

Rethinking the priestly formation of St. John Vianney Seminary:

A critical practical theological analysis

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ABSTRACT

St John Vianney Seminary was established in response to the requirements made by Pope Benedict XV in 1919 to have indigenous priests trained and formed in their own countries. He emphasised that European missionaries train and value indigenous clergy so that one day they can be able to take spiritual leadership of their people. However, in South Africa, the apartheid laws brought in racial formation. This is why St John Vianney Seminary initially was established for white priest candidates only. But later on, when the political climate was conducive, in 1978, it merged with St Peter's Seminary, which had been for black candidates only. In its history, St John Vianney shared the sufferings, struggles, and liberation of South Africans. Since democracy in 1994, formators and seminarians have dominantly been black, and this has encouraged and enriched Inculturation. The encouragement of Pope Benedict XV, therefore, has borne fruit because today African priests get adequate faith formation to be missionaries of accepted quality. To enrich their pastoral ministry in taking the laity seriously in the Church, recent priestly formation documents encourage the holistic integrated priestly formation aimed at empowering priests for the fulfilment of their mandate in the mission of the Church and formation of the laity. The findings of this study revealed a gap between formation of parishioners, priests, and formators, implementation, and involvement in the mission of the Church in South Africa. In their position within the structure of the Church, participants were asked to define their call as parishioners, priests, and formators to locate their role in the mission of God and the mission of the Church. Participants provided suggestions to be considered for change in priestly formation to enable priests to fulfil their mission and ministry efficiently in the multicultural democratic South African society. For the Church to be relevant and practical in society, all her members are called to participate in her mission. Priests are responsible to see this realised and the mission of the Church accomplished.

KEY WORDS

Vocation, Roman Catholic Church, role of the church, curriculum, rethinking priestly formation, laity formation, St John Vianney, missionary discipleship, *missio Dei*, *missio Ecclesia*.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACPSM	- African Catholic Priests Solidarity Movement
AG	- Ad Gentes
AM	- Africae Munus
AL	- Amoris Laetitia
CCC	- The Catechism of the Catholic Church
CCCB	- Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops
CL	- Christifideles Laici
EA	- Ecclesia in Africa
EG	- Evangelii Gaudium
EN	- Evangelii Nuntiandi
GS	- Gaudium et Spes
GP	- General Prospectus
IQ	- Interview Question
LM	- Lumen Fidei
LG	- Lumen Gentium
MISTRA	- Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection
NMI	- Novo Millennio Ineunte
OT	- Optatam Totius
PDV	- Pastores Dabo Vobis
PFC	- Parish Finance Committee
PO	- Presbyterorum Ordinis
PPC	- Parish Pastoral Council
RFIS	- Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis
RM	- Redemptoris Missio
RA	- Ratio Nationalis
SACBC	- South African Catholic Bishops' Conference
SCC	- Small Christian Communities

CHAPTER 1

Introduction, background, and methodology

1.1 Introduction

The general approach of the mission of the church in South Africa had been very ambiguous and inconsistent in engaging the citizens and transforming societal structures with gospel values. The ambiguity and inconsistency in the ministry of the church has a long history with regards to relations between church and state, conceptual understanding of the mission and the practice of the diakonia ministry in South Africa. What follows is a discussion of the literature reviewed regarding the involvement of the church in South African society, reflecting on why the rethinking of the formation of priests in the Roman Catholic Church is necessary to meet the demands of her mission of evangelisation of the members of the church and society to be active disciples of the gospel in the democratic multi-racial, multicultural South Africa.

Bosch (1991:344), Francis I (2013:#176), and Pillay (2017:1) argue that the mission of the church has two mandates, namely spiritual and social responsibility. The spiritual mandate of the mission of the church implies that the church is commissioned to announce, to proclaim the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ. This announcement of the good news can be done through communication of the gospel by preaching, teaching, prayer, and training. The second mandate of the mission of the church calls for Christians to engage in responsible participation in the society for transformation.

The second mandate of the mission of the Church is calling Christians to dismantle societal structures that perpetuate injustices and reconstruct a society that is increasingly consonant with the vision and values of the kingdom of God (Cochrane, De Gruchy & Petersen 1991:2,3, Francis I 2013:#178). In addition, Mbigi (2005:2) and Du Toit (2009:21) interpret the second mandate of the mission of the church as involving qualitative engagement and deep change of the economic, political, and social aspects in society.

Deep change of economic, social, and political aspects of the society dictates that the church should not only address immediate needs but should also confront systemic evil and hindrances perpetuated by the policies and societal structures in society. Although the Roman Catholic Church claims the inseparability of these two dimensions, the reality is that the laity are not

effectively involved in social transformation of society in fulfilment of their special calling to be salt, light, and leaven in society due to poor priestly formation that produce poor leadership that does not engage in formation of the laity (Wankar 2021:185).

The mission of the Roman Catholic Church does comprise evangelisation and societal involvement, but with the history of the Church with a settlers' church for the whites and a mission church for the blacks (Bate 1999b:8), re-evangelisation of members and outreaches to lapsed members is of necessity to build one united Roman Catholic Church in the democratic society. According to Paul VI (1975:#15), self-evangelisation is necessary for the mission of the Church, hence evangelisation must begin with those within the Church through faith formation, sacraments, and on-going formation. The evangelised laity must be empowered to be true and active disciples who will evangelise the world through proclamation of the good news of Christ. Proclamation must not be limited to proclamation of the good news only, but must be embodied, demonstrated, and lived through love, carrying, sharing, working for justice, and the well-being of others.

Lack of effective participation in the mission of the Church therefore implies failure of the theological institutions to equip ministerial priesthood for an appropriate leadership and ministry within churches and associated institutions, which results in poor spiritual leadership unable to engage its own context. Theological institutions are meant to train and form pastors in doing ministry through the laity who are co-responsible for the mission of God, and the mission of the Church (Diehl 1997:92, Benedict XVI 2012). One can conclude, therefore, that the main factor that contributes to the poor mission of the Church and the lack of involvement in society is poor leadership due to lack of adequate training, or poor church leadership that had received training but fails to perform to its expected level due to self-interest (Ngambi 2011:9). In contrast, another reason might be the early acceptance of young men to the seminary before they mature and go through the stages mentioned by Maslow (1954), that is, a need for basic, psychological and self-fulfilment, therefore they struggle throughout their priesthood period to achieve self-actualisation and find their true calling in life.

In light of challenges that the church in general is faced with, the Church leadership should do self-introspection and assess processes that have been followed within the Church structure and determine if they bear fruit for the mission of the Church in South Africa. This, according to Magezi (2019:130), calls for theological reflections on the practice of the church, which he

says is shallow and lacking in many of the churches in Africa. The faith formation of the laity, which is the seedbed for vocation to discipleship, should change from focusing on the reception of sacraments to discernment of a calling to discipleship by all the baptised. From this first stage will then follow discernment for vocations to ministerial priesthood and to being a formator of future priests.

The last stage will be to focus on how formation for priests is contextualised to meet their needs, the needs of the laity, and the fulfilment of the mission of the Church. This process will assist in finding the ambiguities within the Church structures and placing her on the position to retain her nature, which is to be a sacrament of salvation through all the baptised to evangelise and to engage with societal transformation, making the reign of God possible at every age. Ignorance of reality, of the context, is ignorance of God speaking and working in the present situation leading the salvation of all his people.

Kumalo (2009:247–248; 2013:6–8) discusses at length various historical stages of how the church related with the colonial era, apartheid, and even the democratic government in South Africa. These stages (just mentioned and not discussed in detail) are the follow: uncritical acceptance (1652–1800), critical acceptance (1801–1911), critical opposition (1912–1960), intensive resistance or prophetic witness (1961–1990), mediatory role (1990–1994), and critical solidarity (1995–present). The Roman Catholic Church went through some of these stages and further discussion follows in later chapters on how the Roman Catholic Church participated in politics during the apartheid era and in democratic South Africa.

By critical solidarity the church commits its support and solidarity to the state in its endeavour to serve its citizens with integrity, but at the same time the church is autonomous and commits to critical engagement with the state if it fails its responsibility to serve its citizens in honour and respect (Kumalo 2009:247; 2013:1). This endeavour is seeking a new presence in society after the period of apartheid, letting go of the evil past, enhancing what was good, and finding new ways of engaging with the government and society (Hodgson 1988:17).

Kumalo (2009:250–255; 2013:639–641; 2014:227–229) raised a concern that even though at present critical solidarity is a generally accepted way of how churches may relate with the government, there are many churches in South Africa that still do not support or adhere to critical solidarity to relate with the state. This raises the question whether the Church is thoughtfully preparing and empowering its members to engage critically with the state for

transformation. In another way some churches might be adopting a lower profile, as suggested by the late Archbishop Tutu (MacMaster 2008:4), to allow the democratic government to implement its vision and the church to establish her identity in the new dispensation. The fact is that people in government are the same people as those in churches, but they do not share the same sentiments anymore (MacMaster 2008:8).

The failure of churches to support or adhere to critical solidarity with the democratic government in South Africa has further perpetuated the ambiguity and inconsistency of church relationship with the state. Gumede (2012:126–127), argues at length about this when he states that there are some churches in the democratic government of South Africa that still display silent and uncritical loyalty to the state and many of these churches are co-opted in the agenda of the government. In return they receive patronage from the government.

In light of the above, one can argue that failure of the church to understand its identity or relations with other societal structures such as the state, is due to a lack of understanding of the essence of her mission in time and place. At the same time, a lack of self-understanding of who the church is in society could be mentioned.

In relation to the Church and her involvement in economy, Speckman (2007:5, 13–160) argues that the macro-economic policies were intended to improve the standard of life of the developing countries and create a global community. Instead, macro-economic policies caused social institutions in the Third World countries such as South Africa to lack institutional capacity, and citizens to lack economic initiative. Therefore, the Third World countries have become dependent on the developed countries and thus have become perpetual beggars. In this instance, the role of the Church can be to empower and prepare people to participate in the production and distribution of economic goods and services and in the effective management of the economic surplus (Speckman 2007:xxvi).

In summary: the church leadership must empower all its members to challenge political and economic policies that hinder development of economic power and to confront vicious acts such as corruption, nepotism, and bribery that perpetuate systemic evil hindering economic development. Oppressive economic systems take away the dignity of the poor and call for liberation, which the Church can help assist with by offering the Social Teachings of the Church in all her faith formation for both laity and priests.

The pertinent consequences of the ambiguity and inconsistency of the Church in its ministry to engage the citizens and transform societal structures of South Africa was due to narrow pietistic spirituality. For example, through history the Church struggled to maintain a balance of the two mandates of the mission. At one time the Church overemphasised the spiritual mandate at the expense of the social involvement of its mission (Wankar 2021:185).

On the other hand, the overemphasis of the spiritual mandate of the mission led to a narrow pietistic missionary spirituality that overemphasised the individual piety to the expense of involvement in society. However, the Church's overemphasis of individual piety to the expense of human involvement in society, led to congregations overemphasising social concern and the horizontal dimension of neighbourly love over and against emphasis on spiritual transformation (Bowers-Du Toit 2010:265). The struggles to balance the two dimensions of evangelisation continues, perpetuated by the model of the Church adopted, of poor leadership training for ministry, and Christian formation from the theological institutions (Stevens & Collins 1993:xii, Wankar 2021:185).

The key task of theological education is to empower pastors to understand the will of God in calling them, to understand the mission of the Church, to understand their context, and to be skilled in engaging the needs of the people of God. The nature of theology is to engage the challenges of its time and place and to give direction to the people in their relationship with God and with each other (Hodgson 1988:11). This being the case, the South African theologians need to work out theology that should inform, form, and transform faith formation of Christians to empower them to participate in the twofold mission of the church of evangelisation and social engagement.

In addition, theological institutions should focus on faith formation, scripture, social teachings of the Church, situating these in the context of forming integrated spiritual, righteous, and moral leaders who in turn will form Christian communities and equip them for their mission in society for their time (Naidoo 2012:1). This implies that theological institutions should not be myopic in their view of formation of pastors: pastors should not only be trained to be individuals with spiritual values but also with the necessary skills to empower others for ministry of the church; others being the laity, the church council, or just ordinary members of the church.

In support of the pastoral ministry, the laity are the ones who must also be instruments of evangelisation and social mandate of the mission of the church because they occupy various positions and encounter different context within society (Francis I 2013:#120). The laity, as disciples of Christ, partners, and co-responsible for the mission of the Church, have been undermined and ignored instead of being and acting within and outside the Church as missionary disciples in their own context (Benedict XVI 2012). Kritzinger (2007:13) argues that the underrating of the laity in congregations has caused them to become spectators who cannot participate in the mission of the Church in society and that they have become passengers who wait for the pastor to take them to their destination, consumers who simply receive and without question consume whatever the minister gives them.

Accepting without questioning, participation in the mission of the Church does not help the laity to fulfil their calling as disciples of Christ and participate fully in *missio Dei*. The fact that the self-understanding of the Church is not well expressed to the laity by the leadership affects adversely the role of laity in mission. There is a dichotomy in the understanding of who or what is the Church and because of this division made for the hierarchical ministries, the laity are left out. When the concept of the Church is understood by all the baptised in their different positions and levels and not limited to the priests, then all in their own strata would be liable to carry out the mission of God as the Church.

The laity, by the right of their state of their life, however, are the Church in action within society—with rights, duties, and responsibilities. They have to know and act on the demands of their baptism as members of the Body of Christ, His followers, and to participate fully in His redeeming work in their state of life (Paul VI 1975:#21). Non-participation of the laity in the evangelisation and involvement in societal transformation shows failure on the side of the leadership in the understanding of the Church and her mission in the world.

The membership of the Roman Catholic Church in Africa, and South Africa in particular, has become predominantly African, especially now in the democracy (Nabuya 2011:9); calling the leadership of the Church to address the fate of Africans in their struggle for identity, dignity, and to assert themselves as a people in their culture, tradition, and religion (John Paul II 1995:#48). The religion that Africans now has is the gospel message that needs to challenge them to conform to Christ and to seriously challenge negative elements in the African culture that prevent them to live as disciples of Christ (Nyathi 2011:120). Christianity is a lived religion

meant for all people in every age, place, and culture (Mt 28:19–20). Gospel values need to be integrated, find a home in everyday life, and become part of the African culture for authentic living and transformation of society (John Paul II 1995:#59).

The consequence of the external forces such as slavery, colonialism, and apartheid have deprived Africans of their own identity, human dignity, and freedom in shaping their own destiny (Magesa 1998:320). Democracy, globalisation, and technology, in turn, continue to alienate Africans from themselves forcing them to mimic Western countries in their progressive political, economic development, and theological education with lack of local content which should ground them in their *Botho/Ubuntu* culture and contribute this to global culture (Magesa 1998:325).

The churches in South Africa could assist as it did in the past by training their members to discard the oppressive parts of history, ponder on the present context, and set proper strategies for faith formation that plan the future and make them prophetic in society (The Kairos Document 1986:28-30). Being prophetic is the nature of missionary discipleship—assisting the Church leadership to build parish communities that participate in “Christ’s priestly, royal and prophetic mediation of salvation” (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1994:#1268 (CCC), Osmer 2008:28). Parishioners live their mission in society and should evangelise by living the gospel values integrated in their *Botho/Ubuntu* culture that draw attention to God’s judgement and hope (Osmer 2008:132). Hope implies healing from the past and uplifting human dignity and identity in society, re-instilling or re-emphasising the concept of *Botho/Ubuntu*.

The *Botho/Ubuntu* concept within African understanding implies respect, care, sharing, and concern for others and the environment, enhancing cohesion within a community or society (Masango 2006:931, Msengana 2006:88–89, Futhwa 2013:69, Breed & Semenya 2015:1, Mzondi 2022:2). This concept relates to the Christian perspective of accepting all people as my neighbour (Lk 10:25–37), made in the image of God (Gen 1:26), including politics, economics, and social life in general (Magezi 2020:4). Msengana (2006:89) mentions five characteristics of *Botho/Ubuntu*, namely “relatedness, collectivism, communalism, spiritualism, and holism.” This should be the core of formation for ministerial priesthood in a multicultural society to be prepared to form the laity that should work together to build a Rainbow Nation in a new democratic South Africa. The Catholicism of the Church embraces this concept, but faith

formation lacks grounding and practical living amongst members in the past and present democratic South Africa. This leads to rethinking faith formation to fulfil this mandate.

Rethinking implies reconsidering and assessing the results of the present situation and changing the faith formation strategies to meet the requirements of the mandate of the Church in South Africa today. It is a reflective discernment on a particular process for making changes that would lead to laity involvement in the mission of the Church (Benedict VI 2012). The South African society is said to be Christian, but there is no societal transformation. This can be that Christians do not live their lives as disciples of Christ as He commanded for lack of formation they receive to live their calling effectively and fulfil their mandate in society. In this regard, Olaitan (2020:46) asks: If the Church exists to evangelise, how much emphasis is placed on that during priestly formation? What model of evangelisation is taught to seminarians to address lack of laity participation in the mission of the Church in society? How many practicals are done for primary evangelisation of those who had not yet heard the good news, as well as for re-evangelisation of those who are disillusioned by the Christian religion? How are priests formed beside the proclamation of the gospel and preaching to witness faith, hope, and love as their identity in their daily lives (Olaitan 2020:38)? These questions can assist in rethinking faith formation for all the baptised for discipleship, evangelisation, and social engagement that brings about structural and policy change by witnessing to salvation which is God's gift to liberate humanity from the shackles of sin and oppression.

Rethinking priestly formation calls for reflection on the part of the leadership to assess formation to determine whether it achieves its purpose and empowers recipients for missionary discipleship and whether it fulfils the mission of the Church today (Francis I 2013:#26, Magezi 2020:6). Reflective practice would also assess the difference between the African worldview and the Western worldview which dominates processes in formation and instils a Western lifestyle that conflicts, for example, with values of marriage and responsibility for members of the family (Juma, Du Toit & Van der Merwe 2018:1).

The struggle to have the laity participate in the mission of the Church is not particularly South African, as it is also experienced in other parts of the continent and globally. Lack of active involvement of the laity in working together in the mission of the Church is due to poor formation and adherence to functionalism and clericalism on the part of the clergy (Mallon

2016:72, Olaitan 2020:45), and this is a universal phenomenon. The result is failure to make disciples who in turn will go forth, make disciples, baptise, and teach (Mallon 2016:26).

Rethinking also leads to renewal of the Church and focuses on members and institutions for missionary positioning within the African setting that calls for new ways of empowering in information, formation, reformation, and transformation (Francis I 2013:#24). A new leadership model is needed that can bring about radical change with a purpose to make missionary disciples for the Church to recover her evangelisation nature (Osmer 2008:177, 183). This needs leadership to put into place processes for reflection on rethinking, renewal, and remodelling of the whole formation system. This would encompass both dimensions of evangelisation and empowerment for action within and outside the Church.

Renewal calls for restructuring of expatriate missionary structures, ways of evangelisation and catechising, liturgy and worship, self-understanding and self-theologising, self-ministering and self-propagating in order to answer the new dispensation of the Church and the South African society (Nabuya 2011:3–8, Francis I 2013:#27). In the following paragraphs evangelisation, faith formation, societal engagement in history, and the current status quo of the Roman Catholic Church in South Africa are explained.

1.2 History of mission and ministry of the Roman Catholic Church

To understand the development of African vocations to ministerial priesthood and their priestly formation in the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) in South Africa, it is necessary to reflect on the history of the missionary outreach to South Africa. The two concepts, namely mission and ministry, will be explained first to determine their importance in the life of the Church and how they functioned in the context of the early arrivals of the missionaries in South Africa.

The understanding is that the mission of the Church is to evangelise, based on Matthew 28:19, to “go out and make disciples of all nations”. The ministry thereof in this understanding is to “baptise and to teach everything that Jesus has commanded” (Mt 28:19–20, Paul VI 1975:#7). In other words, the proclamation of the Good News of salvation is first and foremost *missio Dei* which through the baptised continues and becomes *missio Ecclesia* par excellence. Pastoral work is priests and laity fulfilling their ministry according to their “specific role within the Church” (John Paul II 1995:#75). Faith formation of both laity and priests, therefore, should

prepare them to participate in *missio Dei* and *missio Ecclesia* to fully fulfil their vocation in the Church and society.

Missio Dei is the salvation mission of God to redeem humankind and all of creation from their sinful nature and bring them into a relationship with Himself (Daugherty 2007:153, 163), while *missio ecclesia* is the continuation of *missio Dei* instituted by Christ sending His disciples on mission (Daugherty 2007:163). The sending of the Son into the world and the sending of the Holy Spirit by both the Father and the Son to assist Christians on their pilgrim journey continues through the sending of all the baptised to bring others into this relationship with the Trinity (John Paul II 1990:#9).

The early missionaries' initial intention was to serve, to minister to the white settlers as a priority, which was a ministry to the already baptised (Bate 1999b:8). The shift to evangelise the indigenous people only came later, intertwining colonialism and mission (Kiernan 1982:97, Bosch 1991:264, Bate 1999b:8–18) and thus creating a weak link in faith formation of the converted to discipleship. Christianity and civilisation meant the same thing with the aim to uproot converts from their pagan culture and customs and to Westernise them. Africans did not have an option but to comply with the outside pressure and complied and practiced Christianity as part of civilization without losing the core of who they are by privately practicing their traditional religion, culture, customs (Mokhoathi 2020:2).

This expatriate missionary strategy of civilising Africans included the spiritual, intellectual, social, and economic development of Africans irrespective of the African indigenous knowledge, learning, and culture. The problem with this expatriate missionary strategy was that parents or families of those converted were left out and this strategy, though it uplifted the standard of living of Africans, divided the family faith formation structure (Bosch 1991:252). Those who did not accept Christianity continued with their traditional religion, leading to dual practises of religion within a family unit, namely Traditional African religion, by parents, and Christianity by children who had to adhere to both (Adamo 2011:1, Masondo 2015:88). Some Africans accepted Christianity, which was imposed on them, to gain access to education and economic development, but the Christian spirituality was practised together with traditional religion (Bosch 1991:254–257, Mukuka 2008:77, Juma *et al.* 2018:1).

The practise of Christianity by Africans includes or is practised together with African Traditional religion, culture, and customs. It is commonly known and practised today so that

many Africans in South Africa have accepted Christianity and fulfil its requirements, for example, reception of sacraments and payment of church dues, but at the same time African rituals are also performed at home, for example, the reception of a child in the family, marriage and burial rituals. Performing of African rituals is not something of the past as it is still practised today at childbirth, during funerals, weddings, and ancestral sacrifices (*Mpho ya Badimo*) (Juma *et al.* 2018:1).

When illness and tragedies strike and Western medicine fails, families or individuals seek help from the African belief system of Traditional Healers for protection against evil spirits, healing, childlessness, and transition to adulthood (Juma *et al.* 2018:1). The dual practise of Christianity and the practise of African Traditional Religion is not the understanding of inculturation as understood in the Roman Catholic Church.

The following discussion highlights the reason for later RCC missionaries' coming to South Africa to evangelise Africans, their struggle to settle, which influenced their ministry, and their strategy for mission amongst Africans. The expatriate missionaries used societal engagement in building schools, clinics, hospitals and involvement in agriculture to uplift the status of Africans as a method for evangelisation and teaching the Christian faith.

The arrival of the Roman Catholic missionaries in South Africa coincided with the European exploration movement and colonialisation of the Americas, Africa, and Asia (Bosch 1991:263, SACBC 2018). Travelling together with the Roman Catholic Portuguese adventurers, the missionaries came to the Cape as early as 1487/1488 but they did not settle until 1805 when religious societies were legally allowed to freely practise, even though this was short-lived (SACBC 2018, Denis 2018:141). The arrival and appointment in 1837 of the first bishop to Cape Town, Patrick Griffith, marked the establishment of the RCC in South Africa (Denis 2018:141). Missionaries arriving in the 19th century were to look after the Roman Catholic settlers and educate their children (Flanagan 1982:84; Bate 1999b:8; Denis 2018:142). The Church then was classified as the "Settler Church" as it concentrated only on the needs of European settlers (Bate 1999b:8).

In 2018 the RCC in South Africa celebrated 200 years of the "official erection of the Vicariate Apostolic of the Cape of Good Hope" (SACBC 2018). The reason for the Roman Catholic missionaries not settling earlier was based on the historical RCC relations with the Protestants back in Europe (Bosch 1991:246, De Gruchy 1982:74–77). The missionaries' struggle to settle

in South Africa influenced their relationship with the government as well as the missionary outreach and evangelisation of Africans (Iheanacho 2021:104). The process of evangelisation of Africans was very slow and unsuccessful until the arrival of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and the Trappist at Mariannhill in 1882 who developed a comprehensive strategy for evangelisation that engaged the African context (Bate 1999b:6; Denis 2018:142, Iheanacho 2021:98).

The Trappists developed a comprehensive mission approach that integrated faith formation through preaching, faith formation of youth through education, and societal engagement through economic development (SACBC 2019). This strategy encompassed the twofold mandate of evangelisation, that is, spiritual formation and social involvement, which empowered Africans spiritually, intellectually, morally, and economically. Although the aim included civilisation of Africans whose way of life was regarded as primitive, the mission mandate of evangelisation was achieved (Bate 1999b:6).

In *Ecclesia in Africa* John Paul II (1995:#59) states that inculturation includes two dimensions: “the ultimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity” and “the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures.” John Paul II (1995#62) further explains inculturation as “a movement towards full evangelisation. It seeks to dispose people to receive Jesus Christ in an integral manner. It touches them on the personal, cultural, economic, and political levels so that they can live a holy life in total union with God the Father, through the action of the Holy Spirit.” The practise of two religions concurrently needs further research to be addressed in catechesis and priestly formation for authentic living of a Christian calling in the African context.

Duncan (2014:1) argues that inculturation is through adaptation, innovation, and reflexivity, emphasising that Africa was Christianised because of adaptation and accommodation which did not result in total conversion but to new ways of worship and living a Christian life (Duncan 2014:7). Different communities formed by those who left mainline churches differ in their worship style and the way they merge Christian concepts with the Traditional religious concepts, making them differ from the Western way of worship, and unique in their interpretation of the Bible (Duncan 2014:7). Inculturation in the past was supervised by expatriate missionaries on how the gospel encountered the local cultures but now that the RCC

is predominantly black, faith formation and formation of priests must empower the locals with the process of integrating the gospel to transform culture.

The expatriate missionaries' approach to evangelisation, however, covered the two important aspects of the mission of the church, that is, the proclamation of the gospel and social involvement through schools, health facilities, and charity work. Proclamation of the gospel and social involvement, however, in most cases, did not involve Africans but they were and still are to a certain extent recipients of the gospel and charity. Lack of involvement of Africans in their own emancipation from poverty encouraged or created dependency on missionaries for resources and thus their conversion was based on the need for economic development and inclusion in Western lifestyle (Mukuka 2008:77). This tragically created the mental enslavement for Africans who thought every good thing is Western and is viewed as better than their own, making them unable to use their own knowledge to feed and clothe themselves as this would mean that would still be regarded as primitive (Bosch 1991:253–259, Mukuka 2008:84).

One cannot deny that expatriate missionaries offered to Africans their own culture, civilisation, and their Christian religion as the way of life for all humanity. This missionary endeavour was also geared (perhaps unintentionally) towards inner colonisation of Africans to the Western culture (Bosch 1991:259, 266, 271). Therefore, current church leadership must differentiate between imposed Western thinking and how themselves and their people are converted to Christ and have integrated Christianity with their traditional culture. This process will lead to ownership of Christianity and help build an authentic relationship with the Trinitarian God without shame and fear.

Religious women (sisters or nuns) followed in missionary outreach and opened schools, first for the white settlers' children and then for Africans, although the education programme for blacks was inferior to that of whites (Chamberlain, Pavlicevic & Tiernan 1999:189, Rakoczy 2012:116). The schools were built in the European style and the curriculum followed the European education system of teaching and learning, and the personnel came from overseas. Young Africans experienced that what they learned at school contradicted what was practised in the family. School education influenced the thinking processes of children, empowering them with Western intellectual knowledge which the family members did not have knowledge of, taking the responsibility of instilling values and involvement in society away from the

family. This period can be classified as the expatriate missionary outreach to Africans, even though the initial focus was mainly on already evangelised Europeans (Chamberlain *et al.* 1999:189).

It is necessary to understand what is required by accepting a calling to be a Christian and what recruitment to Christianity entails. The command of Jesus to “go and make disciples” implies preaching the message of redemption arousing in those who hear it repentance, convert and to be baptised. Preaching the gospel should awaken a desire or a longing to adhere to the gospel message, and to believe in the Trinitarian God, which then demands being taught everything Jesus commanded and become a disciple and in turn to go and do likewise.

The understanding to be a missionary disciple means accepting Jesus as Lord and Saviour and building a personal relationship with Him (Jn 3:14–17), accepting His teaching, and living by them in society for service (*diakonia*) (Jn 13:34–35, Jn 14:23–26, Jn 15:1–17), and ultimately following in Jesus’ footsteps by accepting suffering, persecution for the sake of the Kingdom (Mt 16:24–26). In other words, a missionary disciple is someone committed to make Jesus known, loved, honoured, and served in whatever way possible in one’s context: to become the light, salt, and leaven in society (Mt 5:13–16, Lk 14:34–35, Mk 9:50).

Although mission schools offered religious education to youth, it lacked a strategy to make them missionary disciples. Even African vocations to ministerial priesthood to become a religious brother or sister were not accepted (Chamberlain *et al.* 1999:194). Notwithstanding, vocations amongst African realised as early as 1887, 1894, and 1899 with four young Zulu men who were sent to Rome to study since there had been no seminaries built in foreign lands yet. Christian Western education and their study in Rome alienated these Africans even further from their culture and people.

It was only from 1940 that local vocations for both blacks and whites were considered, and efforts made to establish local seminaries, one for blacks and another for whites, delaying formation of local leadership in the country (Denis 1999:128–129, Iheanacho 2021:98). Training of African diocesan priests in Southern Africa started in 1924 in then Basutoland (currently Lesotho) (Denis 1999:2018:142). In 1946 St Peter’s Major seminary was establishment for Africans and coloured students in South Africa and was inaugurated in 1951. The seminary for whites was opened in 1948 in Queenstown (currently Komani) and moved to

Pretoria in 1951. It was named St John Vianney Seminary, and is the concern of this research as it is currently housing mostly Africans (Denis 1999:130, SACBC 2017).

The RCC followed the laws of the country in her evangelisation, faith formation of youth in schools, and formation of ministerial priesthood by building separate seminaries for the white settlers and Africans (Nxumalo 1982:51–52). The leadership at this stage did little to oppose the apartheid regime except issuing letters “to appeal to whites by logical arguments” about the inhumanness of apartheid laws (Bate 1999b:151–157, Denis 2018:142). The strong stance to oppose apartheid took place when the leadership realised that they were first “to confront the hypocritical internal praxis” which did not justify and qualify them to critique the government (Bate 1999b:158).

The leadership, for example, started the process of dismantling racial separation by making a resolution in favour of integration in Catholic schools, which was the first step of putting their words into action (Bate 1999a:200).

Although the leadership then took steps to dismantle the separation between blacks and whites, they did not consider the cultural background of the blacks as it was regarded inferior. Western theological concepts and education did not fit in the African setting where children were educated by their family, clan, and tribe, and introduced them to the activities of society surrounding birth, life, and death (Adeyemi & Adeyinka 2002:224).

Today new strategies and new theological concepts are needed in rethinking theological education that speaks to the African thought, understanding, learning, integration, and living (Galgalo 2004:7, Bunduki 2021:162). Priest formation and faith formation of laity through catechesis need to emphasise the reading of scripture in the context of the multicultural South African historical background, engage the new democratic context, and assess and understand where the faith, education, and social involvement of the people is in society, so that discipleship and witnessing can bring about change in the present situation. It is the role of theological education to consider the context and to address whatever prevents human development and degrades human dignity (Ntseno 2022:1).

Christian vocation and ministerial priesthood are in themselves a gift from God to build the Church and to increase the Kingdom of God in the world (John Paul II 1992:92–93). African candidates need a new way of priestly formation that enhances African missionary discipleship

situating themselves in their context and culture. The South African situation has changed and challenges the presence, relevance, leadership, and the mission of the Church. Few changes can be named: the family system, practice of culture mixed with Western and Christian values, the development of sects that attract people to new ways of worship, and the use of technology that offers attractive interpretation of scripture.

The Roman Catholic seminaries in South Africa can be used for creativity in finding authentic Christian living according to the gospel by engaging South African students and the laity in discussions and providing free space for expression of ideas without fear of punishment. The new generation of students and youth could help with new ideas of being church and how to live the gospel values in the age of confusion and technology that brings the world right into their homes as individuals and as family. Inculturation is not static as society changes with time and the young generations are influenced by traditional culture, world cultures, and the democratic South African situation. The world, recognised as a global village, does not display being influenced by gospel values in its culture and the mission of the Church is not directed to influence its processes in human development (Hill 1995:250). The young people are the best candidates to devise processes of inculturation of the world culture of indifference to the gospel values.

In the Roman Catholic Church ministerial priesthood comprises two distinct vocations, namely religious and diocesan. Priests in religious orders or congregations, live community life, follow the spirituality and charism of their founders, even though their ministerial priesthood training is similar to that of diocesan priests. Diocesan priests, on the other hand, have their own spirituality and are incardinated in a Diocese under the leadership of a local bishop, even though they are open to mission outreach of the Church outside the borders of their own Dioceses (Paul VI 1964 #28). They promise allegiance to the local Bishop and become firstly missionaries within their own local dioceses, fulfilling the internal and external mission of the local Church in parish ministry and society (CCC 1994:#1567). Within the structure of the Church in South Africa, the South African ministerial priesthood presents the visible leadership in parishes and in the hierarchy but their influence in society is less visible and felt.

Christian formation, like all other formations, starts in the family and the family ushers the children to the church and society (Mokone & Pali 2022:1). Seminary formation builds on the integral foundation formation of the family, parish, and society (John Paul II 1992:#41,

Mokone & Pali 2022:1). The parish, the spiritual family, should build faith formation of catechises on the foundation made by the family, and culminate in priest formation that forms leadership for the Church. But the parish and the seminary should be aware that the structure of the family has changed from being predominately formed by both parents, that is, a father and mother, and that most families are “ecumenical” with members belonging to different denominations, religions or practice a mixture of Christianity and Traditional religion.

The mission of the Church depends on laity formed in their vocation to provides a fertile ground for vocations to family life, priesthood, religious brothers and sisters, and single life. All these differences in society and the Church need holistic formation, which consists of human, spiritual, and intellectual formation, and discipleship. Ministerial priesthood is called to administer the parish community as spiritual leaders and to form members of families to become missionary disciples ready to participate in the internal and external mission of the Church. The mission of the church needs to continue, but in a different way, to meet the needs of the people of today.

The Church needs a new kind of leadership that should bring about deep change in her structures and implement new processes in her mission that requires discipleship (Lk 14:25–33) that chooses Christ above all others, sacrifices everything for the sake of the Kingdom, and takes up the cross and follows in His footsteps. This is a commission for servant leadership (Osmer 2008:183) for all who accept a calling to follow Christ. To be able to do so, grace is needed, firm family foundations, parish family ministry, and ongoing faith formation of all the baptised that leads to priestly vocation.

The following discussion presents the challenges the Church faces on priestly formation.

1.3 Ministerial priesthood formation and its challenges in South Africa

This section discusses the development of ministerial priesthood formation in South Africa since the call from Pope Benedict XV to train “indigenous priests in their own countries” (Mukuka 2008:128, Rakoczy 2012:115) until the amalgamation of the white and black seminaries to the present.

As already mentioned, in 1919 Pope Benedict XV called for the training of local clergy who would be one with their people by birth, nature, sympathies, aspirations, and would do better

than anyone else to teach the faith to their people because they would know their mentality and culture. Formerly, as already mentioned, because of lack of seminaries in mission countries such as South Africa, indigenous vocations were sent to Rome for studies in a different cultural setting, mentality, language, system of teaching and learning, and they then returned to suffer discrimination like all Africans in the country (Denis 2010:10). Benedict XV also emphasised the kind of formation they were to receive by stating the following:

If, however, the indigenous clergy is to achieve the results we hope for, it is absolutely necessary that they be well trained and well prepared. We do not mean a rudimentary and slipshod preparation, the bare minimum for ordination. No, their education should be complete and finished, excellent in all its phases, the same kind of education for the priesthood that a European would receive (Benedict XV (1919:#15)).

This statement that indigenous priests should receive the same education as the priesthood that a European should receive ignored the different backgrounds of nations. Due to the above statement priestly formation in South Africa and anywhere else in the Roman Catholic Church was the same even though priests were trained in their own countries (Rakoczy 2012:116). However, this was changed and Episcopal Conferences were commissioned to own and develop formation documents and to fit them to their own regions (Congregation for the Clergy 2016:#3 and #7), but in the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC) only human formation has been owned and *Ratio Nationalis* not yet written to direct formation for future priests.

Archbishop Hurley, a South African white, in 1962 critiqued formation which was offered then to local seminarians and stated it offered them “fairly good text-book knowledge of the faith in terms of magisterial degree and scholastic definitions ...” but did not form “prophets and apostles” (Denis 1999:135, Rakoczy 2012:117). Archbishop Hurley then advocated for formation that relates to life, to history, to culture, and to experience that would empower priests for ministry in their own context. Hurley saw a discrepancy between academic knowledge and practical application of it in society and insisted on training priests who would be competent to communicate the faith to their people in the context of South Africa (Denis 1999:134–135). The vision statement presents the primary mission and goal of St John Vianney Seminary as to provide the Church with future priests for the Southern African region and for the entire world (St John Vianney Seminary 2022:7), yet Hurley’s concerns are still prominent.

A few questions to ask in relation to the research question of this study are: Has the formation of priests at St John Vianney Seminary changed since the seminary is now predominantly run by African formators and the majority of candidates are Africans? What signs or changes are there to differentiate the South African priests from those of other cultures in Africa in their approach to laity formation? Are the concerns of Archbishop Hurley in 1997 informing formation of priests today formed by their own South African formators? Are the laity being formed as co-responsible for the mission and ministry of the Church as proposed in 2012 by Pope Benedict XVI? Are parishes now run by local African priests better engaged in societal engagement for transformation as suggested by Pope Francis I (2013)?

The Congregation for the Clergy (2016:25) advises that the cultural background of candidates ought to be taken into consideration and they must not be uprooted from their culture. How is priestly formation integrating the multi-culturalism in the South African society to enable candidates to serve without discrimination as a prophetic element needed in society today?

The Church in South Africa was divided between the settlers' church for the whites and mission church for the blacks (Bate 1999a:157; Chamberlain *et al.* 1999:189). Is the Pastoral Plan (2019) addressing these issues to help the two groups to amalgamate and is it forming part of laity faith formation, on-going formation for both laity and priests and does it form pastoral formation at the seminary? Being a Roman Catholic myself, from observation, the number of white parishioners has decreased in most parishes which were formerly white parishes. How is the hierarchy addressing this manifestation and re-evangelising the lapsed members? How has laity faith formation and societal involvement for the mission of the church in the democratic multicultural South Africa integrated these two groups? Are the needs and challenges of these groups forming part of the curriculum at St John Vianney Seminary preparing priests to re-evangelise and to serve the needs of the multiracial and multicultural society?

The curriculum of the St John Vianney Seminary is based on *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (John Paul II 1992), integrating four pillars of formation: human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral. To obtain credibility, St John Vianney Seminary was registered with the South African Department of Higher Education and Training as a Private Higher Education Institute (St John Vianney Seminary 2022:1 & 3) and therefore incorporates the requirements of the National Qualifications Framework Act 2008 (NQF).

The objectives of the NQF complement the four pillars of formation as they are designed “to contribute to the full personal development of each learner and to social and economic development of the nation at large” (Government Gazette 2009:6). This objective should be combined with the Social Teachings of the Church and form part of pastoral formation. The question then is, how does the seminary combine the expectations of the Church and the objectives of the NQF and provide the Church with future leadership able to minister effectively in the Church and society? Ntseno (2022:8) argues that the Church should find space between the world of educational policy and the world of no legislation and find space to make changes that meet the legitimate requirements of society.

The solution to this ambiguous situation will be for the churches to do mission through the laity, training them for missionary discipleship as salt, light, and leaven to fulfil and to meet the legitimate requirements of society. The problem of churches is seeing the Church as an institution and leadership without the laity, and this has crippled the mission of the church for not empowering them with theological education in their formation and for them to gain confidence in who they are and to answer their calling in society.

Ministerial priesthood is meant for the formation of the relevant church leadership for service of the laity and evangelisation of all people of God (CCC 1994:#876, #1551) but the implementation of this ministry to the laity has not yet formed an integral part of formation for the priests for them to make contribution to the social and economic development of the nation as required by the NQF. It can be concluded, therefore, that what is written in documents does not necessarily mean adherence to the requirements of the Department of Higher Education either by priests themselves or parishioners they serve. Other institutions of higher education need to carry out research to assess how their students contribute to social and economic development with such a high unemployment rate in South Africa.

Past studies carried out at St John Vianney Seminary are next discussed to highlight the situation and state the challenges faced by African candidates, priests, as well as indicating the gaps that need consideration.

1.4 Contemporary studies on priestly formation at St John Vianney Seminary

Contemporary studies conducted at St John Vianney Seminary, which trains and forms diocesan priests to be incardinated in dioceses within the Southern African region, and St

Joseph Theological Institute, which mainly trains religious priests who follow spiritualities of different founders of religious congregations within the Roman Catholic Church. Missionaries by nature, used as participants priest candidates and priests who attended these seminaries with the exclusion of parishioners or laity and formators of future priests involved in training and formation and play a central role in providing the Church with spiritual leadership. The findings of these studies are presented below, starting with those conducted first and ending with the most recent ones.

Lumbi (2011) carried out research titled “Understanding some of the contemporary challenges experienced by Catholic clergy in South Africa”. Participants were candidates from St John Vianney Seminary and priests around Johannesburg. This research excluded formators and the laity as part of the understanding of challenges faced by candidates and priests, forming the gap which is addressed in this research.

Lumbi’s findings suggest a need for effective implementation of inculturation, improvement of communication between seminarians and priests, and candidates and priests with authorities of the Church, the bishops. Lumbi found the methods for evangelisation wanting and highlighted the need to broaden the involvement of the laity in the mission of the Church and parish activities (Lumbi 2011:49, 66). This research was carried out while parish priests participating in this study were candidates at the seminary. Their views will be discussed in the following chapters which reflect the same sentiments as reflected in Lumbi’s research findings.

In the same year (2011) the South African Catholic Bishops’ Conference (SACBC) carried out research in their region to determine which characteristics would ensure successful priesthood and what difficulties stood in the way of becoming an effective priest. This research also excluded the laity and formators of future priests as participants. The findings from this research had not helped the episcopacy to amend and to formulate *Ratio Nationalis* that would give a new direction and influence contextualisation of the curriculum on formation of future priests at St John Vianney Seminary to curtail and address problems faced by priests in ministry.

The recommendations of the research by Lumbi (2011:8) and that by the SACBC (2011:5) did not change the theological and philosophical framework of the curriculum by adding more African theology and philosophy that would help students to situate themselves in their context. The SACBC is charged with the responsibility to own documents internationally published, to

translate them, and to inculcate them to address the challenges in their own region and to empower members for the mission of the Church in the current context (Congregation for the Clergy 2016:#1–#10) but this has not yet happened.

Juma, Van der Merwe & Du Toit (2017) in turn published an article titled, “The experiences of African Roman Catholic Church seminarians”. Participants were seminarians from St John Vianney Seminary and St Joseph Theological Institute (Juma *et al.* 2017:4). Data from the research indicated that participants felt that “their training systematically chiselled away at their global meaning system, their fundamental understanding of the world and their cherished values causing them intense discomfort and cognitive dissonance” (Juma *et al.* 2017:4).

It was clear from the findings of Lumbi and Juma *et al.* that the Roman Catholic Church worldview contrasted with the African values participants upheld. The concept of celibacy, global meaning, and fundamental understanding of the world were further discussed by Juma *et al.* (2018:1) in their article “The ‘persona’ lives of Roman Catholic priests”. The authors present African cultural practices and beliefs contradicting the RCC teaching which are still practised by African priests, such as the veneration of ancestors, the consultation of traditional healers and the centrality of fatherhood that could lead priests to live double lives (Juma *et al.* 2018:1).

Lack of integration of African belief systems with the RCC teaching encourages “different personas enabling priests to adjust to the social contexts of their lives and work” (Juma *et al.* 2018:3). Living a double life leads to split personality and character that could destroy the trust the laity has in the Church leadership as they fail to be a bridge between people with God and God with his people. Another outcome of living a double life could result in it becoming an accepted hidden culture of ministerial priesthood which would distort the public “face” of the RCC in society. Unless attended to, the Church would not be taken seriously in society as the leadership would not be living what they believe and what they teach.

Khwepe (2016) conducted research on “The construction of masculinity by seminarians of the Roman Catholic: A South African study” at St Joseph Theological Institute with the candidates as participants. Khwepe (2016:32) highlights the significance of gender, power, and organisational culture of the seminary as being problematic for the seminarians for construction of masculinity. Khwepe further states that this was due to the inadequate training and lack of competent formators of future priests as major concern in the training of seminarians. This

challenge might be the result of the process of choice, nomination, and recruitment of formators of future priests which neglects the concept of a calling in the involvement in certain ministries within the Church and even in society and the preparation and formation thereof which might also neglect the engagement of the democratic multicultural context.

During the apartheid regime, most African priests felt alienated from the Church (African Catholic Priests Solidarity Movement 2000:6) and most did not form part of the leadership of the Church. With the struggle for liberation and the white leadership realisation of the dichotomy of separation of the white church from the African mission, African priests were incorporated into formation with no proper preparation and formation to take up the leadership of the Church and formation for priests. Without proper preparation African priests were unable to introduce deep change and situate the Church to the South African context rather than to mimic the Western or European style they found already in use in the Church by the expatriate missionaries. The past problems could have influenced the processes and leadership of the Church resulting in a lack of competent leadership and formators at present to bring deep change in laity faith formation and formation for priests.

According to the findings of Khwepe (2016:102), seminarians at St Joseph's Theological Institute associated masculinity with power, status, reliability in crisis, responsibility in the family, confidence, aggression, and the expression of sexuality. These qualities were seen as characteristics that construct a real man and how a man should behave. This mentality influences also the South African Church leadership dealings and functions which makes it difficult for most to have women included in the leadership decision making in the Church where women are the majority of her members (Hill 1995:250).

Another concept most seminarians in Khwepe's study found difficult to accept is celibacy. The Roman Catholic leadership is to vow and/or promise celibacy at ordination, which participants viewed as depriving them of their cultural and natural inclination to married life, regarded as their traditional way of being men (Khwepe 2016:95). Celibacy or an unmarried man or woman in African culture is viewed as abnormal and are called names which humiliate their status. The violation of this vow or promise is viewed as normal and law is rarely imposed on those who have children under the vow or promise of celibacy, depriving children a secure family life and insertion into society and women a complete and open relationship with the fathers of their children. This concept of celibacy for Church ministry in the RCC needs to be discussed

and integrated in a different way in an African context where a male child has duties and responsibilities to fulfil.

The concepts of poverty and celibacy, which are regarded as forming the ministerial priesthood identity in the RCC, are a challenge to African traditional culture that places the responsibilities of propagation and care of the family on a male child. As stated by Juma *et al.* (2018:1), this leads seminarians and priests to not live what they publicly promise but continue their Church ministry and traditional requirements of a male child. This challenge, placed by cultural and philosophical roots on bearing children and the Church demand on celibacy for priesthood, prevent priests and seminarians to be true to themselves and weakens trust in what they preach, which weakens the mission of the Church. At the same time, parishioners are deprived of spiritual and social formation for their mission in society as priests struggle to integrate and fulfil the demands of culture and customs with those of the Church tradition on celibacy (Juma *et al.* 2018:1).

The gap in Lumbi, SACBC, Khwepe, and Juma *et al.*'s research is that participants were seminarians and priests, with the exclusion of the laity and formators of future priests. Africans and black South Africans are still rooted in their traditional culture and family ties are still the source of who they are and the form of their identity. The demands families place on their sons are natural due to lack of understanding of Christian concepts and their exclusion in the Christian formation of their children. The Christian calling to live a celibate life and vow poverty as inherent in a calling to ministerial priesthood and religious life in the RCC are new concepts in the African life. To facilitate understanding these concepts it should be inculturated and form part of faith formation (Mt 19; 1 Cor 7:34–38) for individuals to make an informed choice if called to live a celibate life as a witness, and not just adhering to a demand integrated into the vocation to priesthood (Mokone & Pali 2022:6).

The challenge expressed by these studies reveals the weakness of the RCC in considering individual conversion and or vocation apart from family roots and culture. The gap in the above studies is addressed in this research by including parishioners, parish priests, and formators of future priests on their understanding of a Christian calling in their position and level in the life of the Church, and the kind of Christian formation they receive to empower them for their calling to effectively answer its demands and fulfil their mandate in the mission of the Church

for evangelisation and societal engagement. Parishioners, priests, and formators of future priests form the body of the Church, with Africans being in the majority in all groups.

The success or failure of participants for involvement in the mission of God depends on collaboration between the three contributors in the formation of ministerial priesthood. The documents of the Church on priestly formation suggest the inclusion of different groups of people in the formation of future priests, including the families of seminarians. Seminarians and priests also advocated for the inclusion of their families, especially parents, as they would be in an African context at the traditional culture for initiation into adulthood or in marriage arrangements (Mokone & Pali 2022:4).

The relevance of the hierarchical ministerial structure of the Church, the mission of God, and faith formation of the laity depends on the effectiveness and contextualisation of priestly formation. When priestly formation does not address and engage with the core of who people are, an African person in his being, in his culture, and his philosophical roots, then formation has no foundation to build on. The knowledge received through the four pillars of formation satisfies the requirements for ordination and the objectives of NQF to obtain academic degrees but do not empower a priest as spiritual guide. The chance of successfully integrating Christianity into the African culture is slim and formation of the laity for their mission in society cannot be realised. The mentioned discussions above lead to the following: the problem statement, aim and objectives of this study.

1.5 Problem statement

The General Prospectus 2022 of St John Vianney Seminary (St John Vianney Seminary 2022:7) states the primary mission and goal of the seminary as “to train future priests for the service of the Roman Catholic Church and for the good of Southern Africa and the entire world, without discriminating against anyone who wishes to follow the programmes SJV offers”. This statement sets the purpose of the seminary and priestly formation without discriminating against anyone. The question is, how does the seminary balance formation to ensure that theological and philosophical content informs and forms, empowers and skills local priests to be competent and effective for the mission of the Church and for ministry in the local multicultural context?

The aim of formation for future priests though, states that the purpose is to produce well-rounded formed future priests who are academically developed, deeply human, psychologically balanced, pastorally effective, and spiritually mature, and able to contribute to the South African and the international context (St John Vianney Seminary 2022:7). The result of this aim promises firstly, to produce priests with personalities that are a bridge and not an obstacle between God and His people and people with God, and secondly, priests who are pastorally effective to fulfil the mission of the Church and carry out their parish ministry to empower the laity through faith formation that informs and forms them to be missionary disciples and become involved in societal transformation.

This, however, is difficult to determine from priests already in ministry how pastorally effective they are in contributing to the mission of the Church and the faith formation of parishioners empowering them to participate in the mission of the Church and fulfil the mandate of their calling in the multicultural South African context.

Drastic change in the South African society since 1994 brought along challenges of corruption, lawlessness, xenophobia, and crime. Christianity seems to fail to influence the lives of Christians in their everyday life (Naidoo 2015:165), revealing that priestly formation does not achieve its aim as stated above. Besides, membership of the Roman Catholic Church has since changed to mainly black priests and a majority of black laity, calling for faith formation that befits their context of a rainbow nation that includes expatriates, with their various cultures, races, languages, and educational status. How does formation for future priests prepare and skill them to minister effectively to all?

Church membership across nations and cultures need relevant servant leadership able to serve their spiritual and societal needs to help them uphold their cultures and restore their dignity (Ogbonnaya 2017:18). There is a need for the reassessment of the understanding of who is the Church. How does the Family of God model and the many documents of the Church on the laity faith formation and participation in the mission as co-responsible inform the curriculum for formation of future priests for them to serve South Africans effectively?

Faith formation of the laity relates to priestly formation in that it introduces children, youth, and adult converts into Christianity to answer their calling as followers of Christ. It forms the foundation for a calling to ministerial priesthood, and ministerial priesthood calling is for the service of the laity to teach them everything Jesus has commanded. Similarly, formation of

formators for future priests is linked to formation of future priests in that they are the ones who are to teach, form, mould, and equip future priests for their pastoral ministry to fulfil the mission of the Church.

Laity, priests, and formators, therefore, need formation for evangelisation and practical skills for societal engagement for transformation in the society that is struggling for justice and stability after the struggle for liberation under the previous government's oppressive apartheid system. The Church, meaning all the baptised, should receive Christian formation which is situational for them to be relevant in their ministry in the Church and mission in society.

Christianity is growing in Southern Sahara Africa (Nyende 2008:38, Naidoo 2015:165, Ogbonnaya 2017:1) and needs new ways of theologising, new ways of self-understanding, and new ways of expression to be authentically African (Ogbonnaya 2017:18). Faith formation of the laity and social engagement need to be grounded in the cultures of *Botho/Ubuntu*, to make them missionary disciples in their own identity and situation (Masango 2006:930).

Formulation of the curriculum would need to consider the following questions: "Whose knowledge is transmitted, whose perspective is informing the knowledge, to what effect is the knowledge conveyed and who are the conversation partners?" (Venter 2015:185). Nyathi (2004:120) determines that Jesus was a perfect communicator who challenged His (Jewish) culture where it was wrong and unjust, suggesting the same to be done with African culture, political, economic, and social structures. Culture is not static, and the Church needs to be always prophetic in her approach to changing situations. For the Church to be true to her nature and have the laity participate in her mission as leaven amid society, rethinking formation for future priests needs consideration leading to the main research question.

1.6 Main research question

To what extent is the formation of priests at St John Vianney Seminary equipping the priests to empower the laity for their role in the mission of the Roman Catholic Church in the democratic South Africa context?

1.7 Research aim and objectives

The main aim of the study is to determine how formation of the future priests from St John Vianney Seminary enables them to form the laity to participate effectively in the internal and external mission of the Church in the multicultural democratic South African context.

This study does not follow the conventional structure of a thesis but is framed according to the four hermeneutical practical theological tasks (Osmer 2008:4) which consists of a critical and integrated engagement of both theoretical and practical data to address the main research question. This study begins with practical concerns of the ministry and formation in the Roman Catholic Church. These practical concerns were derived from the empirical data, observations and Church and scholarly documents that were studied. The theoretical and theological reflection on the practical concerns followed. The concepts from historical, systematic, Biblical theology and social sciences were used to implement theological and theoretical reflection. Lastly, the study concludes with reflective practice in a form of strategies, desired actions and change that leadership in the Roman Catholic Church may implement to transform the ministry of the Church.

Osmer's (2008:4) four Practical Theological tasks and their related questions are linked to the objectives of this study so that the process of interpretation of the situation within the Roman Catholic Church in South Africa could be clearly expressed, and the solutions derived at be useful to the members of the Church in their own context. The objectives of this study are expressed in a manner that fits the study but carry the same essence as the four tasks of Practical Theological Interpretation and their related questions.

Osmer (2008:4) mentions the first Practical Theological task as descriptive empirical task, which is about gathering information that helps discern patterns and dynamics in a particular context. The related question is: What is going on? This question is about a matter of attending to what is going on in the lives of the individual, families, and communities. In relation to this study, *the first objective of this study* is to analyse the views of the participants on the priestly formation and its impact on the mission of the Roman Catholic Church in democratic South Africa. This objective is engaged in Chapter 2. In addressing the above-mentioned objective, the following strategies were used to gather information: spirituality of presence, and priestly listening and attending:

Spirituality of presence (Osmer 2008:33–34) means being present to others within the presence of God and to offer intercession, share empathy, suffering and frustration of the pastor and the congregations. This means creating an atmosphere where the other feels secure with no preconditions and judgement. Spirituality of presence further means being fully present to the other, in other words, being attentive to them. Being attentive means the other must feel being listened to in the way that you feel what they feel, and you are fully present in the situation, in other words, attending with an open heart. Furthermore, spiritual presence is creating an atmosphere of prayer where God’s presence is felt. It constitutes openness, attentiveness, and prayerfulness. As part of exercising spirituality of presence, the researcher attended various worship services and meetings of pastoral council, diocesan, and national conferences of the Roman Catholic Church to observe and experience various contexts within the RCC.

Another strategy was priestly listening, which involves listening to others and praying on their behalf to God to understand their circumstances and context. In this study, priestly listening was practised when the researcher was present at the RCC meetings, listening, observing and asking pertinent questions to understand the views of the participants concerning the formation and missional practices of the RCC. The last strategy is formal attending, which used empirical research methods to investigate a particular situation or context. The empirical research entailed the researcher making appointments with participants to interview them for the purpose of this study. More discussion on the empirical research methodology followed is discussed later in this chapter.

Osmer discusses the second Practical Theological task as interpretive task which seeks reasons for the phenomena and practices that were observed in the descriptive task. To provide those reasons there is a need to draw on theories from the arts and sciences to help understand some practices and phenomena. The related question to the above task is: Why is this going on? The question seeks to understand why some practices and phenomena observed in descriptive task occur. In relation to the above-mentioned task and related question, *the second objective of this study*, is to interpret the ministerial practices by explaining why the participants view the priestly formation and its impact in the mission of the Roman Catholic Church in the manner they have given. This objective is addressed in Chapter 3. To engage the above-mentioned objective, the researcher reflected on and used various theories and concepts from social

science, education, and other disciplines to interpret the data from participants and practiced fair judgement of the sources and data to achieve good practice of ministry and leadership.

Osmer says the third Practical Theological task is the normative task and its related question is: What ought to be going on? The question seeks to discern God's will for present context. The normative involves the process of prophetic discernment whereby there is an effort to understand interaction between the divine revelation and human response and experience. The positive consequence of this interaction is realised by ability to make good judgement to apply the relevant theological and ethical concepts and interpretation to a situation with the aim of engaging in good practice. Good judgement, accompanied by correct theological and ethical interpretation, may lead to sympathy with the plight of those who suffer. *The third objective of this study* is to delineate theology of priestly formation to understand its essence, nature in the formation of priests, and its supposed goal This objective is engaged in Chapter 4. To respond to this objective this study delved into theology of formation, its purpose, and its nature engaging spiritual discernment in the process of praying, reading, and writing about this study. Sources were fairly judged, using theological and ethical interpretation to strive for good practice.

In his discussion of the pragmatic task, Osmer states that it is about determining strategies of action that will influence a particular context in ways that are desirable and reflecting on the implemented actions (Osmer 2008:4). Leadership with character of servanthood is essential to lead the process of implementing required strategies and actions. The related question to the pragmatic task is: How might we respond? This question calls for particular and desired action to specific context. In light of the above *the fourth objective related with the above-mentioned task* is to propose actions that the church leadership might apply to facilitate change in priestly formation at St John Vianney Seminary by forming leadership that can bring about deep change in the Church to benefit the laity and their role in the mission of the Church in society? This objective is realised in Chapter 5.

Every church is unique and the solutions to the challenges faced by each church should be guided by a vision, mission, strategy, type of relevant leadership, and the analyses of the situation. The analyses of the situation and strategy for implementation help bring about change. As a result, this is where guiding by leadership is crucial. A good leader can offer good guidance only if he or she can overcome his or her inability to attend to the other. A priest as

interpretive guide is needed to help members understand the present situation, their identity, and their task in shaping the new course for the parish community.

1.8 Positioning within Practical Theology

This research was carried out under the Department of Missional and Practical Theology at the University of the Free State. The modern Practical Theology has the following sub-disciplines: Liturgy and Homiletics, Leadership and Congregation Studies, Pastoral Care and Counselling, and Faith Formation. This study focuses on faith formation of all the baptised for them to define their calling, to know the source of their calling and the purpose of their calling in the context of their life in the Church and society.

The first consideration was to define what differentiates Practical Theology from other theological disciplines and how its importance relates to formation for discipleship. Heyns and Pieterse (1990:7) mention the goal of other theology disciplines as to impact theological knowledge, while the goal of Practical Theology is to focus on processes, activities, and events putting these into practice. Furthermore, Practical Theology, unlike other theological disciplines, prefers to start with practical concerns, then theoretical theological reflections on the concerns raised on practice then back to reflective practice (Magezi 2019:119). This means that Practical Theology deeply reflects on the meaning of actions and experiences of believers, the discernment of the will of God in a particular context, and how people come to faith and live it in their human-divine interactions as individuals and as a community. Furthermore, it is these human-divine actions that distinguishes Practical Theology from other non-theological disciplines (Ganzevoort 2009:4, 9). Scholars give different definitions of what Practical Theology is and how it differs from other disciplines. The general view is presented, and the next section presents what Practical Theology is in the African perspective.

Practical Theology, as theological discipline, is difficult to define because of some various shifts it underwent through time. Initially it was known as Theology of Application (Heitink 1993:1, Woodward & Pattison 2000:2) that applies knowledge from other theological disciplines such as Biblical and Systematic Theology, and unable to form knowledge of its own. The purpose of Practical Theology as theology of application was to evaluate the effectiveness of the theory and improve individual theological mobility in achieving the divine will. The shift towards Practical Theology as theory of crisis (Heitink 1993:2) meant that

Practical Theology was used as a discipline to address the social ills encountered in the society. This is where Practical Theology provides knowledge and skills on counselling, interpretation and guiding through the trauma and the crisis that is experienced. The shift towards Practical Theology as theory of action (Heitink 1993; 6, 102) alludes to empirically oriented theological theory of the mediation of Christian faith in the praxis of modern society. This implies that Practical Theology engages in religious action that aims to change the given situation in society and the sphere of action is not only the church but the whole society.

Other scholars also define Practical Theology. Ganzevoort (2009:3–7) defines it as a study of the field of lived religion which involves discernment and analysis of the evidence of the sacred (being). Lived religion for Africans may refer to experience of African Traditional Religion and encounters of Africans with early Christian missionaries and Islamic faith. Ikenye (2008:38) defines Practical Theology as a theological discipline which must be descriptive of African lived experience. The lived experience in Africa may refer to the experience of the slavery, colonialism, apartheid, encounters with traditional religion and early Christian missionaries. Dames (2013:9) explains Practical Theology as a critical, hermeneutical, participatory-action and reflection study within the praxis of God for the missional praxis of the church within the praxis of society. This definition of Dames links Practical Theology with academy by being critical, hermeneutical, and reflective. It also links Practical Theology with ministry by emphasising participatory action. Focus on the praxes of God, church and society highlights the contexts it intends to engage.

The scope of Practical Theology expanded tremendously from a clerical and ecclesiastical paradigm to Christian practices in the society known as praxis (Miller-McLemore 2012:25). It has become international and its contours are anything that concerns the church life and public importance to shape the public policy and bring about the social renewal (Osmer (2008:ix, x; Woodward and Pattison 2000:8). Ganzevoort (2009:8) defines the object of study within the scope of Practical Theology as the ordained ministry, church, faith, religion, culture, and society. This study is focused on the role of the clergy and church members in society, and how their ministerial practices achieve the mission of God and transform their own context.

Practical Theology is concerned with “praxis of lived religion” and transforming it (Ganzevoort & Roeland 2014:97, 98). Lived religion refers to experiences one may have from whatever religion s/he may have, that is, it can be experiences from African Traditional Religion, Islam,

or Hinduism. This means that Practical Theology is concerned with how members of other religions engage their own context to transform it. The above is an indication that Practical Theology has moved in some countries to incorporate other religions and cannot be limited to Christian religion as in the past and is shifting towards being multi-religious. Ganzevoort (2009:3–7) and Dreyer (2010:3) state that Practical Theology has shifted its religious identity from a reformed and Christian oriented discipline to a more ecumenical and multi-religious discipline. Practical Theology in this study is viewed from the Roman Catholic perspective.

Practical Theology faces various challenges as it grows in scope and experience shifts in its religious identity and definitions. Dreyer (2010:3, 5) mentions one challenge of Practical Theology as minimum use of empirical methods in Practical Theological research or adaptation of empirical studies from other disciplines. This study employed the empirical qualitative research method to obtain the views of the participants on the formation and mission of the RCC. Magezi (2019:130) states that in doing Practical Theology there is movement from practice to theoretical reflection and back to practice, but most of the time theoretical reflection is ignored or shallow, hence many institutions, such as churches, suffer from un-reflected practice. This study engages the movement of Practical Theology by beginning with practice (Chapter 2), then theory (Chapters 3 and 4) and reflected practice (Chapter 5). The third and last challenge experienced in Practical Theology is excessive use of social science to address social challenges. The adverse effect of this practice is that theological reflection tends to be narrow, and the use of Bible becomes just a proof text to justify theological practical positions. The consequence turns Practical Theology to be a bad theological science and bad social science at the same time. This study keeps balance of not misusing scripture or making excessive use of the social science theories.

1.8.1 Practical Theology in African context

The nature of Practical Theology in Africa is defined using the context of Africa which differs from that of other countries. According to Magezi (2019:119), Practical Theology intends to close the gap between God and faith and lived reality in the world. The nature of Practical Theology in Africa is defined by African culture, how Africans relate with the living and the dead, how they form images of God and relate to Him (Meiring 2007:735; Nyende 2008:41–42). Knowledge of the culture, spirituality and traditional cosmology of Africans would help

direct the way Practical Theology should be shaped and applied in every context (Kasambala 2005:321–320).

Practical Theology in Africa is understood as it brings one in conversation with liberation and feminist theologies in addition to interdisciplinary conversations, which contribute to political, economic, and other community issues (Magezi 2019:118). Practical Theology in South Africa is viewed as being influenced by Western thought and thus needs decolonisation for it to be contextualised to deal with the reality of the poor in society, and theological reflection should be informed by them (Magezi 2019:132). This understanding links to this study in that the parishioners were included in this research to hear their views on the formation of priests who are called to service them. The voices of parishioners or laity in general are ignored, not listened to, and they do not inform the processes and decision making of the Church who takes decisions for them. Their opinion is not sought, nor their understanding asked for, and their hopes are ignored.

In an African context, Practical Theology needs to understand that religion for Africans is not written on paper but “in people’s hearts, minds, oral history, rituals and religious personage like rain makers, officiating elders and even kings” (Nyende 2008:43–44; Wepener, Dreyer & Meylahn 2017:140). This African context forms the foundation for Practical Theology to build on and help Christianity to enter an African’s heart, form the core of his/her everyday life. Then a deep understanding of who an African is, how they identify themselves in their cultural and religious belief, how they function in their relationship with their living dead, how they respond to life during suffering and joy, might provide an approach to their faith formation, participation in the mission of the Church, and social engagement to transform the oppressive situation they live in (Ogbonnaya 2017:3).

Without taking the people who are in faith formation into consideration results in imposing on them faith knowledge that they cannot apply in their everyday life as their culture. For most Africans the correlation of the two religious practices is practised without any problem and has become a new culture for them. They improvise and use their traditional religion and culture in situations that form the core of who they are and use Christian practices when suitable for public life, for example, the reception of sacraments and funerals.

For Christianity to be written in the hearts and minds of Africans it needs to come home, be functional and contextual to answer their everyday life situations. It should resonate with who

they are as a unique people created by God. It should inform and form part of relationships, inform their worldview regarding birth, life, death, and make sense of the place of the dead in their live experience for it to become culture for Africans (Ogbonnaya 2017:3–4). Practical Theology in this regard needs to be a vehicle that helps Africans to internalise the mission of the Trinity for the world, the place of ancestors (living dead) in this process, and the part they are to play in bringing it into realisation. In doing so, Practical Theology will be situated and practical for application in the multicultural South African context. Practical Theology to be a good theology must be situational (Hodgson 1988:11).

Practical Theology in Africa ought to help Africans to reconstruct their lost communal self and ground it on Christianity (Meiring 2007:735, Ikenye 2008:38). Jesus' prayer for unity (Jn 17:1–26), cannot be overlooked by all those who call themselves Christians. Trinity is One God, Community of Persons and so is the African perspective of life (Meiring 2007:735). All who seek to know God, love Him, and serve Him should form a communal witnessing.

Building on the traditional religion, Practical Theology should help Africans to integrate Christian spirituality of life and live it out as missionary disciples. The weakness of Christianity in South Africa is through its introduction to Africans, producing pew Christians with faith formation based on reception of sacraments. Christianity needs to move away from Church structures and documents to people's hearts, feelings, emotions, homes, and social sphere, allowing itself to make an impact in transforming all structures of society. Wepener *et al.* (2017:147) state that for Africans religion is not "so much in beliefs, dogmas and creeds as it is about the performance of faith practices" that take place not only on Sunday but in everyday life to solve whatever situation occurs.

Regarding the South African situation, Practical Theology needs to consider the history of the country before apartheid, during apartheid, as well as the present political, economic, cultural, religious, and social realities, and integrate these realities to develop a new thrust for Practical Theology for the country (Naidoo 2015:168, Dreyer 2017:1, Wepener *et al.* 2017:141). The multiplication of African Independent Churches (AIC) manifests dissatisfaction in Christian religion, which separates the spiritual world from the natural world, as well as the unacceptance of ancestors (Bompani 2008:665). The way of worship and participation, performance of rituals, healing services, and practical living presented by many of the mainline churches do not resonate with how Africans celebrate and perform their rituals (Keolotswe 2014:227–228).

The aim of Christianity is the integral emancipation of a person, which is currently not being manifested in the ordinary lives of Christians. Practical Theology must be a vehicle to make this a reality by contextualising Christianity to help Christians live it out in their daily life. People leave the mainline churches and form their own version of Christianity, joining the Christian concepts with African belief systems, culture, and customs and form African Independent Churches (Wepener & Swart 2021:1-4). Some of these African Independent Churches have established their own tradition, some have no trained ministers, and have simple structures but people leave the mainline churches to join them because they are still in search of God and seek meaning in life.

This study is approached from the Roman Catholic Church perspective of Practical Theology that developed from pastoral theology (Cahalan 2007:113, Naidoo 2015:174). Pastoral Theology, according to Cahalan (2007:113), had not developed as an academic discipline, but rather to ground the practices of ministry in theological and practical sources after the Second Vatican Council. The Second Vatican Council's understanding of Practical Theology brought new insights to the Catholic theologians as they sought new methods guiding pastoral ministry and this has contributed to the field of Practical Theology in Europe (Osmer 2012:67). Cahalan (2007:113) opines that Practical Theology developed from the life of lived faith and views it as a "choice to practice a theological way of life—a choice or decision that does not come at the end of a process like an outcome, but rather stands at the beginning, like a true test of faith: 'Can I practice this way of life?'" (Cahalan 2007:114)

Rahner (1972:3) asserts that the difference between Practical Theology and Pastoral Theology lies in their point of reference. Practical Theology is praxis-oriented and Pastoral Theology is ministry-oriented and when these two disciplines are joined together, they form complete theology. One cannot survive without the other for knowledge of the context ought to inform ministry and ministry ought to impact on the context.

Bate (2011:2) argues that both practical and pastoral theologies are regarded as exploring the link between human, personal and social realities on one hand, and the Christian traditions on the other. According to Bate (2011:5), Pastoral Theology is a branch of Practical Theology and regards Pastoral Theology as practical. Bate (2011:8) argues that the development of Practical Theology was a response to the failure of ministerial formation to equip the clergy to respond to the needs and concerns of the people.

Cahalan's (2007:114) argument of a choice at the beginning of a practice of a theological way of life, introduces into Practical Theology the concept of a calling. Accepting Christ in one's life is a matter of choice that needs discernment, openness to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, and commitment of life. Life in Christ is practical living out his command of love, peace, justice, and sharing these, is following in his footsteps as He suffered and died for mankind. It is a choice that needs reflection.

1.8.2 Practical Theological Model

There are various Practical Theology models used to do research throughout the history of Practical Theology. These models are used to interpret and analyse the context for the purpose of understanding and analysing the context. These models are: Zerfass model, Browning model, LIM model, Dakin Model and Osmer model (Smith 2013:72–107). This study chose the Osmer model, known as Practical Theological interpretation. According to Osmer (2008:x), the model is suitable for both theologians and religious practitioners such as pastors in congregations. It can be used in theological institutions to empower students about engaging in practical theological interpretation and for religious practitioners it can be used to analyse their context and transform their vision to contribute effectively to public life. Therefore, the Practical Theological Interpretation model can be a bridge between academic Practical Theology and congregational ministry. According to Osmer (2008:13, 18), it gives common structure to all the sub-disciplines of Practical Theology. Its presence, both in academy and ministry, emphasises the interconnectedness of ministry, in other words, what you learn in academy relates with what is happening in the ministry. It helps congregational leaders and academics to be good interpretive guides of context, events and situations. In this study, the Practical Theological Interpretation model is appreciated for its connectedness it emphasises between academy and ministry. The researcher intends to use this model further into the ministry after doing this research. It gives various options for data collection which makes it open to be used both for academy and ministerial purposes. Lastly it links well with the Practical Theological movement of practice-theory-practice.

This Practical Theological model (Osmer 2008:4) consists of four tasks: What is going on? Why is this going on? What ought to be going on? How might we respond? There are four Practical Theological tasks related with the above questions: The descriptive-empirical task, The Interpretive task, The normative task, and the Pragmatic task. The above-mentioned tasks and their related questions are used to guide the structure and objectives of this study as discussed

from above under the research aim and objectives.

1.8.3 Empirical research in Practical Theology

Having discussed the relationship between formation and Practical Theology, it is necessary to understand how empirical research is used in Practical Theology. The goal of empirical research in Practical Theology is to provide methods and tools to describe and explain what goes on in the actual lives of actual people (Van der Ven 1993:20). It is a means of spiritual presence, of attending to others in the way that provides an opportunity to understand and evaluate their context and events that take place in their lives (Osmer 2008:41). It is an interactive process or means of knowing, being attentive to what is going on around you. Knowledge is acquired by means of direct and indirect observation or scientific processes. It involves knowing through the senses, and through the experience of events around you.

The mission of the church must arise out of its deepest awareness of its context (Hazle 2003:350), and this requires an understanding of that context. In acquiring knowledge and understanding necessary to answer the research question from real life situations, observation and qualitative methods were used in this research.

Empirical research in Practical Theology requires attentive listening to others to understand what is going on in situations and contexts of their lives (Osmer 2008:39). In carrying out qualitative research (Sullivan 2001:4; Louw 2003:38; Osmer 2008:38), the researcher aimed to outsource knowledge from its original source: from the lived experiences of participants as parishioners, parish priests, and formators of future priests by formal observation and interviews.

The researcher observed activities taking place during the days of interview with parishioners and the parish priests, and at the seminary with the interviews with formators. As a member of the Roman Catholic Church she participated in parish activities of which she is part and observed how members of the parish interacted amongst themselves and with the parish priest. The research methodology is discussed next.

1.8.4 Research methodology

To answer the research question and fulfil the objectives of this research it was necessary to develop a clear map that directed the processes of the choice of participants, collection, and

analysis of data. To fulfil the requirements for data collection and data analysis, sampling of participants was carried out and methods to collect data and procedures for data analysis were decided on.

Methodology is the study of theories used in carrying out the research processes while a method is the actual tool used to collect data (Nieuwenhuis 2016a:51). To address the research question, it is important to select proper and appropriate processes and methods to ensure the possibility to collect appropriate data to answer the research question (Nieuwenhuis 2016a:51). According to Neuman (2006:2), methodology is broader than methods. Methodology is the link binding reality and object with the method in the research process of data collection, data analysis, and data reporting (Nieuwenhuis 2016a:51, 74).

There are three research methods to do empirical research, namely the quantitative research method, which is a research process that is systematic and objective in its ways of using numerical data from a selected population to generalise the findings to the community studied (Maree & Pietersen 2010:145). The qualitative research method is a process of collecting rich descriptive data in respect with a particular context with an intention of understanding what is being studied (Nieuwenhuis 2010:50). The mixed methods research is a research process that combines quantitative and qualitative research strategies within one study (Ivankova, Creswell, & Plano Clark 2010: 262). This study used the qualitative research method.

The purpose to select qualitative research method is to seek to understand a given research problem from the perspectives of the local population it involves. The research problem of this study is discussed in light of the above (Chapter 1, 1.5). Qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviours, and social contexts of a particular populations. This study sought the opinions of the participants about the missional practice of their church in its own context and indirectly the study also observed the values such as practice of love of neighbour, care, social justice, and so on. Qualitative study provides a complex textual description of how people experience a given research issue and provides information about the “human” side of an issue—that is, the often contradictory behaviours, beliefs, opinions, emotions, and relationships of individuals and the participants are given the opportunity to respond in their own words to the interview questions (Mack *et al.*, 2005:1, 4). Most of this study gives a textual description of how participants experienced formation from the local diocese and seminary.

Qualitative research in Practical Theology helped the researcher to understand the actions and practices of people in a specific context and how they put meaning in their everyday activities (Osmer 2008:49). In this study the choice of qualitative methods related well with what the researcher wished to obtain and to access data; it allowed the researcher to identify and engage with participants from their natural setting in three parishes of the RCC in South Africa and the St John Vianney Seminary.

