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Dr. Ecclesial Ministry

Writing Workshop

10 November 2010

The Format of Writing a Theological Essay for Ministry Formation: An Exposé

Most organizations require a style in written material that is uniform, standardized and, for the most part, user friendly. Until 2009, the Ministry Formation Program utilized a very general set of standards that was unevenly enforced. This was noted by the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops' accreditation team during their visit last December. Likewise, the diocesan deacon formation program saw a need for a uniform style for their written papers. This is an abbreviated form of that set of standards. In this short essay, the current and proper formatting will be discussed and illustrated.

Theological essays should be written in Times New Roman, 12 point font using double spacing. The margins are one inch. A cover sheet is not used, unless specifically requested by the instructor. As you can see above, the proper heading is visible in the upper left hand corner of this page. The participant's name is typed, followed by the name of the instructor, the title of the class and the date of the writing. Pages are numbered in the upper right hand corner with the participant's last name followed by the page number.

Any source which can be described, excerpted, or referenced in any way, should appear on the works cited page or bibliography. Some commonly used references in the Ministry Formation Program would be: the Sacred Scriptures, Church Documents, or the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The original sources show in great detail how the references are to be noted. For

simplicity and brevity, we show the most common sources that you will use. Select one format, use it throughout the paper.

If you are quoting from Scripture directly, place the quote in quotation marks and the reference at the end: “After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning...” (Mt 28:1). If you are paraphrasing, do not use quotations, but give the book, chapter and verse at either at the end (preferred) or the beginning of the paraphrase. When quoting or referencing the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the standard abbreviation is three capital C’s followed by the reference number: “Incorporated into Christ by Baptism, the person baptized is configured to Christ” (CCC #1272). If you are quoting from one of the Church Documents: “It is therefore of the highest importance that the faithful should readily understand the sacramental signs...” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* #59).

If you are quoting from the author of either one of your textbooks or another book not listed above, use the author’s last name and the page number from where you took the quote. “The Arian heresy would fuel future heresies, both spin-offs and overcorrections, for another three centuries or more” (Aquilina, 122).

References (or Works Cited – will discuss!)

Aquilina, Mike. *The Fathers of the Church: An Introduction to the First Christian Teachers*.

Exp. Ed. Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor, 2006.

Catechism of the Catholic Church. 2nd ed. Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000. Print.

Paul VI. *Sacrosanctum Concilium. The Second Vatican Council*. 4 Dec. 1963. Web. 20 July

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Smith, Peter J. "Sacraments for Every Child." *America* May 24, 2010: 12-15. Print.

Wooden, Cindy. "Cardinal Suggests Preparing Children for Communion Even Before Age 7."

The Catholic Telegraph Online. 10 August 2010. Web. 17 August 2010.

(updated 7/2014 with new MLA guidelines)