and a gift from God, and it was a purpose for a person to become a priest. Thus, the seminary became the way for the spiritual formation for those who were engaged in the priesthood vocation to becoming a priest someday. Seminarists also consider motivations as part of their participation and commitment to the seminary. The result states that most seminarists are influenced by their self-decisions in becoming a seminarist, inspired by their service in churches or the religious community, and by church members and other administrators. They also get encouragement from their family members, such as their parents and relatives. By distinguishing the "Call," most seminarists recognize it as a natural sign from God, allowing them to become seminarists and form themselves as spiritual leaders.

Seminarists also encountered challenges inside the seminary. As a natural phenomenon encountered by every individual upon entering a specific vocation, seminarists face severe challenges in entering the priesthood vocation. The result states that in most of the trials encountered by the seminarists, the misunderstanding among their fellow brother seminarists about the different characters varies from the background of their lives; negative thoughts among seminarists can also be considered a challenge. Aside from the differences, monotony or boredom can be a factor that a seminarist faces as a difficulty inside the seminary, longing for the presence of family members, friends, and other relatives. Adjustment to the new environment is another aspect of the struggle encountered by a seminarist; they are experiencing hard times in modifying the new environment, especially inside the seminary.

Seminarists overcome the challenges inside the seminary by the different coping mechanisms or processes of evaluating themselves through adjusting to the new environment. The findings show that most of the seminarists at OLPHS cope with the challenges through the daily prayer that they are practicing; through this spiritual formation, seminarists are encouraged to ask for help and enlightenment in coping with the different

challenges they encounter inside the seminary, acceptance to the given responsibility became the realization on the seminararians of going through the priesthood. In contrast, others said they are accustomed to this daily formation accomplished inside the seminary. Referring to the process that they use is the finding of a spiritual director for the enhancement of their commitment inside the seminary. Engaging in outdoor activities such as sports and bonding with their fellow brother seminararians is also an aspect of coping with the challenges faced inside the seminary.

Seminararians also have dreams and aspirations in life to become a priest someday. Every seminarian has dreams and ambitions, portraying the true essence of the symbol as a priest in the future. One of their dreams and aspirations is to become an excellent example of what a priest is, being compassionate and considerate to other people by giving the symbol of love and empathy. In building their purpose, one of their priests' desires is to build a strong foundation among Youth Encampments in the country and reassure the members of The Knights of the Altar. To be a priest someday is having the accomplishment in responding to the "Call" that God had given to an individual; it is up to the person if he can genuinely recognize and respond to the sign given to him. Having the purpose in the future to become a priest means to share the Words of God among His people, giving an example of what a seminarian was destined for and portraying the symbol of peace and love among humankind.

CONCLUSION

Since the divine grace elevates a man to be a priest through the laying on of hands, it is clear that the priesthood is unlike any other vocation open to men. Even the term "vocation" can be misleading since there are other vocations, and the priesthood is not on the same level as those other vocations. In an essential sense, the priesthood unites all of the callings to which man may respond and cannot be thought of as just one of them. The priesthood is a calling or a life, not simply one occupation among many that a man might choose. This means that the priest has been called by God and given the gift of God, that is, the grace to accomplish his work. The priest is the member of the body that has the charge and the responsibility to unite all together and sacramentally to manifest the presence of Christ in the Church. In practice, the priest's life is wholly dedicated to the service of God and God's people, all day, every day. Every part of his personal life reflects his calling and his responsibility. Even if, because of certain circumstances, he must have secular employment to sustain his life and his family, his priesthood remains his only vocation. It can never be a "part-time job." He must live a life consistent with what he teaches. It is inconceivable for the priest to teach and exhort to holiness and to live a life dedicated to pleasures and entertainment, greed, and personal ambition.

While gathering the information from the respondents, we are learning from their experiences as we compare how difficult it is to live away from your parents and how lucky the typical student usually lives from the specific living factors. Behind all of these experiences, the seminararians are the factors in harmonizing faith and integrity to God's words in our society; they are the teachers of the moral acts that should follow by everyone since there is a decreasing percentage of seminararians in the country, they are our hope excluding the seminararians who left the seminary and cannot resist temptations. This research study opens many opportunities to deal with the reflection that after this study, the questions will remain on our minds, that there will be still phenomena that may occur and could trigger our consciousness; research is dynamic, you cannot say that after the conduct of the study is you had answered that specific question, but when there is still life

providing us the questions that may remain unsolved, those phenomena will remain unanswered. The contribution of this research paper to society could have the call for other people to enter priesthood vocation if that was their passion, serving in the religious community and for the church. Patience, determination, team spirit, love of work, socialization, and value of time helped us determine that this research would never be successful without the presence of my group mates and for the presence of our respondents and teacher.

The findings lead the researchers to several implications for the seminararians and future researchers. As the researchers studied the life stories of the seminararians, the vocation would benefit from a greater understanding of how seminararians live in the seminary, precisely their thoughts, challenges, coping mechanisms, and dreams and aspirations. NDMU, as a catholic and religious institution, should support the dedicated seminararians in pursuing seminary leading to the priesthood. The director and administrators of the OLPHS seminary should also provide different pastoral integrations where aspiring seminararians would encourage themselves to enter the seminary.

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