The qualitative research method is concerned with exploring the “why” questions of research question (Nieuwenhuis 2016a:53). The research question used in this study is an explorative research question that fits well with the qualitative research method. The qualitative research method collaborates well with ethnographic design, fieldwork, and participant observation studies (Nieuwenhuis 2007:50). This study used ethnography as part of the research design, and participant observation as part of data collection process. This method also collaborates well with theories such as critical theories that are concerned with humans and ask explorative questions like “why”, “how” etc.

1.8.4.1 Theory of research

To be able to fulfil the requirements of an empirical research in Practical Theology, the use of a research approach is necessary. To fulfil the purpose of this study the critical theory best suited the research question and objectives of this study (Nieuwenhuis 2016a:64). Critical theory “views social reality as an ongoing construction process” that can develop to change the social reality by changing the mindset of those in power (Nieuwenhuis 2016a:63).

This study aimed to assess, critique, and offer a strategic plan of how the Church might respond to liberate, form, and empower all members irrespective of their position, in order to fulfil the demands of their calling by carrying out the mission of the Church for the transformation of individuals, families, groups, and society (Nieuwenhuis 2016a:63). This process should include formation in the two dimensions of the mission the Church, namely, spiritual, and social. The breakthrough is in members understanding their calling, who called them, the purpose of being called, and the consequences thereof. According to Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011) critical theory must explain what is wrong with current social reality, identify the actors to change it, and provide both clear norms for criticism and achievable practical goals for social transformation.

The objective of critical theory is to contribute to human emancipation and explore social relations and institutions to unmask forms of domination and to enhance resistance and human liberation (Osmer 2008:77). This study aimed to reveal these injustices even though the researcher was aware of the resistance that this could cause from those who may benefit from the present situation of the laity being ignorant of their rights, duties, responsibilities, and their real position in the Church and their real mission instead of being used to support the status of the hierarchy by providing funding to uphold their status quo (Nieuwenhuis 2016:64; Osmer 2008:77). The expectation of the hierarchy is for the laity to pray, obey, and pay without question.

It does not take a generation to change a mindset, but a process needs to be put into motion with the aim to transform the processes of the understanding of the Church's vocation as an inner desire to contribute towards a greater good, initiated by God, and for His sole purpose. It is the responsibility of the church leadership to offer formation that enhances the understanding of making missionary disciples of all the baptised, including themselves. The call to missionary discipleship is the call to participate in the *missio Dei* commissioned by Jesus after revealing it to his disciples (Mt 28:19–20).

Critical theory collaborates with other theories that support social change. For example, within Practical Theology, a contextual approach is used to study the social context and practices of the Church with the purpose to transform a given situation. This study will also integrate contextual approach to help critically analyse the social context and the practices of the church. The transformation within the society by the Church intends to dismantle powers of evil forces and build the community on the principle of unity and equality (Cochrane *et al.* 1991:2).

The researcher combined critical theory and ethnographic research design to answer the research question. Critical theory is defined to seek to critique events, situations, institutions, and behaviour of people with the aim to provide solutions and guidance to liberate those in society who have no voice (Osmer 2008:77). Ethnography is a description and interpretation of a cultural or social group or system with the intension of developing “thick” description of cultural and social groups to examine patterns of behaviour, customs, and belief systems, with the intension to create a cultural representation (Osmer 2008:51). Both critical theory and ethnography have vested interest in human behaviour in natural setting and the understanding that human behaviour with the purpose to learn and suggest deep change. In this study the

ministerial practices of the participants were studied with the intention to understand and critique where necessary for the purpose of deep change.

1.8.4.2 Ethnographic research design

According to Nieuwenhuis (2016:106), ethnographic research design is a research method that concerns itself with the understanding of meaning in social life. In other words, ethnography is a description and interpretation of a cultural or social group or system and involves prolonged observation of the group, typically through participation and thick observation in which the researcher is immersed in the day-to-day lives of the people or through one-on-one interviews with members of the group in order to understand the meanings of behaviour, language, and interactions of the culture-sharing group (Creswell 1998:58).

Born and bred as a Roman Catholic, the researcher is familiar with the situations of participants, their behaviour, interpretation of events, the celebration of Holy Mass, the language used to describe views, which facilitated fulfilling the requirements of active in-depth participation for ethnographic analyses design. Coming from the same background made it easy to understand concepts, meanings they put to their situation, satisfactions, and complaints. The incorporation of three groups of participants was to have a holistic understanding of how they viewed the effectiveness of priestly formation for the formation of the laity and the mission of the Church in the democratic South Africa.

Ethnographic analysis allowed the researcher to discover and interpret what was significant to participants in relation to priestly formation (Nieuwenhuis 2016b:106). The researcher was therefore able to “analyse the data for a description of the culture-sharing group, themes that emerge from the group, and [make] an overall interpretation” (Nieuwenhuis 2016b:107). The views of all participants displayed what is common in the culture of the Church and their dissatisfaction of it in fulfilling the mission of the Church in the democratic South African society.

The combination of critical theory and the ethnographic research method correlates with the aim and objectives of this study to unearth the processes of formation for priests and whom it serves in the mission of the Church and whether it achieves its purpose to serve the common priesthood of the laity. (Osmer 2008:77). Data collection and analysis were interpreted to determine processes and formation offered to the members of the RCC to empower participants

to participate effectively in the mission of the Church. Priests are offered a long period of learning and formation which the laity are deprived of in their faith formation making them vulnerable and easily manipulated for the benefit of the leadership that ignores holistic faith formation of the laity for their mission in society.

The present processes of formation for priests, offering them exclusive power over the laity and over-emphasis of their rights and status within the structure of the Church undermines the rights, duties, and responsibilities of the laity as full members of the Church. The laity are offered minimum formation, limiting their rights and duties in the Church, while giving the priests full power to oppress them for lack of knowledge of their place in the Church as followers of Christ. The objective of this study was to unearth these disparities which do not offer equal rights to all members of the Family of God and allow their oppression in their position and state of life. The laity are kept ignorant of their calling within the Church and their mission in society which distorts the mission of the Church as if it belongs only to the leadership, to the hierarchy. The following section discusses the framework used in this research to achieve the objectives of this study.

1.8.5 Sampling

Sampling is the process of selecting an appropriate number of participants with the aim to fulfil the research question and have data saturation (Nieuwenhuis 2016b:83–84). To fulfil the objectives of this research purposive sampling was used with the aim to have three categories of participants central to ministerial formation involved directly or indirectly. Purposive sampling is when researchers use their expertise about some group to select subjects who represent the relevant research population for analyses in their own context (Berg 2001:32). The following paragraphs describe the processes followed for the selection of participants.

Formators for future priests are all those who take part at the seminary lecturing as non-residential and residential formators. Residential formators are those who lecture and at the same time reside full-time at the seminary, forming a community together with candidates for ministerial priesthood and taking care of them as Diocesan seminarians. Formators play a key role in forming the ministerial priesthood as spiritual leaders in the Roman Catholic Church in parishes and forming the hierarchy of the Church. Their participation in this research provides inside knowledge of what is going on in training and formation of priests, why is this going on,

what ought to be going on, and how change might be achieved. Formators formulate the curriculum, implement it, assess its outcome, and make recommendations for ordination of especially the residential formators.

The request form for interviewing was sent to all formators: 17 philosophy lecturers and 24 theology lecturers, comprising of both residential and non-residential formators, female and male, priests and lay lecturer. Amongst the 41 formators, 14 were residential formators. Of the 41 formators only 5 consented to interview, which was a mixture of residential and non-residential. Of the 5 all male participants, 4 were priests and one a lay lecturer. Some priest formators interviewed were former students of the institution and had experienced parish ministry for some years before they were recruited to lecture at the seminary, while others reside at the seminary as full-time formators.

Parish priests were chosen to take part in this research because they had undergone priestly formation for nine years (two years at orientation in Cape Town and seven years in Pretoria at St John Vianney Seminary). They were in a better position to assess the impact of the priestly formation they received to give their views on whether it helped them to answer their call and fulfil their parish ministry effectively (effectively here meaning being empowered to deal with challenges of ministry in achieving the mandate of their vocation). Request forms were sent to 19 parish priests who had completed formation, were ordained priests and had been in parish ministry for five years and more.

The laity are identified here as parishioners, and these two titles are used interchangeably in this research. The laity belonged to parishes of priests who consented to participate in this research. Each parish priest co-opted three volunteers amongst his parishioners: a man, a woman, and a youth. The reason for this was to have views as broad as possible because ministerial priesthood is a call to serve the common priesthood of the laity, and to empower them for their role in the mission of the Roman Catholic Church, especially in the democratic South African context. The laity have a special vocation of transforming the temporal world by living out the gospel values in all spheres of their lives. The laity are the best candidates to evaluate if priest formation helps priests to empower them to fulfil their mission in society. Nine persons were interviewed: four male (two adults and two youth) and five adult females.

These categories of participants formed three levels of participation in the mission of the Church and contributed to priestly formation on different levels. The status of individual participants is explained in the following section.

1.8.5.1 Participants

The participants formed an important part in the outcome of this study. Without them this study could not have been realised. Discussion of participants now follows, starting with parishioners, then parish priests, and lastly formators. Participants were given pseudo names that differentiates their gender and category, for example, parishioner one was represented by “LP1W” meaning lay parishioner, one, a woman. Parishioner two, a youth, male “LP2YM”, parishioner three, woman “LP3W”, parishioner four male “LP4M” and they followed that sequence. Parish priests were given the following pseudo names: the first parish priest was given “PP1”, the second priest “PP2”, and the third priest “PP3”. Formators in turn were given the following pseudo names: the first priest formator “PF1”, the second “PF2”, and the third formator was a lay person and “L” was added to differentiate him from the priest formators, and was given “PF3L”, the fourth priest formator “PF4”, and the fifth priest formator “PF5”. In the following section a short description of each participant is offered.

The first group of parishioners belonged to the first parish visited, served by “PP1”. They are all Afrikaans speaking coloureds. LP1W is a widow, aged between 35 and 49. She attended a Catholic school from Grade R to matriculation and held a diploma in nursing. She is a full-time employed nurse and involved in different ministries within the parish. LP2YM is a young man between 18 and 24 years of age, in Grade 12, a member of the Youth Club. LP3W is an elderly active woman, older than 64 years, married, and holds Standard 6 (Grade 8) certificate. She is involved in different ministries within the parish, that is, charity projects and welfare.

The second group belongs to the second parish visited, served by “PP2”. They are all Bapedi speaking blacks. LP4M is aged between 50 and 64 years, married, and employed full-time. His level of education is Grade 12, and he is a member of the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC). LP5W is a single woman, aged between 35 and 49 years and employed part-time with a certificate in education. She is an ordinary member of the parish. LP6YM is aged between 18 and 24 years, and a first-year student at the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT). He used to be a coordinator of the Youth Club and an altar server in his parish.

The third group belongs to the third parish visited, served by “PP3”. They are all Xhosa speaking blacks. LP7M is a married man aged between 50 and 64 years and employed full-time, with a BEd Honours degree. He is a member of the PPC and served as an acolyte and funeral lay minister. In the community he is involved in chicken farming, a project initiated by a member of society. LP8W is a married woman, aged between 50 and 64 years, a pensioner, with a diploma in Primary Education. She is a member of the sodality of St Anne, belongs to a Small Christian Community, teaches catechises, is a member of the PPC, and involved in Caritas. LP9W is a single woman, aged between 35 and 49 years and employed full-time as a youth coordinator. She holds a Grade 12 certificate, and she is involved with orphans and HIV/AIDS patients in the community.

1.8.5.2 Brief history of each parish priest

This group is made up of all South Africans, coloured, Mopedi, and Xhosa. PP1 has been an ordained a priest for six years and in parish ministry for five years, aged between 45 and 54 years, and holds a bachelor’s degree in theology (B.Th.). PP2 has been an ordained priest for five years and in the current parish for two years and is aged between 35 and 44 years. He holds a degree in Philosophy and Theology. PP3 has been an ordained a priest for five years, is aged between 35 and 44, and has five years’ experience of parish ministry. He is furthering his studies abroad. He holds a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in Philosophy and Theology.

The last group of participants are formators. This group includes South Africans, two blacks and two whites, and an African from abroad. The nationality of formators will not be linked to them since the group is small and they can be identified. PF1 is aged between 35 and 49 years and has been a full-time employee at the seminary for one to two years. He has a long period of experience as a priest in parish ministry and had studied abroad. PF2 has been a full-time employee of the seminary for three to five years, a priest, aged between 35 and 49 years. He holds a Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology. He felt very fulfilled in helping young men who wanted to carry on the mission of the Church in the future. PF3L is a male lay lecturer, over 60 years of age and a lecturer for three to five years. He is content with his subject but does not think the institution is fulfilling its vision and mission. PF4 has been a full-time lecturer at the seminary for six to eight years and is aged between 50 and 64 years. He believes being a formator is a vocation within a vocation and the best way he can serve God and the Church. PF5 has been a full-time employee of the seminary for six to eight years and is aged between

35 and 49 years. He is happy and fulfilled with his ministry, believing that his ministry emanated from him being a follower of Christ. His views differed from those of other formators.

Participants in this research formed three categories of involvement in the mission of the RCC. The first group is of the laity or parishioners chosen as the best group to evaluate the effectiveness of formation for priests since ministerial priesthood is called for the service of the common priesthood of the laity. The second group consisted of priests in parish ministry who have been the recipients of priestly formation and could best evaluate whether the formation they had received empowered them for their parish ministry. The third group is that of formators of future priests who are responsible to provide the Church with the leadership ready to carry out the mission of the Church and responsible for parish ministries and the formation of the laity. These three groups form a holistic intertwined whole in the formation of ministerial priesthood and success of the mission of the RCC. Their views formed the data collected to be discussed below.

1.8.5.3 Data collection

The techniques for data collection, already discussed in paragraph 1.7 above, are spirituality of presence (Osmer 2008:33), priestly listening (Osmer 2008:35, attending and guiding (Osmer 2008:39) and were used in observation and interviews. This research was based on qualitative research methods that comprised document analyses, observation, and interviews (Nieuwenhuis 2016b:75). A short explanation of each of these data collection methods follows.

The first step in data collection was the assessment of the documents of the Church on priestly formation, faith formation of the laity, and the place of the laity in the mission of the Church. The General Prospectus of 2012 and 2022 of St John Vianney Seminary formed the official document used for analysis of courses offered within a period of ten years to determine if any changes had occurred regarding courses offered, content material for courses, and processes of teaching and learning. The focus was mostly on the four pillars of formation and how courses offered display their integration for holistic formation that empowers for practical and contextual implementation concerned with holistic laity formation for their involvement in the twofold mission of the Church in society instilling gospel values in the field of education, politics, economics, culture, science, art, international life, and mass media (Paul VI 1975:#70).

The second step was to visit parishes and to meet with participants in their own setting. This was done by being physically present at parishes and at the seminary. First, the researcher observed the environment where the parish or seminary were situated. The standard of houses around, activities within the parish or seminary, and the interactions between participants were also noted.

The third step was conducting one-on-one interviews with participants which involves spirituality of presence, priestly listening, and attending. This step helped the researcher to observe behaviour, attitudes, tone of voice, and feelings of participants, while listening attentively to the said and unsaid views. Lastly, using probing guided questions, she directed the participants to not lose focus during interviews as a way of guiding them during the interviews and enabling the researcher to answer the research question. Interview questions included both semi-structured and open-ended questions.

For the selection of participants, the researcher used purposive sampling (Maree & Pietersen 2016c:198). The intension was to select participants who contribute to and gain from priestly formation of diocesan priests who had studied at St John Vianney Seminary. A letter was sent to all diocesan priests who had studied at St John Vianney Seminary and had been ordained and been in ministry for a period of five years and more. The choice of five years was based on the idea that within the first five years one is inclined to use what was learned at institutes and during this period they are given ongoing formation once a year on the metropolitan level. The dioceses in the SACBC are divided into five metropolitan which is made up of dioceses headed by an Archbishop. After five years of experience, one is confident to be creative and combine one's own experience in ministry with what had been learned.

Of the 19 recipients of the letter, only three responded and were interviewed together with their three parishioners comprising one youth, one female, and one male in two parishes. The laity, identified here as parishioners, formed the first group. The priests, identified here as parish priests, formed the second group.

A letter was sent to all formators, resident and non-resident, totalling 41, male and female. Only five consented and all are male formators. All five formators were interviewed: three resident and two non-residents, comprising four priests and one lay person. They formed the third group. These three groups totalled 17 participants and were interviewed for this research.

1.8.5.4 Challenges encountered during data collection.

The first challenge was a delay at the beginning of this research. A year was lost while the researcher was waiting to obtain permission from the SACBC, which meets only twice a year. This waiting delayed receiving ethical clearance, which was then only obtained the following year.

Priests who had consented resided in two provinces and in three dioceses. They had three different cultural backgrounds and languages. Two parishes in one province were 500 km apart and 1 000 km from the third parish. Travelling was a challenge and parishioners having to come from different outstations for interviews posed another challenge. These setbacks delayed collection of data and finishing the research on time.

However, empirical research afforded the researcher a rich background experience of the countryside. The natural setting of participants included urban, semi-industrial, and rural settings, which depicted the different demographics of the country. The behaviour and attitudes of people were related to their surroundings. Those from urban areas were more outspoken and had had better opportunities to education and traveling. This was also the case with those from semi-industrial areas. The rural participants were cultured in a traditional way and their surroundings included mountains, a mixture of traditional style of houses with modern brick houses. Each family house was distant from others. These participants were more relaxed than the participants from the urban and semi-urban areas. The context of participants and demographics of the country added insight to what formed the views and suggestions for changes in priestly formation.

The visit gave the researcher an opportunity to experience activities that took place during the week at a parish, interactions between parishioners, and between parishioners with their parish priests. The first parish visited was a multi-racial urban parish. Parishioners were from three different backgrounds, that is, from black and coloured townships and whites from town. On the day of interviews, the researcher was invited for the daily morning Holy Mass. Interviewing of parishioners took place in the evening while others attended parish pastoral council (PPC) meetings. This arrangement prevented the researcher attending the PPC meeting, which could have afforded her an idea of the concerns of the parish. After the meeting, people had communicated freely and lively together and with the parish priest, displaying a family spirit.

The second parish was in a semi-industrial area, and the researcher was invited for Holy Mass in the afternoon to meet with some participants for interviews. During the day the researcher visited the premises. Parishioners from different outstations were gathered there to clean and prepare the premises for the upcoming Sunday's celebration of the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. All the outstations that belonged to this parish where PP2 serves, were coming together for this celebration which they appreciated because it helped them get to know one another, interact, and experience celebration of feasts celebrated in the RCC which they had not known about before. The outstations were a few kilometres apart from one another and from the presbytery, which was near a small industrial mining town. Parishioners were friendly and excited about this celebration.

The last parish was in a deep rural area. The priest had had a workshop with funeral lay ministers who came from different outstations in the area. Though the workshop was held during the week, it was well attended by both men and women. The discussions were lively with all attendees participating. There had been rapport between parishioners and the parish priest, and the discussions were in the local language. All these activities took place before the interviews and it gave the priests the opportunity to introduce the researcher, who had attended the workshop and conducted the interviews afterwards.

The use of interviews for data collection in Practical Theology is regarded as an important method for attending and listening in qualitative research (Osmer 2008:61). Listening skills afforded the researcher the opportunity to be present to participants, giving them time to express their views. The use of one-on-one interviews gave participants time, space, and freedom to express their views without prejudice. The timeframe was one hour and thirty minutes (90 min) for each participant, but more time was allocated when necessary. The next step was the visit to the seminary.

The interviews with formators were conducted last. Formators were interviewed at different settings for their convenience. Two formators were interviewed at the venues where they were attending conferences, one at a parish office, and the other two on the seminary premises. The interviews at the conference venues and at the presbytery had a negative impact in the sense that the environment was not connected to the ministry and created an artificial setting. Nonetheless, participants gave their views without reservations.

The two formators interviewed at the seminary gave the researcher the opportunity to view the setting of the seminary where the action takes place. The big buildings overpower surrounding houses. They are situated on large premises left behind by missionaries and had formerly been reserved for the formation of white seminarians. The surrounding area had formerly been regarded as affluent and historically a ‘white by night’ area (Brain 2002:90) but it is now freely occupied mainly by blacks, both seminarians and formators. The environment influences people psychologically, emotionally, and mentally and alters behaviour and attitude. How the seminary environment affects the seminarians’ performance and ministry after staying there for seven years needs additional research. Data collected by observation and interviews was analysed according to themes as discussed below (Nieuwenhuis 2016a:53).

1.8.5.5 Data analysis and interpretation

Data analysis is an important stage in research where the researcher extracts meanings from data collected. The first step in data analysis is the preparation of data collected by following certain processes that guide the researcher to identify words, units, or segments, sentences, and paragraphs that give meaning directed to answer the research question and leads to achieving objectives and desired goal (Nieuwenhuis 2016c:114). The understanding and arrangement of data facilitated the process of analysis and interpretation in this study to achieve the desired outcome.

The steps taken detailed sampling of participants, data transcription, data organising, getting acquainted with data, data coding, and interpretation (Nieuwenhuis 2016c:114–120). Coding of data is the process of reading through data collected line by line, marking words or segments which give meaning related to the theme in that section with a symbol or descriptive words. In this study an open coding system (Nieuwenhuis 2016c:116) was used to identify themes, sentences, and paragraphs that gave meaning to the theme of the section and answer the research question. The importance of these steps helped the researcher find information from data collected and clarify it for problem-free interpretation (Nieuwenhuis 2016c:114).

The researcher used two approaches to data analysis, namely coding and content analysis. Coding allowed the researcher to familiarise herself with data by reading all details line by line and dividing the information into meaningful units (Nieuwenhuis 2016c:116) in relation to the

objectives and the research question. Secondly, content analysis allowed for descriptive and interpretive analysis of data. The process was as follows:

- Voice data was transcribed into text data.
- Data was scrutinised in individual categories and coded manually using pre-coding and other coding was developed whilst reading the text to make meaningful units.
- Coded units were developed into themes.
- A hermeneutic process was followed to form categories.
- Categories from different clusters were related to each other to find a pattern.
- From the categories main findings were established.
- Findings led to interpretation and reporting of findings.

Each participant was unique and expressed himself or herself in a distinctive way. To extract meaning from raw data a word, a phrase, a sentence, and even a paragraph was coded to form meaningful themes (Du Plooy-Cilliers, *et al.* 2014:236) that answered the research question. Both manifest and latent content analyses were used in this research to extract all the hidden meaning in the many or few words used by the participants while expressing their understanding of the impact of ministerial formation on the efficiency and effectiveness of priest ministry in their initial years of ministry.

All information gathered by observations, by interviews, and document assessment was used as relevant data and put together to form a comprehensive information to answer the research question. Conclusions were drawn from the data (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit 2004:3–6; Richards 2005:33). Recommendations were based on the findings.

1.8.5.6 Trustworthiness and credibility

In qualitative research credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and reflexivity are used as measure to establish the trustworthiness of data analysis, findings, and conclusions (Nieuwenhuis 2016c:123–125, Korstjens & Moser 2018). These measures were used in this study to measure the trustworthiness of data analysis, findings, and conclusion.

To attain credibility in this research the use of methods to collect data were fitted to qualitative research, document analysis, observations, and interviews. Visits to the places where interviews were to take place days before and participating in events that took place at these

venues, created an atmosphere of knowing. Being a member of the RCC also helped the researcher and participants to have a sense of belonging, understand one another and topics discussed in the questionnaire were familiar to both the researcher and the participants, and participants could not fake their views since the researcher knew what they were talking about. The findings are the information from the views of participants. Interpretations, supported with quotes from their opinions, ensured credibility (Nieuwenhuis 2016c:123). The questions were open-ended and transparent and similar for all participants, even in their own position and level in the structure of the Church. Probing was applied for deep interview, ensuring comprehensive views of participants, and to ensure validity.

Interviews were carried out at the surroundings of participants to understand what informed their beliefs, actions, and opinions (Nieuwenhuis 2016c:124, Korstjens & Moser 2018) in order to ensure transferability. The description of the context, participants, the use of purposeful sampling, and thick description of data, was carried out to ensure that the reader has a full picture of where and how the research was conducted and to make his or her own decision about the reality of the findings (Nieuwenhuis 2016c:124, Korstjens & Moser 2018). Interviewing participants from different landscapes of the country, that is, urban, semi-urban or industrial, and rural area, the researcher was able to cover to a certain extent the different settings of the South African population with their different cultures allowing the reader to make his and her own decision about transferability.

To achieve dependability in this research the research design incorporated data collection, transcription, analysis, and interpretation (Nieuwenhuis 2016c:124, Korstjens & Moser 2018). This process informed confirmability of research, informing the researcher to be objective in interpreting the data from the three categories of participants in their different levels of involvement in priestly formation (Nieuwenhuis 2016c:125, Korstjens & Moser 2018). The analysis of their views informed the findings. Quotes were used to emphasise the arguments.

Being the member of the RCC, the researcher relied more on what participants said than on what she knew and had observed before undertaking the research project. The fact that participants were located more than 500 km away from the researcher's residence helped the researcher to be objective with no influence by her own environment on the views of participants from parish to parish and from the seminary.

1.8.5.7 Ethical considerations

Research ethics were developed to protect the rights, dignity, and integrity of participants. The following permissions were sought and obtained before data collection:

The Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference granted permission to carry out this research in their region, under required ethical measures. The SACBC stated that they were not to form part of this research. Permission was also received from the rector of St John Vianney Seminary to use the documents of the seminary and to contact individual formators for interviews. Two lists of graduates of priest candidates stipulated in the rector's letter were obtained and contact details of parish priests were then obtained from the SACBC directory.

In order to protect the rights of participants and for interviews to take place, and the intentions of the research, permission had to be obtained from the Ethics Committee of the University of the Free State. Letters received from authorities of the Church were explained to the participants. It was made clear to all participants that the Church authority did not form part of the research and that participants would not be punished for taking part, and that this research was purely academic. They were made aware that the findings of the research would be used as a fulfilment of academic study and could also be used for publications and presentations at conferences. They were assured of their privacy and the protection of their identity in reports and presentations. Participants were also made aware that their responses would be kept under lock and key for five years and could later be used for further research, after again obtaining ethical clearance.

After participants had assured the researcher that they understood what was required of them, they were asked if they voluntarily opted to take part in the research and were ensured that they were free to pull out anytime if and when they felt uncomfortable about the interview. When all was established, participants were asked to sign the consent form as a surety that they were taking part voluntarily and had understood the implications of their participation.

To ensure confidentiality, the name of the seminary was withheld during the interviews. Participants' names are not quoted in the report, but they are identified by their allocated coding and succession of interviews. The first to be interviewed in a category became number one for that category and numbers followed that sequence, as discussed above.

Audiotapes, and anything else that could give clues to the participants' context are under lock and key and will be destroyed after five years (Maree 2016:44).

This chapter provides the introduction and background of the study situating it in Practical Theology using the qualitative research method, and critical theory in combination with ethnographic research methodology. The study used documents, observation, and interviews to collect data that helped the researcher to answer the research question. The integration of findings from these sources gives credibility to this research. What follows is the outline of chapters based on Osmer's four tasks of Practical Theology.

1.8.5.8 Outline of study

Chapter 1: Introduction, background, and methodology

This chapter introduces the research and discusses processes that followed the collection data, transcription, coding, analysis, and interpretation in order to reach the findings to answer the research question.

Chapter 2: The Roman Catholic faith formation in the context of democratic South Africa.

Discussions in this chapter address the first objective of the study, which was to analyse the views of the participants on the priestly formation and its impact on the mission of the Roman Catholic Church.

Chapter 3: The state of formation within the Roman Catholic Church

Chapter 3 interprets empirical data on the formation within the RCC and its impact on priests and the laity in their participation in the mission of the Church, thus engaging the second objective of the study, which was to interpret ministerial practices by explaining why the participants view priestly formation and its impact on the mission of the Roman Catholic Church in the manner they have given.

Chapter 4: Envisaged formation within the Roman Catholic Church

This chapter is concerned with the third objective given as to delineate theology of priestly formation to understand its essence, and nature in the forming of priests, and its supposed goal. Theological concepts and theologies of calling, formation and mission are discussed.

Chapter 5: Formation for missionary discipleship

The chapter responds to the fourth objective indicated as proposed: what actions the Church might apply to facilitate change in priestly formation at St John Vianney Seminary by forming leadership that can bring about deep change in the Church to benefit the laity and their role in the mission of the Church in society. In this chapter, suggestions are made on how the Church might and should respond by forming relevant leadership to implement deep change in formation of priests and still be true to her nature.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and recommendations

This chapter summarises findings of this research based on the themes of the study, namely calling, formation and mission of the RCC. It also explains how the objectives of the study were achieved. Lastly it gives a direct response to the main research question of the study.

1.8.5.9 The value of the study

Based on research conducted at St John Vianney Seminary and interviews discussed in contemporary studies, the findings of this research should be of importance to the Department for Formation, Life and Ministry of the Clergy and inform the formation team at the seminary on the views of the laity, priests, and formators on the impact and outcome of formation of priests. The views of parishioners might help with information on how the laity are still lacking in their understanding of their vocation, who called them, and what kind of mission they are involved in and should be involved in.

The views of parish priests might and should enlighten the Department for Formation, Life and Ministry of the Clergy on the struggles priests are having in fulfilment of their call to ministerial priesthood and faced with in translating and contextualising knowledge received to fulfil their parish ministry due to priestly formation that does not engage with their context.

The views of formators are crucial for the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC) to assess the processes of accepting vocations to ministerial priesthood, assess the concept of recruitment for candidates to priesthood and formators of future priests, and formation of formators. The urgency of owning and contextualising international documents on formation of all the baptised and formulation of *Ratio Nationalis* to give direction to ministerial formation, and to evaluate formation of the laity in fulfilment of their vocation in

society which depends on the ministry of parish priests. The involvement of the laity in the mission of the Church, the formation of parish leadership that should bring deep change in the mission of the Church and the functionality of the hierarchy in twenty-first century. Poor formation of the laity produces poor vocations to ministerial priesthood, and the outcome of poor formation for priests produces poor parish leadership, poor Church hierarchy, and poor mission of the Church in society.

Ministerial priesthood is meant for the service of the common priesthood of the laity. The concern of the universal Church has issued documents in favour of involvement of the laity in the mission of the Church, for example, *Evangelii Nuntiandi 1975*, *Christifideles Laici 1988*, *Evangelii Gaudium 2013* just to name few. Failure of the parish priest to fulfil the demands of their mission and requirements to serve the needs of the laity for their mission in society and to curb corruption and other social ills and thus failure to establishment of the Kingdom of God, then “recruitment” would mean nothing but maintenance of structures. nor for the mission of the Church in time and place. It is of importance that priestly formation should form men that should have at heart the mission of the Church as missionary disciples and in turn make missionary disciples of the laity.

The academy could use the findings of this study to assess whether higher education prepares effective leadership for society which is ravaged by corruption, crime, and lawlessness. St John Vianney Seminary’s intellectual formation is aligned with the requirements of the South African Department of Higher Education and if priests are unable to translate knowledge into practical implementation, is higher education in South Africa able to produce ethical skilled leadership in their different professions? The academy could annually assess the number of graduates, where they are, what they are doing, and find out from them how their education has skilled them to bring about change in society. From their findings they might be able to change the curriculum to produce professionals who are skilled, ethical, and committed to their field of work.

Universities are open to all races, ethnic groups, and cultures, and produce graduates in different fields, but what difference has that made for good governance and economic development for the country? The majority of people still live in poverty and those who have acquired higher education are unemployed and are not empowered for creative self-employment.

People in rural areas, when demanding services, set fire to schools, libraries, and clinics as a sign of lack of ownership of those institutions. These institutions do not change their circumstances and the education their children receive does not skill them to create jobs for themselves and transform their context. Additional research could compare the performance of those who have received higher education to determine if they are able to translate, contextualise, and implement knowledge they received in their workplace. This leads to the limitations of this study.

1.9 Limitations of the study

The first limitation of this study is that it is limited to the South African context and concentrates only on the major seminary, St John Vianney Seminary in Pretoria, forming diocesan ministerial priesthood. St Joseph's Theological Institute, situated near Pietermaritzburg in KwaZulu Natal, does not form part of this study as it forms mainly religious priests who stay in their own formation houses. The results of this study therefore cannot be compared to any other Roman Catholic seminary in South Africa.

The second limitation is that the study is limited to a Roman Catholic Church seminary, excluding other mainline churches' seminaries in South Africa who might have the same experiences. St John Vianney Seminary may to a certain extent relate to other Roman Catholic Church seminaries in other African countries, but foreign seminaries were excluded from this study. South Africa is the last country in Africa to gain independence from apartheid rule which differs from other African countries that got their independence from British rule, for example, thus has its own unique context.

The third limitation was the use of English for interviewing the parishioners. Due to the researcher's limitation in language skills in some local African languages, English was used as a neutral language for interviews. The use of a foreign language limits expressions, understanding, and emotions imbedded in the views of people. The use of English excluded participants who might have offered saturated data for the study. Some of the participants among the laity struggled to understand the questions and express their views in English. Some of the laity did use their own vernacular and their views were translated into English since the language of the research was English.

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter set out the introduction, background, and methodology of the study to answer the main research question and objectives of the study.

Chapter 2 presents the interpretation of the views of participants following the second task of Practical Theological Interpretation, the interpretive task, and its appropriate question: Why is this going on? The aim is to fulfil the objective of this chapter and its research question.

CHAPTER 2

The Roman Catholic Church faith formation in the context of democratic South Africa

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the concepts and the background of the study regarding the Roman Catholic Church mission and impact in society. The Lord Jesus established the Church to continue His mission empowered by the Holy Spirit. The mission of the Trinity revealed by his birth, life, suffering, death, resurrection, the sending of the Holy Spirit, and the sending of the apostles reveals the continued care God shows for the salvation of His people (Paul VI 1964:#5). The sending of the apostles portrays the kind of Church Jesus established, that is, a missional *ecclesiology*. All who are called to follow Christ, are called to participate in the mission of the Church as she upholds her nature to always be missionary (Paul VI 1965:#2).

Based on the understanding above, this chapter presents the participants' views on their understanding of their calling as parishioners, priests, and formators of future priests (from now on formators) at St John Vianney Seminary, as well as the effectiveness of the faith formation they received to enable them to participate in missional ecclesiology. The objective of this chapter, therefore, is to analyse the views of parishioners, parish priests, and formators on the impact of priestly formation on the faith formation of the laity to participate in the mission of the Roman Catholic Church in the multicultural democratic South African context.

To grasp the depth of understanding the participants' views, individual interviews were carried out with three distinct groups of nine parishioners (laity), three parish priests, and five formators. This chapter engages the first task, namely the descriptive-empirical task of Osmer's (2008:4) Practical Theological Interpretation. The descriptive-empirical task engages the question "What is going on?" In applying the descriptive-empirical task and its appropriate question, the views of parishioners, parish priests, and formators are described to extract their understanding of an interview question related to their understanding of their calling as parishioners (laity), parish priests, and formators at St John Vianney Seminary. The second question is on the faith formation they received in their position and level of participation in the Church enabling them to define their calling, who called them, and the mandate of their

calling. The third question is in relation to their participation in the mission of God and the mission of the Church in the democratic South Africa context.

The aim was to determine what is going on in the faith formation of participants today, and to discover whether their formation was relevant, practical, and appropriate for the level of their position and participation in the structure of the Church, and whether they were involved in the twofold mission of Christ in society, that is, spiritual and social involvement to further the mission of the church in society. The following paragraph explains how this chapter is structured.

The findings are divided into three sections. The first section describes the views of participants on their understanding of their calling, how they connected it to the Caller, and the mandate thereof.

The second section describes participants' views on what kind of formation they received to enhance their calling. Recent documents of the Roman Catholic Church on priestly formation mention four dimensions necessary for integral holistic formation based on human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation. These are intended to strengthen priestly formation and for priests to integrate them and in turn form the laity holistically as disciples of Christ, thus empowering them with skills and methods that will enable them to participate in the mission of the Church in society and bring about transformation in the political, economic, and societal structures they are involved in.

The third section describes participants' views on the role of the Church in society, as well as their views on their involvement and role in the mission of Christ in their position in the structure of the Church. Participants gave their views on their understanding on who is God for them and His mission, who is the Church for them and on her twofold mission of evangelisation and the involvement in society through diakonia.

Diakonia is understood as participation of all the baptised in the proclamation of the Word, service in the Church and society, and care for creation in response to challenges of injustice and human suffering (Klaasen 2020:123) in anticipation of the coming of the Kingdom of God. Diakonia involves both clergy and laity and it means they must spread and defend the faith in both words and deeds, as true witnesses of Christ in every situation of their lives (Paul VI 1964:11). The proclamation of the Word and service must be relevant to the context of each

group, practical for living it out in their time, and appropriate for their situation in a multicultural democratic South African society.

What follows are three presentations of participants' views according to their position in the structure of the Church. The first presentation is of the laity who are parishioners and members of the Church by baptism, sharing in the priestly, kingly, and prophetic functions of Christ. The second presentation is the views of parish priests who are called for the leadership of the Church to serve the needs of the common priesthood of the laity. The last section presents the views of formators whose call is to form future priests, the leadership of the Church to further the mission of Christ in South Africa and the world today. These three groups form a connected spiral symbiosis as they feed and empower each other inter-changeably for the mission of the Church and their ministry in the Church and society.

The views of participants reveal patterns and dynamics of faith formation that ought to incorporate the Social Teachings of the Church for involvement of the Roman Catholic members in society in carrying out the mission of Christ. Paul VI (1964:#28) stated that the laity need faith formation which is common for all, and particular formation which empowers them for their apostolate which differs depending on and according to their state of life and their occupation in society for them to fully participate in the mission of the Church. John Paul II (1988:#59), on the other hand, advocated for laity formation according to the union of spiritual life with its values and demands and secular life of family, work, social relationships, the responsibilities of public life and in culture.

This process, if implemented, will help determine what is going on in the training and formation of participants and how well the Roman Catholic Church fulfils her missionary mandate by involving all the baptised. The first section describes the views of participants on their understanding of what is their calling, who called them, and what is their mandate as followers of Christ.

2.1.1 A calling as understood by participants

The Lord Jesus called his disciples and commissioned them to go and make disciples (Mt 28:19–20, Francis I 2013:#113). All those who become Christian should heed the call to discipleship and respond according to their position and involvement in the structure of the Church. The first question participants responded to was: What do you understand by your

calling as a parishioner or parish priest or formator? From this question the researcher developed three components that incorporate the responses of participants: calling, caller, mandate.

The parishioners' views are presented first to establish their understanding of what a calling to be a Christian or parishioner entails as a member of a Christian community or a parish. Their views revealed the strengths and weaknesses of the faith formation they received in their initiation into the Church and ongoing formation from parish priests. Their views also shed light on their experience of formation regarding the effectiveness of priestly formation for the service of the common priesthood of the laity. What follows is the discussion describing views of parishioners on the understanding of their calling, who called them, and the mandate thereof.

2.1.2 Views of laity on a calling

The first question put to participants was: What do you understand by your calling as a parishioner? (IQ 1) In response to this question not all parishioners defined their calling and who called them. LP4M and LP7M parishioners, from two different parishes and of the same age group, expressed two aspects that need mentioning for one to become a parishioner.

LP4M expressed his views on the question, what do you understand by your calling as a parishioner, by relating the process one goes through to become a parishioner. He related that his calling as a parishioner was not just to be a parishioner, but first to become a Christian and then a member of a parish, ready to serve. Being a Christian is being a believer in Christ and incorporated into the Church. The three sacraments of initiation, namely baptism, confirmation, and the Eucharist, make one a participator in the mystery of redemption, a full member of the Body of Christ. By virtue of receiving these sacraments, LP4M became a full member of a parish, a parishioner, and called to serve.

LP7M, on the other hand, mentioned another point on the process of being a parishioner, which he expressed as follows:

It is to accept the Word of God and even convert the other people who are away from the calling of God, and the Word of God. It's to try to influence other people who are doing perhaps wrong things to do right things in the name of Jesus Christ, so that they can be afraid or refrain from wrongdoings within the society they live in (LP7M on IQ 1).

LP7M mentioned accepting the Word of God, which obliges one to convert. By converting, one becomes an apostle and a disciple obliged to convert others. As a Christian one becomes a

messenger, a carrier of the gospel to others, reconciling them to God so that they can live in the right way in the name of Jesus as his followers in society. Both parishioners expressed a process of being a parishioner which signified their call to be Christians. The other parishioners understood their calling to be a parishioner by stating only one aspect of a calling, as described in the following paragraph.

The majority of parishioners (LP1W, LP3W, LP5W, LP6YM, LP8W and LP9W), in reply to Question 1, stated that they were called to serve. The services they rendered were both internal and external ministries. In their internal ministries they were involved in teaching catechesis to children, training and forming the youth by giving advice and mentoring, conducting workshops and retreats, and organising ecumenical youth days (LP1W, LP6YM, LP8W, LP9W). The external ministries consisted of looking after orphans and people suffering from HIV/AIDS, providing material needs to the poor and marginalised, visiting the sick and praying with them (LP1W, LP2YM, LP3W, LP6YM, LP8W, LP9W). The majority of these participants were women, from three different parishes and three different dioceses.

LP5W, unlike the rest of the parishioners, explained why she is called to serve by stating that it is for the greater purpose of our Lord Jesus Christ. Her response can be understood to mean that she took Jesus as her Caller to whom she is to render her services. Understood as such, she is the only parishioner who identified her Caller even though she did not define a calling.

LP2YM, on the other hand, explained how he became a parishioner in two steps. The first step was when his mother chose to baptise him, thus making him a member of the parish. The second step involved his personal choice when he received his First Holy Communion. LP2YM was aware that he became a member of the parish from the moment of baptism even though it was not his personal choice but that of his mother. Baptism makes one a child of God and a member of the Church and incorporates him or her into the parish.

LP6YM understood his calling as a youth in the parish as to serve at the altar, sometimes as an usher, depending on the occasion. Together with other youth he cleaned the presbytery and the church. This youth stated that service made him a member of a parish, which he identified as his calling to serve. Both LP2YM and LP6YM, as youth, had a limited understanding of a calling and did not define it nor identify God as the one who called them into a personal relationship with him and that it was through this relationship that they are to serve him through the parish. Most women (LP1W, LP3W, LP8W, LP9W) shared the same views on their

understanding of a calling and mentioned the mandate of a calling as to serve, but without defining a calling or identifying the caller.

It is worth mentioning how LP1W, having been educated at a Roman Catholic school, deliberated on her understanding of her calling as a parishioner. LP1W, a widow aged between 35 and 49 years, attended a Catholic boarding school and served as a catechist, as a coordinator in the Youth Club, and in the Parish Finance Committee (PFC). She knew her obligations of being a parishioner by participating in ministries within the parish. Her attendance of a Catholic school did not help her define what a Christian calling is and who called her. She knew her obligations but failed to link this to being called by God to perform her obligations. When she left school and went to nursing school and later worked away from home, she stopped going to church but attended again later when she returned home. Had she known what a calling is and who called her, she might have been able to be faithful to her vocation and witnessed where she was. Back home she was reminded by the home environment of what she had learned at school and renewed her commitment to the parish. Faith was imposed on her by being at a Catholic school and it was not a personal answer to a calling to be a Christian. The faith formation she received is discussed later in this chapter.

All other parishioners mentioned that they were called to serve, which is the mandate of a calling without defining it, and who called them to serve, except LP1W, who had attended a Catholic school and understood the demands of being a Christian. Attending a Catholic school that emphasised the need to act on what she was taught also helped her to reach out to other people of different denominations and religions without discrimination. LP5W, on the other hand, learned to understand what she was to do as a Christian from people outside the Church (not even Christians) because her faith formation was inadequate to help her to live her faith and to serve.

It can be concluded from the views of parishioners that the majority understood the mandate of their calling, but they could not define a calling and who called them. The implication of this lack of defining a calling and identifying the caller is further discussed in Chapter 3. Parishioners who mentioned the process of becoming a member of a parish as first receiving the Word of God or becoming a Christian, explained the demand of being a follower of Christ, that is, being a disciple, by going out to convert others. LP2YM, who explained that it was his

mother's choice to make him a member of a parish by baptism, was aware that he had to make his personal choice to become a Christian and a member of the Christian community.

The following views represent the analyses and descriptions of the views of parish priests on their understanding of their calling to ministerial priesthood.

2.1.3 Views of parish priests on a calling

Parish priests were asked the same question as parishioners in their position as leaders in parishes and responsible for faith formation of the laity on their understanding of a calling. The views of the laity portrayed the position of faith formation they received in parishes. The views of parish priests on their calling reveals what affects lack of faith formation for the understanding of Christian calling for the laity.

Two of the three parish priests interviewed gave their views on their calling by stating two dimensions of a calling, that is, who called them, and the purpose of their calling based on service of God and his people.

Both parish priests (PP1, PP2) in their response to their calling to ministerial priesthood, responded that God called them to serve him and his people. As most parishioners, they centred their response on "service" of God and his people. PP1 related that he is called by God to know him, serve him, love him, and to share that with the people and bring them into a relationship with him. He said to be doing this in different ways, that is, by listening to the Word of God with them, being there with the people in different and often difficult times in their lives, for example, funerals, bereavements, and family crises.

PP1 states that God called him first for himself: to know him, to love him, and to serve him. After building his relationship with God, he could share that with people. PP1 served God's people in two different ways, namely being there for them, offering a spiritual presence in different situations of their lives, and by priestly listening. In other words, he served people of God as both the guide and the interpreter of events in their lives by being present in their circumstances. Similarly, PP2 related that he was called by God to serve him and to serve his people with love, care, and dedication. He did not stipulate how he serves God but only how he served people. These participants' views were brief, with no further elaboration.

The views of PP3 slightly differed from those of PP1 and PP2. He related only the mandate of his calling without defining a calling or identifying explicitly who called him. By reference

though, it can be deduced that it was God who called him. He presented his views on his calling by stating that he is called to bring the people of God to God and God to his people, helping God and his people to establish a relationship. He understands that he is to help the people of God to understand their faith and who God is for them. On a personal level he stated that he is called to serve God and to worship Him, not only helping people, but as a priest he is to serve God and worship him.

The three parish priests shared the same sentiments that they were called to ministerial priesthood, and it was not their personal choice. They all agreed that they are first called to serve God and then to serve by knowing him, loving him, and worshipping him. Their service to people is to help them have a relationship with God by understanding their faith, being present to them in their situation, and to listen to their problems. Even though they knew they are called by God they did not define what a calling is and how they had received it.

Parish priests, together with most of their parishioners, shared the same sentiments about the mandate of a calling, that is, called to serve. With the background of the understanding of a calling by parishioners and parish priests, the views of formators on their understanding of their calling as formators follow.

2.1.4 Views of formators of future priests on a calling

The formators' views on how they understand their calling as formators are important for the whole process of the building of the Church. Formators play a crucial part in the life of the Church by forming future leadership fitting for the time and place to carry out the mission of the Church by implementing the Pastoral Plan of the Bishops and to form and empower the laity to fulfil their mission in society effectively and to transform the political, economic, and social structures to conform to the service of the Kingdom of God.

The views of parish priests were limited mainly to God as a caller and service to him and his people. Formators had to respond to the same question to also create understanding of the views of parish priests who were formed by them. The responses of formators are presented individually since their views on their calling all differed.

PF5 stated how he understood his calling as a formator by giving a detailed explanation of his calling to ministerial priesthood, and then referred to his responsibility as a formator. He stated that his calling radiated first to his own discipleship with Christ and his understanding of

priesthood. He related that priesthood is not just service to the people but that it radiated first in the fact that he had made a choice to follow Christ as his disciple. He sees this as the first point in ministry because unless one is radiated in Christ, serving him, then one's service is totally irrelevant.

PF5 deemed priesthood as a call, a discipleship, and a following of Christ. PF5's service emanated in preparing priests of tomorrow. His aim is to form a man who was radically himself, rooted in Christ, and had a relationship with God. It would be through that relationship that a man could impact similarly at a human level where he would internalise the values of Christ the Priest, in serving and relating to others.

He expanded his views of his work as a formator by explaining what kind of future priests they are entitled to produce and what he understood by priestly ministry and the Church. He continued thus:

Ministry is essentially in itself a collaborative effort, whereby one needs to learn that the Church is the People of God, is us, and therefore if we are going to operate in this vision that the church is the People of God and it's us, that means then the Church is a communion and therefore, ministry it's about ministering not alone but with others and... is to guide and discern with people the will of God by taking them along. And that's the kind of a priest that I feel myself that we are entrusted with the task of promoting and producing today in formation, and this is basically what we are trying to do. [To train] somebody who is humanly mature, intellectually equipped and spiritually rooted in the person of Christ but who is also pastorally able to dispense the ministry in the name of Christ with a certain amount of love that Christ himself did for his flock. And for me this is an entirely the vision that is rooted in the priesthood as I have understood it in my own priestly life (PF5 on IQ 1).

This lengthy explanation was not shared by the other formators. They had their own understanding of a calling to be a priest formator. The following views are that of PF4, who became a formator because of obedience to the authorities. Therefore, his call emanated from being obedient to the Church; he was, so to say, called by the Church to be a formator. Even though in the first instance he obeyed his authorities, PF4 later realised that that was what he really liked doing. He related his views as follows:

So, in that sense I've kind of discerned I am a diocesan priest, but I like teaching and formation, I just like it, and I'd like to believe I'm probably better at that than other things ... I do feel this is where I can serve the church a lot better than in other things. So, it is as clear as that (PF4 on IQ 1).

PF4 regarded being a formator as a calling within a calling, a priest and teacher (Mt 28:19). He was called by the Church and fulfilled the mission of the Church to teach.

PF1, on the other hand, related a different view on his understanding of being a priest formator as follows:

The understanding of my call as a priest and a formator, I would say, is to provide the Church with leaders. Not only leaders but community builders, because at the end, the priest is sent in that particular community to build a community of faith. Yes, so, that is my calling, that is my duty to see to it that that person is worthy of not just preaching but of living his faith together with those people. Yes, around him must be a community of faith (PF1 on IQ 1).

PF1 saw formation of priests as his call and duty, forming leaders and community builders who would not only preach but live their faith together with the people as role models of what they expect parishioners to be and do. PF5 and PF1 described the mandate of their calling without defining what is a calling and who called them to fulfil their ministry as formators at St John Vianney Seminary.

The following views differ from those described above. Formators PF2 and PF3L saw their calling as a professional duty of sharing knowledge with candidates on their journey to discern their calling. PF2 saw formation of priests as a fulfilment of a duty, helping young people to understand what God wants of them. He viewed formation of priests as centring discernment in everything they do and to help students to learn to look upon themselves like our Lord Jesus Christ who continuously discerned the will of God the Father. Students must also do the same and discern if being a priest is what God wants them to do for the rest of their lives. PF2 related that priesthood is not a temporary vocation but that it is perpetual, it is a calling, not a job where one signs a contract and can terminate it anytime at will, Since being a formator was not a vocation for him, he did not define it or mention who called him to this duty.

PF3L, being a lay formator, is more interested in the improvement of priest formation than defining whether he has a calling to be a formator or not. He wished that a fifth dimension be added to the four the documents of the Church recommend, namely emotional intelligence. He is convinced that the seminarians have enough intellectual knowledge but was doubtful of their ability to put it into practice and relate with others on that level.

Formators responded to the question on their understanding of a calling from a point of view of what they were expected to do, or to produce, and what was lacking in the formation of candidates. Their views were more outward looking rather than them regarding being a formation as their calling to fulfil the mission of Christ, even though through teaching and formation of future priests they are fulfilling the demands of the commission to go, to make

disciples, and to teach. Of the five formators, only PF4 saw his calling to be a formator as a calling within a calling as a priest and discerned it to be the best way he could serve God and the Church.

The above discussion on what the participants understood about their calling as parishioners, parish priests, and formators can be summarised as follows: none of the participants defined a calling, and only parish priests identified God as the one who called them to ministerial priesthood and gave them a mandate thereto. The laity and most formators mentioned the mandate of their calling by explaining their call as to serve in different ways within the Church and being involved in society. The services rendered were mainly within the Church and for the benefits of the Church.

The importance of understanding a calling, who called, and the implication thereof helps Christians in whatever position they are called in the Church to respond accordingly and to know to whom they are accountable for their life as witnesses of God's love for the world. Without these three components of a calling, it might be difficult to adhere to the values of the gospel as a parishioner (Christian), or a priest, or formator. The following presentation will reveal the kind of formation participants received for them to understand their calling better, who called them, and how they were introduced and empowered for their mandate. The second section presents the views of participants on the formation they received for them to understand their calling, who called them, and the mandate thereto.

2.2 Formation of participants for their appropriate calling

Every person who responds to a calling is entitled to receive formation that will help and better him or her to discern their calling, locate and build their relationship with the caller, and participate in the mandate proposed by the caller. Formation is offered at all levels of Christian life, but the views of participants will reveal what is going on in their own formation and whether it helped them to understand their calling and participate in the mission of the Church. The following discussion presents first the views of parishioners on the formation they received, followed by the parish priests' views, and the views of formators are discussed last.

2.2.1 Views of the laity on their formation as parishioners

After deliberating on their understanding of their calling, parishioners were asked whether they thought the training and formation they received from the parish or parish priest had adequately empowered them for their calling as Christians/parishioners (IQ 2). The views of parishioners in response to the question are related in the following paragraphs.

Most parishioners were satisfied with the formation they received from their parish priests (LP1W, LP2YM, LP3W, LP6YM, LP8W, LP9W). These parishioners stated in different ways that the formation they received enabled them to serve within the Church and in society. The discussion starts with the majority's views and ends with individuals' views. LP2YM, LP8W, and LP9W received formation in the form of advice, encouragement, and learning from the parish priest as a role model on how he treated children. LP8W related how the parish priest helped her to form her personality and character in dealing with children by relating an example. She was content with what she received which made her grow as a person to the realisation that she had to serve with love, and she became aware that children of today are not the same as children of her time. She stated the following:

The way I used to discipline my children is the same way I discipline children in the church. Then the priest helped me. Sometimes I used to be harsh then the priest advised me that I must not be harsh, that I must try to be soft and love them. But sometimes one has that tough love because that is the way I grew up but today it is not the same way with today's children. Yes, he helped me to be calm and not to be harsh always. They say 'love them, discipline them, but love them, yes but love them (LP8 on IQ 2) [Modified].

The views of LP1W differ from those of LP8W. She regarded herself fortunate for having attended a Catholic school where she had been a boarder and had had religious instruction five days a week and went for daily Holy Mass from Grade R to Grade 12. The faith formation she received helped her grow in her understanding of her obligation as a Christian. She related that it was hammered into her that giving should be more than receiving and she therefore strongly believed in doing, in being active in the Church. The main issue for her was that one needs to be taught, and once you fully understand what you are taught, you need to live that in daily life. This process follows three stages, being taught, fully understanding the lesson, and then putting that into practise by incorporating the gospel values in daily life. Her conviction as an adult helped her, as a nurse, to take a stand against abortion laws and be ready to lose her job rather than to comply to assist with abortions. She stated this with conviction and passion about what

she has learned. She compared the faith formation children receive today to that of previous times by deliberating about her faith formation as follows:

I think what we were taught then and what the kids are receiving now is a big difference because we were taught daily, and we went for daily Mass. It was daily, now you have a choice if you want to go for Mass or even with catechism classes. There is a difference in the years that they are spending now to be confirmed in comparison to us attending classes daily from First Holy Communion up to Confirmation in Grade 12. I really think, yes it equipped me more to be part of my church and be a Christian. It even helped me to see other congregations of faith or other churches on equal stand not to look down at them and think I'm superior but to work with them and teach them what I have been taught, ja (LP1W on IQ 2) [Modified].

Besides faith formation she received at school, as an adult LP1W received formation from the sermons of the parish priest, just as LP2YM. She attended workshops as youth coordinator, as well as retreats offered by the parish priest who sometimes invited newly ordained priests, where they offered new ideas on Christian formation. She was also assisted by her parish priest during her time of grief after the death of her husband, which helped her to minister to others in the same situation. LP1W felt empowered personally, spiritually, and as a human being she improved her experience of life as a Christian, sharing with others what she received.

LP3W, from the same parish, also cited the sermons of the parish priest as formative and a source of empowerment for her calling as a parishioner, compelling her to serve the poor and the marginalised in the streets. She was happy with what she was involved in because it had always been her desire to serve. Initial formation and ongoing formation from PP1 proved to be a source of empowerment for service for his parishioners who were satisfied with their formation.

LP2YM, on the other hand, received his formation as a youth more by attending the Sunday Eucharist where he listened to scripture and the sermons from the parish priest who explained and interpreted it within the context of his parishioners. His understanding from listening to the parish priest encouraged him to share the gospel message with his friends at school. He shared with them that he loves his church, especially because in his sermons the priest presented scripture and not his own views. This youth appreciated scripture (LP2YM) and confirmed what LP1W stated above. From being taught and understanding, one is able to share the message with others and live according to the gospel values. Other parishioners received faith formation in a different way, for example from parishioners of the first parish that helped them to understand and live their vocation.

LP3W and LP6YM received their formation through instructions in catechesis which were offered to them in preparation of the reception of sacraments. These views are next unpacked, starting from those of the youth, followed by those of some adults, to better understand how different age groups understood their faith formation and how it empowered them for their calling as parishioners.

LP6YM mentioned that he received his faith formation through catechesis before his baptism and confirmation. He related what happened during that process by explaining that the parish priest used to visit their outstation, questioned them on what they had learned, quoted scriptures for them, and preached to them. He felt that these actions from the parish priest formed him to be a Christian in word and deed. LP6YM said this as a matter of fact and was he content with the formation he received. Both LP2YM and LP6YM were involved in youth ministry and attended vocational workshops and youth camps as a form of ongoing formation, which also helped them to understand their faith as Roman Catholic youth. They participated in their parishes in different ways.

Adult parishioners expressed positive ways of faith formation they received that help them to grow in their vocation as parishioners as follows: LP4M felt empowered so much that he was confident in himself about his faith and does not doubt himself or feel shy about his faith as a Catholic. He related that priests equip them better now than previously, referring to expatriate missionary priests, and he trusted himself in what he is doing in the Church. In his response he was calm and content with what he was receiving and did not seem to want more to grow in his faith as a Catholic.

The level of understanding of a calling as parishioners directed their expectation of faith formation, and they were content with what they were receiving from their parish priests to fulfil their calling. They could not expect more because they did not know they deserved more and had the right to holistic formation that incorporated the four pillars (human, spiritual, intellectual, and ministerial) that included the Social Teachings of the Church to enable them to participate in the internal and external mission of the Church. Two other parishioners had different views regarding the faith formation they received and did not feel empowered for their calling, as described in the following paragraphs.

LP5W and LP7M had different views regarding the faith formation they were receiving for their calling as parishioners. LP5W presented her view lengthily on how inadequately she was

formed and mentioned that from her group of 26 in her First Holy Communion, she was the only one left as the others had left the Church due to lack of understanding of their faith and had joined other denominations. She passionately expressed her views how she got to understand her calling as a Christian as follows:

I think I just discovered it from listening to other people and from being empty and trying to discover what is it that I should be doing, why am I here on earth, but not from the Catholic Church ... the Catholic Church is more focused on rules and regulations and what should be done this way, and that way. Then as this happens people forget that we shouldn't be worrying about rules and regulations if people are empty and do not know who they are. If our people don't know what it means to be a Christian, then you know, they won't know they are called. So, my answer would be no, I don't think the Catholic Church is doing anything to make sure that we are empowered and to make sure that we understand what we are to do, what and why we are here even in the first place. That is the confusion that one goes through in life without knowing the purposes and becomes totally confused. You come to church and you don't even know why you are here in the first place and then you go out there and discover from other people what you should be doing as a Christian and what you should be understanding regarding being a Christian in the first place (LP5W on IQ 2) [Modified].

The views of LP7M are similar to those of LP5W, although they are from different parishes, dioceses, provinces, and 1 000 km apart. These parishioners are aware of what they needed to know to live their vocation as Christians, which was more than a Sunday sermon and individual personal advice. LP7M sadly described the faith formation he was receiving as follows:

No ... it seems as if the priests themselves don't have enough knowledge about the work that they are doing. It seems as if what they have learned they don't understand it well that is why it doesn't become effective to me. The priests, as far as I can see and listening to them, they just read books but there is nothing that much that impacts towards me so as to convert me effectively that I may call myself as a Christian, real Christian, because they just read things from the Bible and just try to relate the story in the Bible to me that's why I sometimes leave the Church without knowing what was being said in the Church. When I go home sometimes within one or two hours, I forget what was said in the Church (LP7M on IQ 2) [Modified].

In summary, the answers of parishioners can be divided into three categories.

- Firstly, there are those who felt formed through spiritual input from the priests through scripture, preaching, catechesis, retreats, workshops, conferences, and the Eucharist.
- Secondly, there were those who had personal encounters with the parish priest when struggling with personal issues and received advice and encouragement, and learned from the priest as their mentor.
- Thirdly, there are those who felt the Church or the priests did not offer them much regarding initial faith formation and ongoing formation through preaching, workshops, or conferences that helped them to live their Christian life effectively in society.

LP5W had related that her understanding of her calling is to serve for the greater glory of God but the formation she received in the church did not help her to fulfil her calling as a Christian, she was rather helped by people who were not within the Church. LP7M, on the other hand, understood his calling as to accept the Word of God and influence others by it. However, the sermons from the parish priest as an ongoing formation did not help him to understand scripture and to become a missionary disciple with conviction as he forgot what was said within an hour or two.

It was from their understanding of a calling as a parishioner that they were either satisfied or critical about their formation. Ongoing formal faith formation was not experienced by all parishioners in the form of workshops, retreats, and conferences to help them grow and effectively be involved in the mission of the Church. This point is elaborated on later in this chapter. Retreats which LP1W mentioned were not available to everybody since LP2YM and LP3W from the same parish, did not mention them as their form of faith formation.

In conclusion, most parishioners (LP1W, LP2YM, LP3W, LP4M, LP8W, and LP9W) were satisfied with what they received to understand their calling as parishioners (Christians) and/or as individuals. The following discussion presents parish priests' views on the formation they received at the seminary to understand their calling to ministerial priesthood. Their initial formation as parishioners might have been the same as that of the youth as discussed above which formed the foundation of their vocation to ministerial priesthood and on which formation for priesthood was built.

2.2.2 Views of priests on being adequately formed for their calling

The parish priests were asked the same question put to the parishioners regarding their formation and whether it was adequate to help them understand their calling to ministerial priesthood and its demands in the multicultural democratic South African society. The responses of the parish priests are divided into two categories. Those with similar aspects are discussed first, followed by those least agreed on.

The general agreement was that they were academically formed but lacked skills to translate and practically implement the knowledge acquired in their own pastoral ministry (PP1 and PP2). They realised that real learning took place at parish level where their roles are reversed from being in the pews to being at the pulpit as a leader in a parish.

Lack of skills is identified as not having enough time for practicals at the seminary to implement acquired knowledge and not enough attention being given to what was necessary for the running of a parish. Activities of teaching catechesis in parishes around the seminary and the internships were not helpful to them regarding bringing about change in the parish ministry. They learned theological and philosophical theories but were not taught to contextualise or inculturate these theories to answer the needs of the democratic multicultural South African society.

Their views are cited to emphasise what they said as the key players and/or receivers of formation for ministerial priesthood for the formation of the laity on parish level to fulfil the mission of the Church. The effectiveness of the mission of the Church depends on them forming the laity to participate effectively in transforming processes of politics, as well as economic and social sectors. The views of PP1 are presented first as he was the first priest to be interviewed. He has been in ministry for six years, serving an urban parish made up of blacks, coloureds, and whites, with different cultures, customs, and languages, He related his formation to understand his vocation as a priest and fulfil his mandate effectively as follows:

I am not hundred per cent *sure* (emphasised) that I was adequately formed. But *academically* (emphasised) I think they did a good job but how *to apply* (emphasised) all that information practically in a parish situation, I don't believe that I am adequately prepared to serve in a multicultural community in the new South Africa, a multicultural country. Formation was mostly academic as I said. The training was academic, but how the rubber meets the road that is where I had to learn and still learning how to bring that academic knowledge, how to bring it practically, how to apply it practically in the lives of people especially in human relationships, and conflict resolutions. I find that this happens a lot in a parish. I don't know how to deal with them, how to respond to these challenges in parish ministry (PP1 on IQ 2) [Modified].

In a similar way, PP3 related the same sentiments after being in ministry for five years and situated 500 km away in a rural parish and a different diocese. He related his experience of seminary formation as follows:

No, that was not enough what I got from the seminary because some of the things I had to learn from the parish. Mostly the office work I had to learn from the parish how to run the office of the parish, and how to manage my pastoral work and my office of administration. I had challenges to run finances of the parish. We were just taught two weeks; I can even say four hours how to handle finances of the parish. So, it was not enough what I got from the seminary. We got a lot of theories about the theologians and the philosophers about what they said about certain things, certain issues in theology and philosophy. But when it came to the practical work in the parish, it was little what we were given. And what we were taught after we came back from the internship on how to handle things, was minimal although I think we should have been given enough time because it would be thing we would be doing, but nothing more was done. Even celebrating Holy Mass, we were taught just two months before we left the seminary... (PP3 on IQ 2) [Modified].

Both parish priests indicated their dissatisfaction with the formation they received. They lacked skills to translate acquired knowledge into practical situations in their parish ministries. The period of internship meant for practical experience of pastoral ministry was not helpful and did not improve their skills to be hands-on in their own parishes.

Inadequate preparation at the seminary did not help them to introduce new outreach methods of pastoral ministry suited for the multicultural democratic South Africa, but perpetuated the old style of parish ministry, preparing parishioners for sacraments and for priests to be sacrament celebrants and ritual performers (PP3). Conflicts and human relations in the new context of democracy did not form part of their formation and priests are struggling to help parishioners to deal with them (PP1).

PP2, unlike PP1 and PP3, was satisfied with his formation. In his response he mentioned the four pillars of formation, namely spiritual, intellectual, pastoral, and social, which are used to improve them, and added that these have empowered him a lot for parish ministry. His views were totally different from those of other priests even though they were trained and formed at the same time and at the same seminary. The views of PP1 and PP3 though, confirmed the views of LP5W and LP7M that parish priests did not seem to have understood their training and lacked skills to form the laity and empower them for their mission and to perform their ministry effectively.

The views of some formators highlighted the reasons for the dissatisfaction amongst parish priests and others confirm the views of PP2 regarding formation they received for their ministry at the seminary. The views of formators on their formation in understanding their vocation and preparation of their ministry as formators of future priests follow below.

2.2.3 Views of formators on formation for their calling

After hearing the views of parishioners and parish priests on their formation for their understanding and empowerment for their calling, the views of some formators clarify what is lacking in formation for priests. However, the majority did not regard their mission and ministry to form future priests as their calling, which might contribute to their satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Some formators (PF2, PF3L, PF5) related what they deemed necessary to be added in formation for future priests instead of relating how well they were empowered for their calling

or their duty and responsibility as formators. Some of their views are presented verbatim to emphasise their point of concern. PF1 presented his views as follows:

Well, there is still a hiccup in that. The problem and the question would be how are the formators recruited? Yes, how does the Church recruit formators? Myself I was discovered by chance, yes, but no one ever said to me one day you will be a formator, all of a sudden then I got a call, 'Would you consider going to John Vianney and be a formator and the lecturer?' Then I said, why not, why not, if that is what the Church wants, no problem (PF1 on IQ 2) [Modified].

PF1 was not prepared and formed for formation of future priests, but he accepted the ministry in obedience to the Church. He was aware that that was not the way to go about becoming a formator. He said this with concern, being aware of what was going on at the seminary.

PF4 had a similar experience but he later discerned that he liked teaching and formation of future priests. Being involved in formation through recruitment could bring both positive and or negative results, depending on the reasons why a person was recruited. The views of PF4 further explain what happens after recruitment and what kind of formation is offered to most of them. He related his views as follows:

I can say common with my colleagues we haven't received much what I call specialized training in formation. Most of us are academics. Our first competencies are academics, and we are all qualified to lecture, including myself and a number of us have done maybe short formation courses, that is, a month course in Rome for example. So, most of it have been gained through on ground practical experience (PF4 on IQ 2) [Modified].

Formation in preparation for them to form future priests holistically according to the Church documents were short courses of one month in Rome, thus outside the South African context. When further probed how he managed to form parish leadership for the multicultural democratic South African society, he replied that some of them (formators) are the product of the seminary and have learned to live together as students in a multicultural environment and that helps them to serve as best as they can, even though not fully equipped.

PF4 further related that the Church has never sent anyone to be a specialised master formator who could form and lead them in what is needed to form future priests. He related feeling helpless in the situation, not knowing what to do other than just doing his best. This explanation of PF4 clarifies the views of parishioners and parish priests on what is going on regarding formation for priests at the seminary. This point will be taken up in the next question.

The views of PF5 though, differed from the views of the other two fulltime formators. He related that the formation he received as a student at the institution had since drastically

changed. He regarded himself as trained in the model of the Second Vatican Council and acknowledged that he had experienced the formation as rigid, obsessed with doctrine, and intellectual. He observed that formation being offered to the seminarians at present is an integrated approach based on the four dimensions of formation, namely human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral, which were introduced by *Pastores dabo vobis*. This document emphasises the inseparability of these dimensions in the formation of ministerial priesthood, which they should incorporate in their pastoral ministry in forming the laity for their mission in society. Although PP1 and PP3 had studied under the *Pastores dabo vobis* programme of formation, they still related the opposite of what PF5 claimed has changed and emphasised that their formation was academic rather than pastoral. This point will be further discussed later.

The views of PF2 and PF3L, who are non-residential formators, differed from those presented above. Since they stated that they were not called to be formators but were fulfilling their duty and obligation as professionals, their views are presented separately to highlight the essence of their views.

PF2 was formed abroad and gained working experience in different African countries. He was content with the formation he had received after ordination, as it was geared towards priestly formation. He was trained to help the Church move with her mission and to help candidates to make informed decisions in their calling. He was content with himself and satisfied with the help he offers to candidates to not make a blind choice in entering ministerial priesthood. To help candidates live this commitment effectively, he assists them in making their personal choice, and to not allow themselves to be forced or influenced by either family members or members of the parish. Discernment is central to his approach to the formation of young men who aspire to become future priests.

PF3L, however, felt trained and equipped for his profession, which was not necessarily for priest formation, but general. He was satisfied with his formation that had taught him to be open and to treat all different races, religions, ethnic and language groups equally. He did not have a problem preparing candidates for a multicultural democratic South African society, using the experience of his profession.

According to PF4, the St John Vianney Seminary does not have a master formator who could lead and direct formation, because the seminary is regarded as being too small to have such a person. Because of this lack of a master formator to give direction, and lack of preparation and

formation, each formator offered what he deemed necessary to prepare future priests based on his interests, training, and experience.

The views of formators highlighted the views of parishioners and those of parish priests on what the situation is at St John Vianney. The views of all participants reveal what it is that affects the processes of formation and hampers empowerment of priests for their ministry on parish level.

Formators are intellectuals and form priests who are intellectuals. PP1 commented that it was unnecessary for priests to be formed for parish ministry as academics, because professionals who are members of parishes do not attend Church to ask academic questions from the priest but need spiritual assistance to live their lives in a meaningful way. They, as parish priests, need practical skills to serve the needs of people, and to be present to them in all situations of their lives.

In reply to Question 2 on being adequately formed for their calling, all three groups (parishioners, parish priests, and formators) presented their views based on their position and the level of understanding of what necessary preparation for their calling is for them to fulfil the demands of their calling. All participants were aware that their calling is to serve but differed in their expectations of the kind of formation they needed to serve effectively on their level of ministry in the Church.

In summary, most parishioners felt formed, based on their level of understanding of their rights, duties, and responsibilities of their call to be Christians, without the awareness of the mission they are called to fulfil in society. Their involvement in the external mission of the Church revealed this weakness. The definition of a calling and who called them did not form part of their formation to ground their understanding of being called to serve. The two parishioners who voiced their dissatisfaction about their formation for their calling were aware of what was lacking in their formation for their calling to be Christians and its demands and expected formation that would empower them to fulfil their mission effectively.

The two parish priests, on the other hand, rated their formation as academic and inadequate in offering them methods and skills for their parish ministry. They voiced their views in frustration, stating that they were not effectively serving their parishioners to their satisfaction and were not enabling them to fulfil their vocation in society. Their views were confirmed by

the views of formators who stated that they were trained mostly as lecturers—academics—not formators skilled to form priests who could effectively be involved in pastoral ministry. Most residential formators relied on their own experience as former students at the institute more than the preparation for their ministry to form priests who are missionary disciples ready to form the laity. The implementation of the Pastoral Plan of the Bishops and the mandate of the Church to evangelise and get involved in societal transformation lack in their pastoral ministry.

The next discussion presents the views of participants on how they were formed according to the four pillars of formation considered to offer holistic training and formation that are integrative for ministerial priesthood.

These dimensions of formation are not meant only for ministerial priesthood, but for all people of God in their different positions and levels in Church and society, even though they are elaborated on specifically for priestly formation. The assumption and expectation might be that well-trained and holistically mature formed parish priests would extend that same formation to the laity to empower them for their mission.

The views of parishioners on their formation by the four pillars are presented first, followed by those of parish priests and then those of formators who are entrusted with the responsibility to form an integrated priest for the mission of the Church in the twenty-first century. This way of presenting the views of participants will be followed throughout.

2.2.4 Four dimensions for integrated formation

The four dimensions or pillars of formation are offered in the Roman Catholic Church as a holistic framework of formation for the programme of ministerial priesthood. Although catechesis for initiation into the Roman Catholic Church for the laity does not explicitly tabulate these four pillars of formation, it goes without saying that these dimensions need to be adhered to and integrated into faith formation for people to be fully human and fully alive as integrated human persons, able to fulfil God's purpose on earth. Deprived of one of these dimensions one might not be able to actualise oneself and fully achieve one's purpose and mission on earth. For that reason, parishioners were asked whether they were adequately empowered on human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral dimensions for them to know their calling and fulfil their mission in society. This question was put to all participants.

Parishioners gave their views on their formation by the four pillars, starting with human formation, and provided an understanding on what members receive regarding their Christian calling and their empowerment for missionary discipleship.

2.2.4.1 Human formation

Every living creature is affected by the environment in which it lives, moves, and understands itself. To be fully human one needs to be fully alive and formed to attain self-knowledge, self-understanding, self-actualisation, and faith maturity in order to adapt to the environment and perform one's duties and responsibilities to the best of one's ability. Human formation is therefore basic in the life of each person in order to empower them to answer their call to be Christians and as fully mature human beings. Parishioners responded to the question whether they were adequately formed in human formation (IQ 3.1.1) as follows:

2.2.4.2 Views of parishioners on human formation

Parishioners did not fully understand this question and it had to be clarified for them to fully understand what was meant by human formation. Even with clarification they were only able to state what they were able to do, reverting to service in different ways, depending on what they understood by the question. Some mentioned their ability to reach out to others in attending to their needs in different situations, revealing human maturity and the ability to be self-forgetful, which is a sign of maturity on their part. They gained this ability through being in touch with the parish priests as individuals and matured through such encounters. The next paragraphs present their different views on their understanding of human formation.

LP3W, LP7M, and LP8W were able to attain maturity and reached out to others, whereas LP4M, LP7M, and LP9W developed self-understanding and acceptance of others through awareness gained from encounters with the parish priest, attending catechesis, by attending workshops, and/or conferences. On the other hand, LP1W and LP6YM attained emotional maturity by dealing with their personal problems through the help of the parish priest while LP2YM, LP4M, and LP7M developed self-confidence by realising that they are not better than others.

LP7M explained his human formation as being formed to attain humanness (*Botho*) in dealing with animals and other human beings. He gave a detailed explanation how after his contact

with priests and being a boy scout developed humanness (*Botho*), whereas before he was only concerned with himself and his family. As a boy scout, he cared for injured animals which taught him to be human in his dealings with others.

LP4M, on the other hand, associated human formation as being groomed, being human, understanding yourself, and not discriminating against others by thinking yourself better than they are. This experience was particular to LP4M. He related that had he not been in the Church, he would not be in the position to regard other people as people and treat them as human beings. LP4M and LP7M had similar views on how being in the Church helped them to grow in the concept of *Botho* which helped them to serve others.

LP1W saw human formation as being a better person, while for LP2YM it meant being encouraged to grow in self-confidence and to be brave in life. Their personalities were moulded by being active in the Church, personal encounters with the parish priest, and attending youth camps, which helped them to develop self-respect and respect for others. Personal development led them to emotional maturity and caring for others.

LP1W was helped to deal with her feelings and emotions after the death of her husband which led her to reach out and help those in the same situation. LP6YM learned social and moral behaviour by attending youth camps and to abstain from drugs and early sexual intercourse that could lead to a destructive life. Through youth camps LP6YM learned self-control and how to make better choices in life. He gained confidence to communicate with others without fear of being ridiculed, knowing that it is God only to be feared.

Some parishioners were involved in projects such as Caritas (LP8W), which they regarded as helping them to be human in caring for others. Caritas is a Catholic outreach to the poor and the vulnerable building a world based on justice and fraternal love (<https://www.caritas.org>). The programme, Education for Life (LP9W), was regarded as helpful in forming youth in moral behaviour and respect and was regarded as human formation. Education for Life is a programme for preparing young people to face challenges of life and achieve balance and harmony in every situation in life (<https://edforlife.org>). These programmes helped LP8W and LP9W respectively to relate positively with others and to take care of their needs.

The views of parishioners on empowerment by human formation indicated three levels of growth, that is, personality building, emotional maturity, and human qualities of relating to

others, sharing, and awareness of the needs of others. Parishioners had developed these through formal training by involvement in Caritas, Education for Life, through youth camps, and vocational workshops. Not all parishioners attend or are involved in these activities, only those interested gain by attending. Parish priests, however, had the opportunity to receive extensive formal human formation for nine years. Their views are discussed below.

2.2.4.3 Views of parish priests on human formation

Two of the parish priests (PP2, PP3) responded affirmatively to being formed in human formation. Though their responses were brief, they covered the three components of human formation. Firstly, they mentioned that human formation helped them to be in touch with themselves (PP2), which led to self-knowledge, self-acceptance, self-understanding, and self-love (PP2, PP3). Self-knowledge and self-understanding developed from researching their genealogy that helped them to know their past, define their present, and look forward to the future (PP2). Self-knowledge led them to self-understanding and self-acceptance, which counteracted the legacy of apartheid, which promoted self-hate, human indignity, and lack of self-respect. This process of self-knowledge offered them the capacity of effective maturity and helped build their principles to perform their ministry towards others with love and compassion (PP2).

PP2 presented Johari's Window Model as being used for priests to attain self-knowledge, which assisted them in this process to cultivate human qualities necessary for their ministry. Each parish priest participant had his own background that needed healing and growth. PP3 stated his view on human formation as follows:

In human formation again I think I was really formed on that one because when I came out of the seminary, I could understand myself better. There were some challenges that I had before I went to the seminary. So, through human formation I got there I became a better person, I understood myself and ... I love the person that I am. After leaving the seminary I continued wanting to know more about the person I am. So, I can say that, on the human side I was adequately formed, yes (PP3 on IQ 3.1.1) [Modified].

However, not all priests found human formation helpful. PP1 explained that, had he been adequately formed in human formation, he would have been empowered to handle human problems in the community. He related that they were expected to live a moral life but that did not equip him to handle human problems in the parish. Living a moral life is integral to human

formation for Catholic priests, helping them to live a celibate life, but seemingly the expectations were not accompanied with content by offering formal formation on that.

The overall qualities of human formation, self-understanding, self-knowledge, and self-giving do not seem to have made an impact on him as it did on PP2 and PP3. PP1 could not translate his own human formation to help others in their struggles with life and to help couples struggling in their relationships. When he entered the seminary, he was already mature, with ten years' work experience and needed more than satisfying his basic needs according to Maslow's theory of human needs.

The general views of the parish priests regarding human formation revealed that they gained knowledge of who they are, it helped them live a moral life, and to gain human qualities that taught them to reach out to others with love and care. Through this they were able to impact parishioners who, through personal contact with them, matured emotionally and gained the ability to reach out to others with love and care.

Against the background of the views of parishioners and parish priests the views of formators are described to understand how they were trained and formed in human formation for them to impact the lives of seminarians. Human formation, like all other formation, is spiral and affects people as they relate with one another. The views of formators highlight the views of parish priests in their human formation.

2.2.4.4 Views of formators on human formation

All formators, residential and non-residential, form the educational community for ministerial priesthood formation. They are entrusted with the responsibility to form and prepare humanly mature leadership for the Church to carry out her mission in society. For them to fulfil this important mission, they need to be themselves; humanly mature role models of what they expect candidates to become; their personalities should be a bridge for candidates to discern the will of God in their lives. They need to be approachable, non-judgemental, understanding, and merciful in their dealings with future priests in their care.

Replying to the question whether they were adequately empowered in human formation, their views reflected two categories. Firstly, formators who gave two sides to their human formation, namely their own personal formation as candidates for ministerial priesthood, and secondly the

way they were prepared for their responsibility as formators. Other formators responded only to their preparation for their ministry as formators.

Those who stated two sides presented four aspects. Firstly, their own personal human formation; secondly, courses attended in preparation for their ministry as formators; thirdly, new developments at the seminary with regards to human formation; and fourthly, what human formation aims to achieve.

The first category of formators who mentioned two sides of their human formation were PF2, PF4, and PF5, who stated that their own human formation as students at the institution was inadequate. In their reflection they mentioned not being trained properly (PF2), being ill-equipped (PF4), and that formation was insufficient (PF5), which revealed that they were not adequately formed as seminarians. PF2 stated that to be the person he was, he had to work hard on his own after ordination and engage in programmes that helped him grow to become a mature human being. The responsibility for growth was left to individuals to discern for themselves what would make them happy, mature, and whole.

Expanding on the formation received as candidates, PF5 explained that human formation had always been in the curriculum but was administered differently. As students, they would reflect in the classroom and in small groups on issues of a psychological nature, for example, family history, human relationships, and how they, as students, had to interact amongst themselves. These activities were not well developed and did not equip them sufficiently.

The second aspect of human formation was their preparation to form seminarians to be fully mature men in taking up ministerial priesthood as leaders in the Church. PF1 and PF2 explained that courses they attended in Rome helped them look after young people in their human development and relationships with others, but this was not experienced by all formators who had been sent to Rome, and who found that it did not benefit their own personal formation.

PF4 related that he had not been well equipped in human formation when he was a student and sent for a short course abroad. Since formators were not well equipped in human formation, they were in the process of developing a manual based on *Pastores dabo vobis* (John Paul II 1992:#43, #44) and *Ratio Fundamentalis* (Congregation for the Clergy 2016:#93–#100) to contextualise it for Southern Africa. This was done 26 years after the publication of the manual

Pastores dabo vobis, which formed the basis and structure of formation for priests, which means that for 26 years the seminary functioned without a manual on human formation.

The aim of the human formation manual is to help fill the gap of what was lacking in their own human formation and to help candidates to be balanced men (Department of the Clergy SACBC 2018:3). As balanced men, parish priests would be effectively mature, capable of relating well to others, of giving pastoral care within different cultural contexts, and living celibately in a healthy manner. This process would help growing in self-knowledge, self-acceptance, and self-gifting in the light of faith to help candidates take the humanity of Christ as their model of life (Department of the Clergy SACBC 2018:3).

This development is putting human formation at the centre and as a foundation that other dimensions may build on. The institution will further establish a Directorate of Human Formation that will facilitate the programme and bring unity amongst formators as well as formators with candidates. PF5 gave a list of issues of importance that the new daft manual included:

Issues relating to inter-relations, culture, human sexuality, affective sexuality, how to deal with the vulnerable women and children, ministerial ethics, and etiquette, and dealing also with issues of justice and poverty in society.

Since the manual is in the developmental stage, human formation was done by inviting professionals in human formation to give input on different topics, affording students the opportunity to learn and grow from hearing different presenters (PF5). For FP5, the implementation of what is gained from the seminary depended on three aspects. Firstly, how the candidate assimilated formation and made it his own; secondly, the ongoing formation structures in dioceses that welcome and allow the newly ordained priest to grow and feel at home; thirdly, the structures in place at diocesan level for the formation of the laity that should offer the young priests a system and facilities for their needs to function well in the parish and society. Without these structures in place on the diocesan level, FP5 emphasised, the newly ordained priests would find it difficult to function properly and formation acquired would not be applicable in real parish life (PF5).

The formators' reflections on human formation portrayed the weaknesses of formation in the past, and the hope that the new developments would help empower future priests in their parish ministry. The gaps found in the formation of the laity result from these weaknesses in the

priestly formation and the lack of conducive structures on the diocesan level. Formators were themselves not adequately formed in human formation, therefore could not adequately form candidates to maturity through human formation.

In conclusion, inadequate human formation offered at the seminary made it impossible for parish priests and formators to effectively build the foundation for other pillars of formation. PP1 could not handle human problems of the laity due to a lack of adequate human formation, while PP2 and PP3, who are younger, received personal growth in self-knowledge and self-understanding. The next discussion is on spiritual formation that is supposed to create a mature human person.

2.2.5 Spiritual formation

Spiritual formation builds on human formation in order to perfect it and help the followers of Christ to establish a personal relationship with the Triune God who called them for his purpose. All the baptised are entitled to spiritual formation for them to grow in their calling and mature in their faith.

2.2.5.1 Views of the laity on spiritual formation

Pope John Paul II (1992:#45) states that spiritual formation builds on a well-balanced human formation that unites all dimensions and works in a spiral form. Parishioners were asked whether they were adequately formed in spiritual formation (IQ 3.1.2), and they all responded affirmatively.

The parishioners' views on spiritual formation formed four themes, that is, growth to build a relationship with God, spiritual discipline or personal mortification, spiritual restoration or revival, and love of neighbour by sharing. These views of parishioners are next discussed to highlight the parishioners' spiritual formation and how these themes helped them in living in a relationship with God and neighbour.

The parishioners first mentioned aspects that helped them build their relationship with God. They mentioned the Sunday liturgy where they listened to scripture being read and interpreted, thus gaining insight of who God is. Attending retreats and conferences afforded them time to listen to scripture explained, had time for individual reflection on scripture, and time for

individual and community prayer. It was from these activities that they received spiritual formation and got to know God better and built their relationship with him.

LP1W, LP2YM, and LP3W gained spiritual growth by listening to their parish priests read and interpret the Old and New Testaments in their own context, thus helping them to build their personal relationship with God and Jesus. LP2YM, as a youth, felt encouraged to share scripture with his friends and tell them how good it was to praise God and to listen to his Word, because he could understand the meaning of scripture as it talked to his situation and addressed problems they were faced with as youth.

Other important elements that helped parishioners in their spiritual formation were personal prayer and retreats. LP3W builds her relationship with God by feeling drawn to stay in the church and contemplate the mysteries in the Bible, while LP8W learned persistent prayer or intercessory prayer in her need to pray for her family problems. The parish priest encouraged her to wait on God and not to expect instant answers, which helped her to persevere in prayer. Personal prayer and retreats encourage silence, introspection, and conversion that helped them to take every day as a lesson.

On the other hand, LP4M learned from attending conferences that he was a priest at home, and that it was his responsibility to read and share the Word of God every day with his family and not just wait to hear the Word of God on Sundays only. By so doing he grew spiritually in his understanding of God, but this view was particular to this participant. Parishioners who felt drawn to prayer exercised their baptismal office as a priest to pray for themselves and their families and learned different kinds of prayer to fulfil this office.

Some parishioners learned and grew spiritually by attending revivals, and vocational workshops (LP2YM, LP5W, LP6YM, LP8W, LP9W). It was by attending these activities that the youth were able to learn scripture, to pray, and to discern their vocations. Through their deep relationship with God, they could then reach out to others.

Spiritual discipline or spiritual mortification was valued by LP5W, who grew spiritually and built her relationship with God. LP5W saw her life on earth as a spiritual battle that needed fighting through prayer, fasting, and penance. Similarly, LP6YM became aware of his need for God's forgiveness and grew strong in his relationship with God. During his personal night prayer, he reconciled with God and asked for the grace to forgive others. These participants

were aware of their struggle to live a spiritual life and strengthened their life with individual prayer, self-mortification, or spiritual discipline, and reconciliation with God on their Christian journey.

It was from growing in their relationship with God that their relationship with their neighbours developed and they were able to reach out and help them (LP2YM, LP4M, LP5W). LP5W described her growth in her relationship with God that helped her to be kind to others in the following words:

I realised that I could dress nice and still feel empty. But now when I have given somebody something ... when I cared, when I ask, how are you? Are you alright, how can I help? I get power that I never thought I had before (LP5W on IQ 3.1.2).

Caring for the needs of others, either materially or spiritually, is the core of Christian spirituality. Love of God and love of one's neighbour are the two aspects of Christian spirituality that should be stressed in faith formation. Parishioners' views on spiritual formation introduced them to the ministry of caring for others, where their understanding of a call to serve originated from. They realised that they could not keep the Good News to themselves but had to share with family and friends. The spiritual formation empowered the laity for the twofold dimensions of the mission of the Church, evangelisation—sharing the good news and taking care of the needs of others, even though it was only on the level of welfare and charity.

In summary, parishioners grew spiritually, and their faith matured in their relationship with God through Sunday worship, sermons, retreats, personal prayer, revivals, workshops, and conferences. Maturing in their faith led them to become aware of their sinful nature, made them realise the need for reparations and repentance, and enabled them to reach out to others by being kind, forgiving them, and sharing the Word of God with them.

The spiritual formation parishioners received seemed not integrated as they were unable to connect their calling with their spiritual formation. They were unaware that being a Christian was a call from God to build a relationship with Him and that their services emanated from their spiritual relationship with Him. Knowing the views of parishioners on spiritual formation, and how they learned and developed their relationship with God and neighbour, the spiritual formation of parish priests is discussed. Parish priests had nine years of full-time formal formation by spiritual exercises and courses on spirituality. Their views follow below.

2.2.5.2 Views of parish priests on spiritual formation

In describing the spiritual formation of parish priests, the views of most of them are mentioned first, followed by participants' individual views. In reply to the question on being adequately formed in spiritual formation (IQ 3.1.2), two of the three participants gave a negative response (PP1, PP3). PP1 related that they had spiritual exercises, daily Holy Mass, and the sacrament of reconciliation but there was no spiritual life other than that. They were expected to live a moral life, but they did not have open discussions in groups where they could speak about spirituality and voice their doubts, fears, and problems they had in their spiritual life.

Similarly, PP3 did not find spiritual exercises helpful, and he was unsure what was meant by spiritual formation and/or spiritual life. Prayer and *Lectio Divina* were not helpful for him, and he found them difficult to practice. PP3 deemed spiritual exercises burdensome, and he regarded waking up early in the morning and going for prayers as punishment. As a priest, he wanted to take a break as he was tired of practicing "those things". Spiritual exercises are meant to help a person to learn from the Master and his life, how to live in constant relationship with the Trinity and discern, as Jesus did, the will of the Father. These spiritual exercises though, did not achieve their purpose for both PP1 and PP3.

For their entire nine years of spiritual formation PP1 and PP3 did not understand and did not grow through spiritual exercises. PP3 endured these exercises until ordination, and he was then as a priest tired of practicing them and wanted to take a break. Spiritual direction and reading spiritual books though, helped him to grow spiritually. PP1 had a negative experience, as related below.

Spiritual direction is mentoring in spiritual life to help candidates grow in their relationship with the Trinity, to help them have an ongoing discernment of the authenticity of their call to ministerial priesthood, and to mature in their faith in God. This spiritual mentoring was, however, not understood positively by all seminarians, as PP1 expresses what took place amongst seminarians regarding spiritual direction. Here is their perception:

...even with spiritual direction, because there is perception that spiritual directors report to the bishops and so we all had a fear of really being honest in that area. Because of this fear that you might be kicked out if this or that is known about you, ja so, I think in that area, speaking for myself, I think spiritual formation was lacking (PP1 on IQ 3.1.2) [Modified].

Lack of confidence and trust in spiritual directors and fear to be expelled from the seminary created a situation where candidates pretended, put on a front, and went through the seminary without gaining much from mentoring, discernment of their calling, nor growing spiritually.

PP2, however, had a positive attitude on spiritual formation. He stated that spiritual exercises and prayer at different times of the day empowered him on his spiritual journey. The courses on spirituality helped him to learn different models of prayer and spiritualities and regarded the lives of saints as models of prayer and spiritual life. PP2 was positive where others were negative or lacked understanding even though they studied together at the same time and at the same seminary.

None of participating parish priests mentioned voluntary personal prayer, meditation, and their personal relationship with the Triune God being intensified by the spiritual formation they received. Scripture, retreats, evangelical council, and virtues that are recommended as part of spiritual formation for priests (Congregation for the Clergy 2016; John Paul II 1992), were not mentioned by any of them as part of their spiritual formation, except for PP1 who mentioned that they were expected to live a moral life although there was no spiritual life beside that.

The views of the priests on spiritual formation revealed that it should not be taken for granted that being present for spiritual exercises shows understanding and contributes to spiritual growth and faith maturity. The question to ask is, how are seminarians assessed on spiritual understanding, growth, and faith maturity before they reach ordination and become spiritual leaders? This question will be dealt with in the following chapters.

2.2.5.3 Views of formators on spiritual formation

The documents of the Catholic Church and the 2018 General Prospectus of St John Vianney (St John Vianney Seminary 2018:225–227) stipulate what ought to be the content of spiritual formation. There are specific topics to be covered during formation and a certain behaviour pattern is expected from candidates. Skills and methods on spiritual life are stipulated to convey the content of the subject matter in real life situations of candidates at the seminary, but how candidates are to understand the content and how their spiritual growth was to be assessed are not specified. From the views of parish priests, spiritual formation objectives were not realised. The views of formators reveal how they themselves were formed spiritually to be role models of spiritual leadership able to form candidates spiritually.

The formators' responses could be divided into three categories. Firstly, some affirmed that they were adequately formed during their own seminary formation (PF1). PF2 mentioned recollection days, retreats, daily Eucharist, meditation, and spiritual direction as ways that were used to properly prepare him to live a spiritual life.

Secondly, some participants, rather than stating what they received as seminarians, mentioned courses they received in preparation for their ministry as formators, which they regarded as not focused on spirituality or spiritual formation of seminarians (PF1, PF4). PF4 mentioned that after it was suggested to him that he would be good at teaching and formation, he was sent to Rome for a short course in preparation for his ministry as lecturer-formator, but what he learnt there was not focused on spiritual formation for himself, nor for spiritual formation of seminarians. His views were that he was not well equipped; for his personal spiritual life he prayed what he read, and he read what he prayed, but had no specialised spirituality.

The third category revealed how spiritual life was viewed regarding formation of seminarians towards ministerial priesthood. For PF5 spiritual formation formed a central role in the life of seminarians and their entire life was to be spiritual. He stated that the soul of theology was scripture which applied *Lectio Divina*. PF5 did not explain his own formation but related what spiritual formation for seminary life was meant to be and what they were doing at the seminary to instil that. His own spiritual formation during his formation as a candidate happened mainly through worship and life of prayer, and as a priest his life was sustained by living a spiritual life. PF5 thought that candidates who did not show spiritual life were deemed not having a call to priesthood if they were not rooted in prayer and devotion which are signs of having a spiritual life. Priestly vocation was to be sustained by a spiritual life that unites a priest to Jesus the Good Shepherd. This understanding though, was not shared by all participating parish priests and other formators. PP3 though, still wished to have better understanding of what spiritual life meant. PF5 put his thoughts as follows:

If a man does not actually have a spirituality in mind, he cannot sustain the other things that he does in the priestly life. John Paul II used to argue that a priest who does not pray who has already neglected the breviary, and he is no longer celebrating Holy Mass daily, and has abandoned the Office of Readings, the spiritual reading, this man actually is, he called, a ticking bomb. It's a scandal waiting to happen, yeah (PF5 on IQ 3.1.2).

PF5 further mentioned that spiritual life unites a priest with Jesus as his disciple and emphasised that spiritual dimension integrates all other dimensions. PF5 regards a seminarian

who is not rooted in spiritual life, but only excellent in other dimensions, as someone he would not recommend for ordination, because he would be dysfunctional as a spiritual leader. On the other hand, PP1 stated that candidates pretend, and mask their experiences, and this probably makes it difficult for formators to assess and recommend candidates who are spiritually mature for ordination.

He also explained the new vision of Pope Francis I to transform ministerial priesthood to discipleship. PF5 expressed that, to achieve this vision, the seminary had challenged the bishops to “draw out a mechanism” that would help formators to change ministerial priesthood to become discipleship within the structures they had. He advocated for collaboration between religious congregations and the bishops to articulate what kind of priests they would want to have for their region (PF5). None of the other formators seemed to be aware of this vision of Pope Francis I and did not mention it.

The seminary had a spiritual father, but his impact on spiritual formation was not expressed by either parish priests or formators. Priesthood, as discipleship, was a new concept developing under the leadership of Pope Francis, and parish priest participants were not affected by it as they had already left the seminary when Pope Francis became the universal leader of the Roman Catholic Church.

PF1 and PF4 agreed with the views of PP1 and PP3 in that they had had spiritual exercises, but these had not made a deep impression on their spiritual life. PF2 though, was happy with his spiritual formation based on recollections, retreats, daily Eucharist, and daily meditation, but he had studied abroad and not at the St John Vianney Seminary. PF3L saw spiritual formation as a private matter which did not form part of his training for his specific profession as a lay professional.

In summary, of the three groups of participants, parishioners seemed to have incorporated spiritual qualities in their lives in a more authentic way although they did not have formal spiritual formation like priests and formators. In their views on spiritual formation parishioners mentioned all elements that are stipulated for spiritual life, for example, they persisted in prayer, had personal prayer, acts of contrition, asked God for the grace to forgive others, contemplated before the Blessed Sacrament, fasted, did acts of penance, and learned to reach out to others with love, to mention just a few. They gained their formation from different sources, and integrated what they learned in their lives. With the little they received, grace was

abundant for them to live their Christian life and they needed integrated formation to mature in their faith and get involved in society in an informed way.

On the other hand, parish priests and formators, with their long period of formation, and the opportunity for daily spiritual exercises, felt inadequately equipped and misunderstood spiritual exercises, while spiritual direction was misused by some. The environment at the seminary did not enhance the presence of God in all other activities except attending to stipulated times of prayer and worship. Formators lectured in spirituality, but living a spiritual life is another matter. The third pillar, intellectual formation, which is faith seeking understanding, follows.

2.2.5.4 Intellectual formation

The views of parishioners revealed how they were intellectually formed to understand their faith and their calling as parishioners. Intellectual formation is faith seeking understanding, which is important in the life of Christians for them not to have blind faith without knowledge or understanding, and the ability to articulate it, live it, and to act on it.

2.2.5.5 Views of parishioners on intellectual formation

A person who is humanly and spiritually formed needs to understand all that Jesus has commanded through intellectual dimension of formation to be able to integrate the two and become fully human. LP2YM stated that knowledge of the Word of God and the Christian faith empower Christians to be bold to proclaim the gospel in word and deed.

The views of parishioners in response to intellectual formation (IQ 3.1.3) were communicated under two categories, namely topics that inspire choices in life, and knowledge gained through instructions.

On-going formation beyond catechises for the reception of the sacraments empowered participants to understand some concepts of the Christian faith. Topics raised during the sermon, the Renew Africa programme, Education for Life, youth camps, conferences, and workshops were mentioned as sources of intellectual formation. Topics that the parish priests raised during sermons for example, motivated LP2YM to think and reason about life and to make informed choices.

Intellectual formation associated with knowledge gained through catechises was explained as depending mainly on the knowledge and faith of the catechist to provide a dynamic teaching and faith formation (LP6Y). The RENEW Africa programme, which empowered LP5W, is a “dynamic, engaging process for spiritual renewal of parishes, built on faith experiences of Africans in their daily lives centred on faith sharing within Small Christian Communities” (<https://pages.renewintl.org>). Education for Life, on the other hand, which empowered LP9W, is a system that prepares young people for challenges of life and to achieve maturity and balance in life (<https://edforlife.org>). These programmes are not used in all dioceses and parishes in the SACBC region, and many lay people do not have the opportunity to get involved in them. These programmes informed and formed participants (LP5W, LP9W) to make positive choices for their lives, but LP9W was saddened by the fact that the Education for Life programme was no longer encouraged on the diocesan level even though it had helped her and benefitted youth faith and moral development in her area.

LP6YM explained that attending catechism classes and vocational workshops frequently helped youth to develop their faith and get to know more about the Church. Continual learning affords one an opportunity to gain knowledge, understanding of the Church, and growth in faith. Workshops, conferences, and Small Christian Communities afford people the opportunity to share scripture, discuss social events in light of scripture, and provide clarification for one to make informed choices in life to and become integrated people in human and spiritual life.

LP8W gained intellectual formation from attending St Anne Sodality, a Roman Catholic association for married women, which offers them an opportunity to attend retreats, workshops, and conferences to discuss topics and themes based on faith formation. It was through the attendance of these programmes that parishioners felt empowered and did not doubt themselves as Roman Catholics (LP4M). Those who are not members of these sodalities do not have ongoing formation but rely on the Sunday sermon and Small Christian Community meetings, of which some concentrate on fundraising.

The social teachings of the Church and other documents that focus on the empowerment of the lay faithful intellectually about their faith, the Church, and involvement in the mission of God and the mission of the Church were not mentioned by all parishioners. In the three parishes workshops for ongoing formation for all members of the parish were non-existent. Those who

gained knowledge from attending workshops and conferences were those who were already involved in some ministries or sodalities within the parish to empower them with knowledge for their services and ministries.

2.2.5.6 Views of parish priests on intellectual formation

Intellectual formation of the clergy is, however, organised and its content stipulated. The views of parish priests revealed that they had received much intellectual formation and gained academic knowledge. PP2 and PP3 felt intellectually empowered, while PP1 indicated a gap between knowledge and practice.

In their reflections, the priests mentioned that they had received degrees in philosophy and theology and were satisfied, because it helped them gain knowledge and they could understand and respond to many aspects about their faith and the teachings of the Church (PP2, PP3).

They did not elaborate on the content of the subjects but said that they wrote scientific papers and research methodology and proudly explained the hard work they went through to obtain their degrees (PP2). They had to defend their theses, in itself demanding. Even though they all agreed that they had received much academic knowledge, they were not all satisfied with just acquiring knowledge that was not practical for their pastoral ministry. PP1 explained his struggle as follows:

Intellectual formation was fine. We had a lot of academic input but again intellectual stays intellectual but how do you translate that into practice when you are dealing with people who had abortions, and divorce issues and all that? The courses we did again, were very short, and were not really in depth where we really had human situation that we deal with (PP1 on IQ 3.1.3) [Modified].

Having received much intellectual knowledge did not mean empowerment to PP1 as he was struggling to translate that knowledge into real life situations. These sentiments mirrored those of PP3 who mentioned that priests spend a lot of time at the presbytery because they did not know what to do and how to translate knowledge into practical situations. PP1 expressed the disappointment he felt during lectures and wondered how he would explain, for example, the mystery of the Trinity to the laity and how it fitted into their lives for them to understand and assimilate it.

The general views of all parish priests were that they felt adequately empowered intellectually but that formation was mostly Eurocentric, and more theoretical than practical. This dilemma explains why no workshops, on-going formation, and conferences for all parishioners are

organised to empower them for their mission in society. The empowerment of formators in intellectual formation thus follows to highlight the views of parish priests.

2.2.5.7 Views of formators on intellectual formation

Intellectual formation has structures for formal delivery of content: manuals, assessment structures, and set credits to achieve, unlike human and spiritual formations that lack these structures. Formators had already mentioned that they were academics, but not specifically prepared for formation of priest candidates in other pillars.

The formators' views revealed that academically they were well equipped, holding degrees in both philosophy and theology. The personnel of St John Vianney Seminary consist of lecturer-formators, both resident and non-resident. Intellectual formation aims to inform the mind and equip formators for the proclamation of the gospel message in a credible and understandable way (Congregation for the Clergy 2016:#116). All formators, being instruments in fulfilling this mandate, deserved intellectual formation that equipped them and in turn, empowered candidates to do the same in their parish ministry in society.

The views of formators reveal the three categories of intellectual formation they received. Firstly, training during their own formation; secondly, when some (PF1, PF4, PF5) were sent for a short course in Rome; and thirdly, the seminary intellectual formation they taught. The views of those who received their intellectual formation during their own seminary formation and who were not particularly prepared for seminary intellectual formation, are discussed first.

Some participants amongst formators were resident formators and were the products of the seminary (PF4, PF5). They had received their intellectual formation at the seminary during their own formation. This formation prepared them to do parish ministry in their dioceses, but they were later asked to return to the seminary to teach (PF4). They thus used the degrees they had obtained from the institution to instruct future priests. PF4 explained that they used their own experience more than special preparation for their ministry as formators.

PF1 and PF2 had studied in different countries and furthered their studies after ordination. However, PF1 did not regard his studies as focused on preparing him to teach and form future priests but to return to his diocese and empower the laity. Just because he had studied, he was recruited to teach at the seminary. He was able to use the knowledge he acquired through his studies for formation for priests and inspire candidates and make them aware of the

expectations the laity would have from them as parish priests. PF1 found another source of empowerment in his passion for reading books and passed that passion on to young people. The theology and philosophy they taught were that which they themselves were taught as seminarians (PF1, PF4).

The second point was that, for their mission as formators, they were sent for short courses in Rome (PF1, PF4 and PF5) to obtain additional knowledge to what they had learned in their own formation. PF2, on the other hand, did an extensive course in Rome that empowered him to gain skills and techniques to deal with young people. PF4 explained that intellectual formation was their main area of competency, and they were all qualified as lecturers in either moral or systematic theology.

Thirdly, formators indicated what comprised intellectual formation at the seminary. While PF1 and PF4 felt confident in their ministry as academic lecturers, PF3L and PF5 deliberated on the intellectual formation offered at the seminary. PF3L saw a gap in the academic knowledge seminarians received and stated that they were exposed to much material, but they were unable to integrate the acquired knowledge, experience it in their bodies, talk about it, and interact on that level. These views of PF3L confirmed what parish priests explained above. Personally, PF3L was confident about his profession and felt adequately formed to deal with the seminarians of different races, cultures, and nationalities.

PF5 mentioned the vision of intellectual formation as stipulated in the documents of the Roman Catholic Church and the General Prospectus of St John Vianney Seminary (2018:228). He presented intellectual formation as mostly developed nationally and globally in the Roman Catholic circles. The Congregation for Catholic Education and Evangelization of People emphasises this. As lecturers, they also had to comply with the demands of the South African Department of Higher Education that regulates intellectual formation at the seminary as a registered entity (PF5). Formators had to find a balance between the demands of the RCC to form Church leadership for ministry and to fulfil the demands of the South African Department of Higher Education.

To strike a balance between the demands of the Church and the state, both students and formators had to work hard on acquiring theoretical knowledge, but seemingly the practical part of education did not bear fruits. It will be discussed under pastoral formation. LP7 mentioned that priests did not seem to have understood their formation and training, and his

observation was proved to be true by PP1, PP2, PP3, PF1, and PF3L. PF3L explained that candidates lacked practical experience of what they had learned, and this needs consideration for them to assimilate and experience the knowledge they have acquired as part of who they are as human beings and as spiritual leaders.

PF5 explained that Pope Francis was not of the idea that intellectual formation be given such high esteem and advised that it ought not to be emphasised over other dimensions. Nonetheless, PF5 stated that the seminary was fully-fledged with the office of the dean who regulated all the processes of intellectual formation and the head of the department who ensured that priest candidates were equipped intellectually, enabling them to interact, deal with people, and converse with the parishioners they were to minister to. From the views of parishioners, parish priests, and some formators this was not achieved.

Not all dimensions of formation had similar structures as that of intellectual formation (PF5). The challenge would be to align it to what PF3L proposed to help candidates experience it, feel it in their bodies, talk about it, and to interact on that level of intellect by grounding it through the development of other three dimensions. How this might be done is discussed in Chapter 5.

In summary, the views of parishioners revealed poor intellectual formation as they mostly depended on individual advice and information from sermons. Only few attended workshops and conferences as a form of on-going formation. Parish priests indicated that they had received academic formation but were unskilled in inculturating and translating it effectively in their parish ministry. Formators, however, were prepared as lecturers, but they realised the lack of assimilation of knowledge in the lives of candidates.

The last dimension to be presented is pastoral formation, which is supposed to integrate and an expression of the other three dimensions.

2.2.6 Pastoral formation

The three dimensions presented above aimed at empowering members of the Roman Catholic Church on their own levels in the structure of the Church in order to prepare them to participate in the mission of God. The above descriptions indicate the strengths and weaknesses of human, spiritual, and intellectual formation of the participants. The aim of pastoral formation though, is to help a fully mature human person to be empowered by spiritual gifts made understandable through intellectual formation, and integrated and expressed through pastoral ministry. Pastoral

formation should make acquired knowledge practical in a certain context, offer methods and skills to appropriate knowledge for application, and skills for implementation. The views of participants explain why the pastoral formation they received did not enable them to be effectively involved in the mission of the Church.

2.2.6.1 Views of parishioners on pastoral formation

Pastoral formation (IQ 3.1.4) offered should equip parishioners for their internal ministry. Most parishioners gave an affirmative answer (LP6YM, LP7M, LP8W, LP9W) in this regard. Their views are presented under two categories of empowerment or involvement, namely in internal ministry and in external mission. Internal ministries here mean all ministries that benefit only the members of the parish and the Roman Catholic Church, while external mission means all ministries that aim to evangelise and reach out to people in society. The first discussion presents the views of parishioners who were empowered for their ministry to serve within the Church.

Parishioners LP6YM, LP7M, LP8W, and LP9W understood the question as asking them how they are involved in the ministries within their parish, and they stated their views on pastoral formation to answer that. LP7M was trained to be an acolyte and to conduct services in the absence of a priest, and to lead funeral services. LP6YM stated that he knew what to do as a representative of the youth in the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC).

LP6YM attended meetings and presented the needs of youth and reported back to the youth whatever decisions were taken. LP8W related that the parish priest encouraged them to form SCC, to read and share Bible verses, to visit lapsed members and share with them aspects to boost their faith. These parishioners were able confidently to carry out their ministry within the parish because they knew their responsibility and had received a form of training to carry out their ministry in their respective involvement in the parish.

LP9W used to attend workshops where she was trained on how to teach Education for Life in schools (external ministry). She did that as a member of the Church and found her contribution effective in building the moral fibre of youth. Unfortunately, the programme was terminated and there was no opportunity in the parish for her to continue with that mission. Besides these parishioners, others were given positions, leadership, and ministries within the parish without training and had to learn as they went along.

LP4M was thrown into the deep end when he was elected as chairperson of the Parish Pastoral Council with no prior training for leadership and no briefing for its demands on himself and for the parishioners. He related his experience as follows:

...when I ... entered this position, I found myself wondering, how am I going to do this because I have never been a leader before, but with the first meeting, when we sat down, then I found for myself that this can be done. We turn to think that maybe Father won't like this, he won't approve of this, but when I put things on the table, it was okay, he supported and gave advice... I found that no, this is not a difficult thing to do if you just think that you are not going to be alone. That you are going to be with other people, you are going to share. Whatever you are going to discuss it is a sharing of ideas and then it makes you grow. Every day you grow, and then you realise, there is no problem so you can lead (LP4 on IQ 3.1.4) [Modified].

LP4M learned by doing, grew from this experience and realised that he was able to lead but this experience is not necessarily the case for everyone. Other parishioners were involved in youth ministry, as a support body, as chairpersons, and as organisers (LP1W; LP6YM, and LP9W respectively). LP9W mentioned that beside her training of youth in Education for Life, she learned from the youth chaplain to love young children and regarded him as her mentor. She organised retreats for the youth for them to gain knowledge about their Catholic faith.

LP1W and LP2YM were involved in youth ministry but did not mention any training and formation regarding their ministry. LP1W volunteered to start ecumenical youth days when she realised that the Roman Catholic youth were lost when they were with youth of other denominations. She wanted to connect them and build a platform where they, as youth, could share their faith, play games, and have a meal together. She was supported on this by the parish priest. She had received her training at boarding school where she learned to accept people of other denominations as brothers and sisters.

It can be concluded from these deliberations that some parishioners were formed with a ministry already planned for them (LP6Y, LP7, LP8, and LP9), while other parishioners were chosen to perform leadership ministry within the parish with no preparation at all. Others volunteered or felt drawn to lend a helping hand where necessary, without any training.

Although the four pillars of formation did not form part of catechetical formation, the laity grew in different ways in achieving holistic formation. Some of parishioners were put into positions without any preparation at all and were expected to lead the Parish Pastoral Council—a ministry that needs to co-ordinate all processes of faith formation in the parish. Formation of parishioners therefore did not include pastoral formation that was to integrate the other three

dimensions to skill them and offer them methods to evangelise and serve in society. The parish priests, however, had formal preparation on pastoral formation and their views are presented next.

2.2.6.2 Views of parish priests on pastoral formation

The views of parish priests on pastoral formation contained both positive and negative responses. The affirmative views are discussed first, followed by those that were negative.

The affirmative views reflected empowerment for internal ministry dealing with the celebrations of sacraments (PP1, PP3), performance of rituals (PP3), and the pastoral internship (PP2, PP3). The three parish priests related that they were confident in celebrating the sacraments and performance of rituals even though the practice for the celebration of the Eucharist was done in a short time. Although it was something they were to do every day, it was not given much time for practice to build their confidence in celebrating it.

PP2 related how the seminary empowered them through pastoral formation and explained how the programme for pastoral formation was organised. They were placed in parishes around the seminary to learn and practise parish ministry, to teach catechises, and work with youth at the university level. During holidays they were placed in parishes in their own dioceses, and did a six-month internship in these dioceses. For the six-month internship they signed a contract with the parish priest where they were placed as a supervisor, as well as with the lay team who were to meet with them fortnightly. Some personnel from the seminary visited them to hear how they were performing (PP2, PP3). When probed whether they acquired new skills and techniques for pastoral ministry which they were to implement, this is what PP2 said:

That's were somehow it is lacking because it depended on the priest you are with. Some priests are able to and can direct you on how to do the pastoral work. It depended on the priest, and the environment, and the parish where you are. Some parishes they can really be fertile for pastoral work while other parishes you know they are not. There are some priests who can be able to engage you in their parish to do pastoral work while some other priests are not so open. It depends really on the kind of environment you are and the kind of priest you have (PP2 on IQ 3.1.4) [Modified].

No new skills and methods were introduced in any of these activities which meant they were to perpetuate the old style of pastoral work of teaching catechesis for the reception of sacraments. This means there had been no change, and no new developments in ministry in the twenty-first century. PP1 and PP3 though, did not find these activities helpful to them. PP1 emphasised that pastoral formation was for the celebration of sacraments, as that was the only

thing he could do well. He was unable to handle issues of abortion, suicide, marriage problems, ministry of one-on-one, and problems arising during confessions. He was struggling to handle family problems, to explain the Trinity and make it applicable and relate to the lives of people. PP3 shared the same sentiments that, besides the celebration of sacraments and ritual performances he was unsure what to do in pastoral ministry. PP3 explained what goes on in pastoral ministry is due to inadequate pastoral formation. Words of participants are cited to emphasise the point they are making as follows.

So, it becomes a challenge when you are in the parish when you find out that some or many priests think that they are put in the parish to celebrate Holy Mass and to perform rituals and that we have become sacrament dispensers and performers of rituals. But when it comes to do the pastoral work, we are not sure what to do really. Then you find us sometimes we spend more time in the parish, in the house instead of going out to meet people because we only go out to celebrate the Mass for the elderly and when you go to anoint them ... although I believe we have to bring the presence of God to the people. So, we do not have any other ways of bringing that presence of God to the people. We only want to perform rituals like going for funerals, celebrating Mass, those things that have to do with sacraments and with rituals (PP3 on IQ 3.1.4) [Modified].

According to PP3, parish priests spent most of their time at the presbytery, because they do not know how to “bring the presence of God to the people”, in other words, that they were not skilled for internal and external evangelisation. PP1, in turn, was unable to handle the multicultural democratic South African parish, because he felt he was unprepared for it. Unlike LP4 who led the Parish Pastoral Council without leadership skills and grew from the experience, parish priests were struggling after all their studies of nine years to be creative and to grow from the challenges of pastoral ministry. These challenges are further discussed in Chapter 3.

PP2 related that, theoretically, they were taught how to do pastoral work, but they were not equipped with skills, methods, and techniques to deal with the context in society. This challenge was shared by the three parish priests. The question is: What is going on that formators are unable to detect these struggles and help candidates integrate knowledge with their context? What do bishops do when they realise what is going on in parishes within their dioceses and that the parishes are not active, vibrant, and implementing their Pastoral Plan? Why are the laity quiet about the services they receive from their parish priests when ministerial priesthood is meant for their service as the laity?

Bearing the views of parish priests in mind, the views of formators on their own pastoral formation as formators to skill candidates for their parish ministry and evangelisation of society

are discussed next. The views of formators might highlight the cause of the problem and why parish priests struggle in their pastoral ministries.

2.2.6.3 Views of formators on pastoral formation

In this section the views of formators are presented to try and determine what is really taking place at the seminary regarding pastoral formation which needs to integrate the three dimensions to skill priests for their mission in the Church as leaders, motivators, and missionary disciples. How were the formators prepared to teach pastoral formation in light of the Second Vatican Council that encouraged the involvement of the laity as People of God in the mission of the Church? Formators had already stated that the short courses they received had not prepared them for their ministry as formators but that they were only qualified as lecturers. However, their views on pastoral formation might enlighten the problems parish priests encountered at parish level.

How do they achieve the expectations of the Church to form missionary discipleship in the context of democratic multicultural society? What criteria do they use to recommend a candidate that he is prepared for ordination and parish ministry in their South African context? How does pastoral formation integrate human, spiritual, and intellectual formation for effective pastoral ministry? The views of formators are presented to highlight the answers for these questions and are divided into two categories, namely personal pastoral formation in preparation for being a formator, and secondly, seminary pastoral formation offered to candidates to equip them for their ministry.

The first category comprises participants who received pastoral formation during their own formation as candidates in the institution and who were not empowered for their pastoral ministry themselves (PF1, PF2, PF4). To form future priests these formators were empowered by their personal experiences of many years in pastoral ministry (PF1, PF4). PF2 and PF4 stated that their pastoral formation was inadequate and that they had to work hard on their own to gain the experience which they use to form future priests. As students they had attended short courses in homiletics, basic counselling, and a few pastoral courses, enough to introduce them to pastoral ministry to build on after their ordination (PF4).

Given the opportunity to supervise an intern during internship and acting as a vocational director afforded PF1 the opportunity to become a role model to seminarians who are under his

care and to establish his leadership. Although he was not prepared to be a priest formator, his personal interest in pastoral ministry acted as a springboard for him in pastoral experience and pastoral formation of candidates at the seminary. PF1 had both the experience of handling young people at parish level, as well as learning through experience how to do pastoral ministry. PF2, when commenting on his own formation, related these views:

Pastorally I would say that I was not really prepared with the theology that I received because what I have discovered with the Catholic Church is that theology focuses more on dogmatic theology, the sacraments, leaving very little space for practical application in real life situations (PF2 on IQ 1.3.4) [Modified].

The views of PF2, though he was trained and formed abroad, and lived in different countries, were similar to those of parish priests trained and formed at St John Vianney Seminary. The theology they were taught focused more on the sacraments, leaving little time for practical implementation and this is what they passed on to candidates because they used their experience for pastoral formation and thus parish priests struggled in the same way as they did. This situation made it difficult for pastoral ministry. Time allotted and courses offered for preparation and discussions on pastoral issues were found to be insufficient (PF2, PF4) and ensued in ineffective in ministry. Elaborating on this issue, PF2 explained what was happening at St John Vianney Seminary as follows:

...the theology that has been taught in the seminary now, it is basically more on filling the mind of young people on what the Church believes ... What the priest ought to be, to do, but very, very, little on practicals. In third year theology, that is when they are taught practical things like homiletics. The homily which you are going to live for the rest of your life, is being prepared just in one semester of two semesters. It is more about the mind of the Church, the mind of the Church, sacraments, dogmas, and what not, Church history, but very little, very little practicals. I had to work hard on that one on my own, but it is workable (PF2 on IQ 3.1.4) [Modified].

Formators themselves realised that pastoral formation was wanting and mostly theoretical. The parish priests (PP1, PP3) and formators (PF2, LF3L, PF4) agreed on these issues, explaining why priests spent most of their time at the presbytery. The following discussion presents PF5's views on pastoral formation offered at the seminary, which differed from those of other formators and the experiences of parish priests.

In the second category PF5 presents the documents of the Church, the vision of Pope Francis I on pastoral formation, and what the General Prospectus states as sufficient to prepare seminarians for pastoral ministries and the mission of the Church. In his response, he gave his views on pastoral directives used as a means of pastoral formation at the seminary. He stated

that the seminary did not only teach theory, but students were sent out to parishes close to the seminary to gain practical experience in pastoral ministry.

PF5 took it for granted that sending seminarians out to parishes made an impact on them and offered them experience and awareness of social problems, which he thought gave them sufficient experience for practical pastoral formation. Candidates had not been assisted in solving social problems by going out to parishes, otherwise parish priests would not have complained that they did not know how to solve such issues. PF5 mentioned issues of injustice, poverty alleviation, job creation, empowerment and sustenance of the youth, and youth programmes which he thought were helpful to empower seminarians for their future parish ministry. There seemed to be no supervision nor evaluation of what is happening when candidates go out to parishes, otherwise PF5 would have known that candidates did not learn nor gained experiences that helped them solve laity problems. There are no new methods, techniques, and skills taught at the seminary to bring about deep change in parish ministry, but future priests are to perpetuate what the expatriate missionaries left behind, that is, the celebration of sacraments and ritual performance even though one cannot generalise that all expatriate missionaries only celebrated sacraments and performed rituals. His views were based on the intention of the programme, not the experiences of parish priests in real life situations of parish ministry and the views of some participating formators.

The second point he mentioned was that the seminary was in constant dialogue with diocesan vocational directors and pastoral supervisors to keep the seminary informed of realities in dioceses and society to update and improve pastoral formation. However, what transpired from the views of parish priests was that they were struggling to reach out to their people. The constant dialogue with vocational directors and pastoral supervisors did not filter down to the revision of pastoral formation to form and empower the leadership that will bring about deep change in pastoral ministry. PF5 saw the pastoral training and formation of St John Vianney Seminary as inserted in the context of mission and not a maintenance church that was presented by parish priests and some formators. He deemed the model of the Church, upheld by the seminary, as that of an outgoing Church which did not really exist.

He viewed the Church as caring, more in the world, and not obsessed with self-preservation. He pointed out that Pope Francis I proposed the vision of priesthood as discipleship and that

skills and techniques were offered to realise this vision. The next paragraph presents how the vision of priesthood as discipleship was envisaged.

For PF5, discipleship meant a way of life. A disciple is one who follows and learns from the master. *Lectio Divina* was used as a method to help students learn from the Master through praying the scripture how to become disciples. This process was meant to help students to reflect on the person of Christ and how He interacted with his disciples and for them to go out and do the same. The use of the pastoral circle, namely the See, Judge, and Act Method, is meant to help future priests to apply it in their pastoral ministry. “Seeing” implies looking at the situation and finding facts, “Judging” implies reflecting on those facts on the situation honestly, and “Acting” implies to apply praxis, by choosing which actions to take to address problems presented by the situation or context (PF5).

PF5’s reflections painted a hopeful process of pastoral formation, but surprisingly these sentiments were not shared by neither formators nor parish priests. The question thus arises: Where does the problem lie? Why did other participating formators not share the same vision and views? Is there unity in the understanding formation for future priests by all formators sharing the same vision? The views of all participants (parishioners, parish priests, and formators) gave the understanding that their pastoral formation was inadequate and the views of PF5 might be in the process of implementation and not yet actualised.

The views of participants on all four pillars of formation displayed a disparity between the objectives of the four pillars of formation and the actual teaching and learning outcome. What each pillar of formation intended, the actual teaching and learning, and what participants were experiencing in real-life situations did not correlate—especially for priests and formators who had a formal teaching process to achieve the objectives. Even though intellectual formation was assessed to be of high standard, parish priests were unable to translate the content into practical ministry. The participants’ views on the overall formation of the four pillars are discussed in the next section.

2.2.7 Impact of the four pillars on participants

The discussion above presented the views of participants on individual dimensions of formation, that is, human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral. This assessment concludes the description of the views of parishioners, parish priests, and formators on the formation they

received to understand their calling, build their relationship with God who called them, and fulfil their mandate in participating in the mission of God and the mission of the Church. In the following paragraphs the views of participants on the overall formation by the four pillars are presented.

2.2.7.1 Views of parishioners on integrated formation

Parishioners, when asked how the four pillars of formation they received empowered them to participate efficiently and effectively in the Church environment and society (IQ 3.2), all gave positive responses. The views of parishioners in this presentation are according to their parishes to determine how formation in a certain parish was conducted to empower the laity.

The first parish visited was the multicultural parish in a small town consisting of blacks, coloureds, and whites. Parishioners from this parish stated that the formation they received from their priest helped them to go out into society to serve and to organise ecumenical youth day (LP1W), and to share the Word of God with friends and to convince them to stop their immoral behaviour (LP2YM), while LP3W was able to look after the destitute and provide for their material needs. Most parishioners in this parish received their formation mainly from the Sunday sermons of their parish priest. Those involved in ministries, as well as interested youth, attended retreats, youth camps, and vocational workshops. Sunday sermons challenged participating parishioners to see the needs of people around them, making them feel compelled to do something to address their situation. Their views presented only external involvement, no mention of any involvement in the Church environment as they did previously was made.

Parishioners of the second parish, which was in a semi-industrial area, came from different outstations. Each of participants gave his or her views, which differed. LP5W explained that the three formations were still lacking (human, intellectual, and pastoral), but spiritually she felt blessed because she could work with young children and love them. LP4M felt that charity begins at home. He voluntarily went out to visit members of the parish, talked to them about God, and encouraged the youth to stop using drugs. LP6YM, in turn, helped in the Church as an altar server and participated with other youth in helping during funerals in society. The parish priest served the 16 outstations where these parishioners came from, and these parishioners felt empowered in different ways to serve in the external mission of the parish.

The last parish visited is in a rural area and parishioners interviewed responded positively about how the four pillars empowered them. LP7M related that he was empowered to conduct church services in the absence of a priest: he could preach and conduct funerals. LP8W proudly related that she was respected because when she got married, she refused to attend her husband's church and remained a Roman Catholic. She acted as a reconciler and took part in solving problems within the parish. LP9W is empowered as a youth coordinator of the diocese and visited parishes to motivate the youth to be better people at home and in society.

In summary, all the laity felt empowered by the four pillars to participate in the Church environment and society efficiently and effectively. Whatever they received they used as a source of empowerment for their internal and external mission. The views of parish priests on the overall empowerment by the four pillars follow.

2.2.7.2 Views of parish priests on integrated formation

The interview question put to parish priests on the four pillars of formation differed from that of parishioners as leaders of parishes and formators of the laity. The question was presented differently to each priest depending on his views on each individual pillar. Their views, therefore, are presented individually.

PP1 was adamant that the formation he received was inadequate, but that his experience as a teacher before joining the seminary had skilled him to reach out to his parishioners on their own level. He was able to break down difficult concepts and to translate them to the level of the laity. He combined his experience as a teacher with the knowledge he received and used that in his ministry.

PP2 in turn, commented on spiritual formation stating that it helps a priest to pray and centre the people around God. He sees priesthood as about God being the centre that connects people together and that one cannot be a priest without praying for one's people. He commented that people leave the Church and go to other churches to ask for prayers because they do not get that from their priests. The formation he received helped him to interpret scripture correctly and to preach the mind of the Church, and the mind of Jesus.

PP3 explained how he used human formation by using his own experience to form the laity. What he gained in spiritual formation he used for spiritual formation of the laity in retreats. What he had learnt during his studies and could not translate into pastoral ministry, he passed

on to the laity by encouraging them to read the documents of Vatican Council II and Canon Law to understand their faith. He also encouraged them to have spiritual directors of their own and not to depend on him for spiritual growth and faith maturity. He encouraged his parishioners to use all the things that empowered him as a person while he had been at the seminary. He rated the overall priestly formation as 60%. He stated that there is still much that could be done at the seminary, for example, on spiritual and pastoral formation that can deepen understanding of the culture of the people, in order to help priests to serve people better.

Regarding the integrated formation they received, most of the parish priests found that their formation inadequate for them to form the laity and empower them for their mission in society.

2.2.7.3 Views of formators on integral formation

Each formator responded differently, depending on their own understanding of their duties and responsibilities. The general response was that they were empowered to train and to form candidates intellectually. Their views are presented in the following paragraphs.

Formators deliberated on how they used the different pillars of formation to empower candidates by sharing their own experiences of formation to priesthood and their own experiences of life. PF2 responded that he shared with students that for them to be happy, they needed to be adequately prepared, to be unafraid, to be open, to be themselves, and to serve the Church, and allow God to work in their lives because they could not rely on their own strength but should rely on the help of God. Formation does help to a certain extent, but God is the one who gives strength.

PF4 related that since he felt called to be a formator, he liked what he was doing. Academically there was no problem, but spiritual life was giving as well as receiving from other formators. Pastorally they were not doing much since their concern was academics, although they supervise the interns. The human formation curriculum was in the process of improvement, and he hoped that it would benefit both formators and students. He saw the ministry of presence as more effective and covering a great ground. He explained that bishops select amongst priests someone with certain human maturity to be a formator, hoping that he can pass that on to seminarians.

In conclusion, the formation participants received was inadequate for them to understand their calling, to build their relationship with God who called them, and to know and take part in his

mission. Although parishioners responded positively to their formation, they stated that more could still be done for their ministry and mission in the Church. Parish priests were struggling to form the laity and advocated for improvement in priestly formation. Formators, on the other hand, did what was expected of them using mainly their personal experience rather than the formation they received in preparation for their ministry as formators of future priests. They realised that there were gaps that could be filled in by the ministry of presence and personal maturity. These views of participants led to the third section of this chapter, namely the role of the Church in society and the participants' involvement in it as members.

2.3 The role of the Church in society

The role of the Church in society depends firstly on the participation of all the baptised as missionary disciples for the Church to fulfil her mission and make an impact in society. The presentation above gives the views of participants on their integrative formation based on the four pillars (human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral), and as members of the Roman Catholic Church and how this formation empowered them to fulfil their mandate within the Church environment and in society according to their calling. When a person knows his or her calling, and is formed to understand it, and enlightened and integrated by the four pillars of formation, then he or she ought to have a better understanding of who God and his mission is in the world. Secondly, if this does not happen, then the Church would have no role in society of fulfilling her mandate which she received from God. The Church has no mandate other than to continue the mandate of the Triune God without which she cannot exist. For people to respond appropriately to their calling and participate in God's mission as missionary disciples, an understanding of who God and his mission are, is necessary. It is the duty and responsibility of the Church to "make" those called missionary disciples and they in turn, to "go" and "make" disciples in fulfilment of the great commission (Mt 28:18–20).

Firstly, the role of the Church in society therefore depends on parishioners being involved on every level of society as disciples of the Good News, empowered by the formation they have received from the priests. Secondly, the call to ministerial priesthood is understood in the Roman Catholic Church as a call for service of the common priesthood of the laity and for the leadership of the Christian community. Therefore, priestly formation should empower priests with methods and skills that will enable them to perform their mission and ministry effectively.

Thirdly, formators are at the centre of the mission of the Church. Called from amongst their brother priests to form others for ministerial priesthood as missionary discipleship (PF5), they take the role of Jesus forming his twelve disciples as leaders of the Church and should hold at heart the mission of the Church. It is the responsibility of formators to be aware of the context of society, the cultures, the struggles, and the hopes of the people, and to prepare missionary discipleship ready to carry out the mission of the Church in society. Formators, having a clear understanding of the concept of God and his mission, should enable these disciples to focus their mission appropriately, and to cooperate with the grace of God to live out their calling and fulfil their mandate in the Church and society.

The following paragraphs present the parishioners' views on their understanding of God and his mission.

2.3.1 Views of parishioners on God and His mission

The first question put to participating parishioners comprised their understanding of their calling as parishioners, with the expectation that they would define their calling and who called them. Three of the parishioners mentioned that, in order for one to become a parishioner, one needs to accept the Word of God (LP4), to be baptised and to become a Christian in order to belong to a parish (LP7), and to serve for the glory of God (LP5). These views were referred to God not inexplicitly, while the other parishioners only mentioned that they were called to serve without mentioning who called them to serve. The question asked here was to ascertain the views parishioners as members of the Church had of God and his mission, and to identify their caller and know the mission he called in order to fulfil it on his behalf. To ascertain their concept of God, they were asked the following question: What is your conceptual understanding of God and his mission? (Question 4). The parishioners' responses are presented in the following paragraphs.

The views of parishioners on their conceptual understanding of God and his mission revealed two concepts of who God was for them: the "Being of God" and the "actions of God". The views of participants who mentioned the "Being of God" are discussed first, followed by a discussion of those who mentioned the "actions of God". Their views on the understanding of the mission of God based on the concepts they had of who God was for them are discussed last.

The majority of parishioners understood God in his “Being” in terms of who God is through what is seen and heard. Parishioners understood God as the Creator (LP5W, LP6YM, LP7M, LP8W) of heaven and earth (LP6YM, LP7M), and that he created humankind in his own image (LP8W, LP9W). These expressions might have been learned through catechesis, sermons, or Bible reading and which for them revealed only one Person of the Trinity, that is, God the Father.

LP7YM understood God as a Huge Being and as a Superhuman Being. These views expressed and defined the greatness of God, God as Omnipotent and in Sesotho, *Boleng ba Morena Modimo*, meaning his essence, his fundamental nature. Perceiving God as a “Huge Being and Superhuman Being” expressed the understanding that God was indescribable or inexpressible—all powerful. The views people have of God can express the way they relate to Him, defining the closeness or distance in their relationship with Him.

The second view parishioners gave of God expressed and defined the actions of God or their relationship with Him. Parishioners articulated concepts they had about God stating actions or experiences they had in relation to Him. LP3W expressed her views this way:

My understanding of God is so that, I even can't explain it because I feel so near Him. When I go to Church there is a Blessed Sacrament, I go and talk my things and lay out everything (LP3 on IQ 4).

LP3 felt close to God and was aware that she could not explain in words who God is, but expressed how she felt, her relationship with Him, and His nearness to her. God cannot be explained, which is the revelation LP3W had in her simple way. God is beyond utterance, but His presence can be felt, depending on the relationship one has with Him.

Other parishioners also viewed God as expressed by his actions. LP2YM and LP7M saw God as a Helper. LP5W sees God as the Father who loves us and had sent His Son to die for us. LP6YM presented God as the One who loves and forgives sins, while LP4M stated that God reaches out to us. These concepts expressed the relationships participants had with God. LP8W saw God as trustworthy and someone who is very close. LP1W presented God as someone we must look up to and trust, because of many blessings she experienced from God. LP5W expressed her concept of God through these words:

Our Father is a loving Father, and He wants the best for us ... in our Christianity, the love of God is really defined by Him giving his Son to die for us. Who can die for you? Only Him can die for us. So, this is beautiful (LP5 on IQ 4) [Modified].

By relating the “being” and “actions” of God parishioners expressed their intimacy with God. Though they might have learned these views and have had different experiences of God, their views were personal. To establish a relationship of trust and dependency on God, they needed to have experienced Him in their lives as Creator, Father, Helper, and Forgiver of sins. These conceptual understandings of God in His fundamental nature, through His actions, and their experience of Him, led parishioners to express His mission according to that understanding. The mission of God can be presented in two categories.

Firstly, God as the Creator, as the Huge Being, his mission was viewed as wanting humans to live like his Son who became a human being to teach us how to love God (LP1W) as a Father. God as the Father wishes the best life for his children, (LP5W) that they may live in peace (LP8W) and forgive one another (LP6YM). God created each person with a mission to fulfil (LP6YM). As a Creator, He loved his people (LP6YM), re-created them by sending His Son to redeem us (LP5W) and to forgive us our sins (LP6YM). This mission of God never stops. God is forever creating and re-creating the world and humanity until His mission is fulfilled.

Secondly, the way the mission of God was viewed, was that God helps us through other human beings (LP2YM) and He listens to our prayers (LP3W). God looks after us and wants us to do the same to others (LP7M), to change, to come closer to Him (LP4M, LP5W), and to love Him unconditionally (LP9W). The mission of God expressed in these terms came from the understanding that God is the One who reaches out, as the Father, as the Helper, as the One who is near to us, and trustworthy. Parishioners’ conceptual understanding of God made them assign to Him the mission that befitted their understanding of Him. The concept we have of God directs the way we relate to Him and to others.

In conclusion, regarding this question, parishioners expressed their understanding of God based on their understanding of their calling, who called them, and their mandate. The formation they received introduced them to Christian concepts, and the way they experienced God in their lives. God had touched them in the way they could not deny his presence in their lives. What follows are the parish priests’ views on their conceptual understanding of God and his mission.

Parish priests held degrees in the disciplines of philosophy and theology after many years of study. They had spiritual formation with spiritual exercises, especially daily Holy Mass, that were meant to help them know God, love Him, build a relationship with Him, to follow Him, and to desire to make Him known, loved, obeyed, and followed. Their views would reveal how they had internalised the theological concept of the Triune God and His mission for the world. In expressing their understanding of their calling, they had responded by saying that they were called by God. The following presentation reveals their understanding of God who called them to serve Him and his people.

2.3.2 Views of parish priests on their conceptual understanding of God and His mission

In reply to their conceptual understanding of God and His mission (Q 5), parish priests gave different views. PP1 and PP3 replied to the first part of who God is for them, while PP2 mentioned only the mission of God. With their background of theology, the parish priests stated two concepts of God. Firstly, God is viewed as Emmanuel, God with us, and secondly, God is viewed as the mother, as the Parent (*Umzali* in Xhosa). The parish priests' views on who God is for them were very brief—just one understanding and one mission. Question 4 for parishioners was Question 5 for parish priests and formators, because they had an extra question that was not put to parishioners. Their views on who God is for them are related first, followed by their views on His mission.

PP1 understood God as Emmanuel, God with us, who came to be with us and experience us in our human state, that is, contextualisation of God into our human situation. What helped him understand this concept of God was through what Pope Francis presented during the Year of Mercy: God is a merciful God, compassionate, not waiting to punish us, but who loves us. That, and his understanding of God as Emmanuel, helped PP1 to preach the mercy of God to his parishioners with conviction.

PP3 sees God is a “Mother” for him, a “Parent” (*Umzali*). His relationship with God was that of a child to a parent, especially a mother. He explained that whenever he related to God, he relates to his parent, his mother. Most mothers are loving, caring, and compassionate to their children. God cares for his children, looks out for us, and wants the best for us. God is in every situation of our lives, even in difficult times.

The views of parish priests did not differ much from those of parishioners. PP1 was helped to understand God as compassionate and merciful when already in ministry. With the understanding that God is Emmanuel, PP1 understood the mission of God as that of calling us back into a relationship with Him as a Father who expects us to participate in that mission by bringing Him into the situations of our lives, that is, God is omnipresent. The challenge was to acknowledge Him, be aware of His presence, and experience Him in our lives. In relation to this, PP1 expressed the mission of God as to save all humanity, irrespective of race or colour, a view he shared with PP2, that the mission of God is for salvation of all humanity.

2.3.3 Views of formators on their conceptual understanding of God and his mission

Two of the five formators stated that the “Year of Mercy” (2015 to 2016) proclaimed by Pope Francis, inspired their understanding of who God is (PF1, PF2). The views of these formators and that of PP1 are similar. It was not through their studies that they built their concept of God but were inspired during the Year of Mercy when they had already been in ministry for some time. PF1 explained:

The title of the document which Francis announced at the Year of Mercy, which is *Misericordiae vultus* derives its name from the Face of the Mercy of God, which is Christ. It is how I understand God, yes. The kind of God who is out there, who is not with me, who is not listening to my prayers, who is not extending the hand to take me out, then is another God (PF1 on IQ 5) [Modified].

PF1 stated that his Christological views of God were clarified by the Year of Mercy initiative, while PF5 stated that, for him as a Catholic priest and a theologian, God is love, and primarily Triune, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. PF5 understands God as a community of love because in their community of love there is mutual sharing, mutual caring, mutual penetrating, and mutual pacification.

PF3L deems God as the Creator who created all people equally with equal dignity and yet with different talents. He sees the mission of the Roman Catholic Church, although it presents Mary Magdalene as the apostle of apostles, as remaining male dominated, with the role of women not yet visible in her mission. PF3L added that there is a need for a more feminine touch in the priesthood. Although women participate in certain areas in the mission of the Church, even teaching at the seminary, PF3L found this to be still not enough. It was from these views that formators understood the mission of God and presented it in different ways to candidates.

Formators viewed the mission of God as inherent in His name as the Redeemer who redeems or saves His people in their different situations. God's mission flowed from Him being love that cannot contain itself, but gives of itself to others (PF5). PF5 explained that God gave of Himself to humanity, not because of sin, but it was His desire for communion with humankind that compelled Him to reach out to humanity and wish that they imitate His love fully by being compassionate and merciful (PF2) to each other.

In general, the views of parishioners, parish priests, and formators displayed their understanding and their relationship with God based on the formation they received, their experience of God in their lives, and spiritual maturity. Their conceptual understanding of God also explained their understanding of the mission of God and how they, as individuals and part of people in general, are invited to participate in it. Their views, on their different levels of participation in the structure of the Church, revealed their understanding and their relationship with God, which they did not connect with the concept of calling. Participation in the mission of God compelled them to reflect on the love and compassion of God in the world. This is the mandate of a calling: to be a follower of Christ. These reflections lead to the next section where the views of participants on their understanding of the Church and her mission to understand how they viewed the Church as her members who are called to play a role in her mission, are described.

2.4 The conceptual understanding of the Church and her mission

It is clear from the previous presentation of the views of parishioners, parish priests, and formators on their conceptual understanding of God and his mission, that God wanted people to participate in His mission. God gives of Himself through Christ to humanity and wants to share his love, compassion, and mercy with them, inviting them to share the same with others. The understanding that God is Triune (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) presents to us that God is a Communion and Community of love and wants His children to live in that communion as a community of his children, and as a family. Living in communion and community as the children of God gives us the notion of the Church in the world.

Participants understood God and His mission and the part they were to take in it, and they were to define their understanding of the Church and her mission in the world in relation to them as followers of Jesus called into the family of God as the lay people, priests, and formators. The

views of participants on their understanding of the Church and her mission are presented below, starting with those of parishioners. Views of parishioners on their understanding of the Church and her mission reveal that they understood the Church as themselves in action on all levels of society. Their understanding of their mission is then discussed.

Five categories were prominent in their views, namely the Church as people; as a congregation of a community; as a family; as following Christ; and the Church as an institution in history. Their views on the concept of the Church, influenced by their different cultural and environmental backgrounds, and their level of involvement in the parish ministry, are presented in separate paragraphs.

The Church was viewed in the first place, not as a building, but as people gathered for prayers, who are challenged to own the Church, own one another, look after one another, and help one another as a member in order to grow (LP1W). LP1W expressed her views as follows:

It was just in my previous catechism class that I asked the candidates to make the Church their own. Unfortunately, there are people who believe that the building is the Church. It can't be without people, and people should look after each other and so the church is important in our lives that we become a congregation of a community that helps each other and makes each other grow (LP1W on IQ 6). [Modified].

LP4M, in turn, viewed the Church as a family, as God's people who gather, forgive each other's faults, and who unite to be holy people growing spiritually and mentally. His views were as follows:

...because once we fool ourselves and say at that time when we meet, okay here we are just to pretend to ourselves, that's where I think we will be losing the family. It won't become that bigger family, but the bigger family will become people who understand each other, forget and forgive one another, because if we don't forget and don't forgive, I think when we enter the Church what will happen is that we will not become happy ... be that family that God wants us to be and then forget, forgive and go forward as the Holy Family as it is (LP4M on IQ 6) [Modified].

Both LP1W and LP4M viewed the Church as people coming together to build one another as a family. LP4M deemed forgiveness as central for the family that gathers to pray, and without forgiveness people pretend and do not become united, one, and holy, and cannot grow spiritually and mentally. LP4M opines that these aspects are necessary to build a multicultural parish and society such as post-apartheid South Africa. To build the family of God as stated in the Pastoral Plan of the Southern Catholic Bishops Conference, forgiveness is central to members to forgive and forget their differences and to become a holy family of God.

As a holy family of God, people are challenged to follow Christ and not to concentrate mostly on rules and regulations (LP5W). LP5W saw the Church as those who follow Christ as disciples. She felt that rules and regulations dampen the spirit of joy, freedom of expression, and the understanding of faith. LP5W propagated unity as a means to help people to know their faith and their purpose in life and to follow Christ as the Church.

The Church, as a congregation of a community following Christ, form a place where people gather to listen to the Word of God and are nourished by the proper interpretation of this Word of God by the priest (LP7M). LP8W saw the Church as being there to make people understand that there is someone who is above us and who accepts and understands each one of us as His children; a God who takes care of each one of us. She said the Church should make people aware of the sufferings of other people and to inspire them to take care of the needy.

The presentations above portray the parishioners' views of how they understand the Church in their lives and the role the Church plays, to make God known and why He is there (LP9W). The last category was that the Church is an institution established by Jesus.

LP6YM presented the Church as an institution established by Jesus when He appointed Peter as the rock to build his church on (Mt 16:18). LP6YM sees the Church is an institution that has gone through struggles and persecutions but continues to grow and will stand forever. LP9W, in turn, understands the Church as an institution, meaning God is residing in it in the tabernacle. LP2YM sees the Church as a teaching institute helping people to live their lives through God and not by their own will. This explains the dependency of people on God's will to live their lives.

Parishioners' views of the Church were based on how they experienced the Church rather than on what they had been taught. Although they did not associate themselves directly as the Church, parishioners explained the Church as people, as a congregation of a community, the Family of God, and followers of Christ, which entails the role she must play in society. Parishioners offered their own views on the mission of the Church, and described it by mentioning two aspects, namely the mission of the Church itself, and why people go to church.

The first point mentioned was that the mission of the Church is the same as the mission of God (LP5W). LP5W explained the difference between the two as follows: the Church is more concerned with rules and regulations than following Christ and forming Christians as disciples

(the mission of God). For example, LP5W saw concern regarding what to sing, when to stand or sit during the liturgy as unimportant, as it hampers freedom of expression during worship.

LP7M deems the mission of the Church as uniting people into one united family. The Church helps a congregation of people to reach out to one another, to grow spiritually and mentally (LP1W, LP4M). When people are united, they would be able to live in peace with each other, be aware of each other's needs, know their faith, their purpose in life, follow Christ (LP5W, LP7M), and live a life that is acceptable to God (LP8W). LP5W mentioned that following rules and regulation can make a good catechist but a bad Christian, and that this is not God's intension for the Church.

When people are united, living in peace with each other, accepting one another, it should direct them towards God (LP9W). The mission of the Church, as seen by the parishioners, revealed the mission of God who reaches out through Christ to be one with His people. Further research is needed to determine how deeply these concepts of the Church are understood by parishioners when they feel obliged to live as the Church demands.

The second important mission of the Church presented by parishioners was seen as bringing people nearer to God, to love one another, and become happy (LP4M). They saw the mission of the Church as teaching and making people aware of the Word of God that nourishes the soul (LP6YM). The importance of this is to make people understand that there was somebody above them and that each one was a child of God (LP8W). The Church had to be missionary in her approach to achieve this.

To fulfil her mission, the Church's ultimate mission is seen as to go round the world and provide priests and bishops who should preach the gospel, baptise, and teach repentance to people (LP6YM). Once people have accepted the gospel, they should be able to know why they go to Church, which is to receive the message and the Body of Christ in the Eucharist (LP1W). Parishioners also considered their purpose of going to church as important for the mission.

LP7M explained that the church is a place where the Bible is interpreted properly by the priests and that was his primary purpose for going to church. LP7M regarded the priests as the only ones equipped to give a proper interpretation of scripture, therefore the Church must continue to create that space where people gather to listen to the Word of God to receive proper interpretation of scripture. LP7M's views give the reason why people go to church rather than

what is the Church. LP3W, in agreement with LP7M, stated that people must go to church to find something meaningful that brings them closer to God.

LP5W mentioned that for the Word to be understood, it must be proclaimed in such a way that people should hear it, allow it to touch their hearts, and affect their actions. When the Word of God is heard and interpreted properly, it leads to meditation and behavioural change (LP3W).

LP8W states that the church helps people to be aware of the needs of others and teaches people the commandments of God to stop crime and help people live a life that is acceptable to God. Going to church helps parishioners to grow in their faith and to understand the greater purpose of being a Christian and a follower of Christ in everyday life (LP5W). The priority of the call of the Church is the proclamation of the Word of God and to help people to pray and follow Christ (LP7M).

In summary, for parishioners the Church has a mission and people have the responsibility to respond by going to church and to learn the purpose of their lives, that is, what is their calling. Their views were more from the heart than from the head. The views of parish priests on their understanding of the Church and her mission as parish leadership and proclaimers and interpreters of the gospel follow next.

2.4.1 Views of parish priests on their understanding of the Church and her mission

Parishioners depend on priests to hear scripture and the proper interpretation thereof. Parish priests' views portrayed two aspects of the Church and her mission. Only two parish priests (PP2 and PP3) answered the question and PP1 mentioned only the mission of the Church.

Firstly, parish priests understood the Church as an instrument of salvation (PP2) and as the family of God (PP3). PP2 understands the Church as an instrument, as a sacrament God uses to save His people and to draw them to Himself through Jesus. The Church, viewed as an instrument of salvation, presents the notion that there is no salvation outside the Church.

The mission of the Church, embedded in this view, is to look after the needy, the marginalised, and to ensure that people' dignity is upheld (PP2). The Church is to fulfil her mission through health care provided in clinics and hospitals, through education in schools, and projects that provide food parcels to the needy (PP2). However, these activities are said to be activities of the past since they do not take place anymore due to lack of funds. The second model presented was the Church as the Family of God.

PP3 presented the Family of God as the model of the Church. The Church, as the family of God, should welcome everyone and make everybody feel at home, irrespective of nationality, race, colour, or language (PP3). PP3's understanding of the Church as a family was influenced by his Xhosa cultural background which sees a family as not constituted only by biological members. Whoever joins the family would be treated as part of the family. Therefore, this is the model of the Church that he cherished, as well as its mission being that of bringing people of God to God and God to his people. He advised that all those who are involved in the ministry of catechetics, and evangelisation are to form a bridge between God and his people (PP3). The mission of the Church was not viewed as only spiritual, but salvation is viewed as all-inclusive to the wellbeing of a person.

PP3 further explained how the Church, formerly as the family of God, used to help people economically and spiritually, but emphasised that that role has changed due to a lack of resources. Both laity and priests are confused about their roles, since the missionary approach was to help the poor, but currently the local priests ask support from the laity (PP3). PP3 further explained:

...these days, it is confusing about the role of the Church in the lives of the people, and I think that's why we see many people leaving the Church. Because even us priests, let's say, us priests, even myself sometimes, I feel that I'm not sure about the role I have to play. I know I have to bring the people to God and God to his people, but sometimes I don't, I am not sure how to do those things (PP3 on IQ 6) [Modified].

Parish priests struggle to change the mindset of people from the old system of evangelisation with its outreach of handouts through charity and welfare to implement a local Church which should be self-supporting. Self-supporting in this context indicates that priests, not the people of God, should have been given a better understanding of a local Church and her mission.

PP1 mentioned only the mission of the Church. His views are that the Church should reconcile men to God and especially in the South African context, people to people. He felt unprepared by the seminary formation to achieve that mission in the multicultural parish he was serving. Although the majority of the congregation are coloureds, he observed that they are also fragmented in different ways and have their own differences. He emphasised that he was unprepared to deal with a multicultural situation in pastoral ministry.

It was a challenge for PP1 to work in a multicultural community and to incorporate three languages during Holy Mass to incorporate the languages of his parishioners. He also had to

consider their different cultures, needs, and music during the service, how to compose the parish pastoral council to reflect the reality of the parish, and to deal with other different activities in the church. PP1 felt unqualified to reconcile people with people, and people with God, to form the concept of the Church as either family or as the people of God.

Against this background of the understanding of the Church and her mission by parishioners and parish priests, the views of formators are presented to indicate what model of the Church they use to train and form parish priests for the South African multicultural context.

2.4.2 Views of formators on their conceptual understanding of the Church and her mission

Most formators, before taking their responsibility for formation, had been parish priests, trained and formed at the same institution. As formators, they need to know more about the mission of God and the mission of the Church for them to prepare parish leadership in order to equip them with knowledge and skills for implementation in the South African context. The views of formators on their conceptual understanding of the Church and her mission follow below.

Each formator gave his own understanding of the Church and her mission, displaying four models of the Church, namely, the Body of Christ, the People of God on pilgrimage towards salvation, the Sacrament of Salvation, and the Church as missionary by nature. Each Church model, with its mission, is explained in the following paragraphs.

The first model is the Church as the Body of Christ, given her mission by God (PF1). PF1 felt that since the Church's mission is from God, the Church should be out there in the world continuing the mission of God, but that this was not realised because the Church was stuck somewhere else. He expressed his view as follows:

If I say the Church is the Body of Christ, thus the mission comes from God and continues in us as the Church. We should be there but unfortunately, we are stuck somewhere else, yes, there are problems, there are real problems. We are, I can say, practically not there. We are saying things we should be doing without really doing them, yet the mission of the Church is to go out there to present this Christ who is a Redeemer, this Christ who is a Saviour, this Christ who is more especially closer to the poor and suffering (PF1 on IQ 6) [Modified].

Prompted further that as formators they were responsible to produce priests who should go out and present Christ to the people, PF1 explained what the interaction is between the diocese and the seminary. The interaction between the researcher and the formator is presented fully with some modification for better clarification.

Researcher (R): So, I heard you say that unfortunately. Is it that the Church is not practical in her mission?

PF1: Not yet! No, not yet...

R: So, what are you forming the seminarians to do then because that is what I think your work as a formator priest is to train people who are going to do the mission of the Church?

PF1: Yes, who are to go out there and stop all kinds of things and be there as Christians nothing else.

R: But you are saying that it is not happening?

PF1: I haven't seen it; I haven't seen it practically yes. I have not seen it practically. What you see of cause are priests who are more especially supplying Masses. Supplying Mass is something else but to live the faith, to be closer to the people, to be with them is something else.

R: Does that depend on the formation they receive, or does it depend on their own motivation to do the job?

PF1: Coming to the biggest problem here in South Africa, the biggest problem for the Church is the recruitment. Do we recruit the right people and for what intension? Those two things affect overall formation.

R: Okay.

PF1: Because the seminary concentrated on this type of formation only to find that the boy during holidays is back at home staying with all those who recruited him into this thing giving a counter formation. So, sometimes you discover that there are people who go through formation and formation does not affect them.

R: Okay?

PF1: Because they know that when they go back home this is not the life they are going to live, there is another life expecting them at home they are going to live, so, there is a dichotomy.

R: So, who is to...

PF1: Blame?

R: Yes, who is to ratify that? Is it the dioceses or is it the formation team?

PF1: Dioceses are supposed to ratify that.

R: So, in the seminary?

PF1: Formation should be one, we should speak one language not two languages but one language. From the parish or from the diocese to the seminary and back, should be one language, yes, we should speak one language.

R: So, you think that the bishops who send their seminarians or formators on the diocesan level don't have the same objectives as those of the seminary, of forming people who will go back to evangelise, to empower the laity to live the Christian life?

PF1: There is still confusion at that area, yes. Some of the bishops don't know their seminarians, there are some who don't know the seminarians, they have delegated everything to somebody else.

R: Okay

PF1: They just look at the reports.

The discussion with PF1 presented what the matters at the seminary were that prevent the seminary to form priests ready to continue the mission of the Church. As a formator, he questioned the seriousness of bishops in recruiting formators and their intentions in recruiting young people to the priesthood. He was aware of the dichotomy between formation and the life

lived by priests in dioceses; aware of bishops who were not in touch with the seminarians, and the seminarians with an attitude that portrays that what was taught at the seminary was not a real life to be lived in their dioceses. The views of PF1 were similar to those of PP3, who stated that, as priests, they were sacrament celebrants, ritual performers, and spent most of their time at the presbytery because they did not know what to do.

The question to ask is, what is happening on the level of recruitment of formators and candidates? Why are some bishops not interested to see that the mission of God and the mission of the Church are being fulfilled in their own dioceses but are only concerned with results? PP1, being aware of this situation, queried why nothing has been done to challenge bishops who do not seem to have any interest in the mission of the Church. The next discussion regards the Church as the People of God.

PF4, replying to the question, stated that the Church by nature was hierarchical and in communion at all levels—it was not an institution, nor a building, but living stones. PF4 continued that the Church, as living stones, are people of God bringing with them their gifts, talents, and charisms for the building of the Church, with the laity as majority. Members of the Church, the people of God, are living stones, making up God's house, God's building. Linked to this model is the mission he presented.

PF4 stated that the mission of the Church in South Africa requires better response. Members of the Church have to be bold and be infused with the gospel and Christian values to serve society with its brokenness, problems, social issues, and polarisation. PF4 advocated for the Church to have confidence and boldness to make a difference and make the Christian and gospel values speak to situations, trying to bring God's presence to them. He was discouraged, seeing what was going on in society and which called for hard work. Yet he was not giving up on his part.

PF2 viewed the Church as the People of God on a pilgrimage of salvation. The mission of the Church is to form priests to usher the people of God on their journey of salvation. Priests were needed to usher the People of God to walk on the right path in love, dedication, and compassion. PF2 stated that young priests struggle to fulfil their ministry of shepherding the people on the journey due to a lack of practical experience and skills. Skills taught at the seminary are not effective in their areas, and the expectations of the laity are different from what priests are taught at the seminary (PF2).

The views of PF5 mirrored those of PF2. Quoting *Lumen Gentium* (Paul VI 1964:# 1 and #48), PF5 stated that the Church helps people on their journey of salvation to recognise God, and to invite God in their homes as a sacrament of salvation. As a sacrament of salvation, the Church is to go out and transform the world into a new Jerusalem, a community of love that God desires and at the end to return to God that community of love.

PF5 also presented the model of the Church as a community of love that God desired. God revealed Himself to humanity as Community, Triune God, as a community of love. God desires that all people be united in a community of love in the Church that at the end of time He might accept it back into Himself (PF5). As Community of love, the Church is missionary by nature, but struggles to fulfil her mission in society because the society is pluralistic, and people have the freedom to pick and choose from different values other than the gospel (PF5).

PF3L was concerned that the Church is male dominated and needs to change her masculine nature and integrate the feminine qualities of Christ. He advocates for women to participate in the leadership of the Church. He regarded the part women play in some ministries in the Church as not enough to make an impact. Assimilating the feminine qualities of Christ, the Church would need to accept women as deacons and build on slowly to reach the stage when women can be ordained priests in the way girls are accepted as altar servers (PF3L). The Church, as the People of God, joined together as the Body of Christ, forming the Sacrament of salvation for all people, could fulfil her mission better and more appropriately by having a feminine touch (PF3L).

PF5 saw the division of the church as the main challenge. Divided as the Christian body, this makes it difficult to present the same message to all people who call themselves Christians. Christians who do not represent the values of the gospel are seen as not being disciples, needing to be re-evangelised (PF5). Re-evangelisation should help with the internalisation of the gospel values already received and help maintain them in their lives (PF5). The fact that people are not living out the Christian values is a clear sign that they are not disciples, and the Church has to try to embark on new evangelisation and re-evangelisation for her to attain her missionary nature (PF5).

All participants (parishioners, parish priests, and formators) need to have a common understanding of the Church to be co-responsible for the mission of the Church in South Africa. The mission of God still needs to be realised and the Church needs to move away from being

a maintenance Church to a church that reaches out on all levels (PF1, PF4 and PF5). Priesthood as discipleship should lead the process of holistic formation of the laity to play their part in politics, inclusive economy, and transformation of social structure, to accommodate all people in society, irrespective of colour, race, political affiliation, religious inclination, status, and gender. The Church needs to lead by example in her dealings with people. With the knowledge about God and His mission, and about the Church and her mission, participants had to give their views on how they participated in society as the Church in action, by sharing their views on their participation in society through projects.

2.5 Ministry of the Church through social involvement

The mission and ministry of the Church should include both spiritual and social involvement in society. The ministry of the Church, through projects that only offer food and clothing, does not alleviate poverty, but creates dependency in the long run. In this regard projects would mean those that offer skills for self-reliance, projects that help people to challenge policy development, people empowerment, and movement. It is time that extensive charity projects should only cater for those who are destitute, with the aim to help them help themselves when necessary and when they are able to do so.

All participants agreed on this question. Parishioners, parish priests, and formators presented their views that the Roman Catholic Church is still in the ministry of charity projects, helping the poor through sodalities such as the St Vincent de Paul Society, soup kitchens, Caritas and HIV/AIDS support groups. All these projects do not aim to transform the lives of those who receive such help, nor do they help to develop the economy of society. The Church in South Africa, herself struggling to be self-supporting, should first develop the members of the family of God, the living stone, to be self-reliant. Charity projects are to alleviate immediate needs and are not meant to cover all members, but only the poor and destitute. The participants' views on this issue are discussed next.

2.5.1 Views of parishioners on their involvement in projects

Parishioners from two parishes responded affirmatively to the question whether they were involved in projects. Parishioners in these parishes were mainly involved in charity projects that offered basic things such as food, clothing, and toiletries. LP8W explained that people were used to the Church helping the poor and there are people who still come to Church with

the hope of receiving help, but aid was no longer possible, due to lack of funds. The Church in this area has lost her core missionary identity because of the evangelisation presented by expatriate missionaries.

In democratic South Africa, the face of the Roman Catholic Church has also changed. Most priests are now black and receive no international donations and funding for projects. Only small-scale projects continue, but they do not transform the economic status of people. Charity projects do not challenge the policy of the country to include the poor and marginalised. The involvement of parishioners in projects, according to the three parishes visited, are discussed next.

In the first parish visited, parishioners are involved in a hospice that belonged to the parish, and LP1W related its history as follows:

In this church we have a hospice and in our town that hospice used to care for people with cancer. We moved away from that, and I am the chairperson, and we are still doing that, but more prevention and assistance rather than prenatal care because yes people don't die so often now as they used to earlier. And we also care for orphans and vulnerable children, and we do HIV and ADIS. So these are critical for our time (LP1 on IQ 6) [Modified].

LP2Y related that in their parish they have a 'men active group' that visits the hospice and prays with the sick and console them. Other members of the parish contribute in fundraising to keep the projects going even though they are struggling to get everybody involved. The hospice is open to all people in society. LP3W is involved in the St Vincent de Paul Society and Catholic Women's League that cater for the poor and destitute by offering food, clothing, toiletries, and wheelchairs. Although good undertakings, these charity and welfare projects do not change the status of the poor from being destitute to being self-supporting or self-sufficient.

The second parish visited is in a semi-industrial area and the views of parishioners are similar. As a parish, they did not have any community projects (LP4M, LP5W, LP6YM). LP4M related that they were busy with the presbytery, and he believed that after completion of that task, they would determine what do in society. LP5W, as an individual, looked after children, helping them with clothing, food, and tending them during the day. Parishioners were not involved in any projects in the parish and society.

The third parish was in a rural mountainous area. Participants from this area came from different outstations and were involved in different projects. LP7M was not involved in a parish project but in a chicken producing project, initiated by someone in the society. This project

received assistance from the South African Department of Agriculture. LP8W was involved in Caritas, a Catholic outreach project geared to help the poor. Caritas is a project based on scripture and the Catholic Social Teaching. The mission of Caritas is to promote integral human development, but at this parish it was not functioning effectively, due to lack of funding and the fact that it was still new in the area. LP9W, in turn, was involved in a support group and related her views as follows:

I am involved in the support group, taking care of those who are living with HIV and AIDS, yes I'm helping them too but because for me what I know is that there's nothing more important than prayer, even if they are living with HIV, they need food, they need clothes, but if they don't pray it won't happen to get for them those things. And then like in the month of May, and the month of October, I collect them to pray the rosary. Every day we go to each and every house. Yes, I pray with them (LP9 on IQ 6) [Modified].

Parishioners in these three parishes did not contribute to skill development or policy development, nor to people-centred development. Charity projects were undertaken, but operated rather poorly, except for the hospice that offered health support to the sick. Some parishioners exercised their priestly office and prayed with and for the sick. The views of parish priests from those parishes are discussed next.

2.5.2 Views of parish priests on social involvement

The parish priests were asked what kind of community projects they were involved in as a local Church (IQ 8). Their views are presented separately, relating them to those of their own parishioners. Two parishes were involved in charity projects, while the third parish ran no projects at all. PP1's views are presented first.

PP1 stated that they were failing in this aspect and that they were still on the charity level. He mentioned sodalities that were active in charity projects, such as St Vincent de Paul and the Catholic Women's League. They called such projects undertaken by these sodalities, ministries of help, which reach out to people. He said that he tried to motivate the whole parish to participate, but some parishioners were not interested.

The challenges they face are that the parish consisted of the elderly, and due to the high unemployment rate, employable young people left the town to seek employment elsewhere. PP1 explained that small towns are dying due to unemployment. The only people who remained are teachers, nurses, and police officers, offering basic services to society. The Church and the state do not collaborate in urban development. The views of PP1 went hand in hand with those

of his parishioners, even though he did not mention that he was personally involved, except by encouraging members to support with funding.

PP3 related that they had many projects, such as Caritas. As a local Church they were not helping society as much as they used to during the expatriate missionary era. They, as the local Church, were struggling to meet their own needs and had handed over some of the church-run projects to the government. The views of PP3 were similar to those of his parishioners, namely that they were not making any impact in society. He saw the solution for development as the Church working together with the government.

The views of parishioners and those of their parish priests were similar. The Church lacked outreach projects and no transformation had taken place since the dawn of democracy when the mission church was replaced by the local church. Existing projects are on a small-scale level consisting mainly of charity projects. The formators' views follow next.

2.5.3 The views of formators on social involvement

Formators, on their part, were also uninvolved in projects, except for opening their sports field for use by the local schools, and their premises for sodalities for retreats and conferences during school holidays (PF4). Seminarians were encouraged to get involved with projects in their parishes and communities during holidays (PF3L). At the seminary, candidates visited hospices in the area to get in touch with the sufferings of the people (PF2, PF5), but besides that, the seminary did not run any projects.

Priest formation did not introduce parish priests to the Catholic Social Teaching that could help them to introduce projects as a social outreach of the Church to society. The society's struggle is the struggle of the Church, as both institutions share the same people. The following presentation contains the views of parish priests and formators on the extent of the impact of their ministry on local, national, and international level.

2.6 Impact of clergy ministry on local, national, and international community

The vision and goal of St John Vianney Seminary is "to train future priests for the service of the Roman Catholic Church and for the good of Southern Africa and the entire world" (St John Vianney Seminary 2022:7). The following question presents the views of only parish priests

and formators on the impact of their mission and ministry on the local, national, and international levels of the community (IQ 7).

The presence of the Church in society is through the mission and ministry of priests, in collaboration with the laity. The Church, in her hierarchical ministerial structure, needs to involve all her members by offering appropriate formation geared towards fulfilment of her twofold mission in society. Seminary formation is intended to prepare parish priests ready to represent the Church in society by carrying out her mission of evangelisation and social ministry in society. The Church's relevance and appropriateness depend on her leadership in parishes made possible by the mission and ministry of formators to provide the Church with leadership. The above discussions presented different understandings of who God is and His mission, and the Church and her mission, as well as the participants' involvement in society through projects that should bring about change in the lives of people.

In this section only parish priests and formators were requested to answer this question and they gave their views on whether they were aware of the impact of their ministry on local, national, and international levels as the leadership of the Church.

2.6.1 Impact of parish priest's ministry on the local, national, and international community

Parish priests responded to the question by presenting two aspects. Firstly, the impact of the presence of a priest amongst the people in the local community, and secondly, their impact through preaching. Their views include the local, national, and international community.

PP2 related that the presence of a priest amongst the community impacts on the community's spiritual lives. People are content to know that they have a shepherd amongst them and are comforted since a priest is not a priest for himself, but the representative of the presence of God amongst His people (PP2, PP3).

Locally, the ministry of presence is more valued where a priest could be present in different situations of people's lives, for example, when they are merry or suffering and need consolation and encouragement (PP1, PP2, PP3). When priests become involved in performing services, such as funerals, caring for the poor, visiting the sick, presiding at rituals, and celebrating sacraments, they impact on the local people (PP2).

During worship, the priest empowers people with Biblical knowledge and with understanding of scripture through preaching and interpretation of scripture (PP1). When people move elsewhere, they take along that Biblical knowledge and understanding and that can impact society nationally or internationally (PP1). PP1 related that young people move away from small towns because of unemployment and if well empowered by the gospel, they do carry that along with them and this does bring change wherever they would be, be it nationally or internationally (PP1). Another way the priests' impacted society was by being involved in politics.

PP3 explained that the Church needed to be more involved with the government and should communicate on issues involving people. The Church and the government shared the same people and if they are to bring about transformation in society, they need to communicate and share ideas how to serve society better. PP3 explained his views, based on the meeting the bishops had with the president, as follows:

So, for me I was happy to hear that because we need to talk with the government about what is happening with the people because we are working with the same people. The government is working with the people and as Christians; we are also working with the same people. We want to bring change in the lives of people so, we have to work together. So, there was before not that communication between the government and the Church, even if it was there, it was not really visible or helping the people. But now that the president called the church leaders and promised that he will call them again so that they can discuss, so there is hope in that (PP3 on IQ 7) [Modified].

Communication of ideas and implementation of societal transformation shared by both entities, Church and government, would impact positively on people. Parish priests did not seem to know about the Parliament Liaison Committee of the SACBC that is involved with the government on policy change and other matters of societal influence on regular basis.

The impact of priests internationally was viewed negatively due to xenophobia in South Africa (PP3) that impacted globally due to the way South Africans treat foreigners. The views of formators regarding the impact they make in society locally, nationally, and internationally, follow.

2.6.2 Impact of ministry of formators, locally, nationally, and internationally

Formators' responses presented two themes. Formation of priests is not only local but international, based on the vision and goal of the seminary and the documents of the Church. Ministerial priesthood is intended not only for the local Church but the universal Church—

therefore priests are to be willing to be transferred wherever there is a need for priests and evangelisation. Due to this concept of ministerial priesthood, ordained priests should impact communities wherever they go, whether they are placed locally or internationally (PF2).

The St John Vianney Seminary is in the Archdiocese of Pretoria and seminarians make themselves available to provide Holy Masses and offer workshops, which impact the local parishes around Pretoria (PF1, PF4). They participate in teaching catechesis, visiting nearby hospices, and are involved in teaching of university students (PF2) as part of the outreach of the seminary. Formators impact mainly through the imparting of knowledge at the seminary and also by assisting at the surrounding parishes, but how that is assimilated and lived out is the responsibility of individual candidates and parishioners in the parishes visited (PF2).

Priest candidates studying at St John Vianney Seminary come from different corners of South Africa and in returning to their regions they are believed to bring about change, using the knowledge they gained at the seminary (PF4). PF1 thought challenges in South Africa are due to the different styles of formations the candidates undergo at different institutions of priestly formation. PF1 related that in one diocese one can experience different styles of formation expressed and these are impacting differently on people within the diocese. He explained:

Impacting in terms of academic, yes, but in terms of work itself I would say, because of the dichotomy I have mentioned before, do not seem too much positively ... I would say, seminarians who went through other centres or other institutions for formation, that is for five years, I'm not sure whether in the next ten years we will be having good product. The problem would be going back into the dioceses and to those who are responsible and find out how do they pull together all those different formations to get one particular church in the diocese, because at the moment there are different styles or different formations. You sit at the back of the church and watch a priest celebrating Holy Mass and you can easily say that one was trained at John Vianney, that one was trained at Cedara, that one was trained maybe in Nairobi or wherever... (PF1 on IQ 7) [Modified].

Different styles of formation impact differently on priests and the parishes they serve, making parishioners compare services rendered to them. The question is: Why do bishops send their seminarians to different seminaries inside and or outside South Africa for training and formation when they have their own seminary? It would be interesting to know, as this was viewed by PF1 as impacting negatively within dioceses. The fact is that documents of the Church encourage Episcopal Conferences to own the material to answer the needs of their own region. The South African region has not yet owned the international documents and written its own *Ratio Nationalis* to answer the demands of its own region and have priests within dioceses trained in different styles. The question is: Do these priests answer the needs of the

multicultural democratic South African region in its different styles of doing ministry? The bishops are the only ones able to answer this question.

Formators were aware that laity formation was ineffective due to too much information and not offering enough practical implementation methods and skills during seminary formation (PF3L, PF4). St John Vianney Seminary, unlike other institutions of higher education, does not have a community engagement programme that requires lecturers to get involved in helping them introduce students to and prepare them for community engagement. A more holistic formation of the laity was seen as a necessity to help them live their Christian lives zealously and fearlessly as promoters of faith and gospel values (PF4), but this was not happening in real life situations. Catechesis was viewed as failing in changing hearts. The compartmentalisation of Sunday and Monday to Saturday was not helpful to bring about transformation of life for the laity (PF4) to live their Christian life authentically in society.

Seminarians, however, receive much information, which is not regarded as leading to personal transformation, since they were not given sufficient time to process knowledge, assimilate it, and incorporate it in their experiences in life (PF3L). Counselling skills were offered over a short period of time and emotional and human formation were not emphasised enough to make an impact on the lives of the seminarians (PF3L). In agreement with PF3L, PF1 stated that they had been accused at St John Vianney Seminary of training academics rather than pastoral workers, yet it is also argued though, that efficiency in pastoral work is impossible if a person lacked an academic foundation. The solution is to strike a balance between acquiring knowledge and translating it practically to their local pastoral situation.

PF3L suggested that candidates need a forum where they can discuss issues in a professional way in a safe environment to help build healthy personalities, heal the past, and help channel anger and sexuality positively to facilitate ministry and impact positively on society.

The views of both parish priests and formators on the impact of their ministry were not focused on responding to the question, but to express what seemed to be a frustration. PP1 commented that young people, well-formed when they moved elsewhere, could influence others wherever they went, but he was unable to specify how they impacted society locally, nationally, and internationally. Formators, instead of focusing on the question, explained the weaknesses of the formation they were offering at the seminary and proposed changes.

The next section presents the views of parish priests and formators on the relevance and appropriateness of priestly formation in the South African context. The views of parish priests are presented first, followed by those of formators, which might help explain their frustrations.

2.6.3 The relevance, practicality and appropriateness of formation for South African priests

This chapter endeavours to answer the first descriptive empirical task and its related question: What is going on? This section deals with the relevance, practicality, and appropriateness of priestly training and formation in the South Africa context (IQ 4), based on all the above discussions. The analysis of data above discussed the current formation of members of the Roman Catholic Church, starting from parishioners and parish priests to priest formators. Parish priests, as leaders in the Church, are given the responsibility to facilitate the mission of God and to form the laity, as the Church, helping them in their mission and ministry on all levels of society.

The participants' views portray their overall analysis of their formation as they respond to the question on the relevance, practicality, and appropriateness of priestly formation for the South African context. Parishioners were not requested to reply to this question, only parish priests and formators were requested to state their views since they had formal training and formation on the four pillars. The reason for this question was to determine whether the formation priests and formators received was applicable to the multicultural democratic South African context.

The expatriate missionary era has passed, and the local priests took over and are continuing the mission of Christ amongst their own people. Formators were mainly South African blacks. Parish priests and formators were South Africans and were ordained for their own people. They knew the culture, customs, and languages of their people, and experienced the Christian life and struggles faced by their own people. As they were trained and formed at St John Vianney Seminary, an institution that was formerly for "white candidates only" in an affluent area in Pretoria, it was necessary to determine whether their training and formation were relevant, practical, and appropriate for them to implement the mission of God.

The views of parish priests and formators regarding this this question whether the formation they had received helped them answer the above question follow. In the following discussion, the views of parish priests are presented first, followed by those of formators.

2.6.3.1 Views of parish priests on the relevance, practicality, and appropriateness of priestly formation for the South African context

This section presents the parish priests' views based on the three themes that form part of the question of relevance, practicality, and appropriateness of priestly formation. Their views, applied to their experiences regarding their ministry, their struggles, and their understanding of the formation they received are portrayed. The strengths and weaknesses of their formation are presented.

Of the three parish priests, only PP2 regarded the formation he received relevant, although he advocated for the inclusion of African religion. These were his views:

Yes, in general I can say it is, in fact it is however I feel we should touch more also in our training, on African Religion and churches and go deeper by understanding our faith in South Africa especially African religion and churches, not to shun them but to study them more and understand the spirituality they have. In fact, sometimes, even we can just go and visit them time and again and be able to breathe their spirituality, to assimilate it, and to understand it. And by assimilating it, we will be able to understand the people who are in our churches because we should not only present Jesus Christ as European, but we should also bring him down to our level as Africans (PP2 on IQ 8) [Modified].

PP2 felt that to understand the laity they need to study African spirituality and to study more African religions and denominations. Inculturation would make formation of the laity possible because it would help priests present Jesus in an African understanding, rather than according to a Western approach and concepts. Both PP2 and PP3 stated that the formation they received was Eurocentric and needed to be changed. PP3 advocated for the inclusion of African theologians in the curriculum who would be better related to the African context. Focussing on Western theologians did not benefit them in their parish ministry. The negative views on the relevance of formation are discussed next.

The fact that Christianity was brought to Africa and South Africa from Europe, clothed Jesus in a European understanding (PP2). Christian concepts, vessels, vesting, the altar, the tabernacle, saints, the Cross, and Mary were clothed with Western thought and understanding and need to be clothed with African understanding of God and spirituality (PP2). PP2 was in favour of using Ugandan saints and martyrs as examples of African spiritual life to bring faith home to Africa.

The way of worship in the Roman Catholic Church is regarded as being influenced by European culture. PP2 felt that it was impossible to remove Eurocentricity in some practices and artifacts,

because some things are central to Christianity, such as the cross. PP2 related that punishment by crucifying people on a cross is not an African concept of punishment but the cross cannot be discarded because it would mean discarding Christianity. Inculturation was left to individuals to interpret concepts without being skilled therein, and these individual manoeuvres made it difficult to translate into the African situation. PP3 lamented the formation they received by expressing his views as follows:

It was not really relevant because sometimes you find that we are taught about things that happened *long* (emphasised) ago. Sometimes, we are not going with the present situation of our country. Like I think we were supposed to be taught more about the African setting. We are formed to be African priests but some time you find that we are taught about things in Europe instead of looking at our situation now and be prepared for what is happening now in our country (PP3 on IQ 8) [Modified].

PP2 explained that due to a lack of inculturation skills, some parishes are more Vatican than the Vatican itself. Priests built their own Vatican because they believe it the way to be a Roman Catholic (PP2). It was viewed that irrelevant formation makes formation impractical.

PP1 also deemed formation as impractical. The difficult Christian concepts, for example, such as the Trinity, is found to be difficult to explain practically to the people. He continued:

I often thought, now, what am I going to do? especially when we did intellectual things like the Trinity, how am I going to put this into practice, with inspiration and all those things, how does it relate to people and all those doctrines. How do they relate to the peoples' personal lives? That is what was, I think, lacking for me ... but how to use that knowledge, how to form the laity at the level of the laity, where the laity are, I think that was lacking in our formation (PP1 on IQ 8) [Modified].

PP2 suggested that the process of inculturation by individuals starts with one appreciating and accepting oneself as an African, because it would then be easy to bring everything down to the level of the people and make appropriate for them.

Priestly formation was viewed to be inappropriate as far as Christianity was understood, with the inclusion of African religions and churches. The overall views of parish priests' participants were that the formation they received was relevant since documents of the Church were universal, although not practical and appropriate for application in the South African context. Due to the lack of practicality and the inappropriateness of priestly formation, laity formation was considered difficult, and the mission of the Church was delayed or not fulfilled.

Priestly formation of participants was based on the four pillars of formation, but it did not adequately prepare them for their mission and ministry to form the laity to be effective in

society. There is a gap between knowledge acquired and the implementation in real-life situations in parish ministry. Parish priests found their formation irrelevant and too Eurocentric. The views of formators on the relevance, practicality, and appropriateness of priestly formation for the South African context are discussed in the next section.

2.6.3.2 Views of formators on the relevance, practicality, and appropriateness of formation for a South African priest

The views of formators on the relevance, practicality, and appropriateness of their formation for the training and formation of Church leadership are presented, starting with positive elements, followed by the negative elements.

All formators agreed that the formation they received was relevant, even though it was given on international level (PF1, PF2). PF1 and PF2 had studied and lived in different countries, which opened their horizons (PF2) to many possibilities (PF1, PF2). PF2 made candidates aware that it was possible for them to work for the Church anywhere and in any context in the world, because formation is international, but this internationality does not make it relevant for the South African context (PF2). All formators agreed that priestly formation was practical.

PF1 regarded the formation he had received in Rome as impractical in the sense that he received it on another continent, and he did not have the opportunity to practice in parishes there as is the case in South Africa. Although PF4 emphasised that the formation he had received was mostly academic, and that he had learned other dimensions through experience, he agreed that it was applicable to the South African context and therefore practical. The multicultural environment of the seminary made it possible to apply formation on the level of multicultural society in preparing candidates for the South African context (PF4).

All formators accepted that the training and formation they offered at St John Vianney Seminary was relevant, practical, and appropriate for the South African context. Formation also prepared priests to be open to the missionary outlook of the Church because it was not a closed formation, but it provides the possibility for ministry anywhere in the world.

Although parish priest participants found formation irrelevant (PP1, PP3), impractical (PP1, PP2, PP3), and Eurocentric (PP2, PP3), these views were not shared by formators. The fact that candidates had the opportunity to go out to parishes around the seminary and do a six-month

internship, these were viewed by formators as offering the practical experience needed for the South African context.

PF5 related that they send seminarians out to parishes to come in contact with the suffering of people—unemployment, issues of justice, poverty alleviation, and job creation. He also mentioned the fact that the seminary collaborates with pastoral supervisors and vocational directors on diocesan level to upgrade their programmes of formation to meet the needs of the societies where candidates originated from. This situation was not evaluated, but taken for granted that it helped candidates prepare for parish ministry. However, the parish priests experienced it differently, as they found their formation impractical and these experiences not helpful in their pastoral ministry as priests.

PF3L experienced his priestly formation as semi-relevant, semi-practical, and semi-appropriate, leaving much room for improvement. Much still needs to be done to fulfil the basic needs of the laity at parish ministry.

The above presentations portrayed what is going on in the priestly formation, as viewed by the three different groups, which were related directly and indirectly. Based on the views of participants on their calling, empowerment for their calling, and empowerment by the four pillars for the mission of the Church, priestly formation needs rethinking to make it relevant, practical, and appropriate for leadership in the South African Catholic Church.

The views of parishioners, parish priests, and formators painted a picture of formation that has gaps, and as related by PF3L, as being semi-relevant, semi-practical, and semi-appropriate. There is a difference between knowing and doing. Academic formation was viewed by both parish priests and formators as well organised and of a high standard, but they differed on the practicality thereof. Local parish priests who took over from expatriate missionaries are unable to minister to their own people due to lack of creativity, skills, and the inability to translate acquired knowledge for service to the laity. Parish priests found implementation problematic.

Formators especially, felt ill-equipped for their ministry as formators but were more equipped as lecturers and they used their experiences of parish ministry to prepare candidates for parish ministry in the South African context, which was not uniform and symbiotic, as they did not have the same preparation to be formators. The views of formators on concepts that form the centre of Christian religion, for example, the understanding of the concept of God and His

mission, and the concept of the Church and her mission, differed. Their mission and ministry, being at the centre of the Church forming her leadership, are basic concepts that need to be understood correspondingly in a particular region when addressing the needs of the people.

This chapter described the views of participants to determine what is going on in the Roman Catholic Church in helping her members to understand their calling, who called them, and their mandate as members of the Church. The mission of the Church propagates the mission of God and if members are to participate appropriately, they need to know and understand God and His mission in order for them to answer their call appropriately.

In conclusion, the suggested views of participants on what should change in priestly formation, starting first with positive views and secondly with views that they thought should change are presented. The views of parishioners are discussed next on what should change.

2.6.4 What should be considered for change?

Participants were asked to give their general view on priestly formation after their deliberation on their understanding of their calling as parishioners, priests, and priests formators; who called them; and their understanding on the mandate of their calling in their position in the level of the Church. With knowledge and awareness of their status, satisfaction, and needs, they responded to the question, what do you consider should change in priestly formation to empower priests to be efficient and effective in their ministry in order to empower the laity (IQ 9). The question was adjusted to different groups of participants to fit their position.

2.6.4.1 Views of parishioners on what should be considered for change

Parishioners' views on positive aspects regarding priestly formation in order to empower them are presented.

Only three out of nine parishioners stated what they regarded as positive about priestly formation. LP1W stated that the seminary did a good job in spiritual formation of their parish priest. His preaching was building the community and they were growing. LP6YM regarded the formation of priest candidates as adequate for their ministry, since they inspired them as youth to be good leaders and good Christians in society. LP8W mentioned that priest formation cannot change the way it currently is since the Church is sure that it is effective as it is. The following paragraphs present what they considered should change.

LP2YM felt that priestly formation should train priests to be actively involved in the community and to work and support the youth as leaders of tomorrow. LP4M shared the same sentiments that priests should be trained and taught ethics in order to learn to work with people in parishes and how to treat them. Formation should change to help priests to support youth of today and involve them in the parish activities, in other words, formation should change with the times.

LP9W advocated for change that should help priests to not distance themselves from people but to get to know every parishioner, rather than spending too much time on social media. LP8W suggested that priests should be taught in the language of the people and material for formation should also be translated into the languages of the people in the communities they serve. Priests should be trained to give workshops in the languages of the people for clear understanding of the faith, especially to make the illiterate feel at home in the Church.

LP1W, on the other hand, suggested that since priests are unmarried, they should be empowered to deal with problems of marriage and giving workshops to couples in their own parishes and not to wait for workshops to be offered on the diocesan level, as not everyone could afford to attend those. She advocated for emotional intelligence to strengthen priests to stand for what is right and to be able to make decisions about what they are sure of in their teaching. Formation should train priests to handle difficult parishioners so that the parish can function efficiently.

LP5W and LP7M advocated for total change in priestly formation. LP7M commented that priests seem to be only learning about the Bible, because they do not know anything else that they can give to empower parishioners, such as starting projects for self-reliance. Priests only do church services and after church they are nowhere to be seen. The views of LP5W are cited to emphasise what she considered for change.

I think it goes back to what I've been complaining about even during this interview that priests forget about their greater purpose. They forget that they are called so that they can come to parishes and be a gift. You know, when you are a gift, you are able to identify that this community needs this, this community needs that, this people are in need of this, instead of just coming to celebrate Holy Mass only. We have been receiving Masses all our lives and there's still no change. So now they should look at it in a different angle that this people, yes, in the Catholic Church we have to have Mass, but we need something more (LP5 on IQ 10).

LP5's views on what needed to be considered summarised what some of parishioners have mentioned, for example, the need for marriage counselling, youth leadership workshops,

checking the needs of people in general, assessing their situation, and engaging with people and helping them deal with their oppressive situations. LP5W continued:

They [leadership] should change it completely, completely, and go back to the drawing table and do something better, something different. This is not working, it's not. You come into our Church, and you count youth members, and they're three or four, what has happened? Something has to be done or else Christianity will just be useless and people who are not Christians will look at us and say ush we are just the same. We shouldn't be the same. They should envy us. They should want to be us you know. We should go into the world and change them, but we can't if we are messed up, yes (LP5 on IQ 10) [Modified].

The views of the laity advocate for the need for change in priestly formation as they are the ones to be served—the ones who fund formation for priests, and the ones (the laity), who should be empowered to go out into society as the light, the salt, and the leaven to transform it. Without change in priestly formation that empowers priests for holistic formation of the laity, the laity cannot be effective in their mission in society. The views of parish priests on what should be considered for change follow.

2.6.4.2 Views of parish priests on what should be considered for change

Parish priests were asked the same question (IQ 10) and they used their own experiences in parish ministry as a measuring stick. PP1 advocated that formators should create an environment that is conducive to students to be free and open. He commented that lecturers are academically strong but should not emphasise academics more than other dimensions of formation. Parishioners need ministry of presence more than academic knowledge.

PP2 said that courses on finances and administration should be considered. He commented that formation was focused mostly on scripture, without any training for handling finances. He also suggested a course that could help priests address social ills in society, as well as a course to assist people with trauma. He found the psychology course offered inadequate and proposed emphasis on methods and skills to deal with people with stress and trauma who might turn to suicide. Another point he raised was that inculturation should also be emphasised and not to be left to individual priests to do it on their own. The last priest interviewed mentioned changes in theology. PP3 advocated that works of African theologians, who wrote about the African situation, be included in the curriculum. The formators' views on what should be changed, are discussed next. PF1 stated:

What we have neglected now in South Africa is the Social Teachings of our Church. So, though we preach whatever, but the visibility of us as the Church out there somehow is not clear, but we have volumes and volumes and volumes of the Social Teachings of the Church in our shelves, but they do not get opened to train and empower us and parishioners on social involvement (PF1 on IQ 10) [Modified].

The visibility of the Church depends on involvement of the laity in society, using gospel values, but without preparation of a priest to implement the Social Teachings of the Church in parishes, the Church will remain invisible. PF2 said that theology needs to be reshaped and be more practical, and subjects to be introduced to help students deal with social problems in society. PF3L also advocated for more practical subjects to deal with trauma and social problems, for example, by emphasising psychology to be applied in the same way as spiritual direction in order to help candidates on their journey. The same psychologists who assessed candidates for reception into the seminary, should accompany them to the end.

PF4 felt that there was hope, since students did internships, they were working on the human formation programme, and the emphasis was changing from being academic to being more missionary. He agreed with PF1 that the Church was not visible in society and advocated for formation of the laity for the Church to be visible in society.

2.7 Conclusion

In summary, the participants agreed on the need for change in priestly formation for the Church to fulfil her mission in the South African society. Parishioners were aware of the inadequacy of priests in helping them and indicated what should be done to achieve transformation. Parish priests experienced challenges, leading to their suggestions that additional courses could help priests cope in their ministry. Formators as well saw the gaps in the formation of priests and suggested steps to be taken to improve practical skills and methods for implementation.

The first objective of this study is to analyse the views of the participants on the priestly formation and its impact on the mission of the Roman Catholic Church in democratic South Africa. This objective was achieved by engaging the descriptive-empirical task to present the views of the participants about the formation of the priests in the RCC and its impact on the ministry of the church and fulfilled the first objective of this study. To address the above-mentioned objective the researcher exercised spirituality of presence, priestly listening, and attending as a member of the RCC and by visiting different parishes, using one-on-one

interviews. The next chapter interprets the views of participants in order to fulfil the second objective of this study.

CHAPTER 3

The Roman Catholic Church ministry in the multicultural South African context

3.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the second task of Practical Theological Interpretation and its appropriate question, “why is this going on”. The objective of this study is to interpret the ministerial practices by explaining why the participants view the priestly formation and its impact in the mission of the Roman Catholic Church in the manner they have given. To address this objective, the researcher drew from theories of art and science to better understand and interpret the views of participants to explain why this is going on in the Roman Catholic Church regarding the understanding of a calling, faith formation, and involvement in the mission of God and the mission of the Church by participants. The researcher followed the following pattern in interpreting the views of participants:

Firstly, the views of participants were interpreted thoughtfully according to their different positions and level in the hierarchical ministerial structure of the Church to understand their context, being aware of their shortcomings in explaining the truth, therefore their views cannot be blindly used being constructed from a particular perspective.

Secondly, different theories from various disciplines were applied to interpret data, keeping in mind the history of South Africa and cultural background of participants and how these impacted and influenced the understanding of Christian concepts such as a calling, Christian formation, and involvement in the Church and society.

Thirdly, wise judgement implies interpreting episodes, situations, and context by recognising the relevant particulars of specific events and circumstances, discerning the moral ends at stake and the effective means to achieve these ends. These strategies were used to interpret the reasons behind participants’ views and how these affected their overall activities and life in the Church and society.

These strategies helped the researcher to interpret data and answer the second objective of this chapter, namely, *to interpret the ministerial practices by explaining why the participants view*

the priestly formation and its impact in the mission of the Roman Catholic Church in the manner they have given. To fulfil this objective, this chapter is set out in the following outline.

The first discussion provides an interpretation of the views of participants on a calling, by using social and theological theories to determine why participants understood a calling in the manner they did. The second presentation is that of formation as proposed in the documents of the Church and by African and South African theologians and why it is not implemented in the Church. Thirdly, the curriculum of St John Vianney Seminary is analysed, using contemporary theological education theories to find out how they are integrated. The fourth interpretation comprises the Church and her mission in the context of the multicultural democratic South Africa, using theories on the twofold mission of the Church. The main summary of ideas that respond to the research question is then provided, to determine whether the objectives of the chapter are achieved, followed by an introduction to the next chapter.

The next section presents the interpretations of the participants' views on the calling, starting with parishioners, followed by those of parish priests, then the views of formators. This pattern is followed throughout this chapter.

3.2 A calling in the context of Christianity

Theories built around a calling explain it from different perspectives, depending on the aim of what they wanted to express. Different religious belief systems also have their own understanding of a calling, who calls, and the implication thereof (Glenn-Burns 2004:6; Nel & Scholtz 2016:1). In the discipline of psychology there is a new development on theories on work as a calling differentiating it from a job or a career. These different perspectives of a calling reveal the richness of the word and its importance in social sciences, religions, and cultures as individuals search for meaning in their lives.

Literature was reviewed on the spirituality of a calling, work, and family, tracing the concept of a calling from Judeo-Christian tradition to explain and give meaning to the understanding of a calling as understood in this study. The African perspective of a calling also forms part of the discussion to situate the views of participants of whom the majority are black South Africans. Participants were asked: How do you understand your calling as either a parishioner, a parish priest, or a formator? Their understandings are discussed in this chapter to indicate

how they assess their position in the hierarchical structure of ministries in the Roman Catholic Church.

Applying a calling to public sphere of work and family reveals the aspect of a deep desire of humanity in history in search for meaning, who they are in the midst of creation, their relationship with it, and their life purpose (Frankl 1946). Searching for meaning in these basic activities of life directs humanity back to their fundamental duty given in the creation narrative that man is made a co-creator with God and creation is subjected to his care (Gen 1:26–2:25). Sin broke this relationship of man with God and man lost his purpose of existence and ethics of work. Humanity was created by God for himself and for his purpose. The search for depth and meaning in life and work is man's search for connection and relationship with his or her roots, which is spirituality of life (Hoppe 2005:84, Phipps 2011:179). A person is not only physical but an integrated being made of both the physical and the spirit, making him or her a spiritual being created in the image of God.

Spirituality is defined in different ways by different scholars and in this study the focus is on spiritual formation that focuses on all the baptised in their relationship with God, others, and creation. The participants' views on spiritual formation are interpreted according to the Roman Catholic understanding of spirituality, which is understood as a belief through God's grace of a desire and capacity to grow in union with the Triune God. Spirituality understood in this way encompasses the dynamic character of human life lived in a community of believers and conscious of a relationship with God through the Holy Spirit that prompts one to conversion and be concerned with what is of God as a disciple (Griffith 2009:1, Hoppe 2005:84, Piercy 2013:32; Oyemomi 2011:95).

The Catholic spirituality therefore keeps the balance between "prayer and praxis". The participation in the sacraments with the Eucharist as the "source and summit", and engagement in different practices, for example, *Lectio Divina*, meditation, adoration, praying the rosary, etc. form a way of life that gives them their identity and the basics of the Catholic Christian faith (Griffith 2009:2). The proper understanding of these dynamics of Catholic spirituality and practices are geared to help individuals and parishes to build their relationship with God and to live their Christian calling effectively in society.

For spirituality to be authentically Christian it should encompass nine most important characteristics as stipulated by Lazar (2009:2–3). Christian spirituality should be

Christological, Trinitarian, Pneumatological, Biblical, Communitarian, Sacramental, Eschatological, Developmental and Diaconal.

Christian formation should encompass these characteristics and, if they are well understood, should help the baptised, whether laity or priests, to build their relationship with the Triune God, others, and care for all creation.

Psychological studies carried out to evaluate meaning and satisfaction in performing one's work as a calling, developed "Work as a Calling Theory" (WCT) to help those who were in search for personal meaning (Duffy *et al.* 2018:423, Mantler *et al.* 2021:2). Accepting work as a calling influences the behaviour and attitude of people towards work, satisfaction, engagement, a low rate of stress, and fewer somatic complaints even though they suffered from workaholism, burnout, poor sleep quality, and abuse imposed on employees by employers (Erhardt & Ensher 2020:3).

These psychologists' findings were not based on religion, but determined that a calling is an urge, a deep feeling of doing good, a desire to serve for the greater glory, seeking a sense of personal and/or professional fulfilment and general well-being (Duffy *et al.* 2019:328). Theories quantified satisfaction and high performance as the result of perceiving a calling, the opportunity and access to fulfil it, related living enhanced by an environment, mentoring, job crafting, and organisational support (Duffy *et al.* 2018:430).

The weaknesses of these theories though, were that they failed to connect or link a calling to God as the one who instils a desire or an urge within a person. These developments though, can be of use to assess the vocation to ministerial priesthood and to include psychologists who will journey with candidates throughout their formation, as suggested by one of the formators. The understanding of a calling (*pitso, neo* in Sesotho) in a Christian context, recognises God as the one who initiates a calling and a desire to respond to it. In an African context a calling is associated to ancestors who urge individuals to respond to be a *sangoma* (*mokoma* in Sesotho). In this understanding a call is from God or ancestors to fulfil a certain purpose.

The concept of spiritual leadership has also attracted much research and development of leadership theories to establish successful leadership in the workplace (Samul 2019:1). The development in these theories involves an attempt to answer the question about who a leader

is, what a leader does, where leadership happens or occurs, and what a leader thinks about, his or her mind set, and how he or she fulfils his or her duties (Samul 2019:1).

On the other hand, Christian spiritual leadership seeks spiritual depth in an inner journey in search for meaning, discernment, wholeness, and connectedness with God (Hoppe 2005:85–88). These qualities anchor a person and lead him or her to take an inner journey that continues in a reflective life (Hoppe 2005:91). To live a reflective life helps to re-direct one’s life to do good and achieve satisfaction in what one does in life.

An African understanding of a calling as *pitso* or *neo* is described as ‘called’ and or as ‘a gift’ (Van der Watt 2021:4). Whether a calling is recognised as *pitso* or *neo*, those who claim to be called or gifted explain it as a deep urge, a desire that draws you towards a particular lifestyle—mostly living and practicing as a traditional healer (*mokoma/lethuea/sangoma*). *Pitso* could also come through dreams, or you could be inflicted with pain, suffering, and sickness that will make you request healing, which would be interpreted as a call and if you fulfil that calling, then healing will occur (Van der Watt 2021:2).

In an African context one cannot claim to have *pitso* without associating it to the caller. A mentor is mostly suggested. This African worldview of a calling is commonly known, and an accepted concept that once called, you would not resist or have peace until you fulfil it (Gowa 2015). When those who feel called refuse or ignore *pitso*, they feel unhappy and unfulfilled, which draws a parallel to Duffy *et al.*’s (2018:426) understanding and propose: “the benefits of approaching work as a calling likely cannot be fully experienced unless there is an opportunity to actually live out that calling”.

None of the participants in this study, Christian/parishioner, priest, or formator, associated a calling with this African concept of *pitso* or *neo* or to the psychological understanding which raises a question of the authenticity of the Christian understanding of a calling by the interviewees. The spiritual dimension of a calling enhances values for living out a calling in obedience to God and fulfilling His will and purpose, which leads us to the views of parishioners in this research.

3.2.1 A call to be a Christian and a parishioner

Asked how they understood their calling as parishioners, none of the respondents defined it but only mentioned that they were called to serve. This could mean that parishioners did not

associate a calling to be a parishioner (Christian) as *neo* or *pitso* that comes from God. The notion is that for most Africans *pitso* is associated mainly to ancestors (*badimo*), therefore they did not connect it to being called to be a Christian as being the same. Another reason might be that being a Christian was never perceived or associated as a call or a vocation from God.

The experience of some parishioners was that during the time of expatriate missionaries some people became Christians by receiving incentives from missionaries such as education of their children, houses being built for the destitute, and material necessities offered to those in need. Based on this statement it can be concluded that some Roman Catholic Christians cannot associate being Christians as a call from God for his or her sole purpose as becoming or joining Christianity was based on receiving help and gifts from expatriate missionaries. The idea expressed was that people are leaving the church because the local priests do not offer incentives. It follows then that those born within African Christian families did not receive proper formation from their parents and from formation for initiation into the Church. The concept of a call to be a Christian does not form part formation.

Formation for initiation is based on the reception of sacraments and does not help the laity to understand and articulate their faith based on the understanding that God continues to call people through Christ to cooperate with him in fulfilling his purpose in the world. A number of those who receive the sacraments eventually leave the Church for lack of understanding and dissatisfaction of how to live their faith. Even though most parishioners explained the mandate of their calling as to serve, it was not associated with service as a fulfilment of the purpose of a call from God to serve him and represent him in society as disciples. The use of indigenous knowledge can anchor parishioners into a Christian understanding of a calling to better understand the Christian concepts of faith in the Trinitarian God, of living a Christian life, and establishing a Christian identity in society.

Having a deep longing, a desire, to become a Catholic and embrace the Catholic faith helped a parishioner to feel honoured to become a member of a parish, a parishioner, and she was enthusiastic about her service to the poor and therefore satisfied. This parishioner had recognised her calling and longed to become a Christian and established a relationship with the Eucharistic Jesus. She spends time in front of the Tabernacle in adoration and can share her concerns with Jesus. She lives by serving others and becomes exemplary to the point of becoming a workaholic, always thinking of what next to do to help those in need. Recognition

of her calling helped her on her journey of faith living out both sides of it: having a personal relationship with God and love of neighbour. Although she did not mention who called her, she had a relationship with God that led her to contemplative prayer that strengthened her service to the needy.

Other parishioners expressed their calling in terms of its mandate, which was to serve but they lacked enthusiasm to serve. Serving for the greater glory of God and recognition of a calling as reaching out to others by recognising them, extending a greeting, and accepting others has helped parishioners to see God in their neighbour and extend a helping hand.

Since people are uniquely created, they are also uniquely gifted and called to participate in the mission and ministry of God in Christ through the Church. Parish priests were able to express two dimensions of a calling without defining how they received their calling to ministerial priesthood.

3.2.2 A call to ministerial priesthood

Most parish priests identified that they were called by God. They all expressed that God called them to serve him and his people, thus stating both sides of service directed to God and to his people. Priests had the opportunity to increase the knowledge of their faith through the intellectual formation they received. Their views on a calling, though brief, covered the two dimensions of their mandate, to serve God and to serve God's people.

Recognition of a calling plays an essential part in priests who were not satisfied with the way they are serving the needs of their parishioners. A priest who received permission from his father after the death of his mother to become a Roman Catholic because he had a desire to become a Roman Catholic priest, was mourning his inability to serve his multicultural parish and lamented that the formation he received did not help him to fulfil that desire to serve God as a Catholic priest, though his uncle wanted him to become an Anglican priest like himself.

His father, knowing the desire of his son to become a Catholic priest, became his enabler and mentored him to follow his calling. He was passionate for his pastoral ministry and realised that what people need is being present to them in all their situations, which he realised is more important than all the intellectual formation he received. The intellectual and pastoral formation seminarians received did not help them to be creative in their ministry, even though they knew who called them and the mandate of their calling.

The views of parish priests nullified Work as a Calling Theory (WCT), stating that those who accepted work as a calling were satisfied and worked hard since they felt that their work had meaning. Parish priests, on the other hand, spent a lot of time at the presbytery for not knowing what to do in serving their people, except being sacrament celebrants and ritual performers, which was what was taught to them as important. The fourth proposal of WCT suggests that living a calling positively required engagement with one's work, which did not apply to parish priests.

Parish priests lacked creativity as the Roman Catholic Church emphasises applying rules and regulations which harness some people in the ability and freedom to search for new ways of evangelisation. Most priests depend on what they were taught at the seminary and deprive the laity formation that can enable them to fulfil their mission in society effectively. This explains why parishioners could not define a calling and who called them, for lack of doctrinal knowledge of a Christian calling from their parish priests, who mostly concentrated on the celebration of sacraments and performance of rituals, without organising workshops to give parishioners the opportunity to discuss and ask questions for clarification of concepts which are foreign to their culture. The formators' views, however, differed.

3.2.3 A calling to be a formator

Most of the formators associated their calling to being called to ministerial priesthood rather than being called to be a formator. This means that they did not feel the desire to be formators but were fulfilling a duty or profession because of the way they are recruited. Adhering to the recruitment process and accepting a ministry because of being obedient to the authorities without an inner urge can turn a person to a robot, carrying out duties but not being mentally and emotionally involved. If those recruited do not undergo the process of discernment and accept being a formator as a calling and a greater part of ministerial priesthood calling to form leadership discipleship, their lives will not be fulfilled because they are not satisfied with their work. Recruitment and a calling are two different concepts which need better application in discipleship. Having a call and fulfilling its demands give satisfaction which leads to commitment to work, creativity in seeking to fulfil a ministry to the best of ones' ability.

Accepting to be a formator as radiating from being a disciple of Jesus connects one to Jesus and one develops a personal relationship with Jesus as a role model of discipleship. These

views helped formators to live a reflective life that manifests in an inner journey, seeking meaning and significance in life, wholeness of being, and connectedness with others.

Recognition of being called to priesthood and called by the Church to be a formator helped formators to commit themselves to the mission of the Church by providing the Church with leaders and community builders. Identifying a call even when the process used is not proper helps one to make good decisions and to comply with the demands of that call by dedication to ones' work, be well willed, and creative to use ones' experiences to compensate the inadequacy of preparatory formation received to be a formator. Even though the question of recruitment of formators was raised, obedience and recognition of a calling helps one to fulfil one's responsibilities as a priest and formator diligently.

However, fulfilling a duty and one's profession can create an attitude of not being committed to one's duties and responsibilities. However, regarding the formators, this was not the case. Having a profession without accepting it as a call from God to serve him in a particular place can deny a person a full life experience for the sake of obedience.

It has taken the formation team 26 years to start owning human formation and contextualising it for the South African context. The South African region still has not yet formulated *Ratio Nationalis* that would give direction on teaching, learning, and the kind of formators needed and how to recognise those called to be formators. The struggle of formators to accept being a formator as a calling might originate from lack of direction, which is to be provided by a master of formation and not *Ratio Nationalis* for the democratic multicultural South African context. Lacking these necessities, the seminary fails to provide leadership that is prophetic for the Church.

Priesthood as discipleship is long overdue for the country, preventing the mission of the Church to be realised through the laity whose mission it is to live their faith in every structure of society and apply the gospel values, especially those in government positions. The Liaison Office could work as a supportive body to those who are already carrying out their mission in the government structures. Having structures in the Church, but not proper understanding of a calling to be a Christian, priest, and formator, does not produce good results and the commission of Jesus is not fulfilled.

Work as a Calling Theory states that those who live their calling, have work satisfaction, meaning of life, life satisfaction, and spirituality of leadership. These qualities were not expressed by participants as priests and formators as needed to be able to achieve the above. One needs to recognise a calling for a particular ministry.

Similarly, for one to become a Christian, one needs to recognise that one is drawn to following Christ, being his disciple, and participating in his mission in a particular way. The second suggestion to successfully living out work as a calling rest in having a mentor. A mentor can be any person, even one's own parents or a family member, Church authorities, spiritual directors, or a psychologist who knows and understands the desires of the person concerned. There should be mutual understanding, openness, and freedom between the mentor and candidate for proper discernment and spiritual growth.

Lack of trust caused fear amongst candidates, preventing openness and honesty towards their spiritual directors, which made it impossible for spiritual directors to offer advice appropriate to their discernment process for them to grow spirituality as they pretended to do what was suggested to them. Those who were honest and open to their spiritual directors did grow spiritually and in knowledge of who they are as persons, which brings hope of them fulfilling their calling.

The disadvantage of pretending is that they did not grow as spiritual leaders and might not have been able, as parish priests, to spiritually form the laity in order for them to fulfil their calling as the laity. The significance of knowing the caller is to build a relationship, to establish a point of reference when you are in doubt, discouraged or struggling (Ps 27:1, Ps 18:2). Not knowing the caller might lead one to leave the Church for lack of connectedness to the source of one's life.

Unable to define a calling, or who called them, most parishioners only served without identifying whom they were serving or recognising that to be a Christian is a call to discipleship. Lack of associating a calling with God may be indicative of their poor relationship with God and satisfaction with the minimum formation they received and minimum services they performed as parishioners, unaware of the demands of their calling as Christians.

The parish priests, although they had doctrinal knowledge that it was God who called them, did not define a calling, neither in an African nor Christian understanding, which compels those

who claim a calling in an African setting to pursue it and leave everything to follow the voice of ancestors or inner voice to live a meaningful life. The dissatisfaction of parish priests means that they are not living their calling as it is meant due to the formation they received and their obedience to the rules and regulations of the Church that harness creativity.

The majority of formators could not help parish priests to define a calling and grow in their relationship with the caller, because when recruited, they did not clearly recognise being a formator as a calling. Teaching and formation at the seminary were not recognised as inherent in discipleship.

A calling to be a parishioner would be a way of life instead of a Sunday worship and the rest of the week being Africans in their own right (Whiteman 1997:3–4). The problem of the Church in her mission is compartmentalisation of Sunday and weekdays, whereas religion in Africa is a way of life and not a Sunday ritual. Understood properly, Christianity would become culture, and integrative formation would seek unique local ways of responding to the training of priests, closing the gap and building a bridge between formal theological education and education and formation of the laity (Naidoo 2021:1). Parishioners, parish priests, and formators would derive meaning in fulfilling their Christian calling, searching for meaning of life, wholeness, connection and service to God and his people.

In the following section the participants' views are interpreted to determine why people struggle to understand a calling, know the caller, and live a calling.

3.3 Formation in the context of participants

The Roman Catholic Church has recently published two documents on priestly formation, titled *Pastores dabo vobis to the bishops, clergy and faithful on the formation of priests in the circumstances of the present day* (John Paul II 1992) and *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis [The Gift of the Priestly Vocation]* (Congregation for the Clergy 2016) as models of priestly formation. For the assessment of priestly formation in this study, the researcher used these documents of the Church and scholarly writings on ministerial theological education in Africa to assess the views of participants on their formation as parish priests and formators and how this affected laity formation in the context of multicultural democratic South Africa.

Formation in this study is interpreted in the context of formation to be a parishioner (Christian), priestly formation to ministerial priesthood, and formation in preparation to be a formator of Church leadership. The focus of priestly formation means to form candidates in simplicity, sobriety, serene dialogue, and authenticity to help them develop pastoral charity (Congregation for the Clergy 2016:#43, Ukwuije 2020:124). Priestly formation is not meant for ordination only, but is an ongoing process for spiritual growth as a person matures in faith and love of God and neighbour as a disciple of Jesus (Congregation for the Clergy 2016:#43).

There is no *Ratio Nationalis* for South Africa yet although it was recommended that every Episcopal Conference should develop it for their region. The General Prospectus is used to outline the processes of training and formation setting the curriculum for the St John Vianney Seminary and presents the intellectual formation based on general theological education in accordance with the requirements of the South African Department of Higher Education. The earlier General Prospectus included the four pillars of formation stipulating what is covered in them, but lately it presents only the intellectual formation which covers the intellectual curriculum of the institution.

There is only one module in African Theology with eight credits (St John Vianney Seminary 2022:121), one module in Historical and Systematic African Philosophy with eleven credits (GP 2022:103) and one module in African History with nine credits (St John Vianney Seminary 2022:97) which are intended to inform and form African students to function well in their South African context. This situation reverts to Western theological education that denied Africans their African belief system and identity. This situation confirms what parish priest participants mentioned regarding African theologians who can best provide candidates with knowledge on how best to live their calling and fulfil their pastoral ministry in the context of Africa and South Africa, being used as temporary lecturers.

No course is mentioned on inculturation which could afford students to assess their own cultural background in relation to their calling to ministerial priesthood and be challenged to make informed choices in accepting Christian spirituality that focuses on the Trinitarian God and denies ancestral worship. This move denies Africans knowing their roots and a smooth transition to accepting the Trinitarian God and root themselves in Christianity as they prepare themselves to become Christian spiritual leaders. There is no course offered in African Independent Churches and African Traditional Religion to help candidates understand their

families, which in most cases are ecumenical and still practice African Traditional religion. The views of parishioners, parish priests, and formators alleged to lack of knowledge on how to evangelise and re-evangelise on parish level and this can be due to lack of education in appropriate philosophical and theological courses that situate candidates in their own context denying the laity contextualised formation for their mission in society.

As presented above, mentoring goes hand in hand with formation. Without mentoring formation cannot be internalised to give the candidates knowledge appropriate to accepting the calling one has received. In all stages of entry into spiritual life, be it called to be a Christian, to ministerial priesthood, or to be a priest formator, there is a need for formation and mentoring in order to situate a person to live his or her formation satisfactorily.

Priestly formation is modelled on the four pillars of formation believed to provide holistic formation to ministerial priesthood. The vision and goal of the St John Vianney Seminary and the formators' views were that their responsibility was to provide the Church with community leaders able to form communities of faith. Parish priests, however, are unable to exercise their leadership properly due to formation that was not helping them to live their calling.

The contemporary documents of the Church, *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* regards the four pillars of formation as one, integral, grounded in community, and missionary in spirit. The whole formation from baptism through one's entire life is seen as a singular journey of discipleship (Congregation of the Clergy 2016:#3). How each region owns them and translates them to address their situation is the responsibility given to each Episcopal Conference (Congregation of the Clergy 2016:#8), which has not happened yet in South Africa. *Ratio Nationalis* has not yet been written and Catechism of the Catholic Church has not yet been translated in the multicultural South African context to enable formators at the seminary and catechists at parish level to have direction and theological background to what they teach.

Hodgson (1988:98), on the other hand, explains the fundamental purpose of ministry as to guide and to serve the processes of ecclesia mission, that is, to enable the church to realize its ecclesial essence, to be a love, sign and sacrament of the kingdom of God. With the realisation of ministerial formation not contextualised and the curriculum of St John Vianney Seminary heavily laden with Western philosophy and theology, the fundamental purpose of ministry cannot be realised in the Church in South Africa. Ownership and translation of documents using multicultural wisdom and indigenous knowledge would be the first step towards the

inculturation of universal formation for practical implementation in the South African situation. Empowerment of ministers through relevant philosophical and theological knowledge would lead to laity formation for mission and ministry in their own circumstances of everyday life.

The two documents of priestly formation list stages to be followed and what is necessary in each stage for the formation of priests. The documents suggest accompaniment or mentoring as primarily important for discernment of ministerial priesthood (John Paul II 1992:#42). Personal (Congregation of the Clergy 2016:#44) and community accompaniment (Congregation of the Clergy 2016:#50 and #53) are irreplaceable on the journey to ministerial priesthood forming the unity of formation, a single and integrated path. Initial and ongoing formation are regarded as an integral formation throughout the life of a priest, helping him on his journey of discipleship (Congregation of the Clergy 2016:#54).

The effectiveness of priestly formation is based on the maturity and strength of personality of formators entrusted with formation, and on the seminarian who is called to ministerial priesthood for the empowerment of the laity. A candidate called to ministerial priesthood should desire to be formed and be open to spiritual direction for him to be able to live his calling. He is at the centre of formation since he is the one called to discipleship and without him being open to receive and learn, formation cannot take place (Congregation of the Clergy 2016:#53). The initial formation comprises four stages, which are discussed briefly to give the essence of their importance on the journey of discipleship.

The first stage is the propaedeutic stage or preparatory stage, where the emphasis is on forming a solid basis for spiritual life with the aim that the candidates nurture greater self-awareness for personal growth (Congregation of the Clergy 2016:#57–#60). It is a bridging stage helping a candidate to prepare himself for the second stage of philosophical studies or discipleship where seminarians learn the way of following Christ who called them and is rooted in “*sequela Christi*, listening to his Word, keeping it in his heart and putting it into practice” (Congregation of the Clergy 2016:#61–#67).

The second stage entails philosophical studies (or discipleship) and learning from knowing of the Master, forming a lifelong relationship with him using spiritual exercises, including *Lectio Divina* in this process (Congregation for the Clergy 2016:61–67).

The third stage is theological studies or configuration where seminarians configure themselves “to Christ, Shepherd and Servant, so that, united to Him, he can make his life a gift of self to others” (Congregation of the Clergy 2016:#68–#73).

The fourth stage is pastoral or vocational synthesis with a twofold purpose: induction into pastoral life with responsibilities for spirit of service, and intense discernment with a specific accompaniment to declare freely, consciously, and definitively his intension to be a priest (Congregation of the Clergy 2016:#74). At this last stage before ordination the family of the candidate, together with the parish community of the seminarian, are encouraged to receive intense preparation which will help them to support and journey with their son in his priestly life (Congregation of the Clergy 2016:#78). The Conference of Bishops is entrusted with the responsibility to determine the formative programme for diaconal and priestly ordination (Congregation of the Clergy 2016:#75) and to form a *Ratio Nationalis* for their region (Congregation for the Clergy 2016:#176).

Throughout these stages the four pillars or dimensions of formation, taken as integrative, are suggested as forming part of holistic development and personality building. Theological education in South Africa still follows the Western model with processes of recruitment, training, equipment, and moral formation. Formation at the St John Vianney Seminary is regarded by priest participants as still Eurocentric in its presentation of content, as well as teaching and learning, making it difficult for parish priests to translate it into the multicultural democratic South African context. With a curriculum, heavily laden with philosophy and theology, that does not address the South African, this situation is possible, and the purpose of ministry is not achieved.

The Congregation for the Clergy (2016:#176–#187) gives a guideline for ministerial subjects, specialised studies, and the goals and methods of teaching to be considered, which makes it easy to contextualise those requirements in *Ratio Nationalis*. At the time of the interview (2019) the participating parish priests and formators stated that RFIS was not yet part of priestly formation at the St John Vianney Seminary. Based on these views there is still a long way to go before the other three pillars would be owned and contextualised to have an integrative priestly formation for the South African region.

Integrative theological education is understood to refer to a systematic attempt to connect, synthesise and coordinate the major learning experiences appropriate to the formation and

education of priests and ministers. The General Prospectus (2022:90) of St John Vianney Seminary presents the policy of work-integrated learning as a relevant curriculum that integrates theory and practice. Based on the four dimensions (human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral), the views of participating parish priests and formators explain how effective this theory is in a parish context. Parish priests' views are interpreted based on whether the formation they had received integrated these dimensions or pillars, grounded them in community, and if it entailed missionary spirit that helped them to answer the mandate of their calling effectively, using theological education theories.

Human formation recommended in *Pastores dabō vobis* (1992:#43) should help seminarians to build their personalities to become a bridge instead of an obstacle for others in their meeting with Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of humanity. But this requirement should build on an already established foundation at home, and continue in the spiritual family, the parish. Without this foundation the seminary formation is building on sand. Candidates come from different family cultures, customs, and structures which affect their personality and their understanding of life. Before priestly formation starts, a healing process needs to take place and a foundation on the love of God who calls people regardless of their state of life to use as his instrument, should be established on which seminary formation should be built.

Involving the family in the human formation is necessary as a bridge and healing of the family-tree, inviting grace through the Holy Spirit to intervene. Formation continues from infancy, through youth, to young adults, where seminary formation starts and develops for character building and maturity. This is a lifelong journey.

The discussion that follows concentrates on human formation with regards to helping participants grow in their being, forming a foundation where a calling for missionary discipleship can grow. Human formation is like preparing a bed for planting vegetables where the seed of grace can develop, meaning a personal transformation in Christ, surrendering to his will, and preparedness to follow Christ and becoming his disciple. The views of parishioners are presented first to indicate whether parish priests had applied an integrated formation in their parish ministry. Formation of parish priests, which is the main thrust of this study, follows, as well as a discussion on the views of formators, who are instruments responsible for priestly formation.

3.3.1 Human formation

The documents of the Church regard human formation as the foundation of all priestly formation and all other dimensions build on it. Human formation and development are basic for all people, not only for priests, for “grace builds upon nature”(Rossini 2021) which all peoples deserve.

Since formation of children and youth takes place more in schools and parishes and no longer in the family environment as it used to in the African context, the personality building of young people, formation in morals, values, and service to society depend more on the Western system of education and catechesis.

Participating parishioners stated that they received human formation through personal encounters with their parish priest and did not mention the family. Parishes did not have formal human formation that helped them to develop emotional intelligence in dealing with others in society. The youth did not mention school education as their source of human formation. Learning through personal encounters with the parish priest can be interpreted as mentoring (spiritual or psychological counselling) and not necessarily human formation as understood from the documents of the Church and psychological theories of human development (Hershberg *et al.* 2015:1).

Hershberg *et al.* (2015:1) explain how the environment, the individual context influences behaviour and development. This being the case, parishioners who spend most of their time at the parish fulfilling some ministries, attending services, and had personal encounters with the parish priest, were influenced in their behaviour by him. On the other hand, Masango (2006:930) states that self-management is in relationship to one’s context, which is living the highest quality of life. One can live the highest quality of life through self-actualisation which in most cases is through human formation in whatever way it is presented.

Besides being involved in any way in internal ministry, this kind of human formation is initiated by those who go to the priest seeking help because not all parishioners receive mentoring or spiritual direction. Mentoring or spiritual direction does not form part of laity formation even though during preparation for the reception of sacraments they are to have sponsors and godparents without any formation to help them in mentoring those who chose them to sponsor them. Those who were not in any way involved in internal ministries were

influenced by people outside the parish environment on how to behave as Christians and what their calling demanded of them.

Realisation of the needs of the poor and sharing with them whatever they had developed from listening to sermons and attending workshops and conferences. Not all parishioners attend workshops and conferences as it is mainly offered to those who are involved either in sodalities or internal ministries. Youth vocational workshops and youth camps, revivals, Renew Africa, and Education for life were not offered in all parishes visited and this indicates poor laity formation for them to be disciples and fulfil their mission in society.

These kinds of formation are arranged, planned, and formal, with the intension to build those who attend them. Initial and ongoing human formation for all parishioners does not form part of parish programmes or agendas. The experience of parishioners on human formation is that it not a general norm to help them deal with their emotions and heal their wounds, so that grace can build on human nature and produce the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit. Human formation of parish priests follows.

Parish priest participants had received formal human formation for eight years of their seminary life. The Johari Window Model was used to help them be in touch with who they are, to know themselves and to develop better relationships with others. Research on their genealogy helped them to know their past, define their present, and to look toward to their future with hope. With this formation they could bridge their earlier development and heal their past. Human formation using the Johari Window Model helped candidates to build their personalities to be a bridge and rather than an obstacle to others even though this was not experienced by all parish priests.

On the other hand, entering the seminary already mature and a professional, does not affect growth and those who enter the seminary already mature would need a different kind of human formation to ground them and help them face their present life with a different eye.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs formed part of the human formation models used to empower candidates and help them consider their basic needs for protection and self-esteem. Candidates were also to use Maslow's hierarchy model in their parish ministry, especially as a skill for spiritual works of mercy. However, this model did not help parish priest participants to deal with parish ministry, especially helping parishioners in their struggle to live their calling. This might mean that this model was not effective and applicable in the situation of parish ministry.

Not every model used can fit all cultures and situations and this needs careful selection and not just transference of a model with the hope that it will produce the expected results.

The use of positive psychology for formation in the seminary can strengthen positive elements in candidates instead of focusing on negative aspects or repairs of the past (Kwiatek 2014:101). Emotional intelligence was found wanting amongst candidates and it was recommended so that it could help candidates in relating to others.

According to the new SACBC (2016:1.2.3) on human formation, the vision is to form a prayerful, serving, integrated, and community serving priest. The African concept *Motho ke motho ka batho ba bang* meaning ‘I am because we are’ and/or *botho* (humanness) are concepts that need to be resurrected and instilled in church leadership to help them in their ministry and formation of the laity. This concept was mentioned in the seminary’s General Prospectus (St John Vianney Seminary 2018:223) but does not form part of the draft document and how this concept was integrated in the whole formation to form Africans to face the post-apartheid legacy of self-hate and assess how it impacts the context of the multicultural democratic South Africa. It can also be used to assess how it affects the relationship between blacks and whites, especially where parishes are multicultural and mixed race, or between blacks and blacks in light of xenophobia, or across ethnic groups in politics and within the Church. The question is: Is human formation geared towards promoting human dignity destroyed by apartheid, helping priests to attain their dignity and integrity without lashing out their anger based on the hurts of the past, breaking communities of the Family of God?

These, and many other questions, can be asked and should be addressed to heal the country of the past and help the rainbow nation to work together as children of God. The priests, as representatives of the Church, leaders of Christian communities, need to fill the gap and heal the nation. This would only happen when they have been healed through human formation.

Understanding the parish through indigenous knowledge of the family can build parishes as the Family of God, based on the African understanding as envisaged in *Ecclesia in Africa* (John Paul II 1995:#43). At the 25th symposium (2020) of *Ecclesia in Africa* (EA), Kenyan Bishop Oballa stated that the message of *Ecclesia in Africa* is neither substantively clear or meaningfully contextualised and its content had not made an impact on the continent (Onyalla 2020). The views of parish priests proved this observation of Bishop Oballa to be true, because human formation is not done or lived out to heal the past, face the present, or look forward with

hope and restore the dignity of Africans destroyed by slavery, colonialism, and apartheid in the South African situation. Integration of human formation curricula and other documents of the Church for Africa and the Pastoral Plan (2019) are lacking in this regard.

The vision of the draft manual hopes to form a road map for the journey of human formation (SACBC Draft Manual 2016:1.3.1) and to help candidates achieve a threefold growth in self-knowledge, self-acceptance, and self-gifting (Draft Manual SACBC 2016:2.2.1). As diocesan priests, their parishes should become their communities, their families, and reflect the gospel values of loving your neighbour as yourself.

Parishioners expressed joy for having local African priests join in heritage celebrations wearing their traditional attire, eating traditional food together with parishioners, and joining in singing and dancing during worship. African traditional understanding of a family that is strengthened by human formation can strengthen parish life as a Christian family when used together with the Christian understanding of communion and community life.

Most formators' views show that they had not been empowered in human formation during their formation as students and in preparation to become a formator which makes them unqualified to form candidates in human formation. The short courses they attended in Rome did not equip them for human formation and lack of creativity did not help them develop the manual earlier.

The draft document on human formation states that the effect of formation depends on the accurate choice of formators (Draft Manual SACBC 2016:5.1) which brings about the question of recruitment and lack of a calling for those involved as formators. The document suggests that formators should receive proper preparation to help them grow in constant development of their profession (Draft Manual 2016:5.1). This affirms the views of formators that to be a formator was not a calling, but a choice made by the authorities realising the maturity of a person, hoping that he would pass that on to candidates.

The fact that formators are aware that candidates after completion of their studies, leave everything behind, their personality unchanged, and start their own way of life, using their understanding of ministry, which shows the ineffectiveness of human formation they have received or lack of understanding of a calling to ministerial priesthood. Another factor is their recruitment without having a vocation to ministerial priesthood. The reason that seminary

formation is not lived out in dioceses makes the young men who join priesthood have different views of ministerial priesthood, which later leads to dissatisfaction because in the first place they were not called. They knew that once they completed their formation, they would not need to live according to the expectations the seminary instilled in them because their role models in parishes, those who recruited them, teach them a formation that contradicts seminary formation. This mentality shows that there are some priests who do not accept ministerial priesthood as it is being presented to them in their South African situation and instead of voicing their concerns, they act out what they believe should be the norm.

The realisation that some bishops are only interested in reports and have given their responsibilities to discern the vocations of those who join over to vocational directors, also shows that those appointed from amongst the other priests to hold the position of being bishops, still hold the opinion of wanting a different kind of ministerial priesthood. If a person has the intellectual knowledge of what to do as a priest, his human formation and his call are not of their interest. The importance of agreeing on what kind of human formation is necessary to help priests acquire an identity in their living of their calling is imperative.

Adding emotional intelligence, as part of human formation, can help candidates to practically experience their formation, be able to feel it in their bodies, to talk about it, and interact on that level and to express the same thoughts in their ministry.

In conclusion, personality and character building, emotional intelligence, and maturity are some of the necessary and basic content of human formation. Parishioners classified caring for others, trusting self, making the right choices, dealing with stress, abstaining from drugs and early sexual activities as part of their human formation, which means they had received moral formation, which is part of human formation. They received these by being part of the parish and participating in parish ministries. However, most of parishioners do not participate in ministries or sodalities and thus do not receive any formal human formation, apart from Sunday sermons, which does not necessarily lead to conversion, or its content is forgotten within a few hours, because it is out of context.

Parish priest participants, on the other hand, especially those who went to the seminary at a young age, felt that human formation helped them to know who they are, to accept themselves, and to know their background. Knowledge of who they are does not seem to have connected them to the source of their “being” which is God who created them for His purpose. But it is

clear from their views that being accepted at a young age, as adolescents, into the seminary just after they had matriculated, they were not yet mature enough to know who they are, what their background is, their needs, and even their calling. From the views of parishioners, catechesis they received did not integrate human formation, therefore they were immature in their understanding of being created by God for himself and for his purpose when they entered the seminary.

Their vocation to ministerial priesthood could have been influenced by different factors, including being recruited without having a personal desire or because it was suggested to them by either family members or parish priests. At this age when one does not know who one is, the question of a calling still needs introspection, discernment through the help of a mentor, spiritual director, and or the use of theories that can shed light on the ignorant decision made to follow Christ and answer one's calling. The life story of Samuel bears witness to this. His mother had presented him to the temple, and he had to learn to know the voice of God and how to answer his call (Sam 3:1–21).

When this process takes place when one is already within the system those who recruited him without establishing whether one has a calling, also offer their advice, which is contrary to what is taught at the seminary for lack of manpower, lack of leadership in the Church or other factors. The fact that they did not define what a calling is can be explained by these reasons and because human formation does not help them build their personality that gives them their identity as men of God. Those who enter the seminary already mature need more than just knowing who they are from human formation because their decision is not based on the blind choice of a person who does not even know who he is, but on a clear desire to serve the Lord as a Catholic priest.

Knowing who they are did not make clarify the definition of a calling for parish priests and whether they had that burning desire to live priestly calling with all its demands and whether their personalities are meant for priestly pastoral ministry. Their knowledge that they are called by God might have been learned but not part of their self-awareness of God continuing to call people for himself and for his purpose.

On the other hand, human formation did not help parish priests to deal with human problems of the laity, racism, tribalism, and multiculturalism. In their parish ministries, they failed to deal with people who had an abortion, families with marriage disorders, divorce issues, and

people who are suicidal challenges. Formed in a seclusive place away from the normal challenges of life, they lacked emotional intelligence and awareness of the human issues people go through. Knowing, feeling, and experiencing human suffering might have helped them to be creative in helping the laity in their human challenges of life. They might have knowledge but had not experienced the struggles the laity were going through due to formation received away from ordinary human life.

Researching what is going on in society and the experience thereof can help priests to integrate in their human formation methods to deal with problems of the laity and to grow in knowledge how through human development they can make informed decisions to empower the laity. Human formation did not ground them on who they are as members of society as priests and being affected by all the processes that are taking place. In light of being aware of being created in the image of God and called with all their human weaknesses as leaders in the Church could have helped them to be able to integrate human formation in catechesis to help the laity in their own situation of life.

However, human formation did not help them build their personality as a bridge for their parishioners to grow in their personal life as Christians with a mission to carry out. Parishioners had to deduce from whatever the priest said in his preaching and through personal encounters with him, what to do and how to deal with their emotion and shortcomings.

Formators did not contribute much to help priests to use human formation to grow in their lives and use the God-given talents to be creative in their dealings with the laity by integrating human formation in their pastoral ministry. Formators themselves found their human formation inadequate during their own seminary formation and in their preparation for their ministry as formators. Their own human formation as students was not contextualised to deal with problems of a multicultural society. Drafting a manual in human formation, formators were aware that human formation did not help priests to live their calling, establish their identity as Christian leadership exemplary in society, and to help the laity deal with their life in society as Christians. Christian identity is not visible in the democratic multicultural South African society; therefore the mission of the laity is not realised. The mission of the laity is more carried out by the personality and the way they relate, carry out their duties and responsibilities rather than preaching. Unless human formation is integrated in catechesis their mission will be impaired.

With this impaired human formation in mind, spiritual formation is interpreted to understand how it was taught based on the foundation which is weak. The views of parishioners are discussed first.

3.3.2 Spiritual formation

The views of parishioners on human formation did not help them understand that they were created by God in his image for a purpose, which would give a foundation to their calling as human beings, and being created in the image of God, was to participate in the Trinitarian mission in the world. Spiritual formation, on the other hand, should build on and facilitate this knowledge and the understanding of the Triune God: Father as the Creator to awaken ecological practices, the Son drives us to self-sacrifice, and the Holy Spirit empowers with spiritual gifts to bear spiritual fruits in society.

Participants understood human formation to be for self-awareness, moral living, awareness of others, and service to them. What they portrayed was human formation on a horizontal level, failing to connect it with God as the Creator, forming a foundation for spiritual formation and realisation of God as the initiator of their calling. The four dimensions or pillars are intended to be integrated throughout formation and the life of the priests to help them to be fully human, spiritually transformed, intellectually formed, and pastorally skilled with methods for the evangelisation mission of the Church (Congregations for the Clergy 2016:#89).

The documents on priestly formation state that a well-laid foundation in human formation should be completed by spiritual formation (John Paul II 1992:#45, Congregation of the Clergy 2016:#94) where one learns to develop a personal relationship and communion with God and learn to listen to him in all things, which is self-abasement or humility. Created in the image of God and reborn by water and the spirit in baptism, a human being becomes both human and spiritual (John Paul II 1992:#45). The quest for the meaning of life and self-awareness for being created for a higher purpose makes one focused and it establishes learning goals that can lead to transformative learning to occur (Piercy 2013:30).

Theories of spiritual formation are helpful to direct how one learns to stay connected with God and remain faithful to His plan. There are basic elements to be considered in helping the baptised to grow through spiritual formation, that is, growing into the likeness of Christ by developing a personal relationship with the Triune God through scripture, living faith through

the Eucharist, love of neighbour, being missional as a disciple, enhancing spiritual learning through the sacrament of penance and annual retreats, cultivation of virtues, and developing a community spirit, just to name a few (Tang 2014, Congregation for the Clergy 2016:#101–#115). The integration of these elements in the formation process in the life of the laity built on a firm human formation will enhance their personal knowledge and growth in the spirit or spiritual life.

The context of the multicultural democratic South Africa was influenced by the legacy of expatriate missionaries on spiritual formation of the laity who were given the basics of the Creed, sacraments, and prayers without the explanation of their deep meaning and their effect in the life of a Christian. Christian values clothed in Western culture could not be differentiated, being civilised implied to being a Christian (Bosch 1991:259), therefore Africans were forced, subconsciously or consciously, to accept Christianity as part of civilisation brought through Western education.

The documents of the Church, scholarly theological education, and African spirituality were used to interpret the participants' views to better understand the patterns of spiritual formation they received to strengthen their Christian calling.

3.3.2.1 Spiritual formation of parishioners

Parishioners received formal spiritual formation through catechesis when they were preparing for the reception of sacraments of initiation and became parishioners—members of a Christian community. Those who accept Christianity, undergo the process of spiritual formation that separates children from parents through Western education, families from the clan, and the clans from the tribe. Formerly, accepting Western education was to be civilised and Christian. African spirituality, on the other hand, is tangible, experiential, and integrated in everyday life. Taking children away from their families into a boarding school for twelve years was indoctrination into a new way of being a spiritual person which was different from the life lived by the family. The responsibility of the family to pass on their belief system to their children was taken away from them. The spiritual gap that ensued between parents and their children broke down the fibre of the African family structure which was based on the traditional religion with its rituals. A call to be a Christian is a personal response to God which needs spiritual formation that accentuates it and helps one to define what is going on in his or her inner self

and then be connected to the caller. But without the understanding of the Christian calling, one can lose the support of the family and/or be forced to practice both African spirituality and Christian spirituality at the same time.

Spiritual formation of parishioners depends mostly on Sunday Holy Mass, Sunday services conducted by lay ministers, revivals, retreats, scripture, contemplative prayer, intercessory prayer, and listening to sermons. These activities in themselves strengthen the relationship with God and service to one's neighbour once one has understood the concept of Christian calling and is grounded in Christian spirituality.

Attending Sunday Holy Mass was not seen as routine, but rather a source of spiritual formation where one listened to the Word of God and proper interpretation from the priest. But what took place between one Sunday Holy Mass to the next Sunday was left to the discretion of individuals unless one was faithful to the individual prayer at home. The interpretation of scripture during Holy Mass helped youth to build their faith, sustained their belief in God, and they were able to share their joy with friends because the interpretation of scripture addressed the context of the listeners. But without proper interpretation, parishioners' spiritual life did not grow because they forgot what was said within few hours because the sermon did not speak to the circumstances of their life.

It cannot be taken for granted that preaching, retreats, revivals, and conferences always form part of spiritual formation of the laity since it depends on the preacher whether he preaches within the context of the listeners and draws them closer to God. Each parish needs to have a programme that aims to sustain the parishioners' relationship with God and to empowers them to realise their mission and carry it out. On-going spiritual formation for parishioners will impact those around them but if there is no difference between Roman Catholic Christians and those around them, then this is a clear sign of lack of identity due to lack of spiritual formation. Going to church without knowing who they are, shows that spiritual formation of parishioners is not taken seriously, and they cannot effectively carry out their mission in society. Learning who they are and what they are supposed to do from outside the parish implies that the spiritual formation they receive is outside their context and does not connect them to God and his plan, their roots as disciples of Christ, and does not address social issues in the community.

One-on-one ministry parishioners received from their parish priests was helpful for them because they could deal with their personal problems or crisis. This ministry can be taken as

spiritual direction which forms part of spiritual formation. The impact of this ministry helped parishioners to use the help they received to help others in the same situation because it made an impact in their lives. The parish priest became the spiritual guide, a mentor for them. This form of spiritual formation was advocated by a parish priest for parishioners because he had grown spiritually through spiritual direction and by reading spiritual books while at the seminary. He encouraged parishioners to have spiritual directors of their own choice where they could be free and open and not dependent on the parish priest for everything.

Vocational workshops helped youth to realise their calling in life and anchored them in their spiritual life. This form of spiritual formation is encouraged only for young men as the first step towards a process of recruitment for ministerial priesthood, neglecting young women in their struggle to know what their calling is within the Church despite majority of parishioners being women. The young women have formal spiritual formation mostly for the preparation of the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation and no further ongoing formation after that unless they join sodalities for example, Children of Mary.

Those who are matured spiritually became aware of these shortcomings in the Church and how youth are not visible in parishes for lack of understanding their faith and having no one to journey with them during their adolescence. Ongoing spiritual formation in the form of programmes fit for different age groups would be helpful in parish ministry to ground parishioners in their Roman Catholic faith.

Awareness of sin in a person's life encouraged some parishioners to seek to be reconciled with God and to ask for the grace to forgive others. This awareness is possible when one's conscious is awakened by spiritual formation and leading others to fast, realising that spiritual life is a battle that needs to be sustained through prayer and fasting.

Another form of spiritual formation is through Small Christian Communities (SCC) where parishioners pray, read scripture, share what touched them, and reach out to those who are tired spiritually or lapsed Catholics. Where SCC are used for spiritual formation and not as an extension of the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC), where parishioners meet to raise funds for the parish, are a great source of spiritual growth and do help parishioners to see the spiritual and material needs of others, and it encourages them to visit and help others. SCC, though, were not mentioned by any parishioners interviewed as a source of their spiritual formation.

Attending conferences is also a form of spiritual formation, especially those organised for sodalities or for those in ministries as a form of understanding one's faith better. When these are in the context of the group and a theme proper for them is used, parishioners do learn to read and share the Bible with their families and realise that they can exercise their baptismal identity of being a priest at home. This learning which connects parishioners to understand their responsibilities as fathers in a Christian family and reminding them that they are priests, is practical and builds confidence in reading scripture and sharing with family members, bringing Christianity at home to become a culture. Everyday events become a lesson for a Christian life, which is the understanding of an African Traditional Religion.

Spiritual formation can happen everywhere and anywhere once the person is open to the gifts of the Holy Spirit and can then bear fruits in the Christian life. First, they must be taught, and secondly, understand what they are taught, then they can live a fruitful spiritual life. Ongoing spiritual formation of the laity should be a must for them to carry out their mission effectively in society.

With what they received parishioners gained knowledge of the Bible, deepened their relationship with the Triune God, and that influenced their relationship with others. Growing in spiritual gifts and bearing the fruits of the Holy Spirit, that is, the ability to help, heal, bless, feed, clothe and shelter the needy, is a sign of one's efficacious interaction with the unseen God (Lartey 2013:30). The experience of parish priests, on the other hand, reveal the inadequacies of growth in the spirit for them to effectively bear fruits.

3.3.2.2 Spiritual formation of priests

Parish priests had received organised spiritual formation for eight years in an environment conducive for spiritual growth. The General Prospectus (St John Vianney Seminary 2018:225) states that seminarians, by virtue of being in the seminary, are already instruments of the kingdom of God. They are to be recreated and transformed in their manner of being and acting according to the mind of God, which will help them acquire their identity as spiritual leaders. How this is carried out and confirmed in the process of spiritual formation is revealed by the views of parish priests and formators.

The confusion for parish priests about spiritual formation and or spiritual life might have come from separating learning about spirituality, spiritual exercises, and living a spiritual life.

Spiritual formation is explained as prayer, spiritual exercises, *Lectio Divina*, and living a moral life, but these did not make sense to some of the priests and did not form their personalities. Waking up in the morning for spiritual exercises was regarded as a punishment and not a form of process aimed to help them acquire the mind of God and it did not affect their daily processes of living a spiritual life.

Lack of understanding of the meaning of spiritual exercises and what spiritual formation meant lead parish priests to want to break away from those practices as priests. Spiritual exercises were supposed to sustain their calling and connect them to the caller on their journey to ministerial priesthood ordination, but that did not make sense to them. This is a serious allegation to have gone through eight to nine years of priestly formation without understanding the meaning of spiritual formation and spiritual life. Surprisingly, none of the formators seemed to have realised this dilemma and these priests were ordained to be spiritual leaders under those conditions and as priests want to break away from practicing them. The question is, what sustains their priesthood and on what do they build their identity without spiritual exercises?

Spiritual direction and spiritual books though did help them, but the question is how did spiritual direction help someone who did not find the seminary life spiritual and did not find meaning in spiritual exercises? Some of the seminarians were pretending, not open and honest to their spiritual directors for fear of being reported to their bishops and be expelled from the system. In the case of participating parish priests, there is a great contrast between spiritual direction, spiritual exercises, and living a spiritual life, which needs to be taken into consideration at the seminary. One of the formators explained that a seminarian and in this case, a priest who does not pray or practice spiritual exercise, pretends during spiritual direction, is a ticking bomb. This means that there is no system that evaluates spiritual growth because these priests who went through to ordination did not understand spiritual formation and as priests wanted to break away from practising them.

From the views of parish priests, spiritual formation dimension partly does not achieve its objectives for all seminarians, and as priests they fail to help the laity as spiritual leaders to connect to God by offering spiritual formation through workshops, retreats, and conferences, putting into practice what they had learned themselves in spiritual formation. This could be a lack of foundation of human formation and spiritual formation had no foundation to build on

from home, parish level, and from school environment that does not offer religious education anymore.

The bridging course at Port Elizabeth (Gqeberha) and Cape Town does not seem to form a foundation for some, if any, seminarians. The presence of a spiritual father at the seminary does not seem to create a spiritual atmosphere of prayer at their residents and in the whole institution to differentiate it from other institutions of higher education. The interpretation on the views of formators on spiritual formation might give insight in this dilemma, as discussed below.

Formators did not receive specialised spiritual formation in their preparation to be formators and used their own experience as students at the seminary to form others. They were able to teach spirituality, but assistance to candidates in integrating spiritual knowledge with life was absent. Since formators are not prepared to integrate knowledge with life experiences so that it could become part of their “being”, their personality, the teaching and learning at the seminary can be judged as using a banking method. If acquired knowledge cannot be lived out in real life, it implies that even the practical exercises are understood as only part of being in the institution, and not a preparation of life with God, discipleship, and a preparation to exercise them in the formation of the laity. There seems to be a separation between teaching, learning, and living.

When candidates are entering the seminary at a young age, with poor formation in catechesis from their parishes, it is possible that they do not understand the value and the importance of spiritual exercises and spiritual life because they have no foundation, no experience. Another factor is that priestly spiritual formation is foreign to most African candidates and needs an introduction, explanation, and comparison with African spirituality which Africans learn from childhood. It has to be conceptualised in society, confirming the concept that faith is sucked from the breast, which appears in catechism books and which in many cases do not reach parishes and is not used for formation of parents and guardians to imbibe the Christian faith and pass it on to their children.

Masango (2006:931) relates how the concept of *Ubuntu* is passed on from generation to generation, which is how Christian spirituality, once it becomes culture, should be integrated in the concept of *Ubuntu* or *Botho* in the formation of disciples of Jesus. Integrating spiritual exercises through the understanding of African spirituality and the understanding of the Christian concept of a calling to ministerial priesthood can bridge the gap between the

candidates' practice of African spirituality to the living out of Christian spirituality learned at the parish and at the seminary. This needs real *metanoia*, conviction and adherence to Jesus as Lord and Saviour. A total giving to *missio Dei* and *missio Ecclesia*.

The use of teaching biblical studies and devotions cannot automatically allow for spiritual aspects to be adequately captured without proper introduction and understanding of Christian concepts to establish a firm foundation of a relationship with the Triune God. The seminary environment is foreign to most African candidates and a routine life is not part of their growing up and they have not experience it in their African spiritual life.

Formators were not prepared for spiritual formation of priest candidates, especially from an African perspective, and in the context for the democratic multicultural society where religious education does not form part of the curriculum. Most formators were trained during the time of transition from the apartheid regime to democracy and their training was basically Eurocentric, for example regarding a lifestyle of routine, learning, and teaching. This explains the poor spiritual formation priest participants received, because formators themselves were not trained and formed to integrate the African indigenous way of learning, teaching, and instilling spiritual exercises, which is learning by doing.

A positive view on the spiritual formation was envisaged where priest candidates would be formed in the spirituality of discipleship. The current spiritual formation might be taught differently, and candidates might be able to integrate spirituality of leadership and be able to live their lives and gain satisfaction from their calling as priests. Spiritual life lived in a seminary environment where candidates had daily spiritual exercises should create an atmosphere tangible of the presence of God and help candidates live in a spiritual atmosphere.

Spiritual directors were aware of some behaviours that did not reflect communion with God, but bound by confidentiality, did not make recommendations that could redeem the situation. Some candidates were involved in taking drugs and abusing alcohol, etc. but continued their formation to ordination without being helped to form their personality to be a bridge and not an obstacle for the laity to reach God. The suggestion that spiritual directors and psychologists should journey with candidates for the duration of their studies, might be of help to candidates to grow in emotional intelligence, as well as human and spiritual formation. Theories of psychology could inform spiritual directors and help candidates deal better with their pretence and their fear.

The views of parish priests revealed that formators' lack of awareness of the background of candidates, their life experiences, political affiliation, culture, and economic background, influences their understanding and absorption of important theological concepts that should help them understand their call to discipleship. To achieve awareness, critical thinking is called for that would situate candidates and help them to return to their dioceses and form the laity accordingly in their mission to society. The international documents are not localised, and candidates felt unprepared for parish ministry and the spiritual formation of the laity.

Proper strategies for the recruitment of formators and candidates and their spiritual formation in preparation to fulfil their calling cannot be postponed such as situating spiritual leadership in the multicultural South African context.

The two main pillars meant to form the personality of those preparing for the mission of the Church and her leadership revealed a weakness that leaves candidates with no option but intellectual formation that equals them to students in any institution of higher education chasing for academic accreditation rather than building and grounding their intellectual formation on human and spiritual formation that differentiate them as spiritual leadership.

3.3.3 Intellectual formation in the light of mission and ministry

Intellectual formation in the documents of the RCC for priestly formation is regarded as the expression of both human and spiritual formation as a fundamental demand for human intelligence (John Paul II 1992:#51). The Congregation for the Clergy (2016:#116) presents intellectual formation as aiming to provide a solid knowledge in philosophy and theology for solid competence in proclaiming the gospel message which is credible and understandable for the people of today. The General Prospectus (St John Vianney Seminary 2022:7) states intellectual formation as “geared towards producing students who value depth of thought, clarity of vision, intellectual balance, thoughtful dialogue and critical evaluation”.

The mission statement of St John Vianney Seminary presents an integrated and holistic approach to teaching, ensuring the balanced training of the intellectual, human, spiritual and pastoral aspects of its students. Degrees in philosophy and theology aim to play an important role in fostering and promoting tolerance, mutual understanding, and peaceful coexistence in South Africa, which addresses the legacy of apartheid. Theories of theological education are

used to interpret the views of participants on their intellectual formation to ascertain whether it empowers them with knowledge and skills for ministry.

Theological education in Africa will help evaluate training at St John Vianney Seminary against the Pastoral Plan and the propagation of a self-supporting, self-evangelising, self-ministering, self-propagating, and theologising Church to meet the needs and uplift the status of the members of the Church, who are also members of society. Intellectual formation should empower ministerial priesthood for service for the realisation of the above.

Parish priests recommended the integration of African religions, African churches, and African spirituality to situate intellectual formation into the multicultural democratic South African context. African theologians authors' work on African context and which addresses Africa's plight should form part of the curriculum to help candidates contextualise theology and the content become applicable for the people of South Africa in addressing current issues. However, the views of candidates revealed that African scholars were just mentioned and that there was no in-depth teaching on their views to help parish priests deal with their own context.

Formators and parish priests were aware that intellectual formation was Eurocentric but seemed unable to alter the situation. Theological education continues; teaching and offering degrees that are not applicable to the African context with content material not only embedded in the Western context but also in the language of instruction, namely English. African theological education continues the enslavement of Africans in the name of adhering to the demands of the "universal Church", and the Department of Higher Education that gives directives on the content needed for obtaining the degrees. Knowledge, be it scientific or theological, ought to be relevant to the culture and applicable to the context for it to be valuable. Adherence to theological education that does not serve the context and the mission of God in a particular context is irrelevant for candidates to understand their calling and their mandate.

Parish priests commented that they were meant to be African priests, but their training and formation was Eurocentric, which made them mental slaves of Western thought and thus irrelevant for the formation of the laity. The high number of people leaving the Roman Catholic Church in search of prayers of healing somewhere else shows the lack of understanding of the sacraments they have received due to intellectual knowledge they received, which made them memorise it while not understanding its significance in their lives.

There are no programmes on re-evangelisation and care for those who had left the Church, except in some SCC where the laity visited lapsed Catholics. Both laity and formators were aware that formation does not form priests and parishioners for discipleship, which explains intellectual formation offered at the seminary. Developing an effective curriculum that achieves its purpose is the first duty of formators and the leadership (bishops) in fulfilling their mission of the Church. The universal documents need to be owned and re-written in the context of South Africa, be it catechesis or priestly documents. Why then does the Church for the South African regions delay offering formators the opportunity to inculcate the four pillars? Who gains from offering universal formation to the multicultural democratic South Africa when parish priests are frustrated and unable to take God to his people?

Rethinking priestly formation is seeking to change strategies and close the gap between practice and theory, and theory and practice, reorienting the curriculum and redirecting candidates to real learning. Integrative theological education is a systematic attempt to connect, synthesise, and coordinate the major learning experiences appropriate for the formation and education of priests and ministers of the church. The aim is to form parish leadership that will form congregations where change should take place by assessing the vocations of candidates, training and equipping them for their mission, and morally forming their personality to enable them to engage in church and society.

In the African context the laity depend heavily on the leadership of parish priests for them to respond to the internal and external needs in the Church and society as they are the ones responsible to teach and form the faith of the laity for their mission. Priestly formation therefore should focus on the reality of South Africa where the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church has only been in the hands of the local priests for the last three decades. The intellectual formation should focus more on the local Church and form ministerial priesthood in the context of the multicultural South African society for them, in turn, to form the laity in handling working together with other cultures without discrimination.

Xenophobia and under challenges that face the country need to be addressed by using gospel values embedded in intellectual formation of both laity and priests to actively take part in the mission of God in their own context. Parishioners receive their intellectual formation mainly from Sunday sermons. Workshops and conferences with themes to help parishioners in their

different positions in the structures of society, are not part of the parish programme nor available to all parishioners.

Parish priests and formators accepted that intellectual formation is of a high standard and meets the requirements of the Department of Higher Education, but this formation had not helped them in answering to their calling to fulfil the mission of the Church efficiently and effectively.

Formators need to recognise their role as important for the recognition of the Church in society and for all the baptised to fulfil their calling in every level of society. Training of leadership of the Church as discipleship living out the prophetic, priestly, and kingly role in the Church and society would bring about change in the understanding of Christianity and its mission in society. Formators are to see themselves as instruments of change, enabling the Church to situate her mission in her context by forming all the baptised to carry it out.

Parish priests experienced the intellectual formation as Eurocentric and subsequently they were struggling to translate it into parish ministry, making them irrelevant for the laity. The reality is that the main occupation of parish priests is the maintenance of structures by fundraising and administration. The only time they meet with people is during the celebration of sacraments and performing of rituals. Most of their time is spent at the presbytery for not knowing how to bring God to his people and people to God.

Decolonisation of curricula will be the way forward, basing it on the new developments in the multicultural democratic South African society with its many challenges of unemployment, crime, corruption, and lawlessness. The challenge is to re-work the curricula to form African priests for the evangelisation of multicultural South Africa.

The use of English in teaching and learning at the seminary, expressing difficult Christian concepts, makes it difficult for parish priests to translate it into local languages and to develop ideas and symbols to express the Christian faith. Indigenous knowledge and languages are key tools to make the Christian faith become culture, forming the way people think, the way they perceive and experience their environment.

Candidates lacked the ability to feel what they learned and express themselves on that level, because the English language did not accommodate their cultural ways, the way they think, their indigenous knowledge, and their experiences. Adhering to the universal formation does not benefit priest candidates in the local circumstance. They need to be formed in the local

context to first benefit their people as diocesan priests, and universal context should form the appendix of their formation as many will not in the near future leave the country to evangelise the world when Africa and South Africa are still in need of evangelisation and Christian leadership.

In the process of decolonisation of the mind and curricula, the following questions proposed by Venter (2015:185) are relevant: Whose knowledge is transmitted? Whose perspective is informing the knowledge? To what effect is the knowledge conveyed? and, Who are the conversation partners? Using these questions could lead formators and those responsible for the curricula to situate ministerial priesthood formation within the South African situation and in the institutions of higher education. Events that are taking place should inform the direction of change for the Church's mission to be relevant and practical in time and place.

The involvement of the families of priest candidates in priestly formation as mentors, walking side by side with their sons in their discernment for their priestly calling, human and spiritual formation, cannot be ignored (Mokone & Pali 2022:4). The families of priest candidates can help inculcate priestly formation into the cultures in the South African society and in turn learn the gospel values that can inform them to bring up their children within the environment of a Christian family life as role models of the family structure which has been destroyed by many challenges of modern society.

With the ideas of participants on formation, the analysis of curriculum follows, evaluating its content, and teaching and learning model to facilitate intellectual formation for the Roman Catholic leadership in the twenty-first century.

3.3.3.1 Analyses of the content of the curriculum of St John Vianney Seminary

The analysis of the curriculum only concentrates on courses offered in philosophy and theology, which allow the priests to “proclaim the Gospel message through the cultural modes of their age and direct pastoral action according to an authentic theological vision” (John Paul II 1992:#54), to determine if there is a balance of courses to cover the “evangelisation of cultures and evangelisation of the message of faith” (John Paul II:#55) for the multicultural democratic South African context. Pastoral formation should enable African priests to live their calling in the way that they acquire “the inner freedom to live the apostolate as service, able to see the work of God in the hearts and lives of the people” (Congregation for the Clergy 2016:# 119).

The policy for teaching and learning is also assessed to find the balance between instilling information, that is, training and forming candidates to be academics and/or for practical implication, offering skills and methods for implementation of new evangelisation in the age of pluralism (John Paul II 1992:#51). Formation facilitates learning for ministry in the twenty first century, and the General Prospectus of 2012 and 2022 were mainly used to ascertain if there had been any change in the curriculum in ten years.

The following are the objectives of the curriculum of St John Vianney Seminary as presented in the General Prospectus of 2022. Curriculum development aims to cover four elements that are not discussed in detail but that gives a background to the backbone that is supposed to unite the four pillars of priestly formation in the Roman Catholic Church. They are as follows:

- To acknowledge the significance of a systematic approach to the quality of programmes to ensure their fitness to purpose.
- To contribute to the acquisition, construction, and application of knowledge, based on the pursuit of relevance, scholarship, and intellectual investigation at different levels of human comprehension and insight.
- To take cognisance of diversity and differentiation with a view to addressing local and national needs regarding social and economic development. (St John Vianney Seminary 2022).

This implies that the candidates must develop foundational competence (that is, theoretical knowledge), practical competence (that is, the practical application of knowledge), and reflexive competence (that is, reflecting on the relationship between foundational and practical competence) within an integrative framework (St John Vianney Seminary 2022:83–84). These elements were not experienced by parish priests who were struggling to reach out to their people in their pastoral ministry.

The aim of intellectual formation of ministerial priesthood is to equip parish priests to be competent in philosophy and theology in order to enable them to proclaim the gospel message credibly (Congregation of the Clergy 2016:#116). However, whose perspective is informing the curriculum? Intellectual formation has to do with formation of the mind “dependent on the social context in which individual lives” (Bunduki 2021:166). Intellectual formation is viewed as building on or an expression of human and spiritual formation (John Paul II 1992:#51). It is

through human intelligence that a human person strives to connect with the mind of God and to understand the processes of human nature seeking wisdom to know and adhere to God (John Paul II 1992:#51). Indigenous knowledge systems could be integrated here to contextualise intellectual formation.

Explaining the importance of intellectual formation, the General Prospectus (St John Vianney Seminary 2012:158, 228) states two distinct objectives. The first is that the study of philosophy is meant to help students appreciate the relationship between human wisdom and revelation. The aim of philosophy is directed towards “personal, intellectual, and human growth and development, by which individuals are exposed to the world of reason, with its different worldviews and ideas, and are trained to be open-minded and to think and reason critically” (St John Vianney Seminary 2022:7). How the outcome of the two objectives is achieved and their aim is applicable to empower for mission and ministry are revealed by the participants’ views.

The second objective was that the study of theology “focuses on the foundational Christian principles and documents, the Tradition of the Catholic Church, and the Christian faith in all its aspects of historical developments and contextual relevance” (St John Vianney Seminary 2022:7). Theology aims to equip students with the ability to understand and express the mysteries of faith in an intelligible and culturally relevant manner, but this was not the reality of the experience of the parish priests and some formators. Even though the aim of intellectual formation is to equip students to be pastorally effective instruments in answer to their calling, which is to serve the laity in the context of the multicultural South Africa, this has not been realised yet. South Africa, with its history, is struggling to unite its people in the democratic era to work together and build a country where citizens live in peace with one another and share the produce of the country. Church leadership is not helping parishioners to be self-reliant, instead the focus is on mobilising them to be self-supportive to the structures left behind by the expatriate missionaries and to support the hierarchy. The poor are getting poorer and the rich richer while parish priests spend most of their time at the presbytery as their spiritual formation did not equip them to be spiritual leaders.

To overcome a purely abstract approach to knowledge, students were to integrate intellectual formation with spirituality marked by personal experience of God. How this was to be evaluated to ascertain integration it is not stipulated. From the above discussion it is clear that this was not achieved since some parish priests went through formation without a clear

understanding of spiritual formation, spiritual life, and spiritual exercises. They acknowledged that intellectually they are formed, even though they are unable to translate that knowledge and apply it in their pastoral context. They apply some aspects of spiritual formation in offering retreats, but an ongoing formation of the laity on the parish level is not part of the agenda of their ministry.

The many years of seminary formation did not help candidates to better understand the objectives of intellectual and spiritual formation and how to integrate both for their daily life and to build their relationship with the Triune God who called them, and to establish their identity in the Church structure in the manner that they establish themselves as spiritual leaders, and not as the elite or with the emphasises on clericalism. Without a clear understanding of spiritual formation and the translation of intellectual knowledge for application in their context, ministerial priesthood does not become discipleship but remains academic. The mission of the Church becomes the sustenance of expatriates' missionary structures, not evangelisation of the people.

The documents of the Church stress the need for intellectual formation to be a way that will help the priest "to listen profoundly to the word of God, and also to the ecclesial community, in order to learn how to read the signs of the times" (Congregation for the Clergy 2016:#117). What is written down does not become a reality in the classroom, otherwise the priests would not have voiced their inadequacy in forming the laity, who, in every structure of society should be salt, light, and leaven implanting gospel values. The delay for the Episcopal Conference to own the international documents and inculturate them to answer the needs of their region is questionable.

Formation of *Ratio Nationalis* needs to expand important elements within the cultures and history of every region. The South African historical background is unique in Africa with the legacy of apartheid, A Christian identity amongst all the baptised as the Family of God has to be established. When the baptised are taught, and they understand, and assimilate what they have been taught in their daily life, then the Church would have formed missionary discipleship. Formation needs to orientate ministerial priesthood to be prophetic, bridging animosity amongst different races in the democratic South Africa, and empowering all the baptised in their position in every level of the Church to live their calling.

Intellectual training offered at St John Vianney Seminary must integrate formation that qualifies a student for priestly ministries, coupled with honesty, responsibility, and integrity as stated in their manual (St John Vianney Seminary 2018:222). Ministerial priesthood as discipleship needs to help candidates to acquire the qualities of Christ as his representatives, true servants, and animators of Christian communities (St John Vianney Seminary 2018:222), skilled with methods and techniques that empower them to be creative. It should be applicable to communicate knowledge that builds character and the students' ability to integrate both spiritual and intellectual formation that forms ministerial priesthood as discipleship.

The question is, where is the emphasis during training, either on catechesis or priestly formation? Is it on the intellectual aspect where candidates are expected to remember in order to give back what was taught without integrating it into their personal life? Does spiritual formation form the personality of candidates to form their identity or is it just to be present without enabling them to build their relationship with God and love of neighbour which requires social involvement? If it is on both, how does it form the baptised to attain their identity as children of God with a mission and their identity as the Roman Catholics amongst other Christians or religions in carrying out the commission of Jesus? The empirical data from participants provided answers to these questions and an explanation why this is going on.

Most parishioners receive intellectual ongoing formation during Sunday Holy Mass. This is the only formal organised ongoing human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation the laity receives, which is meant to sustain their faith and empower them for the twofold mission of the Church. Parishioners who grew spiritually and were inspired through the sermons did so because the parish priest preached within their context. But what about those who leaves the service and forget everything that was said because the interpretation of scripture was outside their context? After some time, most of those parishioners leave the Church and go where the Word of God speak to their hearts and they get to know what they, as Christians, are expected to do.

Youth are not visible in most parishes as leaders of tomorrow because parish priests do not try to understand their situation and reach out to them. Youth who attend vocational workshops do grow in their faith and knowledge of their calling as young people. Such youth come from parishes where the preaching is contextualised, and the parish priest visits their outstation and is interested to know what they are taught, explains scriptures to them during the time of

catechesis in preparation for the reception of the sacraments of initiation. Where this does not happen and the priest is not interested to know why the youth leave the Church after the reception of sacraments, youth drift away and most never return.

Catechesis is the best time to form young people and catechumens but usually those who teach them do not themselves understand what to teach for lack of formation to be catechists. They pass information on to young people about the sacraments which is what they had received themselves without the theological understanding thereof. Despite lack of knowledge one can become a good catechist but a bad Christian for not living one's faith because of a lack of understanding one's calling. Training and preparation of catechists is a must for them to teach what they believe and live what they teach as models of Christian life.

Conferences are helpful for those who are already involved in internal ministries and sodalities as they are mostly geared towards the revival of members. Not every Christian is called to be a member of a sodality or to be involved in internal ministries but those involved in government structures and hold positions in society need to have intellectual formation more than the formation they received for initiation into the Church. There are no programmes in pastoral ministry to cater for all the laity to know their faith and to grow spiritually.

Knowledge through personal encounters with the parish priest helps individuals to assess their personality and personal behaviour and correct their way of thinking and acting. Gaining knowledge this way builds confidence and growth in the Catholic faith and appreciation of giving, seeing the difference between the youth in the past and youth of today, and how to work with them and love them. Many youths lack love due to both parents working, in single parent families the mother becomes a mother, father and breadwinner and who does not have time to essentials of life, loving one's children and giving them attention. When this can be offered by adults in internal ministries, it can give children and youth a sense of belonging. Those who gained knowledge from personal encounters with the parish priest used it to mentor others and became role models of life lived in faith. Knowing what they believed, strengthened by spiritual formation, led parishioners to take up ministries, knowing their mandate to serve.

Parishioners' views on intellectual formation highlighted four important objectives in Christian formation. Firstly, through intellectual formation, parishioners were able to discern their moral behaviour in church and society. Secondly, they gained understanding of their faith, which gave them confidence, growth, a sense of belonging, and the desire to share it with others.

Thirdly, parishioners performed acts of charity and became exemplars in society. Fourthly, they gained knowledge of their faith and were inspired to learn more. Though their formation was not explicit, parishioners performed ministries that furthered the mission of the Church in society, even if it was in a limited way. The social teaching of the Church does not form part of the programme of parishes to help them in their mission in society.

The Church acknowledges the laity as ambassadors of Christ in the public sphere, in the heart of the world. It is through the laity that the Church is present and active in the world, and therefore should be equipped with solid knowledge of their faith and Social Teaching of the Church, with the gospel principles that will equip them to be credible, competent, and honest professional people in society (Benedict 2011:#128). Intellectual formation of the laity reflected the limited formation they received. Formation of parish priests reveals why formation of the laity was limited to the formation mentioned above, which did not empower them holistically and which was not integrative.

Parish priests upheld the intellectual formation they received. They claimed to have gained much academic input, they were intellectually empowered, and were adequately trained and equipped to obtain degrees in both philosophy and theology. On a personal level, they gained understanding of many aspects about their faith and the teachings of the Church and could respond to challenges concerning the Church in their ministry.

Even though they were all in agreement that they had acquired academic knowledge, they still mourned the lack of skills and methods to apply the learned knowledge in pastoral ministry. Intellectual formation was viewed as impractical and Eurocentric. Topics on abortion and divorce were not discussed in a way that helped them deal in one-on-one encounters with parishioners, to help them deal with their problems. Priests had degrees but could not use the knowledge they gained in pastoral ministry. This leads to assessment of the policy of teaching and learning at St John Vianney Seminary.

The Teaching and Learning Policy (TLP) comprises seven themes, namely: 1) purpose, 2) scope, values and aim, 3) teaching and learning approach, 4) fundamental principles underpinning teaching and learning, 5) points of departure for implementation, 6) student assessment and success, and 7) complaints and objectives (St John Vianney Seminary 2022:81-85). Of the seven only five are of interest for this study. Their summary is presented to explain

why parish priest participants were unable to use the knowledge received for the formation of the laity. Themes presented below highlight the importance for the outcome of the curriculum.

The purpose of the teaching and learning policy is to define its ethos and clarify how it is enacted and considers the external context, including the National Higher Education policy of the country. The scope, value and aim of the TLP is supported by the statement that the essence of St John Vianney Seminary lies in the unlocking and application of analytical scientific knowledge, methods, and competencies. This includes general formative, career-oriented (or professionally oriented) teaching and learning, basic as well as applied research (St John Vianney Seminary 2022:81).

The teaching and learning approach, the method, used to achieve the outcome, strives to promote a learning-centred and knowledge-based teaching and learning environment. Teaching and learning activities primarily take place within academic programmes and guide students to attain specific outcomes. Specific outcomes expected include problem identification and problem-solving, co-operation, self-organisation, and self-management, research skills, communication skills, and the application of science and technology. These outcomes are said to be context specific with discrete outcomes of community service learning to cultivate discipline appropriate competencies that take account of an African orientation (St John Vianney Seminary 2022:82).

The fundamental principles that support teaching and learning, as described by the policy, include the students' previous educational experience, their cultural background, their perceptions of particular learning tasks and assessments, as well as discipline (St John Vianney Seminary 2022:82). Implementing effective teaching and learning involves an active, self-directed, and self-regulated approach to learning. Effective learning presupposes a learning process that allows students to become active participants, directing their own learning. Efforts to attain such active involvement should be contextualised and included at curriculum and module level (St John Vianney Seminary 2022:83). These activities are to form part of the curriculum to provide a focused framework for knowledge production, application, and innovation.

This summary of the teaching and learning policy does not mention the integration of human and spiritual formation to form students holistically as spiritual leaders. Theology and philosophy are meant to open an opportunity for critical awareness and thinking about the

situation using the See, Judge, and Act method which is applicable in every parish context. This was not possible for participating parish priests, because intellectual formation was out of context and impractical for them. The St John Vianney Seminary is registered under the Department of Higher Education, therefore it emphasises academic standards and undermines ministerial training and building of personality central to church leadership.

Parish priests could not teach what they believe, and practise what they teach to fulfil the mandate of their calling. For contextualisation of the curriculum, only two courses are offered in philosophy, namely African history, and Historical and African Philosophy, and in theology only one course is offered in African theology. This does not create a balance between localisation of curriculum and Western thought, which prepares candidates for international ministry.

Formators were of the same idea that they were well equipped in intellectual formation and can lecture because it was the most developed of the four pillars. Intellectual formation was not taken lightly by both formators and students and must meet the criteria set for them by the National Department of Higher Education. This dilemma for priests to acquire a degree in intellectual formation and to have quality and deeper knowledge of divine mysteries of their pastoral ministry and salvation of their brothers and sisters does not apply where theology and philosophy are more vested in Western thought and candidates are unable to translate them into their context.

After internship students are not asked to reflect on their experience and the complexity of pastoral ministry to help them find new ways of evangelisation, catechising, and re-evangelisation to bring about change in the old system used by expatriate missionaries of indoctrination and this does not give students time to connect theory with reality and reality with theory.

The challenges of the present political and economic situation in South Africa should inform the direction of change for the Church's mission to be relevant and practical in time and place. Judging priestly formation as semi-relevant, semi-appropriate, and semi-practical brings us to pastoral formation. Rethinking priestly formation requires decolonisation of the curriculum and the integration of the pillars with indigenous knowledge, culture, and tradition for relevance. Interpretation of pastoral formation provide answers why parish priest participants struggle to fulfil the mandate of their calling by applying the three other dimensions.

3.3.4 Pastoral formation: a process of empowerment for mission and ministry

The purpose of intellectual formation is expressed by three statements in *Pastores dabo vobis* (1992) as, firstly to prepare parish priests to empower all Christians to defend their faith and account for the hope in us (Naidoo 2021:1); secondly, to enable priests to proclaim the gospel and make it credible to the legitimate demands of human reason, and thirdly to help priests proclaim the gospel in the present phenomenon of pluralism and to make a critical discernment (John Paul II 1992:#51). These statements make intellectual formation pastoral, unifying the diverse processes of education (John Paul II 1992:#51), which is thus integrative education (Naidoo 2021:15). Pastoral formation, in the words of Pope John Paul II (1992:#57, Congregation for the Clergy 2016:#119) must have a fundamentally pastoral character or must be permeated by the pastoral spirit.

Pastoral formation therefore should incorporate these statements, putting theory into practise informed by the context by offering skills and methods to contextualise theological knowledge with indigenous knowledge for relevance (Gaisie 2021:84). Integration of the three dimensions of formation (human, spiritual, and intellectual), should manifest themselves in pastoral formation that should lead church members to be self-reliant, to understand their identity, and being able to respond creatively to the missional role of each believer. Integrative formation should empower parish priests for discipleship as the leadership of the Church and serving the laity to participate in *missio Dei*, *missio ecclesia*, and *missio diakonia*.

Pastoral formation, as presented in the General Prospectus (St John Vianney Seminary 2012) aims to empower candidates to acquire skills that would help them disseminate the sense of caring which should include self, others, and creation, as presented in the new pastoral plan, “Evangelising community serving God, humanity and all creation” (SACBC 2019). To achieve the objectives of the Pastoral Plan (SACBC 2019), skills for societal engagement are essential, but ignored. Parishioners were involved in charity and welfare projects, and the Church needs to move towards a people-centred approach to development that “embraces a strong sense of community, and pride in place and heritage” (Korten 1990:4). The Church needs to revive her prophetic nature and become the conscience of the society by living what she believes and practices what it teaches and mobilise parishioners to be active citizens to transform policy and social structures in the spirit of Christ. These skills are discussed further in Chapter 4.

Practically these statements are not put into practice and those who wrote them do not follow up to see that they are implemented in parish ministry. Once the sacraments are administered it is the responsibility of those who receive them to grow in their faith and to serve. Priests continue to do the same things without producing active members who live what they believe and every year statistics is sent to Rome but those people who are recorded members are not coming to Church anymore.

Pastoral formation does not prepare priests for youth ministry and adult members push them away for not trying to understand youth of today being different from youth of yesterday. Ministerial priesthood springs from the common priesthood at baptism and without care for the youth there is no future for the Church of tomorrow. The new understanding of ministerial priesthood as discipleship should translate to missionary discipleship of the laity. The two “class-society” formed within the Church of the clergy and laity defeats the objectives of communion of the Trinity in mission (Sebahene 2020:385).

Parishioners, parish priests, and formators all agreed that they were called to serve but were not adequately formed for their calling. The question is why is this going on in the twenty-first century when Africa is independent from colonial oppression, discrimination, and South Africa from the apartheid system? Why are African Christian leaders perpetuating the colonial system of thinking, and separation systems for clergy and laity in ministry? Each category of the baptised have their own mission to fulfil but the priority is not in the fulfilment of the mission of the Church but on fundraising since funds from overseas have dried up with the takeover of the local clergy. Lack of formation for *missio Dei*, *missio ecclesia*, and *missio diakonia* presents the state of not being the Church as Jesus and the early disciples intended. The laity are still unable to engage in politics, economics, and in all social structures using the gospel values, because of inadequate and improper integrative formation that prepares them to be confidence in their Christian faith and live it in every circumstance.

Parishioners take part in the internal mission of the Church but volunteered to take part in internal ministries of teaching catechism, conducting funerals, being acolytes, holding services in the absence of the priest, leadership in youth ministry, doing charity work, and participating in Small Christian Communities. Parishioners understand taking part in the mission of the Church as volunteering and not as their right and duty as followers of Christ and members of the Church. These ministries are limited to those who volunteer while most parishioners are

bench or pew spectators and even refuse to support ministries within the parish because of lack of understanding of their mandate as disciples of Christ. Taking part in the Trinitarian mission does not require volunteerism because it is the mandate for a calling to be a Christian.

The focus of the Church is more on rules and regulations and parishioners are used to raise funds for the sustenance of the hierarchy not so much to empower them for their mission in society. Formation for the reception of sacraments and the emphasise on the kind of funeral one will receive if they do not pay for this and that is a clear distortion of what a call to be a Christian is all about. The laity are confused, and the Church has become a burial society leaving people spiritually empty. Being a member of the Church does not differentiate Roman Catholic Christians from other people in society for lack of proper formation on participation in *missio Dei* and *missio Ecclesia*.

The seminary does not focus on introducing new ways of evangelisation and formation of the laity using the international documents on formation of the laity to train the candidates for pastoral ministry. Sending candidates to parishes around the seminary and the six month's internship without equipping them with new content material, new ways of formation, the social teachings of the Church, and new methods of imparting faith, pastoral formation becomes a waste of time, propagating the old way of catechising the laity. Parish priests trained and formed in the twenty-first century are still trained to preach dogma with no practical skills for evangelisation, new in its vigour, new in its thrust, and new in its vision does not benefit parish priests (John Paul II).

Christian concepts are foreign to Africans and their translation into local languages a challenge to many if not helped at the seminary to do so. Most Africans, especially in rural areas where most of the old people are still illiterate, using the vernacular to help candidates to express the faith using indigenous knowledge would be valuable for pastoral formation. Based on the views of parishioners, parish priests, and formators, pastoral formation received at the seminary does not integrate the three other pillars of formation helping parish priests to address political, economic, cultural, religious, and social challenges faced by the South African society at present.

Theoretically equipped but lacking skills to translate the acquired knowledge in the parish situation proved to be lack of freedom of creativity for parish priests but also the slow pace of transformation of curricula at the seminary and the delay in formation of *Ratio Nationalis*.

Parish priests are blamed for not having understood what they are taught but the problem is the pastoral formation they received because the Roman Catholic Church is concerned more about rules and regulations like the Israelites of old. If they are to understand what they are taught, they would be able to convert the laity, make them missionary disciples, and commission them for their mission in their homes, local surroundings, and society.

Parish priests are not formed to be prophetic in their ministry, to be servant leaders, ambassadors of Christ, and missionary disciples, which defeats the objectives of priestly formation envisaged in the documents of the Church. Each pillar or dimension of formation is meant to achieve a certain form of growth and maturity in each candidate who has received a calling to prepare them for their ministry, but priest participants expressed the opposite.

Recruitment of formators and candidates is also to be blamed for failure of positive outcomes in pastoral ministry. Rethinking a new model of formation would need a new way of understanding a calling and how it differs from recruitment. It should include how to understand the Caller and his plan and mission in the world, and how he has called individuals and the Church to participate in his mission. Discernment of a calling for these important instruments, formators and priests, would improve the essence of ministerial priesthood and the hierarchical leadership of the Church. They would adhere to the Caller and strive to fulfil his mission as their priority and get fulfilment and satisfaction in their calling by living it in their lives instead of clericalism that kills the fundamental nature of discipleship.

Topics of poverty alleviation, unemployment, job creation, and being involved with programmes that dealt with youth empowerment, did not make any impact on parish priest participants who had been sent to parishes around the seminary to be made aware of these matters in society. Maslow's theory of the hierarchy of needs should be used at the seminary for candidates to reach the stage of self-actualisation, and it would benefit priests if the focus was on the calling not clericalism.

The idea of emphasising in the formation of candidates that the Church is an outgoing Church and that the model of pastoral formation is inserted within the context of mission to prepare candidates to realise that they are no longer in a maintenance Church obsessed with self-preservation, was not shared by other formators and was not a reality of parish priests. Using the model See, Judge and Act, techniques were not functional nor understood by parish priests, otherwise they would have used it to deal with their struggles at parish level.

From the above discussion it can be concluded that parishioners did not receive formation and ongoing formation on the four pillars of formation and from their views they made the best from what they received. In the three parishes, from the three dioceses visited, situated in two provinces, the processes of laity similar with slight difference in individual priest's sermons that addressed the context of his parishioners. Parishioners are not formed in the four pillars for missionary discipleship.

Priests, on the other hand, though they received formal, organised formation on the four pillars, these pillars were not integrated and did not empower them to fulfil their mandate effectively. Formators were not adequately formed in the three pillars except in intellectual formation and they used their experience to do the best they could to form the leadership of the Church.

The parish priests' views echo Bosch's words (1991:259) that the gospel always comes to people in cultural robes. There is no such thing as a "pure" gospel, isolated from culture. The four pillars therefore came clothed in Western culture, therefore, formation received at St John Vianney Seminary is still highly Eurocentric, not balanced with the African theologians who address the African context for application. African culture and indigenous knowledge can best help Africans to make Christianity their culture and live it in their homes and society.

The overall impact of the four pillars on the understanding of a calling to be a parishioner, priest, and formator, and empowerment for mission in South Africa, lacked grounding on the context of the multicultural democratic society. Bediako (2000:6–7), stated that the starting point for an Africanised theological education is the theological category of identity in Africa where the African (theologian) is expected to integrate the "old" and "new" in "African consciousness ... into a unified vision" of what it means to be an African and Christian.

To be able to achieve such integration, rethinking priestly formation would be the best option in developing integrative theological education in the context of South Africa in order to help Africans be rooted and authentically themselves in their culture as Christians (John Paul II 1995:#48). Introspection of African theologians (of the RCC) should lead them to rethink a calling to be a Christian for all the baptised more especially to ministerial priesthood as the spiritual leadership of the Church.

The following discussion interprets the views of participants in their involvement in the mission of the Church after being formed to understand their calling, which was supposed to be

expressed in pastoral formation, providing giving them skills and methods to actively be involved in the two dimensions of evangelisation. The interpretation of the views of parishioners follows.

3.4 Involvement in the mission of the Church

The history of the settlement of the Roman Catholic Church in South Africa discussed already in Chapter one (1.2) sets the background on why the laity are not involved in the mission of the Church. The self-understanding of the Church, training and formation of ministerial priesthood, and formation of the laity form part of the reasons why the involvement of the Church in society is through the hierarchy issuing letters to the government, and everybody else in the Church relaxed.

Gaisie (2021:85) supports this argument by mentioning that the model for a theological curriculum that aims at transformation and mission ought to incorporate four overlapping areas, namely discerning the signs of the times, which is the historical significance of African Christian context which is both historical and contemporary, history and tradition of the Christian movement, and having a mind for mission and transformation.

The change from expatriate missionary parish leadership to the local priests taking over administration of both the settlers and the mission church was not properly prepared for both the clergy and the laity. Catechises and ministerial priesthood formation remained the same and perpetuated the old approach which perplexed both the settlers' and mission churches in their understanding of Church. In both churches many left the Roman Catholic Church for different reasons, one reason being lack of understanding of Christian calling and proper initial formation to become Roman Catholic Christians which was to ground converts in their relationship with the caller and involvement in his mission. Another reason is that Christianity is associated with colonialism and Africans saw the dawn of democracy as being liberated from a foreign religion that came with colonialism, Africans therefore reclaimed the African Traditional religion, culture, and customs to re-establish and assert themselves as people in their own right to gain their dignity as people.

Parishioners, parish priests, and formators in their views mentioned other reasons why people leave the Roman Catholic Church. Parishioners mentioned that some laity leave the Church for lack of incentives in the Church (now led by local priests) which they had previously received

from the expatriate missionaries. Conversion, understood as self-transformation, did not take place in those individuals (Masondo 2015:88) and the formation they received did not help them to understand the Christian calling, nor helped them to establish a personal relationship with the caller, understand its mandate and get involved in the mission of the church.

Another reason mentioned by a parish priest participant was that the laity leave the church to seek prayers from other denominations or African Independent Churches. This view gives the understanding that the process of receiving converts, their faith formation, and reception into the Church, has not changed, even though people do not join now because of incentives. Another reason is the way the laity receive their ongoing formation, which for most is mostly through the Sunday sermons, which does not offer a platform for discussion, questioning, and receiving clarification. Faith formation of children, youth, and catechumens still follows the banking model of teaching and learning which encourages memorisation not understanding leading to conversion, believing the gospel, and repentance.

The views of parishioners revealed that their participation in the parish is in internal ministries, and they reach out to the society through charity or welfare which does not lead to alleviation of poverty and transformation of social structures. A parishioner mentioned that the Church is more concerned with rules and regulations and less in empowering the laity for discipleship and involvement in the mission of the Church.

Parish priests and formators of future priests were not in any way involved in projects and the Social Teachings of the Church do not form part of the curriculum at St John Vianney Seminary, implying that future priests are not empowered for external mission of the Church, and therefore are unable to empower the laity in turn.

A formator opined that the problem of the challenge of Christianity or parish life is compartmentalisation, that is, separating Sunday from the rest of the week. This means that, for most Roman Catholics, both priests and laity, real Christian life occurs on Sunday going for the celebration of the Eucharist, even for those who attend weekday Holy Mass. The message of God might end at the entrance of the church building without affecting the everyday interactions in society.

Expatriate missionary offered charity, education, and health facilities to Africans, and other projects which was necessary, but this prevented Africans to do things for themselves and in

most cases, they were not part of what was done at the parish. Currently the laity are involved in the Small Christian Communities, parish, and diocesan level in fundraising for the maintenance of structures left by expatriate missionaries and the maintenance of the local hierarchy. The stress and propagation of building a self-supporting Church is more expressed than the involvement in the mission of God which the “Church”, all the baptised, are to carry out in society.

This dilemma has made the Church irrelevant to the context of the multicultural democratic South African and the nature of the Church to evangelise, that is, self-evangelisation, re-evangelisation, and new evangelisation do not form part and parcel of the parish ministry and life. The parishes visited did not have agendas aimed at offering all parishioners ongoing formation in the form of workshops on the new documents on the laity, the social teachings of the Church to help the laity to transform their local structures by influencing policy for the good of all those who live in South Africa. There were no schedules for retreats and conferences for all parishioners to help them in their ministries as priests, kings, and prophets in their everyday live. There were no programmes to introduce the Pastoral Plan of the bishops, helping all parishioners from both the settlers’ and mission churches to become the Family of God and witness together in the society still divided by racism, poverty, and political ideologies.

The fact that parish priest participants spend most of their time at the parish house unable to face the plight of their own people and help them out with new evangelisation, it is a sad situation. The four pillars of formation failed to empower priests to serve the People of God, the Family of God in human, spiritual, and intellectual formation and to integrate these dimensions in ministry formation to empower the laity for their mission society. Priestly formation that does not evangelise candidates and empower them for social involvement, but forms academics who are unable to be creative in their own context and perpetuate the past model of ministry and being a priest, that is clericalism (Nxumalo 1982:52–53; Bate 1999b:156).

The involvement of the Church during apartheid and the transition into democracy was highly appreciated by participants. The meeting of President Ramaphosa with church leaders gave hope to participants that the Church will get involved in societal transformation which should start from the transformation of the Church policies on involvement of the laity in the twofold mission of the Church, rethinking priestly formation for the empowerment of ministerial

priesthood for the formation of the laity, dismantling the hierarchical structure which gives absolute rights and power to the leadership. The voice of women should be heard, and the laity should form part of the leadership in the Church since most decisions are made for them not with them.

The Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference Pastoral Plan takes evangelisation as the central focal areas of the Church in the multicultural democratic South Africa; secondly, community, comprising of the laity, the ordained, the family, and youth; and thirdly, service, which concerns justice and peace, healing and reconciliation, and care of creation. The interviews with participants were conducted before the publication of this New Pastoral Plan (2019) but the former Pastoral Plan, Community Serving Humanity did not empower involvement in the mission of the Church otherwise participants would have been involved in society from the past.

The views of participants on their involvement in the Church are interpreted based on the twofold mandate of the mission of the Church and as discussed above, the spiritual mission of the Church was expressed as maintenance of the spiritual and material structure of the Church. Spiritual means sustaining the laity with the celebration of sacraments and performance of rituals, expressed by both parish priests and formators, otherwise priests would not spend most of their time in their presbyteries. Material means service that propagates a self-supporting church over and above self-evangelising and evangelisation by words and deeds.

The social involvement of the Church was expressed by involvement of the laity in projects of charity and welfare with no formation in the social teachings of the Church.

One formator evaluated the theological education at St John Vianney Seminary as semi-relevant, semi-practical, and semi-appropriate for the South African context, which did not in reality prepare priests for the mission of the Church. Parish priests' evaluation of the theological education they received deemed it as being Eurocentric. Spiritual formation was not understood, and pastoral formation lacked skills, the Social Teachings of the Church are not taught, therefore, ministerial formation is for the maintenance of the structure, not for evangelisation and social involvement. Seminary formation, as one formator related, aims to fill seminarians with the mind of the Church and formed priests to enter clerical ranks by using recruitment processes and not relying on God calling people for participation in His mission.

3.5 Conclusion

The views of participants were interpreted to answer the objectives of this chapter, which is to interpret the ministerial practices by explaining why the participants view the priestly formation and its impact in the mission of the Roman Catholic Church in the manner they have given. Concepts which form the core of this study are a calling, formation, and mission, and were interpreted to understand the views of participants and how it affects the mission of the Church in the South African context.

It was important to assess and interpret the views of parishioners in order to establish the background where the vocation to ministerial priesthood emanate from. The result is that parishioners were unable to define their calling and the formation they received did not help them to know their rights, duties and responsibility as Christians, which left unable to participate fully in the mission of the Church. Their involvement was only in the internal ministries and those who are involved in society do so only through charity and welfare.

On the other hand, parish priests knew that they were called by God to bring him closer to his people and his people closer to him, but the priestly formation they received did not empower them to fulfil that mandate. Spiritual formation meant to empower them as spiritual leadership of the Church was not understood, and spiritual exercises meant to help them build their relationship with God, and spiritual direction meant to help them in their discernment, were misused and misunderstood. The theological education was viewed as being Eurocentric and they were unable to translate the Christian concepts, for example, the Trinity, into understandable African concepts which is the heart of Christian religion. From the views of parish priests, it can be concluded that priestly formation does not fulfil its vision, aim, and objectives.

Participating residential formators were recruited for this most important ministry of forming the leadership of the Church and did not regard their ministry as a calling. The formation they received to prepare them for this ministry was minimal and did not empower them and to fulfil their responsibilities they use their own personal experience as former students. For pastoral formation they used their parish experience. All five formators in different ways agreed that the priestly formation offered at St John Vianney Seminary does not produce the kind of leadership that brings about deep change in the Church and society.

These three groups of participants in their own position and level in the Church agreed that priestly formation needed rethinking and that the vision of Pope Francis I to form ministerial priesthood as discipleship was highly recommended, with the hope that it would bring about change in the ministerial processes.

The following chapter discusses the normative task of Practical Theology, and its question: What ought to be going on in the formation of ministerial priesthood to prepare them for their pastoral ministry? The ministry, aimed at evangelisation and witnessing to Christ in the context of South Africa, “You shall be my witnesses” (Acts 1:8) in Africa (EA 1995:#86) needs implementation with relevant leadership.

CHAPTER 4

Envisaged formation within the Roman Catholic Church

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 focuses on the third task of the practical theological interpretation approach, namely the normative task, with its question “What ought to be going on?” The normative task is concerned with the interpretation of situations, events, and actions using theological concepts to form ethical norms that should direct our responses, learning from good practice (Osmer 2008:4). The outcome of the responses of participants in this study are interpreted using theological concepts on the understanding of a calling, formation, and involvement in the mission of God in their position in the levels of the structure of the Church.

Church, which is primarily the proclamation of the gospel, which is the call to evangelisation and social involvement. In the first section the theological understanding of the concept of a calling is discussed, which includes definition, the types of a calling, who the caller is, and the mandate of a calling, which includes *missio Dei* and *missio ecclesia*. These concepts are explained in detail later in this chapter under the section on mission.

The theological discussion establishes which ethical norms are used by the Church in South Africa in the process of receiving those interested in ministerial priesthood to establish the authenticity of their calling, the kind of theological education needed, the calling for residential formators, and structures on the diocesan level that should help them implement knowledge acquired in the formation of the laity for the carrying out of the mission of God. Jørgensen (2016:13, 14) argues that the mission is not our mission, but God’s actions should be primal reality in mission. Therefore, the primary task of the Church should be to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and peace in this world (Mt 6:33). The Church is to understand God’s activities comprehensively and holistically and form discipleship to actualize them in society. The basis of mission is the communion and love between the persons of the Trinity which they shared with humanity through the death and resurrection of Christ.

In the second section the theological understanding of the four dimensions regarded as holistic in a united formation (human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral) are discussed, applying the ethical norm of equal regard to establish how they enhance equal participation in the mission

of the Church and instil ethics in ministry. In the third section the theological understanding of the Church and her mission, divided into two dimensions, that is, proclamation of the gospel and social engagement, are discussed, applying the normative interpretation of good practice by the Church in South Africa in treating her members in the participation of mission.

This leads to the third objective of this research, namely, to delineate theology of priestly formation to understand its essence and nature in the formation of priests, and its supposed goal in relation to the democratic multicultural South African context. The reason for this is to determine the kind of priestly formation relevant to the mission of the RCC in the democratic South Africa. Parish priests are facilitators of the Christian calling by being trained and formed to serve the common priesthood of the laity and to empower them for their mission as they contact people in society of every calibre to impact them with gospel values.

For effective participation as followers of Jesus, all participants should know and understand their calling, receive formation appropriate to their position in the structure of the Church, and know and understand the mission of God in which they are called to continue in their present context. The definition of a calling, the types of a calling, who called, and the mandate of a calling for each group of participants in this study are discussed next.

4.2 Definition of a calling

Different disciplines have recently shown interest in the concept of a calling, in search of a purpose of life and work. In response to the objective of this chapter, the definition of a calling in different disciplines and theological perspectives is discussed.

To call means to shout in order to catch someone's attention (Gen 3:9). God called in the garden to find out where Adam and Eve were. Making a call is reaching out using whatever means available to reach another person. A calling is an invitation to attend to something or someone. To receive a calling is an ability to hear something and listen attentively to understand what has been communicated in order to respond. Listening attentively to a calling is to be alert to what you hear in order to respond positively or reject the proposal which in Christian understanding requires discernment, a mentor or spiritual director to help one on this journey. God has granted individuals a free will to choose freely to respond to His call or to reject it, which has consequences one has to bear.

Scholars in psychology (Dik & Duffy 2009; Elangoyan, Pinder & McLean 2010; Ehrhart & Ensher 2020) present three different definitions of a calling. Firstly, that in the past a calling was rooted in spirituality and the principle that a call is to serve God, humankind, or a higher purpose. Secondly, recent literature presents a calling as a sense of passion for a particular type of work, coupled with the belief that this work is meaningful and purposeful. Thirdly, a calling is defined as an approach to work that reflects seeking a sense of overall purpose and meaning and is used to help others or contribute to the common good, motivated by an external or internal summons. Dik and Duffy (2009) further differentiate between a calling and vocation by stating that,

A calling is a transcendent summons, experienced as originating beyond the self, to approach a particular life role in a manner oriented toward demonstrating or deriving a sense of purpose or meaningfulness and that holds other-oriented values and goals as primary sources of motivation.

They define a vocation as follows.

A vocation is an approach to a particular life role that is oriented toward demonstrating or deriving a sense of purpose or meaningfulness and that holds other-oriented values and goals as primary sources of motivation.

Whatever definition is given to a calling, it remains a desire to fulfil a higher purpose that gives meaning to one's life and contributes to the wellbeing of society. It is a search for meaning in life and to live and work for a greater purpose in response to that desire.

4.2.1 Theological definition of a calling

Theologians base their definition on the Biblical understanding of a calling (Araujo 2012, Nel & Scholtz 2016). In the beginning of creation God created humanity in his own image and to share with them his personhood and the care of all creation (Gen 1:26–31). Humanity had meaning and purpose implanted in their heart from the beginning, as well as a relationship with the Creator God. Humanity lost this relationship through sin and lost their understanding of their purpose, duty, and responsibility to look after creation and had to till the soil for their livelihood. The loss of this first calling created a void in their heart with no purpose to live for, and no meaning in the performance of duties and responsibilities of work (Frankl 1946).

A calling in the gospel has three elements. The first element is that all people have sinned and are in need of God's mercy (Rom 3:23). The second element is that a calling invites people to repent and have faith in Jesus (Mk 1:15). The third element is that there is a promise of

forgiveness, eternal life, and assurance in Christ Jesus (Grudem 1994:90). The understanding that there is salvation outside the Church implies that those called to discipleship within the Church have a specific mission and purpose to accomplish based on the commission to go out and make disciples (Mt 28:19). Jesus extended his mission through the coming of the Holy Spirit who accompanies those who accept his calling and form the community of believers, the Church. Those who accept the call and are baptised, need to be taught everything that Jesus had commanded for them to be disciples and go out to call others into the fold and establish their relationship with God and participate in His mission. This is an ongoing spiral chain in the pilgrimage towards eternal life. This is the normative guidance of good practice in forming missionary discipleship in the present situation of the Church in the South African context. This kind of a calling has three dimensions: internal, community related, and external mission (Frickenstein 2005:4).

The internal dimension relates to that deep desire, or inner urge, that forces a person to want to do something extraordinary, as in the case of Old Testament prophets. This internal desire compels a person to change, to transform from within, and live a life with a certain purpose that is contradictory to and challenges others in society. In the Old Testament the call of Hosea bears witness to this (Ho 1:2).

A community-related calling means a person is called from within a community for the community, for example, the call of Moses, Hosea, and Amos. In these cases, the communities asked questions that affected their way of thinking and living, as was the case of Hosea and Amos. Such a calling relates to the community's behaviour and challenges it in its context to save it or to serve it.

The third dimension is an external calling, and its effects cannot be confined to one person. The impact of a calling affects the course of history, changes worldviews, and transforms society. There are different types of calling received by different people in different contexts and times. Perceptions of receiving a calling may differ, and be through different means, for example, Bishop Desmond Tutu was touched by an Anglican priest, Trevor Huddleston, a white man, taking off his hat to greet Bishop Tutu's mother as a sign of respect for an elder person. These examples are just a few that show that a calling can be perceived through different situations in a person's life, because God can use whatever means to instil a desire to achieve his plan and purpose.

In the case of the laity who became Roman Catholic Christians through the incentives provided by the expatriate missionaries and then left the Church when they no longer received it, it can be concluded that they never had a calling. The formation they received had not oriented them to see God's way of calling them into a relationship with him for his purpose. Those who are recruited for whatever reason and go through priestly formation untouched by it to realise their calling, they are never called for spiritual leadership within the Church and should be helped to seek the meaning of their life somewhere else. Those who pretend to spiritual directors and go through to ordination, lead to the conclusion that later in life they will be dissatisfied and will leave priesthood. But it can also mean that going through formation could be for them a source of learning which they can use later for their personal benefit.

There are many reasons and many possibilities which God can use to achieve His purpose in peoples' lives. The judgement that can be made can fall short of God's plan and for his purpose in the world. In the following discussion different types of a calling are presented.

4.2.2 Different types of a calling in the Bible

The Bible presents different types of a calling. The first calling is God calling creation into being, into life (Gen 1:1–26), and calling Adam and Eve from their hiding place (Gen 3:9). Having lost their relationship with God, God looked for them and pronounced a punishment that would bring redemption to humanity, the offspring of a woman who would crush the head of a serpent (Gen 3:15). Throughout the Old Testament God called individual people to be prophets, and the nation of Israel to be a light to the nations (Ex 19:5–6). The third calling is found in the New Testament. Jesus, at the beginning of his ministry, called disciples to participate in his ministry and later sent them to continue his mission. The following paragraphs discuss these types of a calling in relation to the calling of participants in this study under two categories: a general or universal calling and specific or individual calling.

The calling in the Old Testament for humanity created in the image of God and to share in His mission for all creation, was general, was for all people. Humanity had lost this responsibility in the Old Testament, but God renewed it in the New Testament.

In the New Testament God extended salvation through the birth, life, suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ to all people to restore that first relationship God had with people. A call to salvation through Christ, to holiness is open to all people, it is a universal calling (Paul VI

1964:#39, Frickenstein 2005:5). This is an open invitation for humanity to reconcile with God and with one another in Christ as brothers and sisters.

In the New Testament Jesus called disciples to continue the mission of the Triune God by proclaiming it in words and deeds. Mary (Lk 1:26ff) was called to be the mother of Jesus and Joseph as a foster father to protect Jesus and Mary (Mt 1:20–25). John the Baptist was called to herald the coming of the kingdom of God, calling all to repentance (Mt 3:1–17). The message of John the Baptist (Mk 1:15) was a call extended to all people, a general calling in preparation for the coming of the long-awaited Messiah. The message of John the Baptist is still applicable today for all humankind to hear the gospel, repent, and have faith in the Triune God, the Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier (1 Pt 1:2). Those called to be parishioners, to ministerial priesthood and formators, are called to participate in this mission.

The Holy Spirit sanctifies us, giving us back our original status of being created in the image of God. This calling requires *metanoia*, which is understood as turning away from a sinful state of life, changing one's former life of sin, and accepting new life of grace in Christ as a requirement to following Jesus (Pivonka 2020). Repentance means “to change your disposition towards life and reality, to have a transformed default setting about what's important” (Roberts 2015). This universal calling is for all people to follow Christ to be reconciled with God. It is a calling to discipleship by repentance and believing the gospels, resulting in receiving the gifts of the Holy Spirit and bearing fruits that changes life's attitudes and behaviours (Gal 5:16–26).

The theological understanding of a calling, therefore, is God calling creation into being, calling his people back to Himself through the prophets and his chosen people Israel. God wished to restore the original status of humanity at the beginning of creation. A call to salvation is a universal calling to all people. The concept of a calling in different disciplines is man's search for meaning and a purpose in life. It is a longing to be reconciled with God to fulfil his plan. There is, however, no calling without a Caller (Frickenstein 2005:4). In the following paragraphs the Caller who initiates, sets apart, and sends.

4.3 Who is the Caller in Biblical understanding?

In the Bible God is the one who initiates a call to establish a relationship with humanity (Grudem 1994:206, Daugherty 2007:162). God stooped down to the level of humanity which was God's self-contextualisation to the situation of humanity in order to redeem us where we

are in our lives, and this is the call for the Church too (Hb 2:14–18, Daugherty 2007:165). Those he calls, he commissions to do the same in their own context, to reach out to those in need of God’s mercy, to evangelise, make disciples, teach, and make God visible in the world today. This is a calling for all Christians, to make the face of God visible in the situation of their everyday life, parishioners as well as the hierarchy.

Forming both men and women in his own image, “Let us make man in Our own image” (Gen 1:26) God from the beginning revealed his Trinitarian nature of working together in communion as a community to create, re-create, and sustain creation as he continues to create (Grudem 1994:208). God created both with equal rights, status, and responsibilities to take part in his mission. The mission is God’s mission from the beginning, as Communion of Community.

God the Father, out of love for humanity, sent his Son to redeem the world (Jn 3:16) and to save humankind from sin (Isa 44:60). Jesus established a relationship with us to reconcile us with God (2 Cor 5:18) through love of self-sacrifice. The Word that God the Father used to create the world, that same Word became flesh and dwelled amongst us, and redeemed the world that was created through him from slavery of sin (Jn 1:14). At the Transfiguration (Mt 17:1–13, Lk 28–36), God the Father’s voice testified to the Son. At the baptism of Jesus, the Father and the Spirit were present, testifying that the mission of the Son was a Trinitarian mission (Mt 3:16–17). At the end, Jesus did not leave his own alone, but he and the Father sent the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:2–9).

God the Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit to remain with us, teach us, and journey with us as we bear witness to Christ (Acts 1:8, Mt 28:19–20). He hovered over the waters at the beginning of creation, and he is now journeying together with the Church to teach, sanctify, and remind us of all that Jesus taught us until the end of time (Jn 14:16, 26). God the Holy Spirit sanctifies, and gives gifts to humanity to bear fruits, fruits that will last (Gal 5:22–23). Parishioners, parish priests, and formators through the reception of the sacraments of initiation received the gift of the Holy Spirit to share and bear fruits.

The Caller, the Holy Trinity, calls, equips, and sends (Hb13:21) for the continuation of his mission. No one called is left out of participation in the mission of God. It is now the responsibility of the Church (as a community of believers) to discern their calling as individuals and as a community and to take part in the missionary journey of the Holy Spirit who will be

with them as they witness to the ends of the world (Acts 1:7–9). In the following paragraphs the mandate God gives to those he calls to participate in his mission and the mission of those He has chosen, is discussed.

4.4 Purpose of a calling

God is always at work, and his mission continues in time, through time unending, everywhere, and in all situations of life. The mission of God, or *missio Dei*, to those whom he calls is twofold: to love him and to love one another and together look after creation, which involves social service. *Missio Dei* explains that the mission of redemption has always been the mission of God from the beginning and the hope of liberation of all creation (Gen 3:15, Rom 8:22-25). He calls people to participate in his saving action of love by accepting Christ as Lord and Redeemer. All those who receive this calling accept Christ as their Lord and Saviour and also accept the call to continue his mission, which is the Trinitarian mission. In other words, those who have received Christ and are incorporated to the Church through baptism take part by right in his salvific mission in their own context.

As discussed above, throughout history the Triune God continuously revealed himself to save his people. Daugherty (2007:153) states that “Trinity is a mystery of salvation,” therefore the mission of the Trinity is to save humankind and unite them to himself. Created in his image, he cannot allow that image to suffer eternal condemnation through sin. In his effort to save humankind, the Triune God calls all his people to salvation (CCC 1994:#1) as individuals and as a community of believers to participate in this work of salvation (Mt 20:4). The parable of the tenants shows how those sent were and are received (John Paul II 1988). Who then are the new tenants in the New Testament sent to the world to call humankind to reconcile with God?

Through baptism people are incorporated into God through Christ. All the baptised are called to repentance, to believe the gospel, to go and make disciples, to teach, and carry on the message of hope and peace to others. Repentance leads to faith in God and adherence to his precepts (Mk 1:15). Through baptism all are called to a personal relationship with Jesus and participation in his mission (Mt 28:19–20, Francis I 2013:#111). It is a call to discipleship open to all who hear the Word: repent and believe.

Discipleship is the process of forming a person into the likeness of Christ, restoring the image of God lost at the fall. Followers of Christ are to be a sign of contradiction in the world of

pluralism (John Paul II 1992:#8). Adherence to Jesus is a challenge faced by all who claim to be his followers in their effort to transform the world with gospel values. Being reconciled to God through Christ calls for a personal encounter with the Trinity and to bear witness to the world, not just lip-service but to live the message of redemption in society and make God visible again as a Merciful God who pardons sin and gives new life in the Spirit.

The democratic multicultural South African society needs models of Christian living and service based on justice and truth (John Paul II 1992:#9) as a self-contextualisation of the Church in the footsteps of Christ. *Missio Dei* therefore, is *missio Ecclesia* as realised by participants, but who were unable to fulfil it as members of the People of God. This should be the mission of the Church to teach people and make them aware of the purpose of their calling. Priestly formation should incorporate this concept in all four dimensions of formation.

The next paragraph discusses the mission of the chosen of God through Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, starting with parishioners, then the parish priests, and concluding with the formators, on what ought to be happening with regards to the mandate of their calling. People seek meaning and purpose in life and seek to know this in different ways and faith is integral way of knowing and believing in the eternal purpose offering meaning to life's journey of suffering, joy, peace, and union of love with God and neighbour.

4.4.1 Mandate of a calling to be a parishioner

The discussion above presented the theological interpretation of the concept of a calling which is extended to all people of the world to respond to and take part in the mission of the Church which is the mission of the Trinity as followers of Christ (Acts 1:7–9). Christ extended the mission, which was formerly for the Jewish nation, to the gentiles irrespective of race, colour, culture, and language when the Holy Spirit came on the apostles at Pentecost (Acts 2:1–13). From the beginning of the missionary journey of the early followers of Christ, the twofold mission was already applied (Acts 2:43–47, 4:32–37), and evangelisation was spread by both apostles and the lay people due to persecution of followers of Christ that took place in Jerusalem (Acts 8:4–5). There was no one left out and they could not hold the message of salvation to themselves because they were convinced that Christ was the Messiah (Acts 2:36–39) they were long waiting for. They had the courage to spread the Good New (Acts 4:12) wherever they went, accompanied by the Holy Spirit (Acts 11:19–21).

Through the prophecy of the prophet Joel all those who accept the Word of God are to become His servants, men and women, young and old alike, and should take part in proclaiming the Good News of salvation (Acts 2:17–18). Whoever believes, repents, converts to Christ, is baptised, and has received the Holy Spirit, is to take part in spreading the wonders God has done through Christ. Parishioners are part of those called and incorporated into the life of Christ to spread the Good News and should transform the structures of society to serve all people of God and establish peace and justice where they are positioned in society (Acts 2:43–47. 4:32–37, John Paul II 1988:#2, CCC 1994:#1).

From the early church all those who accepted Christ as Lord and Saviour were involved in making Christ known, accepted, loved, and served by the gifts they received from the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:3b–7, Rom 8:8–17, CCC 2003:#3). There is no competition in the Body of Christ since each is gifted for the good of the whole and for the building up of the Kingdom of God.

The mission of parishioners cannot be compromised by allowing them to perform some ministries within the parish which can only be done by the few, and the majority mobilised to serve the parish by fundraising as their mission. Throughout history God called people for special mission within their context and He is continuing doing the same today. The call to be a Christian and a member of a Christian community, the parish, is the call received by everyone who accepts or has a desire to follow Christ. From this initial stage all should know who Christ is, his birth, life, mission, sufferings, death, and resurrection and how they fit into the whole picture and why their being incorporated into His life matters (Mt 20: 3–4, John Paul II 1988:#2).

Participants as parishioners, parish priests, and formators have all received this initial calling. Each is gifted with specific calling and how each is to witness to Christ in his or her own context is according to the gifts the Holy Spirit has given to each one (1 Cor 12:4–31) for the building up of the Church. Evangelisation and societal involvement are two sides of a coin that cannot be separated from each other in their activities because a person consists of body and soul and needs to grow holistically as the child of God (Mk 6:34–37).

Labouring in the vineyards comprises different services that needs to be carried out by different members of the Christian community whose labours are important and complement each other to attain a good harvest. Different ministries are based on the three functions of Jesus which

are acquired at baptism, that is, the priestly, kingly, and prophetic functions, meant to incorporate one into Christ as his follower and walk in his footsteps and do even more because all have received the same Spirit (Jn 20:19–23) that empowers them to perform even greater works in their own position and level in the church and society.

Incorporation of parishioner into Christ gives them the full right to be and to do the will of God and fulfil his plan. What should happen is that they should focus their life on actively living and carrying out the Trinitarian mission of God realised through the life and death of Christ, that is, the self-contextualisation of God in time and place. Parishioners should, within their context, be the message of hope, joy, peace, justice for all, and make God be visible by their actions. Their mission is more difficult than imagined as they must be always alert and become salt, light, or leaven as the situation demands, than standing at the pulpit and preaching the Risen Lord. That is why their formation should not only be based on the reception of the sacraments only but should form their personality that they are saturated by the gospel values and bear fruit as disciples of Christ.

Parishioners should ask themselves these questions during their initial formation in order to carry out their mission adequately in their position in society: Why has God called me into this specific relationship with him at this time and age? What does he want me to do to make him present in those I live with in society? Lastly, how does he want me to do witness to him in my specific life? No one is left out (Mt 20:1–7) but all who accept a calling to be a Christian should be prepared to participate in building up the Kingdom of God and make it visible by their life which should be contrary to those of others in society.

The ethical norm for this understanding is that there should not be anyone discriminated against in receiving formation that prepares them for their participating in the mission of God. No one has earned the position through his or her own merit, all are gifted for the service of all. They should be signs that differentiate Christians from other people, “love for one another” (Jn 13:34–35), which should be visible in their own circumstances of life. The Lord Jesus prayed for all who share in His mission for protection so that they may bear fruits for the Kingdom as they are sent out into the world (Jn 15:11–17, 17:1–26) because they accepted the call to be His disciples.

The chosen people of God, the royal priesthood, the holy nation, and people set apart (1 Pet 2:9) should be united in their understanding of their position and their co-responsibility in fulfilling

the mission of God. The moral implication of this command is that those called should be obedient and carry out their mission faithfully and bear fruit in every situation of their lives, in season and out of season (Mk 11:11–14) as parishioners as well as priests in their different level in the hierarchical structure of the Church.

The first mandate of parishioners is not necessarily to take part in conducting priest-less services or sharing in the ministries of the ordained, but their mission is amongst people in society where they live and work. The mandate for parishioners is to preach without words, by who they are in society and like Christ to be the message of the gospel they believe in. Catechesis and ongoing formation should always form them for this important mission which makes God present in every situation of their life and on every level in the structures of society.

The method parishioners should use is to be always aware of and alert to their context and ask themselves in every situation, what do I see (what is going on?), what is this telling me, or why is this going on (judge)? And what ought to be going on (assessing the situation)? and finally, how would Christ (must I) have responded in this context? This should always inform their actions in society confronting the evil that denies people their dignity as children of God. Forming parishioners to exercise this method should form the basics of catechesis helping them to mould their personality to direct their behaviour and their response to every situation of their lives.

Being alert in every situation should simultaneously direct their performance of the twofold mission directed by their discernment through the method of see, judge, and act which changes with time and place demanding a different response. There will then be a difference in the life of parishioners (Christians) and non-Christians. Ongoing formation should always remind parishioners of their right, duty, and responsibilities that should inform and form their identity in society strengthening their relationship with God and service in carrying out his mission which they are called to participate in as salt, bringing joy, peace, and meaning in the lives of others.

But if salt loses its taste, then it will be trampled down under foot and will lose its value, importance, impact, and credibility in society (Mt 5:13). If parishioners misrepresent Christ in society, they make Christianity irrelevant for our time. Through workshops and conferences parishioners should build their confidence to stand for what is true, reject laws and policies that are against human rights and destroy human dignity, they should not participate in corrupt

behaviour that favours the few, in short, they should be what they profess to be by their way of life. This would qualify them to be salt and light in society and to be counted as friends of Jesus (Lk 15:14–17).

It is important that individual parishioners should understand first that being a Christian is a calling. They should be able to define what Christian calling means, who called them, and for what reason or the implication of it, for them to establish this process of witnessing in season and out of season by teaching, preaching, and sharing their faith in every possible situation.

Workshops and conferences should have a theme carried out in a certain period aimed to give a platform where parishioners can share and assess the situation of society, their difficulties in being salt and light, find solutions, and get input that directs them on how to respond in the context they find themselves. These workshops should reflect on the present situation, ponder on different theories and ways to respond and transform the old practices. There should be constant evaluation of what is taking place in society to further parishioners' knowledge and understanding of their mission and responsibility in society and to find new strategies to apply in witnessing to Christ. This means retreats should be for all parishioners, not only for those in sodalities and in internal ministries as acolytes, funeral ministers, and or Sunday service ministers. Left to themselves it might be difficult for them to discern how to respond to different situations imposed on them by civil laws and modern life of technology.

Without clear knowledge of these components of a calling and not alert on how to fulfil them can turn being a Christian as for personal salvation without participation in the mission of God in the world. It should be the responsibility of bishops, parish priests, PPCs, the Christian community, and catechists to analyse their context and find the best methods to use in faith formation of candidates, catechumens, children, and youth, to help them align their lives with the mission of God and to fulfil their mandate and bear fruits that will last (Francis I 2013:#20).

The concept of the Trinitarian God should help all members of the parish to work together as the Family of God and fulfil the aim of the Pastoral Plan of the bishops. The African concept of the family and extended family should help especially African parishes understand working together to achieve the good of the whole family. In a multicultural parish the rainbow concept can create a situation of sharing different cultures and how best they can witness together as an example to the struggling South African democracy of bringing different races together and build a healthy society that cares for the needs of all who live in it.

Different sodalities, for example of St Ann, is for married women and their spirituality is to care for their Christian families and the Church, to raise their children in the Christian faith, and to encourage vocations amongst their children to priesthood and religious life. With the many family structures in society, those who do not fall under the married category should be helped to build their families using similar spirituality that helps them to cope with their own situation. They should also feel belonging to the Family of God and cared for. They should be offered workshops and conferences to empower them in their mission as single parents, child headed families, or grandparent families. All have a mission to fulfil, and they should not be omitted in faith formation.

What should be happening is to focus parish faith formation for all parishioners that they may all grow in their Christian vocation by establishing family ministry as the basics of all formation. The Pastoral Plan (SACBC 2019) of the Southern African Bishops' Conference understands the Church as the Family of God therefore the expression of that model should be outlined through family ministry that should make the model a reality from the basic cell of different family models experienced in the democratic multicultural South African context to embrace under the Family of God model all families. Without implementation through proper processes the Pastoral Plan will remain a dusty document in the shelves of parishes with no effect in the lives of parishioners.

Participating in the mission of God is a responsibility that has consequences and needs to be taken seriously. Jesus said: "Not every person who calls me Lord, Lord, will enter into the Kingdom of heaven, but only those who do what my Father in heaven wants them to do" (Mt 7:21). Knowing a calling, accepting it, and not fulfilling its demands will lead to not entering the Kingdom of heaven and it is the responsibility of ministerial priesthood to teach, form, and send parishioners on their mission.

The mandate of parishioners puts them "in the front line of Church life; for them the Church is the animating principle of human society. Therefore, they in particular ought to have an ever-clearer consciousness not only of belonging to the Church, but of being the Church" (CCC 1994:#898). The priestly function is for parishioners to offer prayers and sacrifices for the good of others (CCC 1994:#1267, #1268, #1546) but this will only be effective if they have a personal relationship with the Triune God which establishes them in their function as priests. Parishioners were aware of this function by praying for their families, being persistent in

prayer, asking for God's intervention in their struggle but did not bring in praying for the country in its struggle to solve its problems and offer hopeful life for all. All parishioners need to know and always pray to keep connection with God and pray for the good of others.

Prophetic function challenges them to align their lives as a sign of hope for others by challenging policies, political and economic structures that are oppressive to the poor, and social structures that serve the rich and ignores the rights of all citizens, and to establish love, justice, and peace for all (CCC 1994:#905). Most people misunderstand this function, and it should be made clear for parishioners from the initiation stage of faith formation and to be practised as a way of being a Christian discerning the right response in every situation.

Living the kingly function challenges parishioners to lead by example, to be what they profess, teach, and celebrate in society. To serve is to rule, leading every Christian to be a servant leader in his or her capacity as a person. The kingship function requires obedience to God's plan and mission which leads to the demands of discipleship (Mk 8:34–38, Mt 10:38–39).

The self-understanding of the Church in the multicultural democratic South Africa as the community of believers, the Body of Christ, the People of God, the Family of God, holy priesthood (CCC 1994:#1546), should encourage co-responsibility in carrying out *missio Dei* to fight the spiritual and societal ills. Unity of understanding of the Church and participation in *missio Dei* and *missio Ecclesia* as stated in *Christifideles Laici* (1988), *Ecclesia in Africa* (1995), *Africae Munus* (2011) and *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013) should form part of catechesis and ongoing formation for both parishioners and priests. This will lead to unity of understanding and living the message of the gospel without discrimination of anyone called by God into His Family, the Church. This is the great responsibility for ministerial priesthood to avail these documents to parishioners and to interpret their content in the context of their people. The role of the lay faithful in the mission of the Church as understood from these documents is not yet visible in the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference region as assessed from the views of participating parishioners.

The inclusion, and much more need to be done to update spiritual and intellectual formation of parishioners on their understanding of the mandate of their calling and their involvement in societal transformation. Their right, duty and responsibility as co-responsible in the mission of the Church needs serious study and implementation in the democratic multicultural South African society for the positive involvement of the Church. The effectiveness of the

involvement of parishioners in the mission of the Church rests in the effectiveness of the priests in fulfilling their mission in pastoral ministry. What follows is what should happen in ministerial priesthood in fulfilling the mandate of their calling to help parishioners to be effective in their mission.

4.4.2 Mandate of a calling for ministerial priesthood

The presentation above discussed what should happen to help parishioners to participate in the mandate of their calling. Those called from within the community of believers to ministerial priesthood have a specific mission of service for the empowerment of the common priesthood of parishioners (CCC 1994). A calling to ministerial priesthood is specifically directed at individuals, but their calling should be discerned within the context of the Church and society in which they live and discerned on the basic needs of the Church, the Pastoral Plan, to fulfil her mission in society in time and place.

The one who has a calling to ministerial priesthood should first understand what a calling to be a follower of Christ, a parishioner means, and should receive formation that helps him build his relationship with God from that initial stage, should live the demands of discipleship, and within his context discern his calling to commit his life to bring others in the relationship with God in a specific way, that is, as the spiritual leader of his time. The discernment should also include whether the person concerned has leadership qualities of a shepherd and a servant in his quest to follow in the footsteps of Christ as a leader. With a clear understanding of Christian calling and the three functions, priestly, kingly, and prophetic, those called to ministerial priesthood should build their priestly formation on this firm foundation.

Accepting a calling to ministerial priesthood does not make one cease to being a Christian, a disciple, but it is a call within a common call to take up functions of leadership and leadership is service (Jn 13:12–17). Priestly formation should establish this understanding of leadership as service, as being a servant and should see this from those who are already in ministry as role models of what is taught at the seminary. Within the RCC, what differentiates ministerial priesthood from the general priesthood, is explained as “a *means* by which Christ unceasingly builds up and leads his Church (Paul VI 1968). Therefore, priestly formation should be formulated towards preparing candidates to follow the example of Jesus’ style of leadership, being a servant in order to be great.

As leaders of Christian communities' priests should be more concerned about going out and making disciples, teach members of their communities everything that Jesus commanded, and send them forth on their mission in society to witness in words and deeds. For this reason, it is transmitted by its own sacrament, the sacrament of Holy Orders (CCC 1994:#1547).

Pastoral theology formation explained as the “field of theological knowledge and inquiry that brings the shepherding perspective to bear upon all operations and functions of the church and the ministers” (Hiltner 2000:28) should include all the documents that refer to the importance of the inclusion of lay faithful into the mission of the Church. Without the inclusion of these documents and how they fit into their shepherding, pastoral ministry could end up focusing on maintenance of the structures of the church forgetting who the Church is.

Priests should feed parishioners with the Word of God, not only through preaching, but more in catechesis and ongoing formation through workshops and conferences for all parishioners. Sodalities should not take the place of this responsibility which is for all the baptised to participate in the Trinitarian mission. Using only preaching as an ongoing formation method for parishioners deprive them of asking questions and discussions to have a better understanding of scripture and their mandate in the whole structure of the mission of the Church.

The celebration of the Eucharist as the “source and summit” for the life of the Church in memory of Christ (Lk 22:19, 1 Cor 11:23–34), power to forgive sins (Jn 20:23), for people to be reconciled to God and to one another, and all other sacraments should not deter priests from teaching and living the Christian life as disciples, as role models of what they believe and what they teach.

The celebration of these sacraments are for the edification of Christian communities, to strengthen them on their journey as they perform their mission in society. Ministerial priesthood is not to celebrate these sacraments as cultic priests who offered sacrifice and performed rituals but as servants in service of their brothers and sisters (Paul VI 1964:#10, Broussard 2013). In none of the documents of the Church since Vatican II is ministerial priesthood portrayed as a calling to make those who accept this calling into cultic priests but servants like Christ. Not to understand this concept and actualise it, is disobedience to Christ who demonstrated how those who take up the position of leadership should represent him. In other words, to serve is to lead, as Christ did unto the Cross.

This understanding of ministerial priesthood requires humility, self-giving, and suffering for the faith which leads to priestly holiness in the footsteps of Jesus the High Priest (Connor 2005:1). The identity of ministerial priesthood, like baptism, originates and ends in the Trinity manifestation in history for the redemption of humanity (John Paul II 1992:#12). In this understanding, shepherding and being a servant go together because a shepherd should be prepared to die for his sheep as Christ died for his own and the priest should sacrifice for the good of the people he serves. He should be a gift to them not just by his presence but by helping them to fulfil their mandate and make their society a better place to live.

Parish priests are struggling to fulfil the mandate of their calling and are not satisfied and joyful with the state of their life. Knowing the one who called them unsettled them in their performance as cultic priests and unable to fulfil their duties and responsibilities as servants. Not every situation can fit a theory, but the question is, why do candidates have to go through priestly formation that does not help them to become servant leaders for their communities? What are they then recruited for? Is the understanding of the mission of God and the mission of the Church understood as being the same?

Parish priests had spiritual directors, house formators, and a spiritual father as mentors and as role models, but they lacked direction, motivation, and creativity to fulfil their mission. As priests they are called to be spiritual guides, mentors, prophets, kings, and teachers but were unable to fulfil these functions effectively. A ministerial priesthood calling demands that a priest should forget the self and align to Christ, “towards the Father and towards others, embracing the call to priesthood, dedicating himself to work with the Holy Spirit, to achieve a serene and creative interior synthesis between strength and weakness” (Congregation for the Clergy 2016:#29).

As spiritual leaders, their spiritual formation should become the source of their spiritual life and their mission in the parish community and society. Although the responsibility to cultivate their vocation is placed in their hands, priestly formation should help them to be able to do so, each according to his strength and weaknesses, helping them to cultivate their missionary zeal, exercising their pastoral responsibility with humility as leaders, teachers of the Word, and ministers of the sacraments, practising their spiritual fatherhood fruitfully (Congregation for the Clergy 2016:#33).

Candidates to ministerial priesthood should be helped to align their attitude to that which is required by Christ irrespective whether they have a calling or they are recruited if their mission and ministry is to give them satisfaction in life. Even if it is only one priest struggling to fulfil his ministry it would still be one too many, making rethinking of priestly formation for the South African situation inevitable to help parish priests carry out their mandate and fulfil the mission of the Church in the South African context.

Good practice requires those concerned to search for models that are working in other similar situations and apply them instead of carrying on with the model that perpetuates clericalism and cultic priests, which is unsuccessful in helping priests serve parishioners and empower them for their mission in the South African society.

The burden of priestly formation for the mission of the Church rests with formators of whom most are the product of formation for parishioners and priests in the South African context. Their calling as formators should be endowed with the power of the Holy Spirit to discern the signs of the time and be ready to model formation within the multicultural setting of South Africa. They are called to have their ears on the ground, always alert of what is going on in society and the world, align their spirit with that of the Trinitarian God in his mission in the South African context, and to understand the promptings of the Holy Spirit on how to formulate the content of priestly formation on *missio Dei* and *missio Ecclesia* for implementation (Congregation of the Clergy 2016:#125). What follows is what should be going on in the mission of formators in the twenty-first century.

4.4.3 Mandate of a calling to be a formator

Formators are chosen from amongst their brother priests found worthy of the ministry of formation of future priests. The criteria presented was that the bishops look for maturity of the priest to suggest him as worthy of this important mission. Though the mandate of formators is the same as that of any disciple of Christ to go and make disciples, teach, and send them to the vineyard, the difference is that the candidates they are to form are to fit in the hierarchy of ministries set out for the administration and leadership of the Church. The mandate of formators requires other gifts which demand a certain understanding of the whole plan of God working amongst His people and leading them through the visible human leadership of the hierarchy.

Formators should make disciples of those who are called to leadership within the Family of God in such a way that they become role models of what they believe and teach and their service as an extension of the priesthood of Christ the High Priest (Mt 28:19–20, Connor 2005:10). A call to be a formator is “a call within a call” of ministerial priesthood. It is a call of ministerial priesthood on a different level that requires self-giving and sacrifice that points to what all those called should follow. Teaching is part and parcel of being sent as a disciple, but in case of formators the aim is more on forming the spiritual leadership that direct, mould, and point the way to follow in fulfilment of the mission of the Church by providing her with leaders who portrays the leadership of Christ the Good Shepherd and Christ the Servant who gave his life for the salvation of the world.

Those who accept the duty and responsibility to teach and to form ministerial priesthood as discipleship and leadership of the Church, should have themselves Christ the Teacher as their role model of teaching and formation. Regarded as mature disciples amongst other disciples, their life should mirror that of Christ the Good Shepherd with the hope that they would be role models of the servant leadership for their time and place. What they teach candidates should be what they believe, live, and have experienced in their lives. What they expect candidates to practice in their ministry as leaders of Christian communities, candidates should have received from them in their nine years of formation.

Documents for priestly formation lists these expectations and responsibilities for formators of ministerial priesthood as a community set apart for this mission (Congregation of the Clergy 2016:#132). Formators should mould the content of the twofold mission of evangelisation, of heralding the Good News, and involvement in society using material for leadership and all documents that empower candidates for their future pastoral ministry, which is basically for the fulfilment of the mission of the Church as the Church. Failure of parish priests to perform their mission unfortunately is blamed on the failure of formators to form pastors, shepherds, and servants, offering them content, methods, and skills to apply the message of Christ and continue His message for the salvation of the world.

Chosen because of their maturity, formators should have spiritual maturity based on a personal relationship with Jesus as their source of teaching in forming disciples. They are to teach, above all, by being the message of salvation in their teaching and living their lives on and outside the

seminary premises. Discipleship, or being a disciple, is not to be limited by space as it is a way of life which should be experienced and rub off on candidates.

Amongst the baptised, formators are given a mission at the core of the Church's mission within a particular region. Forming the Church hierarchy in a multicultural society needs a calling and preparation according to the requirements of the local Church and society, yet be open to the universal Church when necessary (Congregation for the Clergy 2016:#132). However, the focus should be first and foremost on the context where formation takes place because of cultural difference and societal development and challenges which affects the dignity of people and their welfare establishing peace, stability, and justice for all.

Intellectual formation that is difficult to translate into the context of parishes in the South African context does not serve the mission God nor God of the Church for all the baptised in whatever position and on what level they find themselves in the Church structure. Indigenous knowledge, background history of South Africa, the present situation of democracy, and envisaged future should inform how international documents should be translated to form the leadership of the Church and influence Christian living of all members, forming a specific identity that shines the light to the ills of society. Reading the signs of the times and place enables effective ministry within the local Church and being prophetic for the society.

The mandate of a calling to be a formator is to build and mould personalities as bridge for people to meet the Risen Christ, and not an obstacle causing parishioners to leave the Church. It is the duty and responsibility of formators to form ministerial priesthood with principles to find ways and or be creative where they are, as settings differ, to fulfil their mandate. Spending much time in a presbytery for lack of knowing how to bring God to his people and people to God is a sign of lack of creativity and this situation does not serve the parish priest nor the parishioners, in other words, the mission God intends to be fulfilled through the Church suffers. God calls people for himself and for his purpose and in such a situation there is disobedience to his purpose because of lack of formation and preparedness to respond effectively.

Formators' mandate should be to form "an active force within the individuals...that which gives order and congruence to all the different kinds of behaviour in which the individual engages" (Hall, Lindzey & Campbell 1998:8). This requires that all those responsible for formation from the family, parish, diocese, and seminary should be of one mind and heart

helping candidates through discernment and formation to answer their vocation whether priesthood, religious life, or marriage.

Moulding mission as the core of formation ought to help formators at the end of formation to assess if a candidate is ready to be sent in the name of the Trinity and as representative of the Church. God calls in order to send people or individuals on a mission and those sent should be ready for the mission and be a gift to parishioners. Hearing a calling is to listen, to discern, to perceive, and to fulfil (Glenn-Burns 2004:16). Formators should help candidates, as part of their mandate, to view the current developments of events and to instil the want to make a difference in society (Glenn-Burns 2004:12). Candidates should want to swim against the tide as their desire to follow Christ and represent him as spiritual leaders in the Church today (Mt 16:24–28).

Discernment is to determine whether a person is converted, has received the gospel, and believes in its demands, ready to carry the message in the context of time and place, wanting to make a difference. The primary calling is to God, to restore the lost relationship, and the secondary calling is to be sent in his name and bring others into that relationship and in turn to be sent to attract others (Guinness 2010). Discernment needs to be accompanied by formation.

In this section a calling was discussed under four headings. Firstly, a calling was defined according to different disciplines and as understood as a theological concept. Secondly, different types of a calling were discussed concerning parishioners, ministerial priesthood, and formators. Thirdly, it was explained that there is no calling without a caller, and the Trinity is the initiator of a calling, and he calls for a purpose, for a plan to share his responsibility with humanity. The last discussion was about the mandate of a calling, namely, to share in the redemptive work of salvation open to all people. The mandate of a calling is missionary in its focus carried out by disciples in their different positions in the Church and in society. No one is left out. Parishioners, parish priests, and formators all have a duty and responsibility to participate in the mission of God and the mission of the Church. God calls in order to send one on a mission. It is a calling to be the new Israel, to become a light to the nation, salt that gives hope to the weary, and leaven that transforms society from within.

A definition of formation to be a parishioner, which is initial faith formation to be a Christian, follows next, then a discussion of priestly formation based on the four pillars of formation (human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral) and the need to involve the families of candidates

in the formation of their sons. An indigenous knowledge system would be helpful at this stage of formation to bring Christian faith home.

4.5 Formation as an empowerment for mission

In this step we look at what enhances a calling in the life of individuals called into the Church as signs of God's love for his people calling them to repentance and reconciliation with himself and one another as a sign of the unity and justice. Formation should be directed towards the fulfilment of the reason for a calling. The components necessary in preparing candidates and enhancing their response to their calling are ongoing discernment, mentoring, spiritual direction, faith formation, and hands-on practical ministerial formation.

4.5.1 Discernment

In the RCC, when a person claims to have a vocation to priesthood or religious life, a process of discernment takes place depending on what is understood by discernment and/or requirements to enter the seminary or a religious congregation. The discussion here is what should happen in that process based on the views of participants in this study in their theological understanding of their calling and how they are involved in the mandate of their calling to fulfil the mission of the Church in the South African context.

South African society is diverse with its unique history and political, economic, and social developments that differentiates its multicultural reality. The democratic achievement does not mean the achievement of economic strategy that gives all the people of South Africa back their liberation from poverty, restoring the dignity that was lost during apartheid. Another factor is the reality that existed in the past of the two separate structures of the church for the whites and for the blacks with the white priests having the status in society which every youth might desire as a spiritual leader.

Africans who joined priesthood at that time did not acquire the same status as the white priests and had to fight their way into being recognised to be good enough to be in the "leadership" positions within the hierarchical structure. The African priests did not feel at home in the Church but foreigners in the Church that said it represented God who created all people in his own image and Christ who died for all people to reconcile them to God (African Catholic Priests Solidarity Movement 2000: 6).

The reasons for those early vocations to ministerial priesthood are not discussed here but those who join now, their reasons need to be discerned with a new perspective of forming the spiritual leadership of the Church equipped to make the Church a home for all the baptised. That which the older generation abhorred from the white priests should not be accepted as the culture of ministerial priesthood and be propagated further because it does not fulfil the purpose of Christ when he established leadership for his Church.

With this background discernment should establish the reasons for joining ministerial priesthood within the Christian community and society that one is growing up in using the Biblical and theological understanding of spiritual leadership in the footsteps of Christ. The one who qualifies would be the one who would be accepted as having a calling, would be the one who fit in the framework of wanting to lose himself for the sake of the Kingdom of God and make a difference in the people's lives.

To archive this, those who are responsible to help aspirants should themselves have grown through the stages of Maslow's pyramid, mature in faith, and carrying out the process of discernment in fulfilment of the will of God. These specific callings do not need be of great quantity, but people with integrity who have grown in their personal relationship with God and have aligned their wills with the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

These understandings of discernment for personal calling could be used for theological education in priestly formation that candidates would use the same process for those who would aspire to become Christians. Priesthood is not a career, a contract, but a life commitment to Jesus and his mission. This requires that a decision should not be taken immediately after Grade 12, but an aspirant should further his studies in the field he would like and be mentored and undergoing spiritual direction as part of the process of discernment. During this time an aspirant should also show signs of discipleship, grow in spiritual life, and strengthen his relationship with God.

Acceptance to start seminary formation should be based on the readiness of the aspirant to take upon himself the servant leadership of Christ as his lifestyle and bring about difference in the Christian faith formation of all the baptised. The twofold mission of the Church should be his motto and the cross his banner. Christianity is not a religion for status but is laying down one's life for the salvation of others. Christian living in South Africa is weakened by lack of structures that support Christian living, for example, not all families are based on Christian marriage and

values of life, the school environment is no longer conducive to Christian religion. Those aspects that formed and influenced young people's values to form their personality, are no longer a given, and social media portrays alternative lifestyles that do not necessarily favour Christian ethics.

This situation should be taken into consideration because they form the foundation of the youth's thinking and style which they will carry into their priestly formation. Discernment should include spiritual formation of candidates in the environment that allows them the freedom to make a personal decision that is not influenced by those who recruit them for their own purpose. As viewed by participants, it is better to not have a spiritual leader than to have one who is not going to be a gift to parishioners and help them discover their vocation, grow in their relationship with God and participate in his mission knowing who they are as people of God.

It can be concluded that discernment is a process of honesty and openness to seek the will of God by reflecting critically on the self, on one's calling, and reasons that motivate one to become a spiritual leader in a society where leadership means self-service. Ministerial priesthood should be following a certain way of life in search of meaning and purpose that will be prophetic and contrary to the views of leadership in society (Itao 2020:3).

Ignatian spirituality includes seven important principles to follow when discerning a calling, namely openness, generosity, courage, interior freedom, reflection, putting priorities straight, and not confusing ends with means (Sazama, 2023).

How the spiritual leadership in South Africa deals with this reality would depend on why candidates are recruited to ministerial priesthood, either to fill positions for the visible structure or for the mission of the Church which should be a reality that makes God's reign visible and effective amongst members. Measures for genuine calling and discernment need to be put into place to help formators in their mission which forms the core of mission of the Church, that is, ministerial priesthood as discipleship.

Once the formation team, together with a candidate, are certain of basic signs that a calling is genuine and the aspirant ready to follow the process of formation, then a person can take the next step and start priestly formation. The next paragraphs focus on what formation means and which components are built on from the results of the discernment process.

4.5.2 Definition of formation

Formation entails an organised programme meant to mould, train, inform, and form a person holistically as suggested by the documents of the Church for priestly formation. Formation starts at home, SCC, catechesis, school, seminary, and continues in ongoing formation. As stated, formation is from the womb to the tomb. As long as we live, there is an opportunity to learn and be formed to enhance our thinking, behaviour, and the living out of our faith.

Formation entails human, spiritual, intellectual, and ministerial. In line with understanding of participants' data, formation of the RCC does not empower for effectiveness in participating in the mission of the Church. Catechism of the Catholic Church and the many documents published by the Lumko Institute for formation, the universal documents on the laity (CCC 1994:1–5).

Dames (2022:3–14) suggests what should inform the formulation of the curriculum in the context of South Africa as to formulate the curriculum with the background of the history of South Africa in order to heal the scars of the collective past imposed by apartheid and which shaped people even in their relationships with one another and not regarding each other as fully human. These scars manifest themselves in the violent system which in so many ways are transmitted into the psychic and physical souls and bodies of our new generation. These scars need to be addressed at the formation of spiritual leaders for them to deal with their own anger and hate and to empower to form the laity to heal, reconcile, work and live together as human beings with differences created by God and shaped by our environment and formed by our cultures and processes of development.

Another point Dames raises is the decolonisation of the curriculum that should necessitate the transformation of higher education to deal with social justice and human rights. This ideology he contested, is didactically grounded in social, contextual, semiotic, and development learning practices based on participation in cultural context. He sees education is instrumental in when, who, and how change should happen.

It follows then that cultural transformation of the apartheid system is the total process of human participation in the existential situation of everyday life. Dames continues that a sound and healthy educational system is necessary for a society to be human, and to heal the wounds of the past of a divided, unreconciled nation. There are different views on decolonization of the

theological curriculum which aims to create education which instils the basic values of ethical-justice, delight, courtesy, and gratitude by embracing their African culture—their roots as a true humanity in a renewed call to act as citizens of God with mutual solidarity, accountability, respect and love for our neighbour.

Those worthy of a calling and who are ready to be sent to proclaim the good news of salvation should be given the opportunity to strengthen their calling by learning as they continue the process of discernment in relation to human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral or ministerial formation they receive. These dimensions should help them further understand the will of God and assess their ability and strength to carry out the mandate of their calling in relation to God's plan and purpose in time and place.

The example of the potter and the clay is suitable to explain the process of formation as an ongoing moulding and discarding of that which is not aligned with the will of God. Spiritual directors and a psychologist should journey with candidate in discernment of the purpose of God and their participation in it (Jer 18:1–4). All people are invited to answer the call and allow themselves to be moulded and modelled into the image of Christ.

4.6 Theology of priestly formation

Theology of priestly formation should be built on the firm foundation of Christian life sustained by the family, Small Christian Community, the parish, and cultural values that sustain these institutions (Congregation of the Clergy 2016:#148, #149, Mokone & Pali 2022:8). Priestly formation, based on Christian life and rooted in the family, especially in Africa, has the possibility to make a greater impact on the candidate's overall life and commitment to his calling and its mandate than singling him out with no systematic plan of involving the family and the Christian family, and the parish. The old system influenced by the Enlightenment worldview of converting individuals, separating him/her from the family and community eroded family values, weakened the family bonds, community support, and Christian planting (Bosch 1991:252). Unfortunately, this system is perpetuated by the modern life of individualism and personal interest devoid of community spirit. In the process of faith formation, the family members are only involved at the end of the process without being part of the whole process.

Christianity could not become a culture, because of this system of individual evangelisation and conversion, and this encouraged mimicry. To correct this mistake, theology of priestly formation should devise a system that incorporates families in the whole priestly formation system to encourage authentic living of a calling, which demands going against cultural norms to live it authentically (John Paul II 1992:#68, Congregation for the Clergy 2016: #148).

To begin the process of priestly formation one needs to be a full member of the Roman Catholic Church, having received the sacraments of initiation, namely baptism, confirmation, and the Eucharist, and be in good standing by having received the sacrament of reconciliation (CCC 1994:#1577). However, the reception of the sacraments of initiation, especially baptism, should not be the only criterium for reception into priestly formation.

As discussed above, reception of the sacraments does not automatically mean one understands the implication of Christian calling, has a personal relationship with God, adhere to spiritual life, understands the implications of faith in Christ, live morally, and is involved in societal transformation as a Christian. Christian values are fading as it is revealed by the views of participating parishioners. It is the responsibility of vocational directors to ratify how far one is in understanding the mysteries of the life in Christ, the concept of the Triune God, and its implication in accepting a calling to be a Christian and to ministerial priesthood. Implementing this process should not be done as a way of doubting God's ways that are beyond human systems but to assist an aspirant to be open to the grace of God and the inner movement of the Holy Spirit that moves one to repentance, leaving everything, taking up one's cross, and following in the footsteps of Christ (Mt 4:18–22, Mk 1:16–20, Lk 5:1–11).

What is important here is fixing one's eyes on the Risen Christ and always listening to the promptings of the Holy Spirit (Lk 5:5–11) while continuing discernment and ministry in obedience to God who calls and sends (Jn 6:65).

Formation of priests is to facilitate lay people's formation based on the command of Christ (Mt 28:20) and the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortations on the vocation and mission of the lay faith in the Church. Formation through catechises should include the above, forming the main part of pastoral formation evaluating the past methods used in South Africa in order to introduce methods that facilitate conversion, repentance, leaving everything behind that does not comply with salvation through Christ.

Christianity is a lived religion which should make it easily lived in South Africa by Africans since African religion is a lived religion practised from within the family, the clan, to the tribe. Being an African myself this was my experience, and this continues amongst those who adhere to African religion and even amongst Christians. Some African culture and customs still form part of their life which need to be assessed for their effects on the one called to bear witness to Christ's life, mission, death, and resurrection. Accepting this as a fact should make it easy for formators and candidates to assess the culture and practised customs in the multicultural society against the teachings of Christ and help candidates to translate the Christian concepts into their indigenous cultures and languages.

The suggestions and direction are given in the Apostolic Exhortations to be used for discernment of what to incorporate and omit (John Paul II 1995: #42 and #43). That which makes us uniquely African formed in the image of God should be highly acknowledged and form an integral part of all formation in South Africa to help Africans build their lost pride and dignity in who they are as people. At this stage the families of candidates need to be included, and African scholars should understand faith in Christ so that families can support and mentor the vocation of their sons with understanding of the demands of Christian calling and its mandate.

The formation team needs to discern how to inculturate priestly formation in a multicultural society such as South Africa in such a way that each candidate can hear them speaking in his own language (Acts 2:5–6, Francis I 2013:#133). Formation of priests should help them to understand that African religion, culture, and its customs need to be purified by the message of Christ who came to fulfil the law and the prophets (Mt 5:17) and that there is no salvation without belief in him (Jn 5:24–47, Acts 4:12) and adherence to him and his teachings (Jn 15:1–16:1–33).

The candidates should understand these words of Jesus, incorporate them into their lives as their identity in society and that of parishioners (Francis I 2013:#24, Bevans 2019:208). Concentrating more on the mind of the Church can deter candidates from what is at stake, living as missionary discipleship based on the teachings of Christ and his mission in the world in which they are called to participate. Within their own environment and cultures, they should facilitate discipleship and adherence to Christ. If the world loves them then they should be worried if they are doing the Father's will and fulfilling the demands of their calling in Christ.

Parish priest participants knew the demands of their calling to bring God to His people and the people to God. The formation they received informed them but failed them in empowering them to live it and teach it. Formators are aware of this and together with all those who are responsible for formation of priests should live what they want to see happening in the Church in South Africa today amongst the lay faithful. This will bring unity of witnessing to the gospel as the Family of God.

What is in the vision and mission statement should find basic ways to achieve the authentic living out of the gospel as the actualisation of the prophetic function of their Christian calling. Further research and discernment are needed to make informed changes based on the multicultural society of South Africa with all its ills and how parish priests perform their mandate on a parish level and in society. The views of parishioners should be taken seriously and their mission in society assessed to have an informed knowledge on how to rethink formation of priests in South Africa.

Corruption and ills in society are precipitated by Christians who are not formed to know and understand their Christian duty and responsibility and how to get involved in society as Christians, as disciples of Christ. The Church in action is the lay faithful in all strata of society who witness the love, mercy, forgiveness, faithfulness, honesty, live justice, sharing resources, and revealing the goodness of God through their services. Issuing statements from the hierarchy should be to support the actions of parishioners in society and vice versa. The actions of parishioners should be complemented, strengthened by their formation and actions and the life of the hierarchy within the Church.

What is most important is “to provide the structures and processes of formation that will foster true conversion and commitment on the part of candidates for the priesthood, as distinct from mere compliance and conformity” to the trend of political leadership in society (Marmion, Mullaney & Ryan 2019:xxii).

Pope Francis I (2013:#133) encouraged theologians to be involved in discernment to make the message of the gospel understood in a cultural setting. Parish priests advised that African theologians form part of the intellectual formation as they address the African context. A committee of translators with theological knowledge, mastery of different South African languages and cultures, and indigenous knowledge of teaching and learning, could contribute to this requirement. All documents on lay faithful formation need to be in local languages to

have information available to all those who can read for themselves. Training of catechists (lay formators) and family ministry need to be a priority in the pastoral programme of parishes, since they are the foundation of faith formation in the human, spiritual, and intellectual preparation of disciples. Catechists should teach and form candidates from their own experience of being taught, understood, and living the faith.

The Lumko Institute as a training institute for the lay faithful should be revisited and reopened to form lay people who should form diocesan catechetical teams. Books written at Lumko should be used as they are written from the South African perspective with the background of the multicultural society. Books from outside Africa can be used by professionals as references but not for formation because they are written by authors from a different cultural background of understanding of Christianity for their own context and in the language that promotes their cultural perspective of life.

Those called to ministerial priesthood, especially from a poor background in catechesis in the parish, need more concern at the early stage of formation—less priestly formation be built on sand (Mt 7:24–27). The question to ask is, who is responsible for the bridging of poor faith formation and how is it done? St Francis Xavier Orientation Seminary is meant to be a bridge from parish life to seminary formation concerned with human and spiritual formation (Draft Manual 2018:1.1.4). But who are the formators and how are they “recruited”? What method of teaching and learning is used to help African candidates from rural areas where African customs are now revived, those from former homelands where ethnicity was stressed, and even from urban areas (locations/townships) who regarded themselves as better than those from rural areas and farms to help candidates to know themselves better as a community of those called for leadership in South Africa? There are vast differences between the home environment and seminary environment, especially because these institutions are in urban areas, which can cause a deep psychological blockage leading to suppression of the real self, leading one to pretend in order to cope with the new situation which is what was expressed by parish priests with regard to spiritual direction. In such situations an African Christian family with the background of theology and psychology who understands the process of development, African culture, South African history, can be of great help and support.

Priestly formation propounded in *Pastores dabo vobis* is regarded “as one, integral, grounded in community, and missionary in spirit” (Congregation of the Clergy 2016: Intro. 3). To address

the modern realities in societies John Paul II (1992:#2) offered this document for Episcopal conferences to consider “the contents and methods of priestly formation” in the rapid changing society causing a new culture, multiplicity, and diversity of context for the evangelisation of people. The process of transforming or rethinking priestly formation needs what Niemandt (2019:153) explains as “traders” and “gatekeepers” to balance change. This will be explained further in the next chapter.

South Africa, with its history and democracy infested with unemployment, crime, corruption, and deterioration of economy, leaving the majority of people struggling in poverty, should direct the content and methods of priestly formation and the mission of the Church. The content of the latest document *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* (2016) is gradually being integrated in the content of priestly formation at St John Vianney Seminary, starting with the contextualisation of human formation.

The General Prospectuses of 2012 to 2020 of St John Vianney Seminary were based on *Pastores dabo vobis* only. *Pastores dabo vobis* introduced four pillars or dimensions of formation. In this research both words are used interchangeably to mean the same thing as used in these documents. The General Prospectus of St John Vianney Seminary (2018:10) states that formation offered at seminary is within the Southern African context, but participating parish priests and formators in agreement viewed it as still Eurocentric, instilling a Medieval status of a cultic priest, lords and serfs’ status between the priests and parishioners.

Episcopal Conferences are to assess their own circumstances, their needs, cultural background, pastoral reality, the tradition of priestly formation, and should write their own *Ratio Nationalis*. This is overdue in the South African situation. Formation should address the context to be effective. When owning the documents and writing *Ratio Nationalis* in answer to the current situation, the post-apartheid reality of the Church and society, the history of priestly formation, and the present challenges of multicultural democratic South African realities and #Rhodesmustfall leading to decolonisation of education (theological as well), should serve the people of South Africa and their needs.

The vision statement of St John Vianney Seminary includes a summary of what the seminary hopes to produce for South Africa. The slow process of working on the contextualisation of priestly formation delays the process of self-evangelisation of the Church and the formation of the laity for the mission in the democratic society of new evangelisation. Reasons for the delay

in owning and inculturating the documents need to expand. Will synodality take effect when the documents of the Second Vatican Council are still not known to many South Africans who therefore cannot discuss questions with knowledge of their own position and rights in the Church?

Democracy in South Africa brought many changes in social life, land reform, education, thinking, behaviour, attitude, and religion. Freedom meant freedom from things some people regarded as oppressive. Some of these changes affected the Church population that dropped from 11% Roman Catholics in 1980 to 7% in 2001 (Egan 2018). The white membership from seminary to parishes level, decreased, leaving the Roman Catholic Church mostly black in both parishioners and clergy.

The fact that white membership declined by leaving the Church when the white government lost its power shows that “settlers’ church” parishioners did not receive faith formation that prepared them to accept Africans as their brothers and sisters. The whites who remained in the Roman Catholic Church struggle because they were not workshopped and formed for the new dispensation, as was the case with blacks who moved into white parishes and occupied pews without proper transition. This situation, which could have been an opportunity for Roman Catholics to bear witness to democracy and prophetic in the way the rainbow nation should accept one another, instead this created unnecessary animosity between blacks and whites who accept Christ as their Lord and Saviour. The leadership failed to anticipate an opportune time to be prophetic and should have prepared parishioners to take this transition as a moment of witnessing being the Family of God. The struggle within society is the struggle within the Church, not knowing how to integrate her members to accept democracy as disciples.

According to Egan (2018) the Roman Catholic Church withdrew from the public stage when it was clear that democratic South Africa had become a secular state and it was impractical to work with the state. With this realisation the Church established a Parliamentary Liaison Office in Cape Town in 1999 to lobby on issues of public policy (Egan 2018). None of participants, when asked about the relationship between the Church and state, mentioned this office. This office might be doing a good job, but if it does not represent the views of the lay faithful and they are not trained and formed in the Social Teachings of the Church, the contribution of this office will make no difference or have little impact on the living out of what is on government

papers as it happened during apartheid—when the Church leadership issued letters that did not bring about any change to address the plight of the poor.

There were individuals and groups among Church leaders, religious brothers and sisters, and priests who were detained for taking the side of the poor during apartheid (Bate 1999a:186). The Bishops' Conference representing the leadership of the RCC took part in the struggle later when the apartheid laws challenged the interest of the white church leadership strategies for evangelisation (Bate 1999a:156–166, 174–185, Mafuta 2016:196–205). The majority of the leadership were whites and inclined to “Eurocentricity, fear of communism, and fear of anti-Catholic reaction by the state” (Egan 2018, Mafuta 2016:198).

Currently it is the opposite. The majority of the laity and clergy are black in parishes and leadership in parishes, and the impact of the RCC is not clear, because those in state leadership are our brothers and sisters or members of our extended families, friends, and/or our comrades, either as lay people or for some of those in the hierarchy. Democracy is testing both church leadership and laity who are faithful to their Christian calling and the mission of the Church as well as to their allegiance to blackness in political leadership power.

At the dawn of democracy, the Church leadership failed to anticipate the transition from the apartheid regime to democracy and did not prepare parishioners for the integration of both the settlers' church and the mission church. After 28 years of democracy, in the researcher's opinion, not much has been done to offer workshops or a platform in mixed parishes and on diocesan level where black and white can discuss, heal, reconcile, and plan together how to bear witness to their Christian faith effectively in society.

At the SACBC there is a balance of black and white leadership but how this helps to see the Church at the grassroots become united has not yet been realised. Blacks moved into white parishes and occupied pews with no proper transition and whites withdrew or left the Church with no one to help them make a smooth transition from being elites to being brothers and sisters in Christ for their important mission in the democratic South African context. At this stage the Church lost its moment of grace to be prophetic in the time of confusion and unsettling situation (John Paul II 1995:#6) where Africans and whites could have led the country in its concept of a rainbow nation.

The St John Vianney Seminary, which used to be for white candidates only, was opened to black candidates who entered with no proper preparation, and seemingly God stopped calling whites to ministerial priesthood. White parishes were handed over to black priests with no preparation and introduction to white culture and thinking which hurt the Body of Christ. There is no strategy in place or included at formation to seek those who left, like the Good Shepherd sought his sheep, and to shepherd those who are left by the grace of God who mostly are the older people who did not want to abandon their faith.

Priest formation should take this context seriously and help heal the past, assess the present, and to work towards the future with hope. The damage caused by arrogant black priests and the whites who are hurting to have lost their beautiful churches to be run by Africans who care less about maintenance needs serious care. This need is caused by the hierarchy's lack of assessment of movements in society and preparation for change.

The rainbow nation needs pioneers soaked in Christian ethos to lead the whole society to genuine liberation from the past. The voices of the lay faithful, both black and white, should be listened to and they should be made ambassadors in their own communities to heal the broken relationships and build the Family of God together. The hierarchy cannot achieve this using a top-down method of change but the laity who live side by side can bring about the best strategy to redeem the situation before it is too late. This is a long process that needs good planning with the basic intension of "transforming practice" (Osmer 2008:158) both in the internal and external practice to liberate society from the past mentality of separate practice of faith and living.

Priest formation as missionary discipleship needs to consider the context of South Africa and plan content that will inform the head and transform the hearts of South Africans as they struggle under the African political and church leadership that continues to oppress their own people (Iheanacho 2022:2). With not much political and economic knowledge, most poor people believe what the political leadership promises them, and with no proper formation from mainline church denominations, fall in the hands of religious church leaders who promise them salvation (liberation) from their depressing situation.

It is the duty and responsibility of the Church to train and form leadership that makes people aware of these pitfalls, not only in time of elections, but in their everyday life in society. If theological education cannot help the church leadership to do so, then what is it for? Parishes

visited and interviewee parishioners displayed poverty of faith formation, spiritual, political, economic, and social poverty. The twofold dimensions of evangelisation, preaching the gospel and social involvement, should form part of priest and parish formation to redeem this situation. There are prominent Roman Catholics in government positions belonging to parishes from rural and urban areas. What impact are they making in society in their position? A Roman Catholic member of Parliament invited as a guest speaker for the closing of the Year of Mercy shared some important facts, some of which are quoted below.

...we cannot continue to preach faith and not live it... What happened to the Church in post-apartheid South Africa? When the Church is deeply rooted in the community and its membership operates as public servants in every facet of life, our societies will be transformed for the better. May you as the Church continue doing that which you do best and called to do. Pray for our leaders, our country, the whole world and all the challenges facing society... Everything rises and falls on leadership... As a government we cannot distance ourselves from the church...I also request the leadership of the Church to admonish and correct us whenever you observe us going astray. Government and church have a functional role in building our nation and society. So, in working together we can and should take South Africa forward (Peters 2016).

If the government does not distance itself from the Church, is it the Church then that is distancing herself from the government by not forming parishioners to carry out their mission as active politicians and economics? Parliamentarians are members of the “Family of God” and represent it in different strata of society. However, without initial formation and ongoing formation that sharpen them to know the demands of their calling as disciples of Jesus, they will be formed by policies that control their services (Peters 2016).

Ms Peters challenged the Church leadership that it did not care about them in parliament and does not offer them any support and formation to help them in their decision making. This means that she was also unaware of the Liaison Office’s contribution in parliament. These comments should give an idea of what is at stake in the formation of priests for their mission to the laity. Peters is not the only one but represents those in leadership in the government who should be included in the mission of the Church.

With the remark from the parliamentarian, one wonders about the concern Kumalo (2009:250–255; 2013:639–641; 2014:227–229) voices that even though at present critical solidarity is a generally accepted way of how churches may relate with the government, there are many churches in South Africa that still do not support or adhere to critical solidarity to relate with the state. This raises the question whether the church is thoughtfully preparing and empowering its members to engage critically with the state for transformation. Ms Peters did not show

awareness of the Parliamentary Liaison Office which is said to sit at parliament representing the views of the Roman Catholic Church. The representatives of the Church in this office should liaise first with the members of the Church about issues at stake in the government and act to support the members who should be exercising their mission. This office should offer workshops to all members who are in parliament about the stand of the Church concerning oppressive issues of corruption, crime, human trafficking, unemployment, and many other issues which degrade the dignity of the people, especially the poor.

In summary, the universality of the RCC does not depend on conquering the world using Western cultures, thought, methods of sharing the faith but where the Church is planted, the indigenous leadership should allow the many faces of the Trinitarian God to shine through faith formation of the many whom God calls to himself. The Church as a servant is not greater than her master, she is called to serve and how “blessed” (Jn 13:12–17) will be those who fulfil this service both parishioners and priests because they would have fulfilled their mandate effectively.

Titles given to the hierarchy that distinguish them from the “commoners”, for example, Father, My Lord, Your Grace, Your Excellency, and garb for officiating in worship celebrations, remove and separate them from the lay faithful and give them status that demand honour, not service, giving them a culture that does not represent Christ crucified naked on the Cross inherent in their calling (Wilson 2008:17).

The African culture is patriarchal, and for African priests these titles endorse the status that is oppressive to those who are not in the clerical level of the Church. In most African Catholic parishes there are few men and many women with no voice in the organisation and running of the Church. The African culture is oppressive of women, and this encourages enslavement or dominance of priests over the lay faithful, the majority being women. It can be deduced from this patriarchal nature of the RCC that the reason why few men are in the Church is due to the way priests just after ordination, have the courage to talk down to adults, point a finger, and reprimand them as if they were children, even though children of today cannot be talked to in such a manner. Could this be contributing to youth leaving parishes? This issue calls for more research.

Theological education in Africa and South Africa should deal with such elements of culture that go against humility in leadership and encourages disrespect, and humiliation of others, be

they adults, men, women, or children (:3). This is where Christianity influences culture and culture is modified by the spirit of Christ (Francis I 2013:#115, Bevans 2019:208).

Formation documents state that priestly formation is “integral, grounded in community and missionary in spirit” (Congregation of the Clergy 2016:Intro. 3). All facets, human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral, need to be integrated into the culture of *botho/ubuntu* to mould a person into the image of Christ the Good Shepherd. God was not ignorant when he formed people in their different nationalities, languages, and colours (Doudiam 2019), but displayed his multifaceted nature that should not be destroyed by imposing one culture on the other, and one gender on another. The Holy Spirit moves wherever he wills, making all things new.

Integrated formation needs also to consider the different cultures that form part of the South African context, such as African thinking, historical experiences, and prevailing realities of democracy (Magezi 2021:73). Lack of inculturation of the gospel message leads to shallow faith that causes people to leave the Catholic faith, seeking prayers elsewhere, making the multiple African Christian Churches or indigenous churches a refuge to meet the cultural needs of Africans (Ephirim-Donkor 2012:236). The Church needs to take serious steps, especially during priestly formation, to involve seminarians to work out a system that will best help them to be practical and relevant in their own context.

Time allocated for ministerial priesthood formation, space and environment, the content material, formators, and lecturers create and instil in candidates that they are a privileged class amongst those called by God to his vineyard, making it difficult for them to see themselves as servants of the lay faithful, not their lords (Murphy 2006:42).

The purpose of ministerial priesthood formation is to mould the candidates into the person of Christ as servant leaders in the Church acting as it is stated in *persona Christi Capitis* (CCC 1994:#1548). Acting *in persona Christi Capitis* should be visible in their actions as priests, teachers, leaders, and pastors (Mt 20:28, CCC 1994:#1585).

With these functions of ministerial priesthood in mind, the next section discusses what should take place at St John Vianney Seminary in moulding the personality of ministerial priesthood based on *Pastores dabo vobis* (John Paul II 1992) and *Ratio Fundamentalis* (Congregation of the Clergy 2016). The discussion includes the four pillars regarded as forming a holistic formation for priests.

Empirical data is quoted where necessary to highlight the effects of the four pillars on parishioners and parish priests, indicating whether priestly formation achieves its intended goal. The four pillars are discussed following the sequence presented in *Pastores dabo vobis* (1992) and *Ratio Fundamentalis* (2016). Human formation is presented first.

4.7 Types of formation for ministerial priesthood

Pastores dabo vobis presents the four pillars of formation regarded as holistic to ministerial priesthood. These pillars are to be adopted according to the context of culture and mission of the Church in a particular culture and developments in society. For the multicultural society of South Africa, candidates' cultural background needs to be taken into consideration to help them accept who they are as African Christians, where they come from, and the people they are to serve after ordination. The following discussion concentrates on human formation in the South African context.

4.7.1 Human formation

This quotation from Pope John Paul II presents the vision he had about human formation. He stated "...in order that his ministry may be humanly as credible and acceptable as possible, it is important that the priest should mould his human personality in such a way that it becomes a bridge and not an obstacle for others in their meeting with Jesus Christ the Redeemer of man." (1992: #43). The main part of moulding personality is living a moral life which should form an integral part of human formation.

Human formation cannot be complete without addressing the issue of Christian morals and those upheld by society, as well as values upheld by individual persons. Following this statement, human formation is to form the personality of a priest instilling morals that are prescribed for the one who answers the call to ministerial priesthood, for example, celibacy, which prohibits priests from marrying. Africans regard a family as the core of their being, and the situation created by accepting a call to ministerial priesthood of being celibate, leaving your family of birth to embrace the spiritual family, parishioners, to stay at the presbytery mostly on your own, sounds inhuman.

This issue of celibacy should be dealt with from the first stage of discernment which can be theoretically accepted but can be practically impossible to live. The understanding here that

celibacy should be well deliberated on from the beginning of ministerial priesthood calling and at every stage of priestly life, should not be understood as an African issue but a human issue which forms the understanding of being human being irrespective of race, culture, and nationality “God created them; man and female he created them” (Gen 1:27–28).

On the other hand, the discussion in Matthew 19:11–12 and 1 Cor 7:1–40 frees a human person to make a free choice between getting married or staying celibate, even though Jesus makes his hearers understand that some remain unmarried, not because of their own choice or for the sake of the Kingdom of God, but because they are born so or because man made them so. Human formation should at every stage of the life of a priest provide a solution without one having to abandon his first calling and the choice to live a celibate life but should also consider those affected by the unfaithfulness to the promise to live a celibate life.

Not being true to the reality of unfaithfulness and making it an African problem distorts the reality that God created humankind the same. History and developments changed the perspectives of other nations and individuals. It is at this stage that formators need to be open and honest with the candidates and offer them appropriate explanation of human nature, why the Church opts for celibate clergy, and how candidate should incorporate this into their discernment process. Emotional maturity should enable one to love God with all one’s heart, soul, and mind, and to love neighbour as oneself, which determines ministerial priesthood celibacy difficult to live without the grace of God and good relationship with others as a support group (Mt 22:37–40, Cozzens 2000:25–43). Celibacy is not running away from love relationships with others but how this is expressed in dealing with others. Candidates can make a great contribution in living out love of neighbour by accepting those of other cultures as equals and loving them as self. In dealing with the concept of celibacy it is important to consider how one accepts and relates to others.

Following the discussion in the previous section, this is a challenging step to take for blacks, coloureds, Indians, and whites in South Africa with their different backgrounds dented by apartheid. Formators at this level should work hard to bridge this dented background of candidates and form their personality, pointing to Christ and reflecting his attitude as the Good Shepherd forming the foundation of all priestly formation for “grace builds on nature” (Congregation of the Clergy 2016:#93).

Acting in persona Christi Capitis, human formation ought to mould, model, and shape the candidates in such a way that his race melts into being a disciple of Christ and this should reflect in his treatment of people of different cultures, in his life, ministry forgetting self for the sake of the Kingdom. Jesus became truly man to save humankind from their sins. This means that a priest should allow Jesus to be reflected in everything he does, and human formation should help him to do so. Therefore, human formation should transcend the individual's cultures to mould candidates as instruments worthy to represent Christ in their mission as a disciples and Christian leaders in the multicultural society.

Called for mission, a priest candidate should relationally and personally be willing to allow himself to be moulded in the person of Christ in His humanity. The ability to allow oneself to be moulded stems from the understanding of a calling to ministerial priesthood which can be difficult if one is recruited for whatever reason. This process requires careful discernment in accepting candidates to ministerial priesthood to determine the authenticity of the vocation, his qualities for leadership, and his ability to relate.

The formation processes, from the beginning to the evaluation stage for readiness for ordination and sending on mission, should form a spiral movement of growth, maturity, and self-giving at all times in the life of a priest. This is humanly impossible unless one is called because God as the caller always provides grace for the fulfilment of the mission he commissions one to fulfil. This process is meant to shape, equip, and mould those called to ministerial priesthood, leading them to the call to holiness which is intimacy with God and imitation of Christ which is sustained by the Holy Spirit (John Paul II 1992:#33).

In the process of human formation candidates should develop positive personality traits, such as effective maturity, humility, gentleness, emotional intelligence, and prudence, just to mention a few. These are to aid him to follow closely in the footsteps of Christ, being meek and humble of heart, becoming his living image in pastoral ministry (John Paul II 1992:#43). Every seminarian must embrace his background, his culture, who he is as created by God before he can abandon himself to the mercy of the one who called him (Amos 7:14–15) and has the ability to make anyone his messenger irrespective of who they are and their state of life.

Besides the above elements that need to be covered in human formation it is necessary to address the legacy of traditional culture, colonialism, apartheid, and to decolonise the mind of seminarians concerning their understanding of power, authority, and leadership. Dealing with

the legacy of apartheid, formators will have to address the element of an inferiority complex that leads to self-hate, racial perception, divisions, and being violent in relationships.

Inequality in society left most Africans wounded and in need of healing from the past especially those who lost their family members during the struggle. The healing of the past hurts will help candidates to better co-operate with those in authority and adults in the parish, especially men, who in their subconscious would represent an abusive father or a father who denied him, creating a situation where he had to grow up without a father figure. Growing up under such conditions, and as a priest to be addressed as “father” and be expected to behave as an “ideal” spiritual father with no experience of a father figure as a role model, can create anxiety that can prevent one to cope with the demands of his vocation and can also lead to pretending in order to cope with the situation without breaking down.

These are few examples amongst many which needs to be talked about and addressed in human formation to direct candidates to receive appropriate psychological help to deal with their past. Those growing up in a single parent home might find it difficult to take orders from a male figure as leader and be wrongly judged as being stubborn when those in authority are unaware of their struggle to cope with male authority.

Amongst Africans there is also xenophobia and tribalism which need to be dealt with as some Africans from other countries prove to be self-confident and become a threat to the local candidates and priests. Different cultures deal with problems and conflict in different ways, and this can create situations where priests in the same diocese can form cliques and divide the diocese into unmanageable groups if this issue is not dealt with in human formation. Even though culture expresses the totality of a person’s life in his own context, expressing his worldview (Francis I 2013:#115) in a multicultural society needs a thorough discussion in light of the gospel and theological understanding of being a new creature in Christ. Candidates should be taught how to deal with others who are different in many aspects.

Racial divide prevents people to share their God-given talents to rebuild and transform the church environment and society into a family where siblings can easily forgive each other and bear one another’s burden. Human formation should empower priest candidates and their parishioners across all cultures to work together to carry out their mission as children of God (Banda 2021:38).

Diversity is a God-given beauty for strength and is complementarity. In Sesotho, this is expressed as *Matsoho a hlapisana* which means hands wash each other. Nobody has everything necessary for survival. People need each other and it is part of evangelisation to make people aware of God's plan in creating humanity with their differences. Pope Francis I (2013:#118) encouraged in these words:

We cannot demand that people of every continent, in expressing their faith, imitate modes of expression which European nations developed at a particular moment of their history, because the faith cannot be constricted to the limits of understanding and expression of any culture. It is an indisputable fact that no single culture can exhaust the mystery of our redemption in Christ.

This does not only apply to European cultures, as people in different cultures view themselves according to what they regard as better than in other cultures. Christianity encourages unity in diversity amongst all nations. Due to technology and globalisation, cultures are shared and copied making it difficult to form candidates in their own cultural background, and the South African cultures are divided and at the same time, the South African society share the common experience of life uniquely South African, which makes it a complicated yet a beautiful nation. All these diversities need to be channelled to form a mosaic. A rainbow concept does not necessarily encourage mixing and sharing but living together in a parallel context. Human formation should play an important part here to form church leadership that is mature and can lead a process of not just tolerating each other but loving each other as children of God.

Social media and education bring the world cultures into every household and affect the thinking and understanding "who is my neighbour" in the biblical context. South Africa, from rural to urban areas, is not unaffected by these challenges. Human formation should empower priests for mission and ministry in parishes, combining catechesis with human formation that should help Roman Catholic membership of all South African races to be exemplary in treating of one another as brothers and sisters confident in themselves as disciples of Christ.

Most of what was held in traditional cultures as important for human formation, for example, morals, relationships, hospitality, respect, and communication, have not formed part of the multicultural and multiracial society. The country is still racially divided, and crime ridden, although most people regard themselves as Christian and Africans but do not uphold *Botho/ubuntu* values.

Education has left many young people foreign to themselves and their society (Banda 2021:38), making them divided in themselves. Seminarians are not spared from this influence, and it

needs to be dealt with to help candidates in their decision making and wanting to live like what they see portrayed in social media, while forgetting the gospel values of discipleship. Even though some things have changed since the time of Jesus, the basics remain the same such as self-respect, respect for others, justice for all, caring for the poor spiritually and materially, being a servant leader, and all that form the core of the Christian religion. Emotional intelligence fits in this stage to help candidate express and communicate on that level.

Emotional intelligence allows a person to be aware of his or her emotions and those of others and be able to monitor his own for the good of community building. In the case of ministerial priesthood, as leaders of communities, they need emotional intelligence formation to embrace themselves and feel content in their own skin and to help parishioners to reach that stage of maturity in their dealings with others in society.

Formators need to be abreast with their knowledge and strategies for formation, holding the candidates and the society in mind in training and formation to enhance human formation strategies. Assessing changes and lack of certain values in candidates, family and society call for a periodic revision of the content of formation to address these changes (Congregation of the Clergy 2016:#3). The draft manual aims to do this, but the outcome of contextualised or adapted human formation is yet to be realised.

The aim of human formation at St John Vianney Seminary is to help candidates develop self-knowledge, self-acceptance, and self-gifting (SACBC 2016:#2.2). These concepts, well formulated within the South African historical and present situation, could help integrate the different cultures and address the racial diversity in South Africa. Self-knowledge and self-acceptance give one confidence to deal with others as human beings created in the image of God, but at the same time being aware that like oneself, they too have both positive and negative characteristics and are fighting their own battles in life. This awareness should make one humble and able to grow in self-gifting in ministry knowing that one is not perfect but by the grace of God one is called to contribute towards the salvation of others by encouraging them to enter a relationship with God and participate in His mission.

Finally, the two concepts self-knowledge and self-acceptance should free a candidate to self-giving, which is a gift of self without abuse or being taken for granted. Jesus is an example of self-giving that is free from prejudice. He accepted all people as his disciples, irrespective of status, gender, or race. South Africa, with the apartheid history, requires self-giving in order to

serve the multiracial and multicultural society and bring about justice, peace, reconciliation, and love amongst different people. Human formation should incorporate these three concepts to be integrated in forming the personality suited for ministerial priesthood that does not serve self, but gifts itself to build the children of God towards his Kingdom. A humanly integrated person can best serve the multicultural parish and be a role model in the rainbow society.

In building others for the Kingdom of God one should be aware of one's historical background to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past, thus empowering one with the ability to define the presence and to contribute to the transformation of oppressive systems, and to look forward into the future with hope. This is required from individuals, the Church, as well as the South African nation to reach the stage of maturity that leads to self-giving for the good of all people living in the country.

Human formation is a process that changes with different stages of growth, affected by time and place and needs reviewing from time to time and be adjusted for the new generations to answer their conditions of life. The concept of *Motho ke motho ka batho ba bang* (I am because we are) does not change with time because the human society should always take the Trinitarian God as its model. No man is an island and *matshoho a hlatswana* (hands wash each other) means human beings are made to complement each other to grow in maturity and achieve the ultimate purpose of God creating them in his own image and after his likeness (Gen 1:26).

In the following paragraph the researcher discusses what ought to be happening in spiritual formation to enhance a mature human person for the mission of God and the Church in society.

4.7.2 Spiritual formation

Human beings made in the image of God and His likeness, are both material and spiritual. Sin separated humanity from God and dented their image which is restored in Christ (Jn 3:16, Congregation of the Clergy 2016:#102). The Holy Spirit sent by the Father and the Son journeys with humanity helping them on their spiritual journey to remember everything Jesus did and taught and to bear witness to him in the world (Jn 14:26, Acts 1:8).

An integral part of ministerial formation, therefore, is spiritual formation that helps candidates unite with God and mature in their relationship with him as they journey in life. The Holy Spirit is the key instrument sent by the Father and the Son to integrate a person to be a spiritual being and to live a Christian life according to the will of God. The same Spirit is the essence of

spiritual formation that gives life to every person called to ministerial functions in his *being* a priest and his *acting as* a priest (John Paul II 1992:#45).

A person is unable to unite with God and fulfil God's purpose unless he or she empties himself or herself and opens his or her heart to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. The aim of spiritual formation, therefore, is to assist the candidates to ministerial priesthood to open himself to the Spirit and through prayer grow in his relationship with God.

Called by God amongst other Christians to function as a leader in his Church, a priest candidate needs to develop his personal relationship with God, by listening to him in prayer through scripture, meditation, and contemplate God's omnipotence in all of creation as he discerns his calling and in future lives his priesthood. Through scripture a candidate makes Jesus his focal point of reference as his role model of Christian life and ministerial priesthood as he learns the will of God and aspires to fulfil it. Scripture should become the spiritual road map of the candidate where he should learn and understand the contours of his mission, develop spirituality for ministerial priesthood as discipleship, to learn the requirements to become the good shepherd, and to live a life of servant leadership (Congregation of the Clergy 2016:#103).

Matured by human formation, a priest candidate should open his heart to become the seedbed for spiritual growth and become an integrated mature human being. It is in spiritual formation where human formation finds its completion, and a person identifies and unites himself with God (John Paul II 1992:#45).

During the period of spiritual formation at the seminary, a candidate should grow spiritually and reach the point where he makes a personal choice to own the Christian faith and to live it as his identity without compromise. To reach the understanding of a calling to ministerial priesthood as discipleship, is a step towards understanding a call to holiness prompted by the Holy Spirit who dwells within Christians from baptism and confirmation. incorporating one into the life of God (John Paul II 1992:#19). Being formed spiritually a candidate prepares himself to be a spiritual father and a spiritual leader, building his personality to become a bridge for people to come closer to God and for God through his priestly life, ministry, and the through celebration of the sacraments come closer to God's people.

St John Vianney Seminary has not yet owned the spiritual formation proposed in *Pastores dabo vobis* and *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* (2016) to situate it in the context of

multicultural religions in South Africa, the challenges of family life which lacks support to build a spiritual bed and atmosphere, the education system that does not include religious education in schools, parish life that does not have programmes for parishioners for ongoing faith and spiritual formation, parish priests who only celebrate sacraments and perform rituals for not knowing how to bring God to His people and people to God, and candidates recruited for ministerial priesthood. This context calls for rethinking of priestly formation that will set as a priority appropriate spiritual formation that will inform and equip ministerial priesthood as spiritual leadership with relevant spirituality that empowers for the mission of the Church.

Contextualisation of spiritual formation would need to be aware of this context and put in place a system that helps candidates own Christian spirituality that forms their ministerial priesthood spirituality. It is almost impossible for candidates to understand and live ministerial priesthood spirituality with no basis of living Christian spiritual life while growing up. The age in which most candidates entered the seminary at too young an age to have made a choice to own the Christian faith, never mind following ministerial priesthood spirituality and confine oneself to spiritual exercises without a break from parental control. Certainly, there are exceptions, but from the background stated above, there should be an understanding that most will struggle to live an authentic spiritual life and grow in spiritual maturity.

Using good practice and normative guidance (Osmer 2008:152), firstly, assessment of past and or present models effective in spiritual formation, especially in Africa and South Africa from the Roman Catholic seminaries and other Christian denominations, can be used to reform the present situation. Secondly, good practice can generate new understanding of a calling to ministerial priesthood, Christian life, priestly life and spirituality in the African context, to discern the spiritual formation that can help candidates to grow and mature in spirituality of ministerial priesthood.

It is important to realise that some things, even spiritual formation, cannot be transferred from one continent to another or from one culture to another, since faith is informed and develops from the context of life of people (Powers 1982). Candidates need to be fetched where they are on their journey of Christian faith for them to understand the meaning of spiritual formation through prayer, spiritual exercises, and be taught how to pray using scripture. This should not be taken for granted lest people be ordained while not yet Christians and not upholding Christian spirituality. The understanding of Christian spirituality forms the framework of

ministerial priesthood as the leadership of the Church forming the hierarchical structure, and if not properly understood and lived, then the Church will end up being led by wolves in sheepskin (Mt 7:15–22) and the laity will not be served to reach their Christian faith maturity and spirituality of service to society.

As candidates mature spiritually, they should, from their inner being, desire to have personal prayer and practice spirituality, without being supervised or out of fear to be expelled from the seminary, to grow in their relationship with God which should be strengthened by the set times of community prayers. Desiring to have their personal prayer and starting that practise at the seminary will help them sustain a life of prayer when they are alone in parishes to keep their relationship with God, not as a punishment but joy of a creature meeting his Creator and Redeemer who calls us out of darkness into his marvellous light (1 Pet 2:9–10).

Without a life of prayer ministerial priesthood would become a career, and the celebration of sacrament mere performance of rituals, pastoral ministries will be duties that are carried out but make no impact in someone's life. These ministries will have no meaning and the priest will not be satisfied and fulfilled as a person with a purpose. His human and spiritual life will not be integrated, and ministerial priesthood will be a burden and not a joyful fulfilment of his calling.

The aim of spiritual formation, according to the General Prospectus (2018:225), is to assist candidates to priesthood in recreating and transforming their inner being and to act according to the mind of God. How this is assessed is not mentioned. Explaining these unusual concepts is not undermining the power of the Holy Spirit who is able to break through any situation and into anyone and touch the heart of individuals and make them instruments of God's love.

Being recreated and transformed in your being is a lifelong process and journey that calls for ongoing discernment, spiritual direction, mentoring in spiritual growth on how the Spirit works, and to find meaning in one's calling. The ability to integrate and discern in prayer the plan of God and His mission, and to live meaningfully and purposefully in the world, is fulfilling the mission of the Triune God (Oyemomi 2011:97). Walking in the presence of God and following in the footsteps of Christ the Good Shepherd is the process of a human becoming the person God has created him or her to be and to participate in his plan of redemption. Human formation should enable a person to understand oneself being created in the image of God (Gen 1:26–27)

and being recreated by the death and resurrection of Christ, allowing the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to direct one's life.

In the formation for ministerial priesthood, the seminary environment and time set for prayers, meditation, and the Holy Eucharist should make it easy for candidates to grow in love relationship with God and neighbour. The atmosphere of silence and prayer creates an environment that should help candidates to be aware of the presence of Christ in their everyday activities. There are features and experiences that should form spiritual formation, such as “conversion of mind and heart, fostering of integrative thinking, personality formation, promoting authentic discipleship, personal appropriation of faith and knowledge, and cultivating a spirituality of the intellectual life” (Naidoo 2011:121).

Pope Benedict XVI, in his homily of the 9 April 2009, highlights three aspects in the life of a priest immersed in Christ. Firstly, he should act in place of Christ and the Church; secondly, he should become a mediator of God's mercy; and thirdly, he should become a humble servant of God's Word. It is in spiritual formation that he learns to interpret the Word of God accordingly, which forms the greater part of his pastoral ministry as priest, king, and prophet, and the celebration of the Eucharist becomes the summit of his priestly life where he prays for the Church, his parishioners, and the world.

Learning without the dimension of spiritual formation would be receiving information that does not lead to conversion, community, and mission (Murphy 2006:58). For human, spiritual, and Christian life to flourish, these dimensions need to be understood in their integration, through intellectual formation. The discussion that follows explains the importance of intellectual formation as faith seeking understanding of God and His mission.

4.7.3 Intellectual formation

Intellectual formation builds on human and spiritual formation and without this foundation it would lack meaning and expression. Pope John Paul II (1992:#51) explains the need for intellectual formation, stating that for the sake of salvation of their brothers and sisters, priest candidates should seek an ever-deeper knowledge of divine mysteries. Intellectual formation in this understanding is faith seeking knowledge about the mysteries of God, which would help candidates to have better understanding of their calling in light of scripture, history of the

Church, Fathers of the Church, lived faith of saints in their context and how they in their own context must interpret scripture and apply it in living out their mandate as spiritual leaders.

The vision, mission and goal of St John Vianney Seminary list what is intended for intellectual formation that builds on philosophy and theology. Parish priests, as well as formators, agreed that intellectual formation is better developed than any of the other three dimensions, even though African theologians do not form a great part of it. Theologies and philosophies used at St John Vianney Seminary have history behind them and their use is long tested in the history of the Church. St John Vianney Seminary is registered under the South African Department of Higher Education and accredited to offer degrees to student who comply to the academic requirements (St John Vianney Seminary 2022:3).

Philosophy and theology are formulated to comply with the standard of higher education and fundamental principles underpinning teaching supports an engaged learning (St John Vianney Seminary 2022:81, 82) which is an indication to applying students what would be expected of them.

Though it is good for students to obtain degrees in philosophy and theology, it does not necessarily mean they are automatically able to impart the acquired knowledge credibly on parish level where parishioners are not waiting to acquire degrees but to understand the marvellous workings of God in history and how they fit in that picture in their life as Christians. The principles of teaching and learning are explained as supporting an engaged approach that involves interactive, reflective, cooperative, experiential, creative or constructive, and conceptual learning (St John Vianney Seminary 2022:81, 82). How these are to assist candidates in pastoral ministry has not been realised yet on parish level, especially those which were visited. This system does not help candidates to practically implement the knowledge acquired and help parishioners to grow in their knowledge of scripture, the love of God and neighbour, and to be become actively involved in evangelisation and social involvement.

Mashabela (2017:2) argues that African theological education can enhance the value of the theological curriculum to prepare theological students in order to engage in suitable economic development and liberation that is centred to the African needs. If St John Vianney Seminary has only one module in African theology this will not be realised in the near future that priests are enabled to engage with their context informed and formed by their priestly formation.

It is important that intellectual formation should integrate other formations to make them more understandable in the light of scripture and the South African context. To be able to achieve this, applicable skills or tools to reconcile and unite parishioners at parish level for them to learn and share their gifts are necessary. Necessary skills should be applicable to focus parishioners on their calling to discipleship regardless of their cultural differences, race, language, gender, colour, or anything that differentiates them, strengthening them in love of neighbour. This should also integrate assessment of situation, knowledge that involves critical thinking, problem solving, formal operations, creativity, cognitive processes, and analysis and representations as explained in the General Directives (St John Vianney seminary 2022:7).

For better knowledge of their calling besides the spiritual inspiration received through prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit, intellectual knowledge helps to clarify concepts found in scripture and history. Biblical and theological concepts need to be applicable to the South African context. Intellectual formation of philosophy and theology developed outside the continent of Africa bear the background history of the Church from where they come from and are difficult to understand, analyse, and apply in the South African situation with its own history and diversity. The same concepts should be understood, make sense, and be formulated within the mindset and cultures of recipients, using their indigenous knowledge for assimilation and become part of the culture. Scriptures, the history of the Church, the Fathers of the Church, Christian thought, should make a home in every home in South Africa for Christianity to take root and influence the everyday life of every Christian and the next generations.

Basic understanding requires knowledge of who one is in the presence of God, and the purpose of one's existence already developed in human and spiritual formation. Openness to learn stems from human maturity and spiritual growth that seek to gain knowledge about one's origins and to understand the world around (John Paul II 1992: #51). The importance of philosophy lies in helping candidates to develop an astute mind and a deeper understanding and interpretation of human beings and their freedom and relationship with God and the world around them (John Paul II 1992:#52; St John Vianney Seminary 2018:228). The study of theology deepens faith and the understanding of the purpose of life as a gift from God and leads back to God, expressed in reaching out to others in their own cultural setting.

Engagement with philosophy and theology are tools for ministerial priesthood and its demands in their own culture and understanding of life (*Botho*). It empowers candidates to understand

the divine mysteries for service and the building of the Kingdom of God. Acquiring knowledge for service in the Church demands integration of that knowledge with spirituality marked by personal experience of the love and mercy of God (John Paul II 1992:#51; St John Vianney Seminary 2018: 228). For effective ministry, intellectual formation is embedded in spirituality to bring about truth and genuine faith to be passed on to others.

The inclusion of a few African modules in philosophy and theology will not bring a magical change in the decolonisation of the curriculum. What needs to happen is serious discernment of which kind of intellectual formation is needed for priests in the twenty-first century in South Africa within a constitutionally defined democracy with a constitution that embraces values that are not applied in society (MISTRA 2020), and with Christianity that is only celebrated on Sundays and does not form part of the values of the baptised, both clergy and laity. Theological education should address these realities to be appropriate to empower for the mandate of missionary discipleship.

The voices of Roman Catholic theologians are not heard in the democratic society “that does not change the life experience of its majority citizens...” (MISTRA 2020:84). Why are the twenty-first century priest candidates silent when other young people of South Africa shout #FeesMustFall and #RhodesMustFall? Why are young priest candidates silent in this situation that oppresses their own brothers and sisters whom they are preparing to serve? Why is the hierarchy silent when the mission of God is not carried out by the priests in their dioceses?

Decolonisation of theological education should reorient the minds of seminarians from mimicry, individualism and an affluent culture that continues to abuse youth and the poor (MISTRA 2020:98). Decolonisation here means a different way of thinking in passing on the Christian faith, teaching, and communicating Christian concepts, assessing African cultures and practical ministry in the context of the culture of people (Benedict XVI 2011:#37). It also means striving to value indigenous knowledge and learning which should also be situated in the new context of multicultural society and should contribute to global knowledge.

This process is allowing the Holy Spirit to permeate all cultures, allowing people to hear the message spoken in their own languages (Acts 2:6–13, Benedict XVI 2011: #37). In this regard the initiator of inculturation or decolonisation is the Holy Spirit and should be allowed to inspire and reconcile people to God and one another through intellectual formation in the context of their culture. Bound to traditional thoughts, preferences, and values that are derived

from the past, progress is slow in making changes in intellectual formation and other formations in the Church to enhance Christian living (Francis I 2013:#235).

Change demands losing something to develop and embrace something even better. This does not mean that the theology and philosophy being taught are bad, but they are not applicable to the South African situation. Knowledge that does not change the perception and lives of people is redundant.

The Episcopal Conferences were granted liberty to inculturate all documents for their own regions and more so theological education for priestly formation, future leaders of the Church. This has not yet taken place. African theologians that address African issues should be included in the syllabus. African religions should form part of understanding the background of most Africans. With this background, formation of the laity might be easier, making them understand the Christian faith by using terminology and expressions familiar to their traditional understanding of the sacred and the profane.

Missionaries left their legacy, but what do the local theologians and hierarchy do to develop intellectual formation or theological education that answers the problems of their region? Graham (2017:565) asks this question, relevant to this discussion: “Where is the *South African* theology being done?” [emphasis Graham]. How does it help Africans, both clergy and laity, to understand themselves within the context of the Christian faith? How does the intellectual formation help them to identify themselves amongst other people as followers of Christ? South African Roman Catholic Christians should challenge the government and society that have normalised poverty, crime, violence, and corruption, with Christian values incorporated into their daily living of their mission in society, but how will they do this if they do not understand their calling, the biblical and theological concepts?

To live the faith in one’s own context occurs when human, spiritual, and intellectual formation are integrated and inform pastoral formation for expression (Congregation for the Clergy 2016:#153). Pastoral formation is discussed next.

4.7.4 Pastoral formation

The four pillars of formation are interrelated and should feed one another to empower a person to be wholly mature to live out God’s purpose on earth. For a better outcome, priest formation needs to be “a unified, integral journey, in which each subject is an important ‘tile in the

mosaic' for presenting the mystery of Christ and the Church, and for allowing an authentic Christian vision of man and the world to mature" (Congregation for the Clergy 2016:#153). The three pillars of formation discussed above should be integrated and expressed through pastoral formation.

Pastoral formation on the other hand, should consolidate them and offer the manner of implementation and to live as a mature disciple. Pastoral formation should also provide tools for social and economic transformation which uplifts the standard of living of parishioners and the better the ability to influence policies and bring about economic justice for all. The concern should change from pushing for a self-supporting church, which means maintenance of structures and support of clericalism, to empower and uplift the status of the people of God, who are the Church.

Empowerment of the people of God should comprise integrated faith formation which includes human, spiritual, intellectual, and mission formation. Concern about and stress of a self-supporting church distort the self-understanding of the Church in the context of South Africa. Influence of policies and critique of the government should be balanced by the social involvement of the parishioners who know, understand, and live out their mandate effectively. Being more concerned about the internal ministries and neglecting the effective living out of the faith in society is negligence of the mission of God.

Priestly formation is tested by the fruits it bears amongst parishioners. This situation endows the fact that intellectual formation is not situated in the context of South Africa. Christians from the Western countries are literate and can read the documents of the Church for themselves and could in the past, when Christianity was the norm, afford to sustain the maintenance of structures. When transferring the theory of a self-supporting church to the South African situation where most Africans, especially, cannot afford even to sustain themselves and live on social grants, with a high rate of unemployment, and a level of education making it difficult for them to understand the documents of the Church assistance at workshops for parishes, parish priests through pastoral formation, should be empowered to bridge this situation.

Knowledge of the mind of the Church through intellectual formation should be balanced by skilling priests with the Social Teachings of the Church, Apostolic Exhortations on the involvement of the lay faithful in the mission of the Church to translate these documents to express the message they portray by means of the indigenous languages and knowledge.

Pastoral formation should provide competency to assess the pastoral situation in every diocese and at parish level to devise a pastoral plan that empowers parish pastoral councils to actively be involved in assisting the pastoral ministry in the uplifting of the standard of faith formation from not only preparing candidates for sacraments but to receiving holistic formation. A self-propagating, self-theologising, and self-understanding approach should form part of parish faith formation.

The three pillars integrated in pastoral formation should enable priest to live the mandate of his calling in an authentic parish life. Emotional intelligence should arm him to be able to express himself, channel his energy where most needed, and be a channel of God's grace and message. The whole priestly formation with its different aspects must have a fundamentally pastoral character, as proposed by Pope John Paul II (1992:#57). The reason for this is because the aim of ministerial priesthood is not meant for self-preservation and administration but to serve the common priesthood of parishioners, empowering them as disciples for their mission in society. What is at stake is effective evangelisation and social involvement, for which the nine years of priestly formation are meant to offer them holistic formation. Unemployment, crime, corruption, policy changes, and all societal ills are to be addressed by parishioners as members of both the church and society.

The term ministerial priesthood is derived from the call to serve, to minister to others. Service is central to ministerial priesthood in all its aspects. The objective of pastoral formation is formation of candidates to become carriers of the good news of salvation, first to their country, then to the world, modelled in the person of Christ who went from village to village and accomplishing in three years the forming of the leadership and had prepared people to receive their message assisted by the Holy Spirit (Jn 4–15).

Human, spiritual, and intellectual formation should aim to mould a priest for mission and for his ministry as true shepherd of souls, the teacher of the faith, and a formator for missionary disciples and to become a gift to parishioners. In a nutshell, the mandate of the ministerial priesthood calling is not for themselves but for service to others.

Priests need to be practical in their ministry to meet the rapid challenges presented by their context (John Paul II 1992:#57). They are to be prepared to witness the charity of Christ, defend the rights and dignity of men, women, and children, clearly proclaim the gospel, call people to worship, and lead them on their journey of faith (Lk 4:18–19; John Paul II 1992:#58). The

parish priest should carry out these duties and responsibilities together with parishioners as co-responsible in the mission of the Church. His mission like Christ, he should train and form disciples who are called to perform their mission by performing ministries that he shares with them as the spiritual leader.

In his leadership, a priest is being prepared to and should aspire for “ecclesial and social co-responsibility” (Benedict XVI 2012), which challenges the hierarchy to change their mindset concerning the role of the laity in the Church and their action in society, which comprises the twofold dimensions of evangelisation through preaching and social development.

The mission, vision, and goal of the seminary “strives towards the development of individuals equipped with knowledge, habits and skills that enable them to fully assimilate personal, communal, intellectual and moral values necessary for personal growth and meaningful contribution to the society of South Africa and the whole world.” (St John Vianney Seminary 2022:7).

According to this statement, the seminary formation is channelled to be integrative of all four aspects or dimensions of formation, aimed to produce a person who is fully mature, morally and intellectually, as well as skilled to function and contribute to the community. Judged from the views of participating priests and formators the statement cannot be fully executed as long as the four formations are Eurocentric, spiritual exercises not understood, and the objective of intellection formation is to fill the candidates with the mind of the Church ignoring the South African context.

Seminarians had to complete a six-month internship to obtain pastoral experience, but they are not offered new skills to implement but are sent out to learn and to practice what is being done in parishes to propagate the systems that are already in place. It is during this time that they are expected to put theory into practice but using the old methods of faith formation that encourages reciting prayers, drilling for remembering, and preparation for celebration. Apparently, candidates leave parishes as they had found them, and they go back having gained the experience of how the reality of pastoral life is all about in parishes and they bank all their learning and formation and when necessary, use some of the things they learned. The Pastoral Plan does not get implemented, the Social Teachings of the Church do not form part of the curriculum, and systems in dioceses do not support new ways of doing pastoral work. This is the reality.

Pope Francis I (2013:#119) encourages missionary discipleship for all the baptised which should change the whole structure of faith formation using different methods, for example for the young children the narrative method, for youth creative learning through sharing, discussion of different topics of faith, morals, new concepts of making God present and visible in their life, to encourage implementation through social involvement in issues of morals, values, policy change, personality formation—in short, evangelisation and social involvement in the age of technology making God present, active, and visible, forming missionary discipleship in their own context to take steps to achieve change they want to see that involves their participation. For catechumens, the use of sharing and discussion methods on issues of faith, family life, morals, social involvement, and participating in family ministry as their contribution to bring faith formation back to the family responsibility as co-creators with God, is recommended.

Pastoral formation should always incorporate the two dimensions, that is, spiritual and social involvement, summarised by the two commandments as love of God and love of one's neighbour. To attain social involvement, the spiritual development of people needs first to be taken care of but should express itself in the social involvement using gospel values. Rooted in the person of Christ, all the baptised would be able to transcend themselves and transform society in the spirit of Christ (Ramphela 2008:18). Pope Francis I (2013:#183) expressed it this way,

An authentic faith—which is never comfortable or completely personal—always involves a deep desire to change the world, to transmit values, to leave this earth somehow better than we found it.

The four pillars of formation cover important aspects of a human being, fully alive and integrated, who in his or her deepest self-desire to do what he or she is created for and fulfils the will of he who created him/her. Negligence and/or delay in finding ways to present God's mercy, care, concern, love, and overall mission in the South African context is sinful. All those called to participate in the mission of Christ by baptism should desire to represent God in their own situation, position, and level in Church and society.

All the structures of the Church should be channelled towards formation of all Christians to present the merciful love of God as Pope Francis I (2013: #25 to #49) encourages. All those called to leadership and form the hierarchical structure of the Church in South Africa should in prayer, fasting, deliberations, and effort work tirelessly to see that those under their care, are

shepherded, and serve, participating in the mission of God and the mission of the Church credibly by owning the message of the gospel, documents of the Church, and devise formation that empowers for discipleship and mission (Hb 10:24–25).

The message of the Gospel should be placed in the cultural context of people, be integrated, and developed to empower a person to achieve a state of wholeness, and Christian communities, parishes be places of learning and formation for individuals and all. The call to discipleship is the call to a missionary journey which will end in eternal life. Pastoral formation should empower ministerial priesthood; the hierarchy to fulfil the two dimensions of evangelisation as their first duty and responsibility and form parishioners; all the baptised as co-responsible for the mission of the Church in the twenty-first century and especially in South Africa.

In the following section the researcher presents what should be included in the social dimension of formation for the Church to be relevant in a democratic multicultural society in South Africa. The majority of the clergy and laity are Africans, but little has changed in their faith formation to empower them for ownership of the faith, to participate effectively in the internal and external mission of the Church. More research is needed to determine the reasons for this delay.

4.8 Social dimension of formation

It is clearly said by formators and parish priests in their struggle to carry out their mission and effectively minister, that the Social Teachings of the Church do not form part of the curriculum and so are not taught at the seminary. This indicates the reasons why parishioners and priests are still involved in projects that cater for the immediate needs of people perpetuating poverty, encouraging people to be beggars, and not involved in projects that transform their own status of life in their circumstances.

Fully formed through the four pillars of formation, parish priests are expected to propagate the mission of the Church, which in the South African context, still concentrates mostly on the spiritual aspect of preaching and catechesis, and on the societal level of welfare and charity through the St Vincent de Paul society, and sodalities. Departmentalisation of Sunday from the weekday parish ministry is the only form of ongoing formation and formation, as the reception of sacraments continues to be the basic spiritual formation of parishioners. Formation of parishioners based on these two forms of formation does not offer them the holistic formation

that empowers them for their specific mission in their everyday activities. Pope Francis I (2013:#176) shared his concern about the neglect of the social dimension by stating that:

if this dimension is not properly brought out, there is a constant risk of distorting the authentic and integral meaning of the mission of evangelisation.

Evangelisation means to take care of the whole human being, liberating them from sin (Rom 6:1–23) and all social ills that impoverishes them, enslaves them, takes away their dignity, and their responsibility to participate in the mission of God and look after all creation (Gen 1:26–31, Francis I 2015). The social dimension of evangelisation is one that cannot be neglected and denied to parishioners if the Church goes forth to preach and teach all that Jesus commissioned her to do to the ends of the earth (Mt 28:18–20, Acts 1:8).

Teaching all that Jesus had commanded is inclusive of caring for the social dimension of society. Besides teaching, our Lord healed the sick (Mt 8:1–17), cast out demons (Mt 8:28–34), calmed the storm (Lk 8:22–25), fed the hungry (Mk 8:1–10), taught the disciples how to fish (Lk 5:5–7), visited friends (Lk 10:38–41), socialised (Jn 2:1–12), raised up the dead (Jn 11:43), and performed many more acts to transform the oppressive state of individuals, families, and communities.

The Church in history in her documents (encyclicals, exhortations, and letters from different Popes) addresses the conditions of social dimension of the mission of the Church based on the actions of God to liberate humanity. Some of these documents are: *Laborem Exercens* (1981), *Caritas in Veritate* (2009), *Ecclesia in Africa* (1995), *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013), and *Laudato Si* (2015). These documents address the social issues that affect the status of a human being—his or her dignity as a being created in the image of God and participate in his mission. These documents are not discussed in detail in this study, but are mentioned to acknowledge the concern of the Church universally as an institution on the social dimension of evangelisation.

The SACBC has different departments on national level, but this does not translate to formation of priests to include in the social dimension of evangelisation. Formicola (2012:111–112) mentions seven critical doctrines that direct the Church’s theological beliefs in social thought and political policies that need to be mentioned here for the purpose of acknowledging the concern and teaching of the Church on the social dimension of evangelisation. These doctrines are mentioned only and are not discussed as they are self-explanatory. They are as follows:

respect for human dignity, solidarity, wealth distribution, ethical governance, social justice, human rights, option for the poor, and respect for the building blocks of society and the Church, the family.

Content material for teaching and formation is available to be included in formation for both priests and parishioners but the main challenge is implementation in South Africa as priestly formation does not address the here and now of society.

Olaitan (2020:46) asks the following questions regarding seminary formation: Firstly, if the Church exists to evangelise, how much emphasis was placed on that during formation? Secondly, how many practical sessions were held particularly concerned with primary evangelisation to non-Catholics? Thirdly, what models of evangelisation were studied during formation besides parish ministry? These questions could be asked of the priestly formation at St John Vianney Seminary and other seminaries in South Africa regarding the formation received on the social dimension of evangelisation and primary evangelisation. Participating parish priests and formators were not involved in projects, and the laity were involved mainly in charity and welfare projects.

The social dimension of evangelisation, therefore, means that “God, in Christ, redeems not only the individual person, but also the social relations existing between men” which includes human advancement (Francis I 2013:#178). Love of God and love of neighbour demands sharing the spiritual riches of God’s love and mercy and sharing the resources of the world with one another, alleviating the oppressive situation of the poor both spiritually and materially.

The missionary discipleship propagated by Pope Francis I (2013) states his basic concerns of the Church in the modern world whose leadership could be trapped in a medieval system that supports the hierarchical division of power, economy, and social life. The laity in such a system receive minimal formation and services just as a means of increasing the numbers of those baptised and keeping them in their pews for manipulation to serve the needs of the structure. In *Evangelii Gaudium* (Francis I 2013:#49), Pope Francis I expresses his fear about the existing state of the Church that concerns herself only with her status, her place in the world, and her rights, by stating:

...More than by fear of going astray, my hope is that we will be moved by the fear of remaining shut up within structures which gives us a false sense of security, within rules which make us harsh judges, within habits which make us feel safe, while at our door people are starving and Jesus does not tire of saying to us: “Give them something to eat” (Mk 6:37).

This statement cannot say it better. Giving people something to eat includes spiritual food, education through the four pillars of formation, and material help by challenging policies, and effective involvement of parishioners in society in their own circumstance of life. In the context of South Africa, the three hungers are evident and experienced in different ways by different members of the Church, meaning society, as they are part of it.

A balanced seminary formation that gives theological knowledge and formation for spiritual dimension and the social teachings of the Church for social involvement would empower priests to be spiritual leaders and formators, as well as “stewards of community economic development” by motivating parishioners to take active part in all spheres of society (Franklin 2015: 67). Parish priests are to form and empower parishioners to be active citizens and participate at all levels of society, exercising their prophetic function as transforming instruments of God’s presence and concern for the plight of His people, embodying the gospel as imitators of Christ.

Parishioners should participate in looking after creation as their first calling, till the soil, and alleviate poverty in all its forms in their immediate environment, as it affects them more than anybody else, as the “Church” the Family of God. The parish should act as a transforming centre for spiritual formation and social involvement in society, and parish priests as leaders, should act as facilitators of transformation of policies and social structures. Parishioners should be trained to be obsessed with confrontation of injustices, corruption, and crime, and be passionate to be righteous disciples of Jesus serving God and humanity (Pastoral Plan 2019).

The new pastoral plan, “Evangelising community serving God, humanity, and all creation” (SACBC 2019:29–34) mentions laity formation and empowerment, but unless seminary formation integrates the Social Teachings of the Church on social involvement and prepares them through the four pillars contextualised for the South African context, the situation will remain the same. Pastoral formation should skill priests with new methods of spiritual formation that will change parishioners into the message of the gospel they are called to implement in their social life.

The call to ministerial priesthood should basically be to bring change in the lives of people, be it spiritual or otherwise. Guder (2015:14) emphasises that formation of the church for mission should be the motivating force that shapes and energises theological labourers in all their diversity and distinctiveness. The cultural diversity of the world should direct each local church

to mould its formation to achieve its mission in the context of time and history (Guder 2015:14). It has been stated in all the documents of the Church that Episcopal Conferences should own, translate, and teach the gospel and international documents to answer the needs of their region. Much has already been written on how the Church's mission should include all the baptised (Francis I 2013:#120), but what is needed is owning, teaching international issued documents for the South African situation and their implementation in the local parishes. The parish is an important cell of the Church, the spiritual family, amongst other families for "transformation, reconciliation, and empowerment" of all the baptised (Francis I 2013:#28, Klaasen 2020:122). Frustrated, unemployed, abused by the government for giving them grants that cannot feed them, people tend to fall into hopelessness attitude and need the Church to give them hope for liberation as it did during political struggle, and now people needs more than ever to be liberated from sin and slavery of the mind that make wrong actions normal, ridiculed, and work for peace and reconciliation as a necessary step to mobilise all members of the rainbow nation into instruments of their own liberation and set the society into freedom of the children of God (Bowers-Du Toit & Dion 2015:20). The best actors in this field of economic liberation are the laity themselves, all people of all races who live in South Africa, irrespective of their culture and status. Church members are affected by these factors like anybody else and from the side of the Church they are bombarded by requests for self-supporting, for funds for the education of priests who come back from the seminary and are unable to form them for their mission in society to fulfil the mandate of their calling.

Pope Francis I (2013:#35) writes:

Pastoral ministry in a missionary style is not obsessed with the disjointed transmission of a multitude of doctrines to be insistently imposed. When we adopt a pastoral goal and missionary style which would actually reach everyone without exception or exclusion, the message has to concentrate on the essentials, on what is most beautiful, most grand, most appealing and at the same time most necessary. The message is simplified, while losing none of its depth and truth, and thus becomes all the more forceful and convincing.

Combining the social teachings of the Church and Korten's theory of economic development (Korten 1990:117) and joining hands with the strategy of an NGO in action would empower the laity to know what they should use in their situation. A list of the four strategies for development, as discussed in Korten (1990) and Swart (2006), is now given, with a fourth brief discussion regarding how to help the RCC empower the laity in their self-supporting Church

concept, which should not concentrate on the Church as an institution, but as people of God called to witness Christ as a community of believers as living stones building the spiritual community.

The first strategy Korten mentions, is relief and welfare, the second, community development, the third, sustainable systems development, and the fourth, a social movements approach (Swart 2006:133). The fourth generation, which is people-centred development, can combine spiritual growth and social involvement as a strategy for the mission of the laity in society, thus differentiating Christian involvement from NGOs, formed in a society but focused on social transformation (Swart 2006:132).

Parishes are already involved in self-supporting Church strategies, but this should be transformed into the fourth-generation strategy that will focus parishes to develop people as the Church and get them involved in their own economic emancipation. Korten (1990:5) puts it this way:

the people-centred vision, authentic development must be just, sustainable and inclusive of all people. Any other type of development is bogus and ultimately anti-developmental. Authentic development action is pro-people and pro-environment. It contributes simultaneously to increased human well-being and environmental sustainability. Neither can be measured adequately in purely economic terms. The people-centred vision embraces a strong sense of community, and of pride in place and heritage. Its adherents commonly speak of participatory political and economic democracy grounded in strong grass-roots organisations. People and their local environmental resource base become the point of departure for development action—people using their own resources to meet their own needs.

People-centred development together with the Social Teachings of the Church will position the laity in their mission in society and say “no to economy of exclusion” (Francis I 2013:#53–#56). All organisations and sodalities within the Church should be formed and trained to focus their vision statement on people-centred development, which is both spiritual and economic. They should become stewards of their own liberation taking control of their lives.

Continuing to render services centred around the sacramental life of the Church and institutional goals deprive the Church of her nature in the twenty-first century. There are resources in society that can be used to empower the laity to use their God-given talents to share the “five loaves and two fish” which are the gifts of the Holy Spirit they received at Confirmation and share and bear fruits (Jn 6:8–9). The social dimension of evangelisation should form part of seminary and laity curriculum, awakening in candidates awareness of their

environment and the ills in societal structures and empower them to get involved to challenge them and bring about transformation in society (Haddad 2016:2).

The recent pastoral plan remodelled the former vision to “Evangelising community serving God, humanity and all creation” (SACBC 2019). The Christian community cannot be an evangelising community if it is not itself re-evangelised, re-modelled, and re-formed to meet the challenges of the day. This would be possible when the method of teaching and formation are transformed, content contextualised emphasising practical implementation in the lives of followers of Christ.

Explaining modelling the Church as an evangelising community (SACBC 2019:1), the president of the SACBC, quoting Pope Francis I, called for the baptised to be sent to serve by virtue of their baptism. The sending implies, he continued, praying, listening to the Word of God, and receiving the sacraments (to this the social teachings of the church should be added to have complete formation). All this ought to compel everyone, young and old, “to go forth to proclaim by our lives and actions the Jesus we believe in, particularly to and on behalf of the poor” (SACBC 2019:2; John Paul II 1988:#9;36).

However, there is a need for a change of mindset from the hierarchy, the clergy (Benedict XVI), in their relationship or view of the laity in the Church and their mission in society in South Africa. There are lay faithful who in their positions in society have expertise that most clergy do not have and who should be incorporated into Church councils and form advisory committees at the SACBC. Being part of the hierarchy, these committees could inform and suggest to the hierarchy issues that should direct the mission of the Church in the South African context and inform social content of formation which should be incorporated in the Social Teaching of the Church. Contexts differ from place to place and need content material to be channelled through the mindset of the people concerned.

Based on the historical background of South Africa effective models for learning, teaching, and formation need to be put in place that will build the confidence of most Africans and inspire them to take charge of their Christian faith and implement it in their everyday activities. Placing authority only on one person in the parish, the parish priest, to direct all committees without the expertise of some fields, continues to influence the mentality of the parishioners that the parish belongs to the priest, and it is his duty and responsibility to live the Christian faith and confront the social ills in society.

All the baptised the hierarchy, as well as the lay faithful by virtue of their baptism and the different expertise in their own life in society, are custodians of the faith and disciples. The laity do not only know their context in the family, workplace, and social life, but have the experience of it and they are the best instruments for change if they are listened to and involved in finding solutions and models that should inform the mission of the Church.

Information gathered from these lay faithful should inform the Church leadership on how to model faith formation and own and translate the international documents in the formation of parishioners. Parishioners should not be a threat to the hierarchy but their expertise in their fields should direct and enhance their mission and involvement in society (John Paul II 1995:#24). The Lord Jesus called fishermen who knew their trade well and made them fishers of men using their knowledge and commitment as fishermen and transformed it by involving them in his mission and we have received the Christian faith from these men (Mk 1:16–18).

In their different fields of expertise, parishioners should be taught how to witness their faith and live it in order to change their own environment—the whole society as salt, light, and leaven depending on their position in society. Their engagement in “temporal affairs and ordering them according to the plan of God” (John Paul II 1988:#9), needs holistic training and formation that addresses their struggles and hope especially in dealing with policies that oppress them.

Pope Paul VI (1975:#15) stated thus, “The Church is an evangelizer, but she begins by being evangelized herself”. Formation of the baptised was the command of Jesus to teach people to obey all that he commanded (Mt 28:20), but the “how” of teaching depends on every age and circumstance, the cultural context of the people, their lifestyle, how they transmit family values, and their struggle to do so, which is influenced by the education outside the family context and their belief system. Teaching catechesis should consider how education influences the mentality of children from the young age from going to kindergarten to matric, thus where they spend most of their time.

It is mostly impossible to influence the faith of children and build their Christian faith through the system of teaching catechesis an hour a week using tools and methods like those used at school. The family structure is still the only structure that gives stability to a person and where if anything fails in society, one runs to and find shelter and moral support. Concentrating on family ministry might redeem this situation and the one hour together at the SCC and the parish

should complement the foundation already laid by the family which is also challenged by ecumenism. This reality forms the context of families and should be used in family ministry as a powerful means to bring restore unity amongst different denominations and strengthen witnessing together Christian values and morals as the Body of Christ.

Using this situation of ecumenism in family ministry should help families to learn from each other the best methods and theories of evangelisation and involvement in society. Evangelising the community to achieve the expected result of a “deep personal relationship with Jesus Christ on the one hand and continuing His mission on the other in communion and cooperation with each other as a community” (SACBC 2019:2), can become a reality. This statement, true as it is, needs decolonisation of the mind of all the baptised and should direct the focus on the situation in South Africa. This worldview can become an opportunity of grace where family members can find strategies that should influence their social involvement empowered by their unity in the belief in Jesus Christ.

Rethinking priestly formation should be creative to use every situation already present in society as a channel through which to evangelise the multicultural ecumenical parishioners and prepare them for their mission in society. Olaitan (2020:39) puts it this way, “The purpose of evangelisation is ‘transforming humanity from within and making it new’.” The new environment is already created by the situation, the content material already presented internationally; what is needed is to devise new strategies of making Jesus known in a new way that will easily be acceptable to the Family of God. Rethinking priestly formation is the key to this, offering also holistic formation that is devised for their context for them to fulfil their mandate effectively in the present context.

The following paragraphs discuss the models of the Church, specifically on how they were used and are still in use preventing the baptised to answer their calling effectively and appropriately. Models help situate the Church’s mission in time and place and explain how best it can be implemented to achieve the plan of God (Hendriks 2021:30) but they can also prevent the involvement of all the baptised to witness to the Risen Lord. Models are not perfect but reveal some aspects of the Church’s realities in the history of people in a certain context, the same as the model chosen by the SACBC for the self-understanding of the Church in South Africa. These models of the Church and how they affect, priestly formation, faith formation of parishioners and their participation in the mission of the Church, are discussed next.

4.9 Models of the Church: Background

The history of the Church in the world and in South Africa changed and developed based on her self-understanding and implementation of her mission in societies. The self-understanding depends on different cultures of the people, political situations, economic advancements, and the level of education in societies of origin (Bosch 1991:257, Adeyemi & Adeyinka 2002:224, Hendriks 2021:31).

This self-understanding of the Church from outside Africa was carried to newly founded communities and imposed on them a cultural understanding of God versus ancestors (Juma *et al.* (2018:1). In some instances, many African Christian religions were formed to include African cultural traits and customs that formed their worldview of ancestors that sustained their lives (Paul VI 1965:#7, Ndemanu 2018:70). As a social institution consisting of people who are both members of society and her members, the Church in most instances incorporates the ideals, processes, and style of leadership found in society. The Church then develops images and symbols that explain and carry within themselves the concepts that justify her existence (Hendriks 2021:31).

These images are limited in presenting the essence and reality of what they stand for especially in presenting the mission of God (Hendriks 2021:31). Pope Francis I (2013:#40) states thus,

The Church is herself a missionary disciple; she needs to grow in her interpretation of the revealed word and in her understanding of truth. It is the task of exegetes and theologians to help “the judgment of the Church to mature”.

Models of the church need to present this missionary discipleship nature of the Church and empower the priests as well as parishioners for radical missional practices that leads to spiritual and social transformation. Church models must be practiced in contribution to prevent weakness and to enhance one another for mission. Borrowed from society that changes with time, some of these images or models become trapped in the past and lose their real meaning for present societies (Francis I 2013:#41). Unfortunately, the Church, formed by people coming from society and wanting to preserve her culture when societies change, is still embedded in these models, depending on whom they served (Wilson 2008:7). With time, these models need to change and represent the new generation of those called to discipleship and should become prophetic in their attitude in spreading the Good News of the Kingdom of God. These models of the Church can only make sense where they were developed, influenced by the context of

cultures, the understanding of the mission of God, formation of the Church leadership, and the social development of parishioners (Hendriks 2021:31).

Reading the signs of the time and place, the hierarchy should evaluate these models in light of the gospel, theological development in their context to interpret the state of society, and faith formation of those called to discipleship (Paul VI 1965:#4). This gives a background to why and how models are formed and sustained in history, giving identity to those who adhere to them.

The following discussion presents the developments in self-understanding of the Church and how models affected leadership, membership, mission, and her relationship with society.

4.9.1 Developments in self-understanding

Developments at the Second Vatican Council present the self-understanding of the Church as a mystery (Paul VI 1964:#3), as a sacrament (Paul VI 1964:#1) and as the People of God. This understanding presents the Church as an entity, a body, a system, and/or a community that cannot be fully understood in human terms, because of her visible reality of the invisible grace. The understanding of the Church as the People of God moved the concept of the Church from structures to people called to participate in *missio Dei*, which is the ultimate function of the Church in the world. Based on this understanding, other models were formulated which are more realistic for the context of time and place to make the Church visible and able to carry out her mission in response to spiritual and social challenges presented by society and the world.

Models proposed by Vatican II are not automatically applied in all societies because of different context and serve the self-understanding of the Church in that particular context. Cultural differences, urban and rural developments, economic diversities, levels of education, forms of faith formation, people's understanding, and adherence to the gospel message affects the implementation of these models. If not changed to fit their context they become dysfunctional and distort the message of the gospel. To understand the essence of the Church as mystery and sacrament, five models which best explains her mission, beneficiaries, and her life in history will be discussed.

Models presented here are those which were used and are still in use in the context of South Africa. The presentation presents definition of the model, its impact on the mission of the

Church, and how it regulates the relationship between the leadership and the laity in the life of the Church.

4.9.1.1 The Church as an institution

The Church is an institution amongst other institutions formed by people who belong to society. As a spiritual institution the Church has recognisable structures, leadership, constitution, ways of initiating her members, and forms of public worship peculiar to her (Dulles 2002:27). These identifiable entities have controlled and dominated the tradition of the Church and her identity and do even today (Hendriks 2021:32).

As an institution, the Church set up her mission as to teach, sanctify, and govern, giving its leadership absolute power, rights, and control of all her processes (Dulles 2002:30). The leadership have the right to command, to proclaim, officiate, make decisions, and co-opt or recruit those who fill their ranks (Dulles 2002:31). Since they believe that their power is bestowed on them by God (Dulles 2002:31), the hierarchy believe themselves to be “the Church” (Dulles 2002:33) and lord it over the lay faithful supported by laws they set in place to favour and protect their status.

The mission of the Church in this model is concentrated in the hands of the hierarchy to preach, teach, and baptise. The laity become part of the institution by virtue of their baptism, but they have no rights, have no set of duties, no voice, and no responsibility in the mission of the Church. In this scenario clericalism plays a major role and the hierarchy regards themselves the source of information, power, control, and initiative in everything, even in fields where they have no expertise (Dulles 2002:31, Hendriks 2021:32). In this model the pattern is that of jurisdiction where laws and penalties are highly exercised, dogma instilled, and canon law followed (Dulles 2002:31, Hendriks 2021:32). The Church is triumphant over the power of evil and the hierarchy displays an attitude of authority, of having all knowledge peculiar to them, and lack modesty in their dealings with the laity and society (Dulles 2002:32, Hendriks 2021:32), cannot be questioned, and are accountable to themselves.

When the Roman Catholic Church came to South Africa this model was functional and continues to a certain extent, even though some regulations are lessened. Formerly Africans and other races were not recruited and accepted into the leadership ranks of power and the institution was divided to accommodate different races in their own setting. The laity have no

platform in the mission of the Church or a voice regarding the affairs of the Church. Faith formation they received and still receive does not empower them for full participation and co-responsibility in the internal and external mission of the Church.

The strengths of the institution model lie in forming structures that bring about unity, instil discipline of the laity, provide stability, give a sense of identity, demand loyalty, and increase membership that comply with laws that do not favour their God-given vocation (Hendriks 2021:32). Necessary as structures are, when over emphasised, they kill the family spirit of the children of God, discourage co-responsibility in the mission of the Church, and those who do not comply are disciplined and can leave without anyone caring. The next model is that of the Church as a mystical communion.

4.9.1.2 The Church as mystical communion

The second model is that of the Church as a mystical communion. In this model, members, through the spirit of Christ, are received through the sacraments. The Church as mystical communion is inclusive of all who believe in Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

There are three models that express the element of community, namely Mystical Communion, the Body of Christ, and the People of God (Jn 14:16, Jn 15:26–27, Hendriks 2021:35). These models join the community of people to Christ by faith and are empowered by the Holy Spirit who manifests amongst them through the gifts (1 Cor. 12:1–11) and fruits (Gal 5:22–23) to serve God and building of one another.

The strength of this model lies in the supernatural union of members in faith and charity (Dulles 2002:50). Members are all those who share in the grace of the Holy Spirit on different levels of relationships, denominations, and religions. In the RCC, both the divine and institutional values are emphasised to keep the balance of communion (Dulles 2002:52). The Family of God model form part of these models. The Family of God model is not yet visible in the SACBC, nor its fruits realised.

In his opening speech at the launching of the New Pastoral Plan, the SACBC President Bishop Sipuka (2020) acknowledged the change of the context in the multicultural democratic South Africa and the need for the Church to have a different approach to teaching catechesis. The implementation of the Family of God model should be directing faith formation at the parish

level by rethinking priestly formation and situating the role of the priest in his relationship with parishioners for co-responsibility in the mission of the Church in South Africa.

The SACBC president, quoting Pope Francis, stated that the aim is to move the Church from being a maintenance Church to a missionary Church, which should include change in faith formation and involvement of parishioners in society by introducing the Social Teachings of the Church. However, the hierarchy has the authority to make this happen. When implemented the hope is that there will be a shift of power invested at the hierarchy to include the laity in the administration of the Church with their different expertise on different levels, have a voice in the running of the Church affairs, especially those that affect them, and faith formation given to both priests and laity contextualised to empower them for their mission.

These models are biblical: God is near and loving and stays with his people through the Holy Spirit, and the leadership of the Church should be cooperating with the Holy Spirit to make God's mercy visible in the South African context (Dulles 2002:51, Hendriks 2021:36).

4.9.1.3 The Church as sacrament

The discussion on the Church as sacrament follows on the Church as mystical communion, giving an understanding that mystical communion is a sacrament, a visible sign of invisible grace that joins people together under an umbrella forming them into a community (Dulles 2002:58). The Church as sacrament is understood as a representative of the union of God with his people, a sign of his love for humanity, and an instrument of salvation for all humanity (Paul VI 1964:#1). Where the grace of God is effectively present and at work, the Church is present through her members (Dulles 2002:63).

Van der Ven (1996:310), on the other hand, reiterated what Pope Paul VI states that due to the principle of ecclesiality the Church does not live nor represent itself and its purpose, but does for the salvation from God. The church structures are meant to serve the community and be focused on the reality outside of it, that is, God and the salvation of humankind, making it a sacrament. This model, according to Van der Ven, takes precedence over all other structures of the church order therefore it cannot be compromised, compelling the church leadership to focus all their energies on faith formation for the laity and formation for the priests for them to become the living sacrament of salvation in society.

The Church as a sacrament of salvation implies that all the baptised should be able to articulate their faith and live according to the demands of their calling as visible signs of God saving humankind by witnessing his love and living out gospel values. All Christians form a community of believers and are beneficiaries of God's grace of salvation (Dulles 2002:64). In the South African situation this model is not visible through the baptised living out their faith as sacraments of God's salvation by transforming policy and oppressive societal structures.

The Holy Spirit has already provided from the grassroot a fertile ground for unity of believers by families that are ecumenical, making it possible for the leadership of different denominations and religions to formulate in unity formation that they will incorporate in their own formation to bring God's saving presence in society by members who are sacraments of salvation. God is bringing unity in his Body from the ecumenical family cell, and this is visible in the South African context. The Church must contextualise formation for both laity and priests, taking from the society elements that furthers her vision and mission (Van der Ven 1996:310).

Contextualisation will make the Church a visible reality of God's presence in the context of today's society, bringing families to become the sacrament of unity, evangelisation, and social engagement that liberates them from all the ills in society as salt, light, and leaven. The leadership in turn, as instruments of service to carry out the vision and mission of the Church in the context of the society today, should bring about this deep change and implement processes that make members sacraments of salvation in society.

4.9.1.4 The Church as the salt, light, and leaven in the world

The Church as sacrament should function to become the Church as salt, light, and leaven in the world where all the baptised, through their words and actions witness the values of the Kingdom of God. All the baptised should become the message as messengers of good tidings and by involvement in all societal affairs, bringing justice, peace, unity, joy, and hope. Believers in God should direct transformation as light which is their mission in society.

Proclamation of the Good News is not an option for the baptised, but their primary mandate given by Christ, which is to continue his mission. Without proper formation, both priests and laity are unable to be the message by means of their attitude, behaviour, and involvement in society, making the Church relevant through them as salt, light, and leaven.

This model concentrates more on the proclamation of the Word, demanding faith from those who proclaim it and those who hear the Word to live it (Dulles 2002:69). This model demands that the hierarchy in South Africa assess their leadership style against the leadership model set by Christ and determine whether they are effective in making the Church salt, light and leaven in the democratic multicultural society. The South African context is ripe for this, and the leadership should be able to seize this time of grace and make a difference in the life of people by discerning the vocations to ministerial priesthood, owning priestly formation, enforce change in the attitude of parishioners by finding new methods of imparting the Christian faith to become culture, and become the change they want to see in society.

The Church by nature is missionary but the dominating mentality is that of the *magisterium* claiming the authority to proclaim and interpret the Word to the community of believers (Dulles 2002:79), thus limiting the mission to the hierarchy. The relationship in the Church is still that of power for the leadership and subservience for the laity failing to be the salt, the light, and the leaven in the internal and external mission of the Church.

Not formed to be missionary disciples themselves, priests are unable to translate and transform faith formation of parishioners and empower them for missionary discipleship in society.

4.9.1.5 The Church as servant

The Word became flesh and dwelled amongst us (Jn 1:14). God humbled himself, took upon himself the human nature and became a servant in order to serve his creatures (Mt 20:28). Those who hear the word of God and fulfil it become his brothers and sisters (Lk 8:19–21). All those who follow him are called to do likewise, to become servants. Jesus, the Word God the Father used to create the universe, came to restore humanity to a relationship with God. Through sin humankind became separated from God and Jesus renewed their responsibility to be co-creators and to take care of all creation and transform the world to serve its purpose, to glorify God (Hendriks 2021:37).

The Church, in continuing the mission of Christ, is to become a sacrament, a visible sign through her members as servants in society and a transformative instrument since in service there should be transformation (Hendriks 2021:37). In South Africa this is still a struggle. The members of the Church are not fulfilling their mission effectively to become transformative instruments. Being called to be a Christian, is not a calling to be confined in the institution,

taking part in the internal ministries and maintenance of structures, but to go out and to serve (Lk 4:18–19, Pali 2019:275, Hendriks 2021:37). Service calls for humility, compassion, relationship, and contribution in the transformation of society through words and actions that display gospel values by all the baptised.

This model of the Church demands that the leadership follow the example of Christ and serve parishioners, not by the celebration of the sacraments only, but also by teaching and being the message, they proclaim. The hierarchical ministerial structure of leadership and clericalism which developed during their context has lost its validity in this model and do not feature in the teachings of Jesus (Mt 18:1–5, Mk 9:33–37, Lk 9:46–48). Greatness in the teachings of Jesus is demonstrated by being humble, being the least, being the last. Times have changed and that which had worked in the past must give way to that which works for today.

The South African situation calls for certain responsibilities for the Church to give hope to the hopeless by opposing injustice, violence, oppression, exploitation, corruption, and being prepared to pay the price for her loyalty to Christ (Pali 2019:275). These responsibilities require confrontation, listening, discernment, and action by leadership in collaboration with the laity (Osmer 2008:129–173, Francis I 2021). To serve is to lead, to rule is to serve, following in the footsteps of Christ (Paul VI 1964:#8, Pali 2019:275). The servant model is not fully visible at present in South Africa since the leadership is not holding hands with the laity to serve and combat societal ills in the spirit of Christ. The vision and mission of the Church is not realised due to lack of change in the mindset of the hierarchy about who the Church is.

In summary, the model of the Church as a sacrament should take precedence over other structures integrating positive elements of all other models as an evangelising instrument and transformer of spiritual and social life of society. All the baptised should become a visible sign of the invisible reality representing the mission of God. Presenting the Church in terms that make it an entity separated from her members creates a problem of unity within and carrying out the mission as members forming the same institute. Care should be taken in emphasising one model above others as some elements can stifle the freedom of the children of God to carry out his mission.

When participants stated their understanding of the Church and what impact it has on society, their views differed, depending on their understanding and their experiences within the Church and her impact in society.

The Church was understood as hierarchical by nature, communion at all levels, the baptised bringing their gifts and charisms as the living stones, the people of God carrying out her mission. The realisation though was that even although there are prominent Roman Catholics in government positions, they lack influence for lack of proper formation and realisation of their mission as followers of Christ. Co-responsibility in carrying out the mission of the Church should exist between the priests and the lay faithful to strengthen witness and living gospel values as disciples of Christ.

Formators are aware of the ineffectiveness of priestly formation to form priests as instruments of change in parishes forming disciples for the mission of the Church. Good practice encourages looking around for models of formation which are effective in forming discipleship and integrating those elements in the curriculum to form priests as spiritual leaders and instruments of change. Forming ministerial priesthood as discipleship should lead them to embrace a servant leadership model which is effective for the mission of God and favourable for the South African situation due to increasing social challenges present in society.

What is still prevalent is the institutional model of the Church promoting absolute power of the leadership with rights that cannot be questioned by the laity as if they are not members of the People of God. Although participants are aware that the mission of the Church is the mission of God, they did not form part of it; rather the laity are more concerned with internal ministries and charity and welfare which does not bring change in the lives of people. Formation for priests instilling the mind of the Church does not propagate her mission.

All formation needs transformation for the South African Roman Catholic Church to re-evangelise herself, to own the Christian faith, and to live it in the context of the multicultural society. The South African Practical Theology and RCC theologians should work out theology that will contextualise faith formation that instilling gospel values to be lived out in all activities in carrying out the mission of the Church.

It should be the responsibility of the local theologians and all responsible to rethink all formation for Christians to become what they are meant to be and to serve their purpose as followers of Christ. A Christian's calling should change the status of a person, his or her thinking about life, personality, attitudes, behaviour, and service to society.

For the Church to be relevant, she needs leadership that is perceptive of the ultimate purpose of leadership, that is, to glorify God, fear God, and be of service to his people. The aim of leadership is to identify with Jesus as a servant, striving to live his integrity, to be interactive, and exemplary to societal leadership. Leadership is needed for the Church as the sacrament of salvation in the South Africa of today.

4.10 Catholic leadership in the context of South Africa

The discussion above highlighted some of the models which influenced leadership, the mission of the Church, and relationship of leadership with laity. The development of the concept of the Church as the Family of God was propounded for Africa because of the way Africans treasure their families, their members, their culture, and life (John Paul II 1995:#43). Though many of the values treasured in a family are slowly fading away, the SACBC still chose the model of the Family of God as the model of the Church in South Africa. The hope is that the Family of God model will resuscitate the lost values of the African family and form the parish, the spiritual family, into a caring, loving, nurturing, and sending family, ready for evangelisation.

For the Church in South Africa to implement the Family of God model, it should instil in her members their identity as sacraments of salvation for the world. The Church should formulate a programme for the family ministry in every parish, as the basis of faith formation of parishioners and integral part of priestly formation. The programme for family ministry as a model for evangelisation, might revive African values that identify Africans and define their personality, will restore their dignity and integrity as a people, and these values would contribute to humanity. This model would need to facilitate the implementation of the model of leadership which portrays the Merciful Father (Lk 15:11–32), the Good Shepherd (Jn 10:10–11; 10:14), and Servant Leadership (Mt 20:28, Mk 10:41–45, Jn 13:1–17) to be relevant to the model of the Family of God. The aim should be to make a difference in the lives of people irrespective of race, culture, colour, or language to restore the lost dignity and build integrity in society.

To attain the model of leadership that qualifies the Family of God model of the Church, priestly formation needs rethinking and writing of an integrative curriculum that integrates the four pillars of formation with indigenous knowledge and Biblical models of leadership that should best implement missionary discipleship. It would be necessary to consider formators who feel

called to implement this new curriculum, discern the will of God for the current time, ready to sacrifice all other things and give themselves to bring about institutional transformation and set the process of change in place. They should work tirelessly to produce Church leadership basically concerned with the mission of God and faith formation of the laity as co-responsible for the mission of the Church, form leadership that will be prophetic and challenge the democratic South African leadership failing to serve its people and form laity able to challenge their context, in other words, to plan “a new turn where morality and integrity form an irrefutable salience in the development of servant and shepherd leaders” (Resane 2020:1).

Formation of the ‘millennials’ ought to be different from those of the past generations because their personalities, work values, and needs have been shaped differently (Anderson, Baur, Griffith & Buckley 2001). The context and time play a crucial part in forming attitudes, thinking, personalities, and behaviour of people forming a new culture. Christianity is not a stagnant religion because God is always creating anew and those incorporated in him should keep pace with him.

Youth born from 1982 to 1999 are classified as millennials who desire a balance between work and leisure and who are more individualistic in work performance, which could create tension when they have to work together with others (Anderson et al., 2017). Those already ordained priests should be re-evangelised to instil in them the spirituality of a family to be able to work together as a team and those still at the seminary, team ministry should be integrated in their priestly formation to instil family spirit for family ministry and forming the parish as the Family of God to enhance cooperation and co-responsibility in parishes. Millennials are said to display self-involved and narcissistic tendencies, which might destroy the family spirit of leadership in the Church (Anderson et al., 2017).

The post-millennials and those born under the democratic government in South Africa have their own characteristics, personalities, understanding of freedom and authority, based on the context in which they were born. This would also need consideration in planning the processes of teaching and learning, empowering missionary disciples who would go back to societies with different perspectives, to facilitate transmission of the mission of the Church (Paas 2013:1). This process of forming new Church leadership would help priest candidates shape personalities which would be a bridge for people to reconcile with God and with one another

on all levels of society. The South African society is still divided by racism, culture, politics, economic differences, different literacy levels, rural and urban living conditions.

Missionary ecclesiology needs to develop servant leadership which emanates from a calling to serve (Resane 2020:2). Servanthood cannot be imposed on a person in a spiritual realm where God is the One who initiates a calling to participation in his mission. Servant leadership therefore emanates from a calling that stems from a personal relationship with God (Greenleaf 1977:19).

Discernment becomes important in this process. Recruitment discarded to fill the ranks. Those concerned with discernment of a calling to ministerial priesthood should be trained, formed, and prepared for spiritual discernment for a calling. It is necessary for the candidate to want to bring about change, be willing to accept the demands of servant leadership that is said to be emphasising increased service to others, a holistic approach to work, promoting a sense of community and the sharing of power in decision-making (Resane 2020:2).

The characteristic of such a leader would be listening, sympathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualisation, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people and building of the community (Resane 2020:2). These characteristics could be inborn or instilled by the Holy Spirit to the one called to ministerial priesthood (Greenleaf 1977:20). According to Osmer (2008:192), servant leadership does not depend on personality traits such as self-effacing, being mild-mannered, or overly responsible, but someone who is courageous, resolved, and has the ability to empower others. Osmer (2008:192) states that “Servant leadership is leadership that influences the congregation to change in ways that are more fully embody the servanthood of Christ” and participate in his mission on that level.

4.11 Conclusion

Parishioners, when asked about their understanding of their calling, stated that they were called to serve, and their formation therefore needs to place their service into the model of servanthood of Christ and they should strive to wash the feet of their brothers and sisters.

The purpose of this chapter was to answer the normative practical theological interpretation with its question, what ought to be going on in the RCC in her effort to carry out the mission of the Triune God effectively in the twenty-first century in South Africa?

The discussion regarded what ought to be happening in the RCC regarding the Christian calling of parishioners, ministerial priesthood, and formators. The discussion was presented in three parts, concentrating firstly on the definition of a calling, types of a calling, who the Caller is, and the mandate thereof. The second part discussed what ought to happen in formation of parishioners and ministerial priesthood.

What is important here is that the holistic formation offered to priests (human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral) should be integrated into catechesis, together with the social teachings of the Church and be offered to parishioners to become co-responsible for the mission of the Church. The four pillars need to be contextualised to form South Africans in their own context of a multicultural democratic society with its history and contemporary challenges, empowering them to participate effectively in the mission of the Church.

Part three discussed the social dimension of a calling, presenting the self-understanding of the Church, stating how models influence leadership and facilitates or hinders participation in the mission of the Church. The Church as the Family of God in a society where the family institution has changed drastically would have to model the spiritual family, the parish, to facilitate family ministry to heal and support the many family models in society in their mission as co-creators with God and basic faith formators forming their children in their relationship with God and their responsibility to look after all creation.

This chapter aimed to fulfil the third objective of this study, which is to delineate theology of priestly formation to understand its essence, nature in the forming of priests, and its supposed goal. Theological concepts, which are supposed to be integrated into the curriculum of St John Vianney Seminary, were discussed in relation to the importance of understanding a calling, to receive an appropriate formation, and the mission of the Church in the context of South Africa. The self-understanding of the Church shared by all the baptised will facilitate effective participation of all members as priests and the laity in the mission of the Church.

Integrated holistic formation for all members needs to be influenced by African Theology that addresses the issues concerned with Africa's emancipation from spiritual, political, economic, and all oppressive societal structures.

In the next chapter the fourth dimension of practical theological interpretation, namely the pragmatic task, as well as its question, how might the Church respond to challenges that prevent

her to effectively carry out her mission are discussed. Synodality, as suggested by Pope Francis I, might form the platform to engage with the laity and develop with a strategy to motivate the members of the RCC to live according to their nature and be the salt, light, and leaven in society.

CHAPTER 5

Formation for missionary discipleship

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses actual processes and strategies concerning priestly ministerial formation necessary to achieve deep radical change in the Roman Catholic Church in order for her to become relevant and be able to achieve the desired mission of God in the multicultural democratic South African context.

The main objective of this chapter is to propose the actions the Church should apply to facilitate change in priestly formation at St John Vianney Seminary to form relevant leadership that is able to bring about deep change in the Church structures, faith formation, and co-responsibility to benefit and empower the laity in their role in the mission of the Church in society.

The outline of this chapter follows this procedure: firstly, the background to the main objectives of this research is given by presenting universal thoughts for the Church's response to the modern challenges; secondly, a discussion of what is needed for deep change, follows; thirdly how the Church should respond to the laity, to ministerial priesthood, to formators' calling, to faith formation, and to their involvement in the twofold mission of the Church;. fourthly, what kind of leadership is needed to implement deep changes; and lastly, a conclusion which provides a summary to the achievement of the objectives of this chapter and research question.

5.2 Universal thoughts on modern challenges

Since 1980 the RCC has experienced the leadership of three popes, namely Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, and currently Pope Francis I. Pope John Paul II went forth from the Vatican responding to the command "go out to the whole world and make disciples" (Mt 28:18). His wish was to see the leadership of the Church follow his example and find new ways, new strategies, and new methods to bringing Christ to the people and renewing his message to touch their hearts and minds in the world of today. Pope John Paul II's leadership was more concerned with change in the mindset of the hierarchy, and he reminded them of their responsibility in carrying out the mission of the Church. He demonstrated what is required of them as the leadership, that is, to go out of their offices, leave their comfort zones, and preach the good News of the Kingdom for the salvation of the world.

When Pope Benedict XVI (2012) followed, his words to the priests were a concern to the renewal of catechesis for the formation of the laity to help them develop to adult mature faith. This theme was used as the theme of his pontificate, concern for faith development of the laity. Though his thoughts were addressed to priests in Rome, they were applicable to all priests in the Church. He explained the situation of the laity as that of being not able to “elucidate the philosophy of the faith, its great wisdom, and rationality in order to illuminate the mind of others”. Pope Benedict was aware of the dilemma of the laity in witnessing their faith because of a lack of a sense of “our calling to be light in this world! To evangelise! To leave all and follow Him! To be a People worthy of His Holy Name!” He reiterated the words of Pope John Paul II, calling priests to re-evangelise the laity, which demands a new mindset for leadership to fulfil their mandate towards the laity.

Pope Francis I’s leadership integrates the concern of both his predecessors. His focus is on servant leadership, which should establish missionary ecclesiology and missionary discipleship for all the baptised. In expressing his vision, his dream of the Church today, he propounded *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013). The summary of this document is expressed by these words,

I dream of a “missionary option”, that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channelled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation (Francis I 2013:27).

As Heads of the Church, their vision is clear regarding changes needed for the Church to retain her nature as an evangelising institution, the renewal of faith formation of the laity and to go forward with her mission in the world. In 2021, in order to facilitate the implementation of his vision, Pope Francis I called for synodality that should bring communion, participation, and mission in the life of the Church. He invited participation of all the baptised for them to contribute their vision and hope to a new presence of the Church in the world.

The Congregation of the Clergy, to facilitate the dream of Pope Francis I, renewed the document on formation of priests propounded by Pope John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis* (1992) by issuing *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* in 2016 that focuses its thrust on the renewal of formation of the leadership of the Church. The missionary impulse that is capable to transform everything that the structures and customs of the Church can serve the mission of God, depends on the change of formation of priests. The change in ministerial priesthood formation proposed by the two documents aims to change the mindset of the hierarchical

structure to channel and be more concerned about the mission of the Church than about its self-reservation. The mission of evangelisation and faith formation of the laity to grow to maturity are the two important components necessary to make the Church relevant in the world today.

Hands-on practical formation, personality formation, and virtues of servanthood will facilitate deep change within the hierarchy to serve the mission of the Triune God in the world. Deep change in the leadership of the Church will in turn, facilitate change in the formation of the laity to empower them for their mission in society.

From the perspective of the universal thoughts for the Church's response to the modern world the popes also issued documents that facilitate formation of the laity and their mission in the world (*Lumen Gentium* 1964, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 1965, *Christifideles Laici* 1988, *Ecclesia in Africa* 1995, *Africae Munus* 2011, *Evangelii Gaudium* 2013). At the Vatican in 2016 Pope Francis I, explained that the Catholic laity can transform the world, but they need appropriate formation that can develop their faith to maturity and be empowered for their mission, as Pope Benedict VI had explained.

The Church in South Africa, therefore, must re-evangelise herself by rethinking priestly vocations, priestly formation, and laity formation for her relevance and her mission in the multicultural democratic South African society. Re-evangelisation needs reforming her self-understanding and faith formation of the laity as co-responsible for the mission of God in society based on the universal thought of the Church in response to the challenges of the modern world.

5.2.1 Understanding deep change

Change in society and change in the Church need relevant leadership that responds to a calling from God with the purpose for them to bring about a difference in the lives of people. Relevant leadership should be open to new strategies of evangelisation and social engagement of the mission of the Church, ownership of the message of salvation by contextualising it and inculturating its processes using indigenous knowledge and be prepared for self-giving in fulfilling their mandate (1 Jn 3:16–18). They should be of one heart and one mind with the will of God for the salvation of his people in their endeavour to make a deep change needed to present the mission of God in society today. There are necessary steps to take to bring such change.

The first step to enable them to carry out this mission is to rethink priestly formation and adapt it to the South African context (Murithi 2014; Mashabela 2017; Kabongo 2020; Magezi & Igba 2018). Training and formation should be contextualised to address the spiritual and social challenges of the multiracial and multicultural South African Roman Catholic Church members. Priestly formation, like all other education in South Africa needs to address the plight of Africans and be concerned with decolonisation of the mind, education, and all Western processes (Ngugi wa Thiong'o 1986, White 2017, Buttelli & Le Bruyns 2018, Sakupapa 2019, Verhoef 2021, Ntseno 2022). With her history, the RCC needs deep change within all her structures to accommodate the settlers' and the mission churches into one structure. Wounds caused by the amalgamation of the two churches within one structure without proper preparation, still need to be addressed, cleaned, healed, and a new understanding of the Church be established and accepted by all the baptised. Scars of apartheid are not yet healed and need to be addressed for a healthy society and healthy Church community (Dames 2022).

To address the wounds caused by amalgamation, clean them, and heal them, all the baptised the clergy and the laity together, need to participate in the new understanding of the Church and her mission in the democratic society which needs their co-operation for it to be successful. All parties should understand anew the values of the gospel on sharing in all spheres of life, to be a servant for the mission of the Church in society, and how their being united in these efforts would make the Church relevant in fulfilling her mission.

Taking a step back to open closed wounds which are still festering will help the members of the settlers' and the mission churches express their feelings about the way the hierarchy treats them by making decisions for them without consultation and preparation. The discussions over the hurts caused by this process can be followed by prayer for reconciliation to facilitate healing and the celebration of the Eucharist for communion. Continuing in the Church as if nothing has happened when the numbers of the settlers' church are dwindling will be lack of care and responsibility on the side of the hierarchy. Re-evangelisation is necessary for all those who have left the Church as part of her mission before continuing with new evangelisation for both "churches" finding a new way to be Church with a mission for the new context of society. The democratic government brought changes that affected the Church and her presence in society. The new presence requires deep change in the understanding of who the church is.

The second step will be to form new leadership who will lead the amalgamated people into one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church with a mission which is presented by joyful, peaceful, and united members. What is required for deep change in ministerial priesthood will be discussed later. Unless the hierarchy takes steps to reconcile the laity before they can be co-opted into the mission of the Church, there will be no success in their mission in society since they will be divided. Unity of witness amongst all races in South Africa will allow them to share their gifts, beauty of culture, methods of doing things, and the depth of faith in all things. This will break the dividing wall of fear that still exists amongst South Africans for lack of knowing one another in depth as human beings and accepting the differences as a gift of God.

Implementation of the Family of God model needs these preparations for it to be true to what it stands for. Skills and strategies for implementation of the Family of God model of the Church will not make an impact on the laity unless the Church is united within herself. Christianity is based on the love of God and the love of neighbour and without exercising this the witness of Christians is not based on the law of God, and it will not be authentic.

The third step will be to devise faith formation for the laity for new evangelisation which incorporates the Social Teachings of the Church. The details of what needs to be included in the faith formation of the laity are discussed in detail later. Catechesis aimed for the reception of sacraments does not empower the laity for the twofold mission of the Church, that is, evangelisation and social involvement as disciples of Jesus.

The fourth necessary step is the introduction of the family ministry which will accommodate all family structures in society. The family structure is basic for the Church and society, no matter who the members are. Family catechesis should be the basic agenda of the parish ministry. If implemented, the families will have God as their foundation and will become healthy cells to raise children who know God and will seek to know his purpose for creating them, taught by their families. Formation offered them should be holistic, incorporating the four dimensions of formation, namely human, spiritual, intellectual, and missionary. Once the family structure is restored to its function, and parents become co-creators with God and bring up children in the love and fear of God, both the Church and society will be healthy. The family structure is the best way to do this ministry.

To bring about deep change in the mission of the Church and how to implement it, the new self-understanding of who the Church is, what kind of faith formation is necessary, and what

kind of leadership should be trained, is the task of the formation team and the hierarchy. The whole system from the family, parish, and diocese should speak the same language for success. There will be no deep change in society if the laity are not formed to answer their calling and live out their mandate appropriately in society. The laity will not live their mandate appropriately unless priestly formation empowers priests to be effective in their pastoral ministry.

The hierarchy has no option but to implement a missionary discipleship formation that forms priests' personalities that they can be creative, focused on servant leadership, and committed to carry out the mission of the Church. The Church needs transforming leadership to empower parishioners to be involved in societal transformation in fulfilment of their mission to achieve deep change in the mission of the Church in society.

5.3 A calling as an invitation into a relationship

To achieve deep change in the mission of the Church, those called to represent God in society and continue the mission of Christ, should understand that being a Christian is a calling. The first step towards deep change and participation in the mission of the Triune God is to perceive a calling and be able to define it in personal terms, identify God as the Caller, and be ready to receive his grace and power to fulfil His purpose in the world. A calling is an invitation into a personal relationship with the Triune God and participation in his mission.

This invitation is built on a twofold love relationship. God so loved the world that he sent his only Son into the world to be the expiation for our sins (1 Jn 4:7–21). In turn, those invited into the relationship with God must likewise love God by loving their brothers and sisters to the point of dying for them. Self-giving and self-gifting to God is visible in service to others, bringing about deep change in the lives of others. Listening, reflection, discernment, and action form one process through which love is manifested by seeking new ways of action and experience.

Faith formation and ministerial priesthood formation are meant to empower and strengthen parishioners, parish priests, and formators to persevere in this invitation and out of love serve God by participation in his mission of redemption in the world calling people back to God. The mission of the baptised, therefore, is to call others, to invite them through their words and actions into this relationship of love with God. It is imperative that all the baptised should reach

this stage of perception and maturity of faith to gain their identity and pursue its cause with passion, joy, and satisfaction. Through discernment humanity listens to his promptings through the Holy Spirit whose mission is to assist disciples on their journey of faith and mission.

For the Church to have members connecting their Christian life to God as the ultimate reason of their being Christians, she needs to create systems, opportunities, and the teaching ministry that connects and inspires catechesis. Candidates in the process of catechesis should, through prayer, experience communion with God and strengthen their relationship with him. Methods of prayer, meditation, and contemplation should be used from the early ages as a form of knowing and experiencing the love and the presence of God in one's life. Catechesis should not only be theoretical but should connect a person to the Persons of the Trinity on a personal level which should be appropriate for each level of faith development. When this is established, the celebration of sacraments, especially the Eucharist, will be meaningful communion of the Family of God.

People become parishioners through two ways or sources, that is, some people are parishioners because they are born into a Christian family and follow what is done in the family. Through infant baptism they are incorporated into the Church with no choice of their own. Through the process of catechesis, they should be helped to listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and freely answer the invitation to enter a personal relationship with God. This needs formation of parents, godparents or sponsors, and catechist as mentors, based on the four dimensions of formation on this journey. It has not been a tradition in many parishes to have continuous catechesis for parents and since families have become ecumenical, this should become part of listening, discernment, and reflection on how faith formation of parishioners should integrate this reality as a way of unity amongst Christians.

With no ongoing formation for all the baptised, children at the age of First Holy Communion still lack full understanding of God inviting them into a relationship of love. Their response at this age, depending on their family formation, is mostly an innocent acceptance of what is expected of them by parents and the parish. Through ongoing formation, they should reach the stage of faith maturity and accept God's invitation as their own personal decision with the understanding of its demands and have the freedom to embrace it. During the time of doubt this firm faith formation will help them to withstand the storms of life and persevere in their commitment of love with God and neighbour.

Parishes must introduce ongoing faith formation based on the four dimensions to help candidates to mature in their faith and commit themselves to Christ. Without ongoing formation, even those who receive the sacrament of Confirmation are still not able to make a firm commitment to God's invitation for lack of knowledge of a Christian calling. Catechists are unable to help them to make an informed decision to follow Christ and commit themselves to his mission as soldiers, disciples of Christ because they are not trained for their ministry.

This situation calls for assessment of some of the practices of the Church which form her culture, tradition, and identity and which had developed in a certain time in history to answer certain challenges but are not applicable anymore. The Church must find new ways for this age of technology and fast modern change to train and form parents and catechists to do their ministry with full knowledge and conviction of faith. The Lumko Institute should be opened to train diocesan laity experts who will be responsible in dioceses to train others in parishes. This does not need the leadership to concern themselves with increasing their statistics but on authentic response to the invitation of God for both parishioners and ministerial priesthood to participate in the mission of the Church.

A multiracial and multicultural South African nation needs young people to be creative in their understanding of the mission, using social media to express their conviction in their choice of following Christ and living as models of Christian life. To facilitate this, youth camps should have a theme that will be carried out for a certain period and be evaluated for its impact on the lives of young people. There should be a follow-up on those after the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation dropouts. Camps and workshop should combine all races in the diocese to introduce a new way of thinking, living, and witnessing together as children of God in a society divided by race, colour, cultures, and economic status. The aim should be to help youth relate to one another, share their faith, and their gifts on how to witness the love of God and service of him in the era of technology. Youth can then become role models to other youth in society by introducing youth ministry. Each parish, district, deanery, and diocese should start such a ministry before sending youth to the national and international youth gatherings with no basic Christian living and witnessing. Accepting young men into the seminary with no experience of a Christian living, witnessing, and understanding of a Christian calling, with no basic personal relationship with God, should also change.

Each diocese should conduct its own assessment of past experiences, reflect on what is going on at present, and study new practices to create and develop new processes, before taking action to implement them to achieve deep change in the structures of the Church for new evangelisation. The deep change should start in the mindset of both the hierarchy and the laity to realise that the times have changed, and that the culture and traditions of the Church should change as well. The new relevance of the Church, through laity involvement, will depend on reforming traditions in families, parishes, dioceses, and nationally, for re-evangelisation of all the baptised through the leadership that desires to bring deep change in the life of the Church.

The use of Catechumenate or the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) should be used for adults who answer God's invitation by becoming the Roman Catholic Christians. Since the structures of dioceses are different, the processes can be remodelled to fit the area, cultures, and possibilities within the diocese. The time of scrutiny is an important stage where catechumens respond to the why question in joining Christianity by becoming Catholics. Trained catechists with the assistance of the parish priest, must allow catechumens ascertain their reasons and eventually understand that they are called by God for his own purpose. This time can be eye opening for both catechumens and catechists, a time for introspection on why people make the decision to follow Christ and channel their faith to mature for them to realise that they are called to missionary discipleship. Throughout formation each catechumen should discern whether his or her decision to follow Christ is based on a calling and is authentic to sustain living a Christian life in society. The encounter with Christ at this stage will help the catechumen to be ready then to receive faith formation that will concretise his or her calling to follow Christ as his disciple.

The content material at this stage should help them focus on the invitation from God, their response and commitment to a personal relationship with him. Blind religious association does not bear fruits as it only strengthens group mentality and add numbers to the parish but does not necessarily lead people to active participation in the mission of the Church. The Church remains a sending institution on the mission of Christ and therefore must continue this ministry as integral part of her nature. At the end of the catechumenate the candidates should feel sent, empowered with both knowledge and methods of living out their faith as messengers of the good news with their actions speaking louder than words.

Most catechumens are adults who should perceive a calling to be a Christian and through different stages in the process of catechumenate, they should be granted an opportunity to articulate their desire and how they feel called to actualise it. Catechists as mentors and the parish priest as the spiritual guide should assist them on this journey of faith. Witnessing can be different for each person, depending on their position in the family and society and each need to realise this and channel his or her discipleship where it is mostly needed. Catechumens need to be listened to as they tell their stories and, like Zacchaeus (Lk 19:1–10), confess their faith, turn away from past sins, and promise faithfulness to the Trinity in their faith and in their relationship with God.

It is during the process of formation in different stages that the discussion on the differences between African ancestral and Christian calling should take place to help catechumens to not fall away from their faith in Christ later for lack of understanding of the differences. Through Confirmation the Holy Spirit give gifts and the Church should assess her understanding of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and not to limit them to what is in scripture, and be open to the gifts that God can grant to people through the Holy Spirit.

The sacrament of reconciliation and the anointing of the sick are reserved to the clergy, but God has the power to grant the gift of healing to whomever He wishes to give. People should not leave the Church because they are not allowed to use their gifts within the Church, depending on who is reserved to be the giver and how the gift has to be exercised. This should be clarified for catechumens to allow them to make an informed response to God's invitation for his mission. The priest, catechists, sponsors, and the whole congregation should bear witness to what is taught, believed, and lived as a receiving Christian community that has accepted and is living the Christian calling.

To compromise the profession of faith by how and what one does shows lack of understanding and conviction on what one believes, teaches, and witnesses. When catechumens are ready, and have established their relationship with God, accepted the demands of the invitation, know their mission as individuals and as members of the Church, then formation for missionary discipleship may commence. Ministerial priesthood is discussed next.

Those called to ministerial priesthood are invited to a personal relationship with God, which also invites them to service in the internal structure of the Church as leaders of Christian communities. The Congregation for the Clergy (2016:#11–#23) provides general principles to

be followed universally to foster vocations to ministerial priesthood, and suggest the kind of formation they should follow. These principles should be owned and accepted according to the cultural setting in a region.

Here the suggestions are based on the views of participants in this research concerning the formation they received and what they suggested should be added to enhance priestly formation and formation to be a formator.

When aspirants to ministerial priesthood have gone through the above discussed stages as parishioners and established the foundation as followers of Christ of their calling, they receive another invitation. A parishioner must make another personal response to God calling him or her in case of those who follow a vocation to religious life, for another mission and ministry within the Church for society. Those who accept this second calling are doubly accountable to God to live their Christian life and combine it with the demands of the second calling in the mission of the Church. Here though the focus is on ministerial priesthood which forms the hierarchy of the Church, fulfilling the leadership offices in the structure of the Church. Theirs is a double responsibility; the missionary discipleship of being Christians and also fulfilling the demands of leadership in a missionary manner, that is, in living ministerial priesthood calling, a priest should do so as a role model for missionary discipleship. He must be who is called to lead the laity how to live their Christian life.

In other words, accepting a calling to ministerial priesthood as discipleship and servant leadership is a consolidation of the Christian calling on a level of serving more the internal mission of the Church by shepherding, being a servant for the laity, and the embodiment of the mission of the Church, making it relevant in time and place and to be lived by believers, the parishioners in society.

The focus is more on guiding the Christian community to be a visible sign of the invisible reality of God amongst his people using the model of the Church as a sacrament, leading individual members, as well as the parish to be salt, light, and leaven in society and in every position of life. Abraham (Gen 12:1–5) could serve as an example here of faith in the unseen God, leaving everything behind and entrusting oneself in God's mercy to lead one to serve his purpose. Like Jesus in his mission, a priest should learn to obey through suffering to know the will of God by reading the signs of the time and laying his life down for the realisation of God's will and fulfilling it in his life and making others do the same (Hb 5:5–14).

The age to follow a calling to ministerial priesthood should be assessed to determine whether it serves the Church to accept young men at that age and impose on them celibacy and the responsibility to live an exemplary life coming from the background of faith formation that prepares people for the reception of sacraments. Most of those who follow this vocation are still young, just after matriculation, and still immature as human beings, and in their faith to understand and embrace the will of God and be committed to it. As they journey in different stages of formation it is expected of them to be open to allow strategies and methods of formation to help them articulate and consolidate their calling.

This practice is unrealistic, and it needs rethinking of vocations to ministerial priesthood. The emphasis placed on helping them to build their relationship with God through prayer exercises in the effort to lead them to abandon themselves in the mercy of God, build their relationship with Him with no foundation, in human terms it is building on sand without undermining the grace of God. This practice leads candidates later as parish priests to abandon the practice of prayer exercises because, as one participant stated, he regarded it as a punishment. Entering the seminary at a young age does not benefit everyone in the same way, especially because the society has lost Christian ethos.

This context should inform the Church to undergo deep change in the practices of priestly vocations and formation. Continuing with the old system in the hope that the outcome will be the same as in the past, is ignorance of the effects of the impact that the political changes in society has on the family structure, education, and life in general, which affect the youth of today. These changes in society have consequences in the vocations to ministerial priesthood and which need consideration.

The difficulty here is that the seminary is registered with the Department of Higher Education and must comply with its objectives. This process of forming ministerial priesthood dissuades the focus from considering what is best for the Church in forming spiritual and servant leadership. The requirements of the Department of Higher Education pertain to academic degrees. Priestly formation should form humble personalities for service, that is, to walk dusty streets and roads, enter houses of the rich and those of the poor, to go to workplaces, markets, and parties, to talk to the young and the old alike. Who of the young men ordained today will do that?

In all these activities priests must always be in communication with God, bringing his presence to his people and taking the peoples' worries, sufferings, burdens, as well as their hopes and joys to him. A priest should be the message of the gospel he preaches in his private and public life and the sacrifice he celebrates at the Eucharist. However, most Africans do not come from affluent backgrounds and the seminary environment portrays a rich place with healthy meals. When a normal human being lives and fulfils ministries as expected of him, while his family struggle to make ends meet, he is affected psychologically and cannot be faithful to his ministries. The Church needs to establish these realities for each priest because needs differ, and she should decide how she can assist individual priests according to their personal needs that prevent them to answer their calling and fulfil the mission of the Church effectively.

An invitation to ministerial priesthood requires one to know and understand the demands for discipleship (Mt 16:24–28), but when those already in ministry display a different lifestyle from what discipleship requires, priestly formation alone will not help form leadership that can bring about deep change. When clericalism is the culture, missionary discipleship is almost impossible.

The hierarchy should assess its standard of living in relation to the requirements of discipleship Jesus demands and the standard of living of the most people in society and decide what and whom do they represent and start deep change by reforming their standard first as an option for the poor. Ministerial priesthood is not status but servanthood, discipleship, according to the mind and heart of the Master. Deep change should begin from what already exists in order to start a new presence through new leadership that will implement deep change (Lk 5:36–39).

Following in the footsteps of Christ, discipleship that answers a calling from God, united with him through the life of prayer, demands a sacrifice (Hb 5:1–10). Comfort is not part of a calling to ministerial priesthood as discipleship unless one is prepared to sacrifice everything for the sake of the comfort of others.

As priests and formators mature in faith, knowledge, and understanding of Christian theological concepts, it should be clear to them that even if they had been recruited for the wrong reasons, eventually it is on God they should focus and to Whom they are accountable. They must focus their attention and desire to make a difference in the spiritual life of people for them to make choices to live their lives to please God and be accountable to him. As they mature in faith, they would need to understand the implications of not fulfilling the plan of God

for material gain and/or to satisfy those who recruited them. The hierarchy should be prophetic in the way they live and behave in society, as people expect from them to be role models of what they believe, preach, and teach for their message to be credible.

During formation candidates should learn the habit of writing down their progress in prayer and to articulate their understanding of their calling as they grow and mature in faith to create a reference for themselves in their discernment process. Mentors, formators, and spiritual directors guide them on their journey but the responsibility rests with the individual who is called by name to enter a relationship of love with his Creator. Ministerial priesthood is not a contract but a lifelong commitment to serve God and his people. Genuine calling will withstand the storms of life because it will be built on a rock and sustained by God who initiated it (Mt 7:21–29, Mt 5:11, 27–28).

Although God can use different ways to initiate a calling discernment is necessary throughout one's lifetime as one grows through different stages. God does not make mistakes, but attentiveness is necessary because people in their weakness can make mistakes, and they can also be influenced differently to achieve a different outcome (Mt 5:33–37, Lk 8:11–15). But God always has a purpose in creating and calling. Each one of us has the freedom to respond positively or negatively in response to a calling and participation in his mission. Priestly formation should empower the candidate on this journey and sustain his faith by an authentic personal relationship with the Triune God.

The possibility of this taking place is when formators themselves are certain about their own calling as formators. As they participate with God in forming the leadership of the Church according to the heart and mind of God, in other words, as discipleship for deep change in the history, formators must discern their ministry as a calling. They are to discern the signs of the time and form discipleship in response to challenges in society (Lk 12:54–56). This is a challenge for formators in a specific way. They are themselves under authority but when called for this ministry they are responsible for putting the process of deep change in place. It is their responsibility by virtue of their calling. They should inform the higher authority of what needs to happen and change after assessing the state of the society and the kind of candidates that come for formation with regard their prophetic function.

Formators are instruments called amongst other priests and chosen to fulfil the office that authenticates a calling to ministerial priesthood, form the personalities of those called, prepare

content material to produce instruments that will implement deep change. They should empower them with leadership skills, with appropriate and relevant intellectual content material, methods, and techniques for practical implementation in parishes. *Missio Dei* and *missio Ecclesia* to a certain extent depend on the model of formation they use, their understanding of the mission of the Church in time and place. They should be familiar with the societal influences and decide how and what they want to achieve. In the same way faith formation of parishioners depends on the formation parish priests receive for them to be effective in their mission in society.

This understanding asks of formators to take genuine steps to evaluate their participation in the plan of God to form disciples for leadership by becoming friends of God and listen to His promptings. The views of participants indicated that deep change is needed in the acceptance of aspirants for ministerial priesthood and in priestly formation. The Church can only be true to her nature by having the leadership that is concerned with the plan of God.

The position of formators can be likened to that of a radar and at the same time an anchor in the life of the Church. They should locate where society is in its spiritual life and development in general, and strive to fulfil God's plan for humanity and creation. Knowledge discovered from this assessment should direct their mission and control their ministry in the life of the Church and how the Church should carry out her mission through every baptised member. In response to these challenges formators should be the deep change they want to see in the leadership of the Church and in parishioners as they fulfil their mission in society. Their life should be prophetic in words and deeds.

Continuing the tradition of formation which was meant for white missionaries is not adhering to the mind of Vatican II and in accordance with the Apostolic Exhortations (*Optatam Totius* 1965, *Pastores dabo vobis* 1992, and *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* 2016) that encourage Episcopal Conferences to draw up their own programmes adapted to the circumstances of time and place. Theologically the whole process of seminary formation in South Africa needs reform and rethinking to respond to the multiculturalism of the society and should present the mission of God in the new way that fulfils his plan.

To be successful in their mission, formators should be united in their understanding of their calling and mission, in their self-understanding of the Church and her mission, and in the mission of God in time and place. They are to re-arrange, reformulate, and model content

material in such a way that will allow for practical implementation. They should not compromise their mission by concentrating more on helping candidates to achieve high academic degrees. Intellectual knowledge which cannot be applied in the lives of parishioners does not serve its purpose of faith seeking understanding for better living of the Christian calling.

A solution that might be applicable is to have two streams or strategies for formation that divide candidates according to their giftedness and capabilities for different ministries within the Church. During pastoral formation candidates can be classified according to ministries within the Church and be prepared accordingly. All these ministries require a servant leadership attitude which requires a higher standard of the virtue in humility and a desire to make a difference wherever a person is placed.

The challenges of parish priests and formators stem from the weak foundation of laity faith formation and the age of reason on which the reception of sacraments is based. The second reason is lack of integration of families in faith formation of parishioners and formation to ministerial priesthood (Mokone & Pali 2022:4). Most Africans are still rooted in their family structure and without involvement of families that form the support system for faith formation it will take long for the mission of the Church to be effective. Individualistic faith formation enforced on ministerial priesthood uproots them from their life source and support for successful authentic leadership.

When an aspirant expresses his interest to join ministerial priesthood the vocation director visits the family to inform them of their son's decision, but when problems arise the family is not involved. The vocation team does not inform nor contact the family why their son is returning home, the responsibility is now left to him to explain. The spiritual family and the human family do not support each other. At the age of retirement also, a priest is left to himself, and his family then has to provide accommodation and care. These practices are inhuman, they lack *botho/ubuntu* and they are not even Christian. Jesus was always close to his spiritual family as well as his human family (Jn 19:25–27, Mt 27:45–46). Jesus lived and practiced *botho* until the end giving meaning to his death and a way to follow.

These practices need to be revisited as they lack love, care, and concern for the families of those who accept the invitation to follow a calling to priesthood irrespective of how they received their calling or what they have done. Another factor is the aspirants' age when they

are accepted into the seminary. The Church of Christ will not die for lack of vocations but what should be done is to offer appropriate catechesis that informs and forms mature parishioners and allow God to call His own.

Youth should pursue professions of their own choice and if they have a vocation to ministerial priesthood, they will pursue it later when they are humanly, spiritually, and emotionally mature. The existing system does not work and when problems arise, candidates are sent back home with nothing to fall back on. This practice discourages those who have a genuine calling to respond to God's invitation for fear of being discarded without any emotional support. These practices fit the institution model of the Church which cares for its existence and treats and uses people for its survival.

The integration of families who form the Family of God can even enhance a calling to Christianity and ministerial priesthood. As long as the institution model is prominent, the Church will consist of individuals who are concerned about their personal salvation and the mission of the Church will continue to suffer. Family members can journey together with their son and/or brother and function as his mentors. Individualism is not part of African culture and creates priests who do not know where they belong, who they really are, and force them to live and function in a vacuum. How these practices affect or strengthen one's ministry needs another research study.

These commonly known practices affect African priests especially when the authorities do not fulfil their promise to support candidates or priests when in need. In African culture and Christianity, *botho* is above the law, otherwise Christianity does not make sense. There is a need to develop new systems of relationships between the families and authorities, between authority and candidates and/or priests. Life lived in fear is not meaningful and does not bear good fruits. Human formation should include and allow discussion on these practices to find a new way of being "Church" integrating cultural practices that enhance psychological freedom to help candidates to feel at home and open and free to respond to God's invitation, not for power and authority, but to serve. This will give them confidence to live the gospel message from the African perspective of *botho* and lessen clericalism. Living in fear leads one to dishonesty, distorts personality, and takes away one's dignity and integrity.

It can therefore be concluded that knowledge received, be it theological or philosophical, does not make one respond to God's invitation freely and fulfil his mandate unless the spirit of

botho, which is a Christian concept, becomes prominent in the Church. The Family of God model demands this change for it to be realised. Formation for priests will remain information as long as it is not processed through who they are in their “being” in their own culture and integrated into their personality to become part of their psychological and cultural framework. The fact is, what is practiced now distorts their personality to make them fit into clericalism.

What the Church must do is to use research findings to create systems of faith formation and priestly formation which build people’s personality to be like that of Christ, humble, caring, sharing, and ready to serve. Christianity is the religion for *botho*, leading people to be who they were meant to be from the beginning, that is, having a personal relationship with God and one another, and to look after creation. The mission of Christ was to restore this relationship (Hb 2:11–18). The Western cultural understanding of Christianity and Christianity as Jesus meant it for every culture should be separated. Jesus did not come to destroy the differences of people but restore their being children of God. There is beauty in differences bound together with the love of God who makes all things new.

Each culture has its positive and negative practices. The negative aspects need to be assessed and discarded but the positive need to be strengthened since they make people who they are as created by God who is calling them for his purpose. Despite their nine years of formation, African priests—both parish priests and formators—struggled to understand and align their calling to their background and traditions. They testified that they were helped to understand God as the merciful Father in the Year of Mercy, long after their ordination. Some Christian concepts are challenged especially since the family structure has changed. Building on a theme using indigenous wisdom and knowledge might be a successful method of intertwining Christianity with the African worldview and to thus make it become culture.

Recruitment of young men to ministerial priesthood with no clear understanding of priestly calling and poor faith formation for the reception of sacrament and entering priestly formation, which is not practical for implementation, cause a distortion to the mission of the Church.

5.4 Recruitment for ministerial priesthood

The discussion here focuses on parish priests and formators as Church leadership that should bring about deep change in their own position and level of ministry in the mission of the Church. Formators mould parish leadership within the framework of the model of the Church

upheld in a certain context to empower them with necessary knowledge, skills, and methods for the implementation of the mission of God. Parish priests in turn as leadership in parishes form and empower parishioners to actualise the mission of the Church in society in their own cultural background. Equally, parishioners who are formed appropriately for their mission, should provide the Church with young mature men and women open and ready to receive a calling either to Christian marriage, ministerial priesthood, religious life, and/or single consecrated life. God does not stop calling and sending for mission and the Church is an instrument to direct and empower for mission.

In this section the focus is on the negative outcome of recruitment of young men for ministerial priesthood and recruitment of formators for their formation. Suggestions regarding what should be the procedure, especially for Africans who are now the majority in the Church, without discrimination.

Formators are leaders and instruments of change building the inner structure of the Church in their ministry and need to have a calling for this ministry for it to be successful. As discussed earlier, a new system can be developed where candidates, without discrimination but based on their God-given talents, could be offered ministerial formation that will enhance gifts and talents for the service of the Body of Christ. Young men can have a calling to ministerial priesthood but for different functions within the structure of the Church which should be recognised during the process of discernment, strengthened accordingly, and channelled to give personal fulfilment, satisfaction, and enhancing the mission of the Church mission and transformation of society.

The fact that everybody who expresses the desire to become a priest is channelled through the same system without discerning where they can be placed in serving the Church causes the Church to struggle when looking for formators, diocesan leadership, and leadership in certain fields and departments. All should be formed for parish ministry as a basic calling of ministerial priesthood for the service of common priesthood, but personal gifts must be enhanced. Further training should be encouraged for those who have a calling to form future priests as discipleship and leadership of the Church. Discernment should help each priest to be where he can better serve God, not as a way of favouritism or discrimination. When placing or selecting people for ministry is based on recruitment, favouritism is mostly exercised, which does not necessarily favour the mission of the Church but bring people together for a ministry haphazardly.

Jesus called men who were skilled for their profession and on duty as his first disciples (Lk 5:1–11, 27–32) and used their skills and commitment to their profession for his mission. The weakness sometimes is that those who are sent to further their studies is because of their struggles they are given a chance and space to mature and after that they are given positions. This does not help the person concerned and there is no surety that the man got the help he was supposed to get and before being given the responsibility to form the leadership of the Church. This system of placing people or appointing them without the certainty that they are ready for the ministry does not help the person concerned nor enhance the mission of the Church. Formators attested to this and some become fulfilled and recognise that that was their calling, but this extraordinary example cannot be applied to all.

Formators need to be professionals, and have to be skilled or prepared for their mission, so that they will be committed, creative, and prophetic in their mission. They will then find joy in their ministry and able to endure whatever comes their way. Jesus will always be their focus and they will use his strategy of formation (Lk 51:0–11). Besides preparation, perceiving being a formator as a calling will motivate them to see that ministerial priesthood is successful in carrying out the mission of God, ensuing in them aiming to situate them in their context, ensuring that content material is appropriate, and that they form servant leadership ready to bring about deep change in parishes.

Parishioners form the foundation of the Church where the seed of faith is planted and develops. When faith has reached maturity, the person becomes more open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and to listen from the heart to God's further invitation to take up duties and responsibilities within the Church.

The first calling is through evangelisation, which is open to all, but the second calling is directed to the few for the leadership of the Church. God cares for his Church and is the one who initiates a calling for whatever is needed for his mission. The present situation of having few vocations to ministerial priesthood might be the way God is forcing the Church to involve the laity in his mission. Every situation is prophetic and needs interpretation to find the will of God and processes to fulfil it.

The Church losses her credibility when the focus is taken away from God to solve the current situation by recruiting people who might not be called by him for the mission. The mission is of God and He directs the processes and the way they should be carried out. Vocational

workshops are necessary means for continuous formation, but can be misused. Knowledge about how the Church functions, her needs, and her structures is necessary formation for all parishioners for them to participate fully in the mission of the Church with knowledge.

When such knowledge is structured with the aim to attract and to recruit young people promising them benefits if they follow a calling to ministerial priesthood and religious life, then a calling as the invitation from God to a particular way of life for His purpose and mission becomes distorted. Discernment is not followed and everyone who wants to join is taken in. When this happens, those who join would be misled and will expect what was promised at workshops instead of allowing priestly formation to mould their personality and help them discern the will of God and serve his mission in the Church.

In the institutional model of the Church where authority, power, and clericalism are prominent it becomes easy for those recruited for the wrong reasons to use the leadership style to be functional in society while failing to be a gift in the parish. Parishioners will then be intimidated and have to function under the mercy of such a priest. In such a situation the parish priest fails to be a gift to the parish and disregards the spiritual needs of parishioners and their involvement in society. There are some youths though who, through vocational workshops, are helped to strengthen their relationship with God through prayer and reconciliation, and to discern their calling and want to live their lives for God. The focus of vocational workshop can strengthen faith formation when used as a form of ongoing formation rather than recruitment.

There is a difference between the expatriate missionaries and the local priests regarding their lifestyle, commitment to prayer, administration of sacraments, and relationship with parishioners. Respect is earned, not demanded, therefore parishioners expect to see and feel the aroma of holiness around the priest as he is singled out to live his calling as priest, prophet, and king, which differentiates him from an ordinary Christian.

Spiritual leadership is demonstrated by one's life, commitment to prayer, touching the lives of people with caring, respect, and commitment to service. Discernment of vocations is important to authenticate a calling based also on the new context in which the Church finds herself now as well as her internal needs which will help her attain her nature as an evangelising and prophetic institution for society. The fact that a parish priest can spend most of his time in the parish house and not knowing what to do except the celebration of sacraments and performance

of rituals, indicates two things, that is, recruitment to fill ranks and inappropriate pastoral formation.

Recruitment of formators follow the same processes. Lack of preparation for different ministries for the work of evangelisation and the mission of the Church by preparing leadership. This problem though, is the legacy of the settlers' and mission church. Africans were not prepared and formed to take positions in the leadership. The fact that there was lack of expatriate missionaries together with the change in the politics of the country, forced local priests to take positions which they were not prepared for to fill the ranks, lest the structure collapses.

It is, therefore, high time that the local hierarchy must start a new away of being a Church by discerning a call to ministerial priesthood, in order to discern and decide what kind of ministerial priesthood is needed for the South African multicultural and multiracial society to bring about deep change in the Church and society.

Those recruited might find the concept of celibacy, poverty, and obedience too difficult and a challenge because the reasons for joining would not be personal (Juma *et al.* 2017:3). Those called would desire to follow the path of holiness and sacrifice for the sake of the Kingdom of God (Mt 19, John Paul II 1992:#20). A calling is a gift from God to be accepted or rejected as each one is given freedom of choice (John Paul II 1992:#35). The vocation team needs to make these clear from the first stage of discerning a vocation. The Church might have to review this system and find another way of discerning vocations to priesthood.

Documents for priestly formation stipulate all that is necessary to be done and what kind of persons should form the community of formators (John Paul II 1992:#66, #67) as role models of what priesthood is understood to be and lived in the Church, taking into consideration the cultural context of those called.

Having discussed challenges on recruitment above, the challenges which participants faced due to their inability to define and know who called them and struggling to identify their mandate are next discussed. God calls people to himself for himself and to send them out on a mission as his messengers. A new model for catechesis is needed to form a firm faith foundation for the Church in mission, as presented below.

5.5 Remodelling catechesis for discipleship

Making the mission of God relevant in the multicultural democratic South Africa, the Church needs new goals, new ways, and new strategies that must facilitate spiritual transformation that promotes holistic formation for both priests and the laity. The aim of catechesis should be more for a life in Christ that leads to discipleship. The old system that was basically instilling dogma was less focussed on active participation of the laity in the mission of the Church. Theological education that aims to instil the mind of the Church should in fact be directed to instil the modern mind of the Church, that is, missionary discipleship of all the baptised as co-responsible for the mission of God. It is necessary to create an integrated curriculum that changes the perspectives of faith formation to aim to connect learned experiences with one's cultural context. Faith formation must offer information, as well as form the faith of those in the process of receiving sacraments and form part of ongoing formation to develop the love of God and neighbour as practical living and involvement in society.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church is meant to give basics for faith formation of those called to life in Christ, but regional catechisms should be formulated within the context of the people. Suitable formators are necessary to motivate towards the realisation of a new or different ways of being Church with members being formed and trained to live mission. The first step to fulfil this requirement, especially with the background of the settlers' and mission church, is to train catechists to have theological background to Christian concepts for example, the Trinity, Christian calling with its mandate and demands, and to offer strategies of mentoring, formation, and spiritual direction. The current situation in South Africa is inviting people to volunteer to become catechists or to be involved in internal ministries. To teach the faith is not a voluntary ministry but an integral part of being a disciple, to teach the faith. All the baptised, when they have understood their calling and received formation that strengthens and matures their faith, and have become disciples, should be commissioned to teach the faith. Those who have a second calling to form children, youth, and catechumens the faith must receive proper formation for that. All ministries need preparation and formation.

This practise was introduced when hired catechists, who were trained and formed for this mission and used by missionary priests to go round outstations, especially in rural areas, converting and teaching catechesis, were phased out. The idea of having parishes and outstations take responsibility for self-propagating is very good, but this ministry is regarded

as voluntary not a calling to teach the faith to children, youth, and catechumens. Another challenge is that, unlike the former hired catechists who were trained for their work, parishioners who take over this ministry, usually are not trained to the level of mastering their ministry by offering them theological background of concepts that form the framework of Christian faith, for example, the Creed.

The responsibility to train catechists though, is given to parish priests as locals, but usually this does not happen. The expatriate missionaries were few and they had a vast area to cover in limited time and had to cope with language barriers, although some had learned to speak the local language well in their effort to evangelise Africans. They therefore made use of the laity for teaching catechesis.

Catechesis was and is still mostly theoretical. Candidates are taught and trained more to remember than to understand the faith, integrate it in their cultural background, personal experience, and apply it using indigenous knowledge in the family and societal context. Teaching catechesis for memorisation does not necessarily lead to repentance and conversion nor to missionary discipleship. It does not form personalities modelled for disciples of Christ and to represent him in society in every aspect of life.

The Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church needs to be read with a theological educational background to understand concepts that form the fundamental truth of Christianity, for example, the Trinity. The Trinity is central to the Christian faith. In other words, there is no Christianity without the Trinitarian God who revealed himself in history. The Creed is a summary of who and what the Trinitarian God is and does, that is, God the Father as Creator, the Son as the Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit as the Sanctifier. These concepts need to be discussed and understood within the cultural background of people to be understood in their true essence, even though the Trinity cannot be understood fully but can be explained by the mission they carried out. Catechists need to have theological background to teach and to interpret concepts within their cultural and social setting to form candidates on their different level of understanding and stages in faith maturity. Both catechists and candidates need to discover the revelation of the Trinity in creation, scripture, history, and the present situation to better their understanding and accept these concepts as part of their culture.

Catechesis as a form of education should not be taught following the “banking method” (Freire 1993:71–72) where candidates are regarded as blank slates with no experience of nature around

them nor knowledge from their cultural setting. A banking method of education denies people the opportunity to assess their situation, where they come from, their background experience of life, their aspirations, their desires, and their understanding of their calling from their own perspective, which has brought them to the Church. The catechist gives what is expected to be known for the reception of sacraments and shares whatever she or he believes, which does not usually influence candidates to be faithful to their calling as Christians.

Confirmands and catechumens are mostly at the age of seeking and need to be allowed to question and find answers for themselves that will leave an impression in their faith journey. The first stage would be to establish where candidates come from, their experiences in life, their aspirations in faith development, their hopes when they are done with structured formation, their faith level, their understanding of some Christian concepts like a calling, who called them, and how they want to respond to the mandate of their calling.

These questions and many others can make them think deeper about the commitment to Christianity and to make an informed decision to continue with formation. To make the journey of faith concrete practical exercises should be given where they will have to report back what they have done and how they did it. The Social Teachings of the Church can be used as the practical living of faith and involvement in society.

The Church, being missionary by nature (called to evangelise) should form and invite all those who accept a calling to be a Christian to embrace missionary discipleship, and to actively be engaged in scripture, to learn from the Master by asking questions, joining discussions, and contributing to knowledge being offered to them (Magesa 2015:175). The aim is to link faith with action, spiritual life with social involvement, and Church life with social life. Spiritual formation should empower and liberate people's gifts to use them through the Church structures to serve society.

Teaching of the faith should not make people storerooms of the past faith experiences but should be an opportunity for candidates to dare to venture into the deep and experience the love of God and his purpose for inviting them into a personal relationship with him. Empowering candidates with spiritual content, skills, and methods to "go" and proclaim the gospel, "to make disciples" and "to teach everything Jesus has taught them," to "feed the poor", "clothe the naked", "heal the sick", and "liberate the oppressed" in both words and actions, does not call

for depositing knowledge but for probing for solutions from candidates on how at their time are to fulfil these demands and requirements to be a follower of Christ.

The Church must begin by making disciples of her leadership and to decolonise their minds from feeling comfortable with doing what has been done and keeping allegiance to the expatriate missionaries. Rome has long given the local Church the freedom to own the universal catechesis in this matter, translate it into the languages of their region, and to use indigenous knowledge to translate it into the local vernacular.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986:12) explains that using language and literature which is not yours takes you further and further from the self to the other self, and from one's known worldview to that of another. Language, Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986:13) continues, has a dual character—it is both a means of communication and a carrier of culture. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 1994) in South Africa has still not been translated into local languages to make it easier for catechists to use it together with using indigenous knowledge that forms the fibre of the culture of the people.

Priestly formation needs to take this into consideration, for without missionary discipleship leadership, there would be no missionary discipleship laity. Without care for family missionary discipleship, there would be no vocations to ministerial priesthood build on firm family foundation of both physical and spiritual families both being missionary disciples as basic cells for the Church and society (Mallon 2016:27, Mokone & Pali 2022:1). They build on each other and need to be taken care of for the mission of the Church to be realised in the twenty-first century.

Preaching as a form of catechesis requests the preacher to be aware where his people are in terms of human, spiritual, intellectual, and social involvement, and model his preaching to address these issues translated from the context of scripture otherwise his preaching will be out of context.

Preaching and catechesis for laity used as forms for formation need to be situational as the “ministry of the word...the soul of a congregation, [and] the life-blood of the Church” (Kruger 1975:62, Francis I 2013:#164-#175). The focal aim of catechesis is to unite people with the love of God (Jn 21:15–17) but presented theoretically does not fulfil its aim and achieve its objectives.

According to the International Year of Indigenous Languages (2019) and Osewska *et al.* (2021:1) languages define identity, express history and culture, help people to learn, defend their human rights, and participate in all aspects of society. It is through language that people preserve their history, customs and tradition, memory, unique modes of thinking, meaning, and expression. The method of teaching and learning and the use of people's language in faith formation needs to be aligned to people's cultural transmission of knowledge and customs to avoid mimicry. The success of catechesis for missionary disciple should uphold a well thought through Christian formation to become culture (John Paul II 1982, Poupart and Praem 1999:39, Navarro-Valls 2011).

Having catechism translated into indigenous languages will make the message of the gospel to be heard and understood in people's languages in their own context (Acts 2:5–13) and it will arouse excitement and conversion (Baolu 2016:21). The use of indigenous knowledge systems is necessary for proper implementation in the context of people's cultures (Gaisie 2021:84). African practical theologians need to work out strategies for re-evangelisation of Africa after the era of slavery, apartheid, and ethnic wars for the Church to move away from being a mission church to a missional Church that empowers for mission in society (Van Aarde 2017:2).

It would be from this kind of background that a calling to ministerial priesthood would develop. Parish catechesis would form a firm foundation for ministerial priesthood as discipleship fulfilling the commission of Jesus (Francis I 2016:#12).

The whole hierarchical ministerial structure is built on this initial stage of catechesis and if not properly organised and channelled towards missionary discipleship, the whole structure of the Church is built on inadequate faith formation and cannot stand the storms of life and members will not fulfil their mission in society as disciples.

This leads to the discussion on how the Church might respond to the above discussed praxis of remodelling catechesis for the formation of the laity by rethinking priestly formation for Church leadership. Leadership that can form, guide, and mentor the laity in their mission for the transformation of society to transform practices of corruption, lawlessness, crime, poverty, unemployment, and social ills that ravage the South African society. Formation at St John Vianney Seminary and challenges of theological education, most of which have already been mentioned above, follow.

5.6 Rethinking priestly formation for missionary discipleship

The main task and role of ministerial priesthood is to evangelise the laity, teach them the faith, empower them for their mission, and send them into the vineyard (John Paul II 1988:#2). Teaching the faith is not voluntary but to help people to understand God's calling and to empower them for their participation in his mission. No one volunteers to go into the vineyard but is invited and sent (Mt 28:19–20).

The vocation to ministerial priesthood is mainly for this mission to form parishioners as missionary discipleship. After every Holy Mass the priests sends parishioners to go into the vineyards to work and evangelise society by being the message of the gospel in which they believe and profess. But without formation that modelled them for this mission his words are heard but not practiced. Since the impact of the Christian life is not noticeable in the South African context rethinking of priestly formation is suggested based on three themes. Firstly, ownership of the international priestly formation, secondly, training and formation of formators, and lastly, involvement of families of candidates in the process of formation.

The first step in rethinking priestly formation for missionary discipleship requires the ownership of the recent international documents on priestly formation and the Social Teaching of the Church. Ownership here means to read the content material through the eyes of a South African who knows and understands the historical background of the country and the present democratic multicultural, multiracial (Rainbow nation) society. The next step in this process would be to write down questions concerning the mission of the Church from the biblical and theological perspective and determine how it must be carried out by South African Christians in light of the present context and in view of the future of *missio Dei* and *missio Ecclesia*.

This process will need to involve the South African priest theologians and the laity theologians who are truly concerned about the mission of the Church in the twenty-first century, the relevance of the Church in the present situation, and they should be vested with knowledge of scripture, the history of the Church in Africa and especially in South Africa, the documents of the Church regarding priestly formation, and have knowledge of cultures and customs in South Africa to be able to tap into African wisdom literature, indigenous knowledge, and languages to write *Ratio Nationalis* for SACBC.

The core concern of *Ratio Nationalis* using all the material listed above should be to form ministerial priesthood as missionary discipleship for the South African multicultural society. Missionary discipleship for the South African context needs to be multicultural to help priests to bring parishioners from different races and cultures together and help them permeate society from different angles for deep change from grassroot level. Unity of different races within the Roman Catholic Church will prove to be a powerful instrument of change.

Discernment on vocation should be concerned with young men whose desire is to bring deep change in the spiritual life of the laity in order to empower them for their mission in society to change oppressive policies, transform practices of racism, economic disparities, and to address unemployment, corruption, crime, and bring about stability in society.

The second important step is to seek amongst the priests those who have a calling to implement *Ratio Nationalis* processes and send them for training and formation in an African country that is advanced in its priestly formation. If that is not possible, they should be trained in South Africa using experts in theological discourse with the aim to bring about deep change in the formation of Church leadership instilling in them the content of *Ratio Nationalis* and offering them skills and methods for teaching and learning which focus on practical implementation and enforce collaboration between the priests and the laity.

Collaboration between the priests and the laity as members of the Church and society will facilitate change in the transformation of societal structures that oppress them. The challenge is with the hierarchy to find new strategies to redeem the lost opportunity of mobilising parishioners of different cultural backgrounds as a prophetic witness to democracy. This should not only be in worship but in all other situations of life where the laity are professionals. They should relate to one another and work together to eliminate evil structures and replace them with those that incorporate all the children of God irrespective of their religious affiliation, culture, and ethnicity. South Africans can pioneer this transformation when they are formed to be missionary disciples within their own circumstances of life.

Those called to ministerial priesthood under this new way of rethinking priestly formation would need from the first stage of entering the seminary to be prepared to shed prejudices and allow their personalities to be moulded for transformation. Upon entering they need to assess their own background and determine what is needed and how they can bring change. The change should regard especially spiritual formation and other dimensions which they find

wanting and that prevent parishioners to be involved positively in society to bring a difference in all structures around them. They must start working on that from the beginning as their project of wanting to bring deep change in society. Discipleship must not start after ordination but from the start they have to learn how to evangelise in answer to their calling. They are the ones called and should tell their story why they think they are called and for what reason. If they do not know that and cannot articulate what difference they are called to do, then probably they are not called. Pope John Paul II advised thus,

The whole community needs to be trained, motivated and empowered for evangelization, each according to his or her specific role within the Church. For this reason the Synod strongly emphasized the training of the agents of evangelization in Africa (John Paul II 1995:#53)

The seminary is the best place to start as it moulds and fashions leadership for the Church into the image of Christ who calls them (CCC 1994:#1581). Western Christian perspective clouded Christianity and clothed Christ in the Western thought to the detriment of the values of the African cultures which united people as a family (Ogbonnaya 2017:17).

Rethinking priestly formation at the St John Vianney Seminary calls for learning, mostly from other African countries, how they have devised their curricula to address their context and form parish priests who are ready to stoop down to the level of their own people and lift them up in the Spirit of Christ who humbled himself, taking our human nature and giving us new life. It is only by following in the footsteps of Christ that Christian faith can become a culture enabling people to live it authentically, own it, and profess it.

The four pillars of formation are geared to form a person holistically into the image of Christ in his or her own culture, enhancing the understanding of a calling, their personality, and equipping them to be who they are as called by God in their own culture. Culture is the fabric of who people are in their integrity. Destroying the culture of the people is to deny them who they are. The fact that African priests interviewed in this study were struggling to evangelise their people means they have been mentally displaced, and they were not creative anymore because the theology they received was foreign to them. The intellectual formation they received was a banking concept that did not have value for them. They were integrated into the universal structure of the Church but removed mentally from their African context (Freire 1986:75).

Theology is understood as “a continuing hermeneutical concern that discerns how the Word should be proclaimed in word and deed in the world” (Hendriks 2004:19). All disciplines of theology ought to make us achieve this stage of participating in the mission of God. Theological education in Africa and South Africa ought to inform and form all the baptised to strive to know God and to make Him known in word and deed. Theological education in South Africa ought to empower priests to empower the laity to enter this movement for themselves in their homes and places of work.

Formation for discipleship needs a strategy that leads individuals, small groups (SCC), and the congregation onto a journey of faith that challenges them to go and do something spiritual and involve themselves in activities in society for change and report the outcome of their ministry. Knowing that they are accountable to the congregation and hearing the successes and struggles of others, would encourage them in their journey of disciple making.

Jesus’ disciples saw him in constant communication with his Father through prayer. They asked him to teach them how to pray, how to be in communication with God as their source of strength. Formation of disciples needs a priest who prays for his parishioners and prays with them to build their relationship with Jesus and to learn from him whom they are to serve. If members could pray for each other and pray together, not only during the Eucharist, but in revivals and retreats, then they would become a praying community of disciples. People leave the RCC to ask for prayers from other churches because they need healing, they need a caring community, they need to relate with each other as a community of believers and be united to God.

The understanding and conviction on the mandate of a calling is the first step towards a missional Church. The missional Church will be realised when teaching methods change from a banking concept that “attempts to control thinking and action, leads women and men to adjust to the world, and inhibits their creative power” (Freire 1993:77) in their local situation.

The last step in priestly formation for discipleship is the involvement of families of candidates in the formation of their sons. This can be done in different ways in different dioceses depending on the number of candidates. The parish priests of candidates, together with the diocesan ordinary, can meet with parents of candidates every time candidates come home for a holiday. Candidates can then share their experiences, allow parents to respond, ask for clarification, give their input. Parish priests can also give their input, and the local ordinary can

then respond, give input depending on the sharing's from the seminarians, parish priests, and families, or give or discuss topics raised. Here creativity is called for from all involved but mainly having *Ratio Nationalis* in mind on what concerns priestly formation from cultural perspectives. Different topics can also address the needs of the diocese and parishes and what projects of candidates are concerned with to set structures in place that will accommodate the new way of missionary discipleship. Sometimes all priests from the diocese can be invited for such meetings with their PPCs. The meeting could end with a session of prayer, they can celebrate the Eucharist together, and share a meal.

Seminarians can then join their parish priests and families for their holidays. During the holidays each candidate can continue his project of bringing change in his own parish. Practical implementation is part of formation for discipleship. After the holidays seminarians will have to report back what they were doing during the holidays in fulfilling what they are called to do and desire to change in their parishes and dioceses in fulfilling the mission of the Church. These changes should comply with the objectives of the Church mission and the needs of every diocese. The families will learn and deepen their understanding on their role as mentor for their son or brother and they will learn to know the demands of a calling to ministerial priesthood and offer their opinions on which cultural practices are a hindrance to God's mission.

The change depends on the willingness of the hierarchy to focus their attentions on the implementation of missionary discipleship by reforming priestly formation for the formation of new leadership that will be concerned about the mission of the Church. From the seminary formation, catechesis will then be implemented by the leadership that is already formed for discipleship. Something needs to start somewhere for success.

The following section discusses how the Church must respond to form leadership that would be able to carry out this mission to bring about deep change in the understanding of a Christian calling and to empower the laity to fulfil the twofold mission of evangelisation. Most themes have been discussed already but the following section highlights what is most necessary in response to a Christian calling in response to the mission of God and the mission of the Church.

5.7 Formation in response to a calling

The situation discussed above, as well as challenges experienced by participants, hamper effective involvement in the mission of the Trinitarian God, the mission of the Church and

diakonia. Mission diakonia here means “a call to action, as a response to challenges of human suffering, injustice and care for creation” (Klaasen 2014:122).

To enable all the baptised to be involved they need formation that helps them to know their identity, their rights, duties, and responsibilities. To re-form the existing formation, research should be carried out and the views of respondent will assist in the formulation of formation in response to a calling. The hierarchy needs to establish the Church’s self-understanding by hearing from the laity how they view themselves in relation to the hierarchy, and understand their identity, their rights, duties, and responsibilities in the life of the Church.

After obtaining the views of all the baptised, especially the laity who are the majority in the institutional structure, a formulation of formation to respond to a Christian calling can follow. Research can be based on the following questions: Why are you affiliated to the RCC? What sustains your Christian affiliation to the RCC? What makes you to be recognised in society as a Christian? Or what differentiates you from other people because of being a Roman Catholic? What do you think can help you live your Christian life better? As a follower of Christ, how do you make him known, loved, and followed in society? The last question could be, how are you involved in society to bring about change in the oppressive societal structures?

To facilitate this process parish priests should take this assessment seriously and ask every parishioner to respond to the questionnaire. This can be done through SCCs to facilitate the process. Analysis of responses from all the baptised would offer an idea whether the hierarchy and parishioners have the same understanding of their identity, rights, duties, and responsibilities as the Church called for a mission in society as disciples.

From this insight the Department for formation, life, and ministry of the clergy can rethink the priestly formation curriculum that would offer human, intellectual, spiritual, and pastoral formation to candidates that would best prepare them for the formation of the laity. Pastoral formation would then integrate the three other dimensions with the views expressed in research to close the gap that prevents participation in the mission of the Church. It is through the understanding that, like the first twelve disciples of Jesus, we are also called in our own context to become fishers of men by who we are in time and place. Responding to the call of Jesus today will be different from that of the first disciples, therefore discipleship will be expressed differently. The same mission will be carried out differently depending on the context.

Ministerial priesthood would channel their ministry in the proclamation of the Gospel, family ministry, formation of all the baptised for faith development, using the social teachings of the Church to empower for social involvement of the laity in all strata of society. Catechesis will shift from being just the preparation for the reception of sacraments to a response to a calling, growth in faith, acquiring of skills, for respondents to become disciples. The focus should not be on the particular sacrament, but on how it strengthens a person for discipleship.

Without an inner passion to follow Christ and participate in his mission being a Christian is for personal salvation. The efforts of the sacraments as steppingstones on the journey of faith will not be effective. The developments of rewriting human formation in the context of South Africa to own and inculturate might facilitate the ownership, inculturation, and contextualisation of the three remaining pillars to form a complete integrative curriculum engaging the multicultural South African context that deems all religions as equally important.

The government policies would not affect people if the Church has concentrated her parish ministry on family ministry. Formulating an integrated curriculum would consider these important pillars of priestly formation for the Church to be owned by Africans in Africa using the family cell as the basic unit for faith formation. The Congregation for the Clergy (2016:#25) encourages inculturation of formation in different cultures as follows:

Special attention needs to be given to vocations among indigenous peoples: they need a formation which takes account of their culture. While receiving a proper theological and pastoral formation for their future ministry, these candidates for the priesthood should not be uprooted from their own culture". The very presence of such vocations is an important element of the inculturation of the Gospel in these regions, and the richness of their culture must be adequately respected. Vocational assistance can be provided in the native language whenever necessary, placing this in the context of the local culture.

Africans are known for their rootedness in the family structure which includes the extended family, but the Church has been slow to adapt this structure to form her members in South Africa. Africans believe in a calling by ancestors and those who feel called are passionate about their calling and are supported by the family members to reach their goal. When being a parishioner can stress a calling as a foundation the understanding of and adhering to a call to be a disciple would be better understood and supported by members of the family.

Responding to the situation in society and culture the Church needs to initiate self-inspection, self-knowledge, and self-understanding to what she is, what she stands for, and what she represents. During apartheid people were separated into homelands based on ethnic

groups, race, and colour. In the democratic dispensation people are expected to automatically amalgamate to form one society under the same flag.

Preparing members for a new mission requires breaking away from traditional ways of thinking about the Church, clericalism, hierarchical status, and should seek new ways of being the Church through all her members. What would control this understanding, is formation directed towards missionary discipleship that is based on the understanding of a calling. The content of formation and the kind of leadership needed to bring about deep changes in teaching and learning, integration of cultural wisdom, indigenous knowledge formation, and integrative curricula, need to be put into place (Banda 2021:39,45; Oluwadare 2021:57; Magezi 2021:70–72, 76–77; Gaisie 2021: 85; Du Preez 2021:146).

The formulation of *Ratio Nationalis* will assist in the focus plan or programme that aims to produce Christian leadership that has the mission of God in mind and heart, able to articulate it, and actualise it in both the Church and society. The South African society needs Church leadership that can demonstrate Christian values as role models of what it means to be a leader in South Africa today. Changing the minds of parishioners to respond to their calling with passion as disciples living the gospel values will have an effect on society.

What follows are the challenges parishioners, parish priests, and formators face regarding fulfilling their mission in the Church and society. The challenges of parishioners are discussed first, followed by those of parish priests and lastly formators.

5.7.1 Laity and mission

The fact that parishioners could identify their calling being to serve, but could not define their calling and the Callers, did not help them to have a clear concept of being called to be a servant following the footsteps of Christ. Service needs to be linked to a certain goal that has to be achieved, as well as a reason for doing it. The greatest challenge for the laity was a lack of formation in human, spiritual, intellectual, and social involvement.

The mission of the laity in South Africa is clear, that is, to transform oppressive practices that take away people's dignity. Lack of employment, housing, clean water, electricity, education that empowers for employment and enables people to create jobs for themselves, take away their dignity as human beings created in the image of God. The mission of the laity is to influence policy and restore the dignity of people.

The Church should be involved in people-centred projects that will empower the laity to make a difference. People-centred projects using the Social Teachings of the Church will help parishes to be centres of spiritual and social change. Charity and welfare projects do not bring about change in society but perpetuate poverty, dependency, and begging, depriving people from using their God-given talents.

5.8 Relevant leadership for deep change

The South African society suffer from corruption, crime, human trafficking, substance abuse, unemployment, abuse of women and children, divorce, youth pregnancies, poverty, and the like (Mchunu *et al.* 2012, Van der Watt 2020, Stats SA 2022, WHO 2023). These social challenges experienced in society are experienced by members of the Church as well, as they are members of society. This means the Church is suffering, she is made up of wounded members. The Church, not being a building, but the Family of God, the Body of Christ, is not exempt from these sufferings because her members are affected. The question is how does the Church integrate these sufferings in her faith formation for both the priests and the laity to bring about empowerment to find the solution, and heal the nation? The overall question is, how do these societal ills become part of priestly formation in empowering parish leadership for their ministry in the faith formation of the laity?

Having different departments at the Head Quarters of the SACBC does not bring any solution to the sufferings the laity go through unless what these departments represents becomes part of the pastoral formation of priests. Priests as parish leadership with the mission to serve the laity their ministry should empower the laity to deal with these common societal ills that they suffer as part of their mission in society.

There are many and different models of leadership in use in different organisations and institutions but the concern here is Church leadership that can bring about deep change in the mission of the laity in the context of the prevalent societal ills. A leader is identified as someone who is called to lead, to be at the forefront, and united with the Caller and his vision and mission in the world. A leader leads the way, knows the direction where and how change should happen, and knows and realises the needs, aspirations, and weaknesses of his people (Pali 2016:148). To lead is to serve but it depends on who is served.

The first task of leadership is to serve God who called him. In the initial stage of priestly formation, it should be established why candidates prayed, how they prayed, and to whom they prayed. Their responses to these questions will help establish a foundation on how, as individuals, they relate to God, their concerns in prayer, whether it was directed to self, family, or societal needs, and which forms of prayer they are using. As future leaders they must be helped from the beginning to build a personal relationship with God, learn to put the needs of others before their own in prayer and in service, and what forms of prayer they are used to.

As future leadership they must guide others in prayer as the first task of a spiritual leader. They will have to lead the members towards the desired goal within the framework of the mission of God and the mission of the Church.

As leaders, the priestly formation must help them form the virtue of humility by learning and involving members in decision making and implementation, knowing and realising their need for co-responsibility and start practicing it at the seminary. When they go to their home parishes for holidays and internships their task will be to share their expertise and professionalism in different ministries within the parish, or diocese. The candidate must be a man of his word and become an example to what needs to be done and achieved. Candidates should concentrate more on performing duties that help them to serve others. These practices will put them on the journey to discipleship and servant leadership.

The Church, being in society and part of society, needs to be prophetic in her leadership style, influencing her members and society to heal from the atrocities they suffered as members of society. A priest candidate needs to be realistic and share the personal suffering he is going through and the sufferings around his family and people in society around him as a way of connecting him to the reality of life. Being aware of his own suffering and those of others he will learn to unite his own suffering with those of the community and in prayer and service learn to unite with the Suffering Servant (Is 42:1–9) whom he is to represent in his leadership and ministry. United with his people on that level he will, as a priest be able to lead and celebrate the Eucharist, being in one mind and heart with the people and the Risen Lord.

The concept of the Suffering Servant will also help the candidates to accept all people of different races and cultures as his brothers and sisters connecting himself to Jesus who died for all people. Cultures change for the good and bad and affects every structure of society from the

family and Church to politics, and therefore leadership styles change as well to adapt to new situations. Candidates will therefore be open to different kinds of leadership models knowing that the people he will serve will be from different cultural backgrounds and therefore he will be able to modify the servant leadership model to serve people where they are in their understanding and development.

The hierarchical structure of the Church, like many other practices within her structure, is universal and recognisable throughout the world but in every culture the understanding is different, and it also depends on whether the leadership model serves the needs of people. The expatriate missionaries practised what they best knew and were familiar with, the hierarchical ministerial structure of leadership was also influenced by the institution model of the Church which they used.

The Family of God model can also influence the leadership model, depending on where the leadership put itself. Forming leadership for deep change in the mission of the Church, a new model of the Body of Christ or the People of God could better fit the servant leadership model. This discernment is part of the ministry of formators who directs the processes of formation to empower candidates for their leadership in society.

The hierarchical model of leadership fits the African cultural practices where traditional leaders are held in the same hierarchical structure. Even today, many would not regard this structure as a problem, especially now that people seek their roots and identity. However, Christianity instils a different society which goes beyond cultural practices particular to people. The servant leadership model goes beyond boundaries and across nations and correlates with what Jesus wished his followers to be in carrying out his mission in the world (Mt 20:25–28).

There are three models of leadership that can be integrated into the servant leadership model that can serve the task of bringing about deep change in the mission of the Church and society, that is, task competence, transactional, and transforming leadership. The functions of these leadership models will be briefly explained to highlight their essence and how these can enhance the model of servant leadership for deep change in the approach to *missio Dei* and *missio Ecclesia* in South Africa.

The function of the task competence leadership model is to empower a person to be capable of performing his or her task competently, empowered with appropriate content, skills, strategies,

and methods to fulfil his mission as a leader. The aim of pastoral formation is to provide the Church with a community leader who is task competent, in other words: a leader who can carry out his pastoral ministry of teaching, preaching, running committees, leading worship, and visiting the sick with excellence (Osmer 2008:176).

The second model is transactional leadership. Those who exercise this model influence others by fulfilling their task with the aim to be reciprocated. He fulfils his task with a tag attached and depending on what others gain from his functions the response can be positive and therefore effect change in the organisation (Osmer 2008:176).

The last model is transforming leadership. In this model the leader uses his influence to motivate others to perform their duties and responsibilities and achieve deep change in the organisation.

Jesus in his teachings encouraged new wine into new wine skins and not to use a new patch on an old coat (Mt 9:16–17). Using these metaphors for the Church in the South African context that suffers so many ills, the combination of these three models of leadership with the servant leadership model will help achieve deep change which needs change both in the structure and mission of the Church. To achieve the positive results in forming relevant leadership, the structures will have to change to accommodate a new leadership model.

The first structure to change is priestly formation, which should situate the four dimensions of formation. The focus should shift from intellectual to pastoral formation. Formation should concentrate more on forming community leadership that incorporates the three models with the servant leadership model propounded by Jesus. The focus on competence, transactional, and transforming as servant leadership model will be acceptable for the South African context.

Priestly formation should concentrate more on shifting the focus of candidates from striving to attain the academic degrees to practical implementation of the mission of the Church. As stated above, this should start from the entry stage to focus the candidate's whole formation on practical implementation using strategies that enhance the relationship with God and the fulfilment of the demands of a calling to ministerial priesthood, that is, the formation of the laity to carry out their mission and bring about deep change in society.

To achieve this process within the parish ministry, faith formation of the laity should shift from preparing the laity for the reception of sacraments to missionary discipleship with the reception

of sacraments as steps for growth in faith maturity. The servant leadership model will channel and centralise missionary discipleship as the core of Christian calling. The parish priest will make parishioners aware of their identity as children of God and their responsibility to carry out their mission in society in order to bring about deep change in policies and societal structures to attain peace and prosperity.

Pope Francis I dreams of such change but for it to be actualised the “banking” system of teaching refuted by Paulo Freire where the stress is more on the mind of the Church, should change to free candidates to be more creative thinkers and find ways to evangelise the society of today with the gospel message, using social media but more by being role models of a good life with God in their own cultural background and history, to the multicultural context. This calls for assessment of the present experiences, reflection on its effectiveness, studying of new ways, and replacing the old system with new action and a new experience of doing things (Branson & Martinez 2011:41).

Priestly formation should train the ministerial priesthood as both missionary disciples and servant leadership, which will challenge the existing leadership in society. At present the Church leadership is not prophetic and cannot challenge the political leadership. The servant leadership model will always be applicable in the Church when following the teachings of Jesus who came to serve the world as the Good Shepherd (Jn 10:11–18) who lays down his life for his sheep, who leads them to green pastures (Ps 23), who seeks the lost and when he finds them, carries them on his shoulders (Mt 18:10–14), who loves until death. The three leadership models, namely task competence, transaction, and transforming make up the concept of the Good Shepherd that leads to the Servant leadership (Mt 20:26–28) concept. A servant leader does humble services for the sake of others, kneels down and washes the feet of his parishioners (Jn 13:13–17), looks after the interests of his people (Acts 20–28), and regards every person as an important member of the Family of God (Phil 2:3–4).

All disciples of Jesus are called to be leaders, for leadership is service rendered for the good of the other (Jn 13:13–17; McBee 2020) and this must be manifested in parishes, dioceses, and the whole Church. Every action should be channelled to serve the people of God and bring them into the fold. Leadership position strives to lead others who are from a deprived, impoverished, and oppressive situation to a situation more conducive to freedom, peace,

prosperity, and the purpose of God (Ex 3:7–10). It is a process of guiding and leading people to achievable goals in their life and this is what is needed in the South African situation.

The Church exists to evangelise and to evangelise through all her members to achieve deep change in all the structures of the Church by training and forming them as distinct leadership with a mission to change all the structures of society to serve all the people of South Africa. The purpose of Church leadership is to form them for this purpose, as salt, light, and leaven in society.

Participants in this research made suggestions on what needs to change in ministerial priesthood, emanating from their experiences of what is going on and why this is going on. Their views are described in Chapter 2 and need to be taken into consideration in the formulation of *Ratio Nationalis* and the curriculum of formation for priests. The inclusion of the three groups, parishioners, parish priests, and formators, provides a spectrum of what needs to be considered and addressed in the formation of ministerial priesthood that will bring deep change for *missio Dei* and *missio Ecclesia*. The recent documents from Vatican II to the Synodality give direction and foundation where change is necessary for the Church's relevance in society. The hierarchical structure with power vested in the few does not function well in the modern world, The reason for having few callings to ministerial priesthood might be a sign that God provides for discernment that all the baptised are called to missionary discipleship. The signs of the time and the world situation must inform the processes in the Church and new strategies for leadership and mission.

5.9 Conclusion

The main objective of this chapter was to propose actions that the church leadership might apply to facilitate change in priestly formation at St John Vianney Seminary by forming leadership that can bring about deep change in the Church to benefit the laity and their role in the mission of the Church in society.

To fulfil this objective the overview of the universal thought was presented that advocates for the involvement of the laity in the mission of the Church as the Church. To achieve this deep change the mindset of the leadership needs to change, and processes of making disciples, teaching, and forming them, and commissioning them to go and become a message of salvation must change. Change needs to occur in the faith formation of the laity that empowers them for

mission in the families, parish, and society. Priestly formation needs to be remodelled to empower the clergy to facilitate this deep change in the life of the Church through the acceptance of those called, and preparing them to make a difference in the Church. This may be achieved by breaking away from clericalism and a hierarchical ministerial leadership model, moving to servant leadership which incorporates good shepherd virtues that incorporate task competency, transactional and transforming leadership that brings deep change in all structures of the Church.

The objective of this chapter was achieved, and suggestions were presented for the Church on how she might work towards rethinking ministerial priesthood formation that responds to the challenges faced by parishioners, parish priests, and formators in understanding a calling, the Caller, and their rights, duty, and responsibility to participate in *missio Dei* and *missio Ecclesia*.

The next chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations necessary for rethinking priestly formation in the multicultural South African society. The aim of Chapter 6 is to respond to the research question, and how the objectives were achieved and to give recommendations for future research in formation of future priests in the South African context with its many and different challenges.

Every church is unique and the solutions to the challenges faced by each church should be guided by a vision, mission, strategy, type of relevant leadership, and the analyses of the situation. The analyses of the situation and strategy for implementation help bring about change. As a result, this is where guiding by leadership is crucial. A good leader can offer good guidance only if he or she can overcome his or her inability to attend to the other. A priest as interpretive guide is needed to help members understand the present situation, their identity, and their task in shaping the new course for the parish community in fulfilment of *missio Dei* in post-modernity.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion and recommendations

6.1 Summary of the research question

The research was carried out in the Department of Practical and Missional Theology, using qualitative research methods of document analysis, observation, and interviews. Participants in this study comprised nine (9) parishioners, three (3) parish priests, and five (5) formators at the seminary. All participants were asked similar interview questions in a one-on-one semi-structured setting using open ended interview questions. The interviews were done at the participants' natural environment for the researcher to gain knowledge of what built their views, their cultural background and to experience their environmental setting. The researcher, being a Roman Catholic, was familiar with what participants discussed which made it easy to capture and to observe their interactions, attitudes, and behaviour amongst themselves. Visits to the natural settings of participants helped the researcher during analysis to match their views with the experience gained during interviews to better answer the research question.

The following sections provide a summary and recommendations on the outcome of their views in the following succession, their understanding of a calling, formation for empowerment for a calling and mission, participation in *missio Ecclesia*, a summary of the research question, and a conclusion.

6.2 General understanding of a calling

The person who has received a calling should be able to define it, identify the caller, and understand the purpose why the caller called him or her. All participants on their different levels and positions in the Church structures had different views on their understanding of a calling, which did not fully express their understanding of the Christian calling. This weakness caused them to be unsuccessful in living out the demands of their calling and fulfil its mandate.

Since Vatican II, Catechumenate (RCIA) was accepted and promoted as a method for laity faith formation in the RCC. At the time of first contact the catechists should establish whether the catechumens are joining because they have received a calling and after hearing their views should make sure to give a clear explanation of a Christian calling that catechumens understand and form a foundation for their life in Christ.

A catechumen should proceed to the next period when she or he has understood and can define a Christian calling, who called them, and the mandate thereof. They then should individually discern their motive for joining against this understanding and can then discern together with the catechists and sponsors whether they are ready to proceed to the next stage where these concepts should be deepened with a clear aim to form missionary discipleship, are able to evangelise and get involved in societal issues for change for the better.

At the period of Lenten purification, they should then assess their faith maturity, their understanding of being a disciple, and their readiness to follow Christ and carry out the twofold dimensions of mission of the Church. For Christians to be salt, light, and leaven the church does not need quantity but quality. People who are ready to profess their faith live it out in word and deed. At this first stage the interest should be to establish the understanding of the concept of a calling as the foundation of all Christian formation and when this is understood, there is hope that other stages will have a firm foundation to build on and bear fruits that will last. Candidates should, in the period of deepening, be challenged like the disciples to Emmaus, to go back to society and share how they met the Lord during their journey of faith and understood their identity and were ready to participate in the mission of the Church as missionary disciples.

When the parish receives children and youth who are born into Christian families, and/or the seminary, the young men for ministerial priesthood, the same process should be followed with modification of how the questions are asked. The catechists and the priests on the parish level and formators on the seminary level should first establish whether the recipients do understand a Christian calling. The importance of this is to help candidates to build their relationship with God for them to respond and be able to participate in his mission.

Catechists and formators should do this by giving the candidates time to define and articulate their reasons for wanting to take this journey of faith at that stage in their lives to rule out the candidates following the parents' decisions and joining, following recruitment for wrong reasons. This method will facilitate introspection and help candidates to discern their reasons for taking a step on their faith journey and help them to make a personal response to a calling without being influenced by anybody and to take responsibility for their decision.

Since the catechists, priests, and formators should have been trained and formed to bring deep change in the life of the Church and her mission, they will be aware of the faith level of

candidates when they start their journey of faith and whether it matures as they continue on their way. Discernment and assessment should be part and parcel of this journey as they go through all stages of formation. The process from one stage to the next will depend on the readiness of individual candidates not on the number of years they have attended sessions or group progress.

The aim should be to form candidates for missionary discipleship; therefore, time should not be stipulated as for how long one stage to the next will take, Progress should be determined by the readiness of individuals based on their participation in discussions and sharing, understanding of Christian concepts, demands of Christian life, faith maturity, and capability to integrate the next stage with the first. The change of attitude and faithfulness without fear of punishment should also be considered as a sign of determination to become a disciple.

A calling to a relationship to God and to participate in his mission is extended to all as a gift from God to be accepted or rejected, as God has also given freedom of choice to everyone. Within a Christian and ministerial priesthood there are different functions to be fulfilled which also requires a person to answer a calling to do them, for example, to become a catechist or a formator.

The Church is made up of all people called by God and form the People of God with equal rights, different duties, and responsibilities. God gave gifts to each one to fulfil certain ministries that link them together by their relationship with him and their readiness to follow in the footsteps of Christ. As People of God and the Body of Christ no one is left out in going out, making disciples, baptising, and teaching everything Jesus has commanded.

For lack of defining a calling, parishioners could not link their services to their understanding of God and the Church. Their services were carried out in a vacuum. Parish priests on the other hand, although they indicated that God called them to ministerial priesthood and are aware of the mission they are to carry out amongst parishioners, they failed to do so because they lacked the foundation which they should have received as parishioners to build their secondary calling. The priestly formation they received at the seminary, which was mostly Eurocentric and enforced the mind of the Church, did not empower them for practical implementation of the mission of the Church. It did not help them to build their personalities to become a bridge between God and his people and the people with God, and did not empower them with methods

and skills to be creative and effective in forming the laity in their mission in society and finally, to be fulfilled in their parish ministry.

Most formators did not view being a formator as a calling but a fulfilment of a duty. The Church must reconsider implementing a process whereby priests who have a calling to form future priests can enlist themselves. Then a process of discernment and formation should be carried out and those who are ready should be incorporated into the community of resident formators of whom most of them should concentrate on human and spiritual formation. This will instil spirituality rooted in the relationship with God and personalities that are a bridge between God and his people and people with God establishing a specific identity for diocesan priests. This will also form ministerial priesthood as discipleship and lead them to shepherd and servant leadership. A response to a calling will have formators committed to the mission of the Church and their ministry, always discerning the will of God in time and context and situating formation to form leadership that is focused on bringing deep change in parish ministry by who they are, whom they represent, and focus more on laity formation.

6.3 Formation for empowerment for a calling and mission

In general, the Church should rethink priestly formation by owning the universal documents, contextualise them within the multicultural South African context, discard the recruitment method of getting young men at an early age to join the priesthood, and formulate *Ratio Nationalis* that will direct the whole process of priestly formation.

The four pillars of formation should be contextualised, and the focus be more on pastoral formation than on intellectual formation which is not applicable on parish level. The scholarly writings of African and South African theologians who are concerned with the present issues in South Africa and Africa should form the background in the formulation of the four pillars with the additional of emotional intelligence in human formation. African Traditional Religion (ATR) should form part of intellectual formation to provide candidates with in-depth knowledge of the background where Africans who are the majority in Church come from. The formation of the laity will have to address issues that control their full response to following Christ.

The Church should do self-examination on her self-understanding and how best she can fulfil her mission in society through deep change in faith formation of the laity. Deep change in

society is possible through the laity living out the twofold mission of the Church but they need formation that forms them to be missionary disciples in their own families, neighbourhood, workplace, and to influence policy and transform societal structures that are oppressive to them or others. Love of God and love of neighbour should be the identity of all the baptised, laity as well as the leadership, which should be the attribute of missionary discipleship with mature faith.

Rethinking priestly formation should lead to rethinking laity faith formation and to achieve these the Church should own and translate universal documents using the wisdom embedded in the multicultural South African society and shared indigenous knowledge. The objectives for formation should shift from acquiring knowledge to the understanding of a Christian calling, formation of personalities, change of attitudes, and instilling of a Christian identity that should be expressed through missionary discipleship.

Many documents and books on formation have been written already at Lumko Institute can be used and Lumko Institute should be reopened for the formation of diocesan catechetical coordinators, catechists, and priests. South African theologians should form part of trainers and formators to establish a process of deep change in the formation of the laity for missionary discipleship. Catechists, to be effective in their ministry, need to have the basics of theological education as the foundation of their ministry. Something has to start somewhere. More funds should be directed to laity formation rather than maintenance of structures and the hierarchy. The aim should be being doing mission through the laity for them to permeate society from the family unit upwards. After all, the laity are the source for ministerial priesthood, therefore laity missionary discipleship means healthy vocations to ministerial priesthood. At the same time, ministerial priesthood as discipleship means better leadership for deep change in laity formation.

The restoration of the family as the unique cell for the Church and society to hand over the faith and prepare children for their functions in society is irreplaceable. The Church should lead the process to establish family ministry to restore the dignity and responsibility of the family as co-creator with God. The spiritual family, the parish, should support the family in handing over the faith through the processes of RCIA. Ownership of Christianity by the family through handing over the faith to their children, will lead to Christianity becoming a culture forming from birth, instruments, carriers of Christ, his disciples.

The hierarchical patriarchal structure of leadership is outdated. The laity in general have no voice in the leadership of the Church but women are the majority in the Church in South Africa. They suffer and carry the burden of raising children on their own and support the Church needs, but they have no voice, no rights, and have no part in the decision making for the life that concerns them. In most cultures women are expected to be submissive to men and the Church in South Africa is highly patriarchal, supporting this oppressive culture.

The Church needs to consider women as co-responsible for leadership with capabilities to find new ways of being Church and fulfilling her mission, offering solutions for better life for all. Men are not picked from trees. Women should be respected for their role in bearing children, raising them, handing over the faith, culture, customs in societies, and for their contributions in the Church. They have the right to decision making which should form part of laity human formation to raise their dignity and empower them to have courage to voice their concerns and offer solutions. Jesus came to give salvation and liberation to all and made them all His disciples.

Laity faith formation should include the four pillars of formation, and the Social Teachings of the Church. Programmes such as Renew Africa, Education for Life, and people-centred development should be part of ongoing formation for the laity to empower them for their mission in society. Workshops, retreats, and conferences should not be reserved only for those in sodalities but should form the culture of the Church and be extended to all parishioners to mature in faith and Christian living. The laity are the best instruments of evangelisation and societal transformation when they have been formed accordingly.

Parish priests opined that there was no spiritual life at the seminary besides being asked to live a moral life. Spiritual exercises were misunderstood as punishment, therefore if faith formation of the laity is channelled to include the four pillars of formation, then seminarians will join ministerial priesthood, having a firm holistic foundation in all dimensions. Spiritual exercises should form part of spiritual formation of the laity, exercised in families and at the parish during workshops and parish retreats.

Intellectual formation was hailed by both parish priests and formators but found to be Eurocentric and impractical. The theological education priests received alienated them from themselves and their people. They were academics rather than servants of the gospel, which explains the inadequate formation laity received. These indicators need to be taken seriously,

even though the number of interviewees was limited to 17 participants who accepted the invitation to take part in this research.

There should be enough time allocated for parish administration and parish finances. Knowledge acquired should assist the parish priest to supervise the laity who form Parish Finance Committees (PFC). Laity chosen or appointed for these ministries should be professionals where possible and at the diocesan level, the Diocesan Finance Council should be professionals in accounting who should train PFCs in deanery to parish level.

Internships should be used to implement deep change in parish ministry and introduce shepherd and servant leadership that incorporate task competence, transaction, and transforming functions of leadership. This process will help the Church change from the banking system of education to learner-centred methods to form parish leadership that is creative and incorporates all parishioners. No one should be left as a spectator.

Formators were not particularly formed for priestly formation on the three pillars (human, spiritual, and pastoral) and this should be of concern for the Church to form ministerial priesthood according to the mind and heart of Christ. There should be a House of formation with full time formators who are not necessarily lecturers and whose concern should be ministerial priesthood formation, instilling a spirituality for missionary discipleship. These should be priests with a calling and with zeal for the mission of the Church like St Paul.

To have this kind of formators there should be conversion, a deep desire, transformation in the way the Church leadership understands who God is and his mission in the world, and who the Church is and her mission as an instrument of who chose and commissioned His disciples to go forth and make disciples. The leadership should make these recommendations their concern for the fulfilment of *missio Dei* and *missio Ecclesia*.

Setting out to create a practical theological educational curriculum that answers the South African realities calls for re-visiting of scripture from the South African perspective and develop a framework that will penetrate the family structures of all South Africans irrespective of race and culture. The South African situation needs reform to be conducive for love of God and love of neighbour in creating a peaceful progressive environment to live in by instilling the *botho* concept.

The Torah sets out basic concepts about creation, human worth, and human relationships that resonates with the African concept of *Botho*. The New Testament, on the other hand, demonstrates how the relationship with and love of God are made concrete and possible by love of neighbour. This understanding was expressed in *The Kairos Document* (1987:18–19) already 36 years ago. It needs to be revived and implemented in the new situation of democratic South Africa. The next session gives a summary and recommendations for participating in the mission of the Church as priests, kings, and prophets.

6.4 Participation in *missio Ecclesia*

In fulfilment of the demands of a calling, parishioners, priests, and formators should fulfil the three offices they share with Christ as priests, kings, and prophets in participating in the mission of the Church.

In the first office of being priests, parishioners on their part must be prayer warriors as individuals, as families, as SCCs, and as the Christian community in society bring the concerns of the society to God through prayer. In their everyday activities parishioners should be vigilant about what is going on around them and practice their priestly office by offering prayers to God for the sufferings, struggles, joys, and hopes of society. In other words, parishioners should always offer prayers to God for the needs of people round them. They should offer words of consolation, encouragement, and blessings, depending on the situation of those in need. They should faithfully keep an intimate relationship with God, love, and service of their neighbour through prayer. They must become active contemplatives in a society that has declared itself neutral to religion.

Parish priests should help parishioners to be always vigilant and faithful in fulfilling this ministry through workshops on how to faithfully remain in prayer amid their daily life activities. This should become the core of family ministry: creating an atmosphere of prayer in the home and an opportunity for children to be in communion with God and mature in their Christian faith for Christianity to become a culture. Prayer changes hearts and it is a necessary mission the laity should carry out for the South African society today to curb the evil in society.

Following in the footsteps of the King of the universe who humbled himself and took upon himself the human likeness, parishioners should perform works of mercy in humble service for their brothers and sisters in practice of the office as kings. They should actively involve

themselves in society by cultivating small gardens, taking care of their immediate environment by keeping it clean, and take care of the sick, orphans, youth, and the aged. All the baptised are called to serve, therefore, to rule and to lead others to do good. They should be an example of what leadership entails by committing themselves to works of mercy, reconciliation, and peace. They should point to politicians, economists, and the whole society what it means to be a leader and become prophetic in their actions.

As prophets, parishioners should exercise this office by being exemplary in everything they do in family life, at work, and in all their activities in the entire society. Their actions, attitude, and behaviour should provoke and raise questions from those who see them. The parish priest should make sure that parishioners understand this office well and help them to be more prophetic by their way of life than by their words.

Through the family and SCCs as ecumenical cells parishioners should from the grassroots witness unity amongst Christians by praying, sharing the Word of God together, doing works of mercy, and have a changed attitude towards life together as believers. By practicing these three functions parishioners will be evangelising and involving themselves in society in different ways, making God present in all situations of society.

Priests, in turn, should renew their baptismal offices and deepen them in their ministry. They should incorporate what is explained above for parishioners even in a more intensive way. In practicing their priestly office priests should be more aware of what is going on in the parish and society and in prayer take it all to the Lord. As spiritual leaders they should faithfully keep in communion with God through prayer, meditation, and the celebration of the Eucharist. They should be a walking presence of God amongst his people. A praying priest will be a role model of what his parishioners should be and should invite parishioners for prayer, adoration, and benediction, which are the forgotten practices of the Church, to strengthen their prayer life.

As kings, parish priests should live beyond their clericalism and hierarchical positions and walk the dusty streets to serve their local parishioners in humility and dedication in visiting their homes, hospitals, commute taxis together, and visit them in places of work. Humble service as servant leaders should include listening and feeling the concerns of people by visiting families and SCCs. They should attend meetings in society as members and citizens and contribute to societal decision by discernment and wise judgment that will lead him to interpret the situation and guide the decision making for transformation instilling gospel values without preaching

and imposing. The parish priest as a king and spiritual leader should exercise the spirituality of thoughtfulness, theoretical interpretation, and wise judgement.

As prophets, priests should be role models of Christian life. They should pray what they believe, teach what they believe, and live what they teach, and become the message they preach. Their prophetic lives should touch whomever they meet and leave people asking themselves questions and lead them to change their lives without them saying a word. What they believe, teach, and celebrate should make them role models of Christian calling. The society needs role models of Christian living on the level of the laity and that of the leadership.

Formators should follow the same procedures as parish priests and create an atmosphere of prayer at the seminary. As formators of future priests they should incorporate it within their ministry, providing the Church with praying community leaders. Prayer should not become a routine but a way of life that brings joy and sustains their ministries. They should live an exemplary life of being a priest, king, and prophet and their lives should represent the praying, serving, and humble Jesus. Simplicity and humility should be the characteristics of their lives.

It should be from who they are as priests, kings, and prophets that they form seminarians in human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation. Their lives should challenge those who see them, talk with them, and dine with them. For this to come to its fruition formators should recognise and accept being called from amongst other priests to form and teach missionary disciples by being what they teach. The three functions received at baptism restore humanity back to who they were when God created them in His own image and what they should be in preparation to eternal life with God. They are offices of those living already in the Kingdom.

Participation in the mission of the Church calls each person to live out these functions or offices as People of God in communion with the Holy Spirit. Evangelisation and social involvement require a personal relationship with God and to be incorporated into his mission. Evangelisation and societal involvement should always be aligned to these functions the way Jesus lived them in his life, that is, in humility emphasising being salt, light, and leaven.

Society should read the gospel, not from the Bible, but from who we are and in our lives as Christians. Non-Christians should envy us and so feel called and drawn to follow Christ. Christianity is a religion to be lived and celebrated as culture in anticipation of the coming of the Kingdom of God. Jesus fulfilled His mission and ministry by practicing these three offices,

therefore all his followers should live their lives in following the Master. Parishioners, parish priests, and formators participating in this research longed to be what they are called to be and to be fulfilled as Jesus' disciples.

Rethinking priestly formation should enable priests to be relevant servant leaders who desire to bring deep change by fulfilling their calling by exercising their offices as priests, kings, and prophets effectively by forming parishioners for them to carry out these functions effectively in society. For parish priest to do so the four dimensions of formation should be contextualised to prepare and empower them to do their parish ministry effectively.

Formators, in turn, should be priests who have a calling to form future priests. *Ratio Nationalis* should give them new direction on how to form future priests who can bring about deep change in the structures and mission of the Church. Priests who should motivate new presence through the laity fulfilling the mission of the Church effectively in society. The Church as the People of God is called to be priest, king, and prophet at all times and in all ages through all the baptised.

6.5 Summary of the research question

The four tasks of practical theological interpretation and their relevant questions were applied in this study to achieve the critical practical theological analysis and fulfil the objectives and answer the research question. This section indicates how the objectives were achieved.

The main research question was: To what extent is the formation of priests at St John Vianney Seminary equipping the priests to empower the laity for their role in the mission of the Roman Catholic Church in the democratic South African context? This was achieved by following Osmer's four tasks of Practical Theological Interpretation approach. Chapters were arranged accordingly to answer, What is going on? Why is this going on? What ought to be going on? and How might the Church respond in rethinking priestly formation at St John Vianney Seminary? Questions were answered in respect of the following four objectives.

The first objective was to analyse the views of the parishioners, priests, and formators on priestly formation and its impact on the mission of the Roman Catholic Church. This objective was achieved through empirical research, where data were collected through observation and interviews of participants, as well as by reviewing Church and scholarly literature. Data were

analysed through inductive data analysis and manifest and latent content analysis. The recommendation here is that the Roman Catholic Church should conduct further research to establish the needs of the laity for missionary discipleship and align catechesis for holistic formation to achieve the desired outcome.

The second objective was to explain why the parishioners, priests, and formators viewed the impact of priestly formation and the mission of the Roman Catholic Church in the manner they stated. This objective was achieved by engaging various theories. Data were interpreted from participants' views using theories from the social sciences related to education and formation while the social impact was studied to give an appropriate interpretation of the context. In this regard the Church should learn from social sciences theories on how to engage with the laity in their own context as both members of the Church and society and be prophetic in her mission.

The third objective was to delineate the theology of priestly formation to understand its essence and nature in the formation of priests, and its intended goal. This objective was achieved by presenting the theology of formation, its purpose, and its nature, and engaging theological and ethical interpretations to strive for good practice. The Church in South Africa should move towards owning the universal documents and develop Afrocentric theology in preparing servant leadership that answers their calling by engaging with the laity in co-responsibility in fulfilment of *missio Ecclesia* in South Africa.

The last objective of this study was to propose which actions the Church might apply to facilitate change in priestly formation at St John Vianney Seminary by forming leadership that can bring about deep change in the Church to benefit the laity and their role in the mission of the Church in society. This objective was achieved by providing suggestions based on the views of participants on how the Church might respond to the challenges faced by her members in her different structures and their position in the Church.

The fulfilment of these objectives shows the need for rethinking priestly formation of St John Vianney Seminary to situate it in the multicultural democratic South African context and empower priests for the mission of the Church and their ministry of forming and empowering the laity for their mission in society.

Priestly formation offered at St John Vianney Seminary is based on the four pillars of formation which, according to participants, did not achieve their objectives to offer a holistic unified

formation to priests to form their personality as a bridge between God and His people and the people with God and empower them to be creative, effective, and zealous in their ministry and mission of the Church. The four pillars need to be owned and aligned with the multicultural context of South Africa through the formulation of *Ratio Nationalis* to be relevant to priestly candidates of the twenty-first century.

Human formation, for example, must promote *shalom* relationship between all South African races and cultures. Spiritual formation should facilitate spiritual transformation of all the baptised in their relationship with God and to engage in evangelisation and social transformation. Intellectual formation needs to promote philosophical and theological knowledge about the candidates' own context, their calling, and their internal and external mission. Pastoral formation must strive to integrate human, spiritual, and intellectual formation to provide the necessary skills for pastoral ministry and counselling to allow parish priests to build South African's human dignity and inculcate the love of God and neighbour. These four pillars need to be integrated by applying the wisdom and indigenous multicultural knowledge in parish ministry.

The curriculum of St John Vianney Seminary needs to promote critical integrated formation and be more Afrocentric than Eurocentric and include the Social Teachings of the Church to meet the challenges of faith and social involvement of all South Africans in the mission of God. Teaching methods need to be student-centred not only in documents (General Prospectus) to adhere to the higher education policy of the Department of Higher Education, but it must be realised in practical implementation in the life and mission of the Church and contribute to problem-solving skills rather than mere reproduction of received knowledge and perpetuation of old parish systems of parish administration and faith formation. The banking method of teaching and stress on adherence to the mind of the Church do not allow for resourcefulness and originality in the African context.

The mission of the Church is two folded, namely evangelisation, and societal involvement. Priests, through laity faith formation, must strive to form priests, kings, and prophets, as disciples of Christ, and through responsible involvement in society, must mobilise parishioners to be ambassadors of the love of God, embody the gospel, strive towards being activists of the gospel, and change from a welfare approach to people-centred development to confront the social ills and injustices.

All the baptised must be formed on how to involve themselves in politics, and how to change from being silent passive citizens to critical engagement with the state. They must be taught about Christian calling and their rights, duties, and responsibilities as Christians. Knowledge of what a calling is, who calls, and the mandate thereof is to facilitate anchoring of faith in the Trinitarian God, forming a personal relationship with him, and strengthen participation in his mission in the South African context.

6.6 Conclusion

Poor priestly formation that does not form priests able to form the laity at parish level means a poor hierarchical leadership structure of the Church.

Rethinking priestly formation is the main research question: To what extent is the formation of priests at St John Vianney Seminary equipping the priests to empower the laity for their role in the mission of the Roman Catholic Church in the democratic South African context? To answer this question three categories of members of the RCC were interviewed, that is, parishioners, parish priests, and formators as participants in the formation of priests in their different levels in the life of the Church.

Parishioners formed the first category of participants since they form the cradle, the basis, the source for priestly vocations, and at the same time, they are the recipients of priestly ministry. Their views revealed lack knowledge of their Christian calling and faith formation in the twofold mission of the Church, preventing them to participate fully and effectively in the internal and external ministries. This reality confirms the need for rethinking priestly formation that will empower priests to be skilful and practical in fulfilling their ministry towards the laity.

Parish priests formed the second category and are the recipients of priestly formation. Their views revealed that the four pillars of formation were not situated to the multicultural South African context therefore made them unable to be practical, creative, and effective in their ministry. They found formation for priests Eurocentric and advocated for the inclusion of African theology and African Traditional Religions that will give them the understanding of their context and where parishioners come from. Counselling has to be intensified to help them deal with individual problems parishioners encounter in parishes. As recipients of formation of priests, parish priests confirmed the urgency of rethinking formation for priests that will form

future priests into shepherds and servant leaders able to bring about deep change in the Church and society.

Formators formed the third category of participants as instruments of teaching and forming ministerial priesthood as the spiritual leadership for the mission of the Church. Their views agreed with those of parishioners and parish priests that priestly formation is wanting and needs to be situated to bear fruits. As formators they were not properly prepared for this ministry of forming future priests and in most cases used their own experiences. There was no *Ratio Nationalis* nor specialised formator to direct and situate them in their ministry. This is a concern if the Church in South Africa is committed in carrying out *missio Dei*, The Church needs to take steps in rethinking formation for priests in all areas mentioned in this research and institute formation for priests that is Afrocentric with formators who have a calling for this ministry and were given appropriate formation to fulfil their ministry with precision.

For the success of the whole endeavour there is a need to break away from the traditional hierarchical structure and clericalism that harnesses and prevents the South African priests from living their calling, empowering their own people in the Christian faith, and participating fully in the mission of God as missionary disciples. The laity are still formed for the reception of the sacraments and mobilised to serve the internal ministries of the parish with minimum formation and no theological educational background to perform these ministries.

Radical change in the mission of the Church needs relevant leadership in the democratic South Africa, leaders who are willing to facilitate quality relationships between the parish priests and parishioners to achieve the mission of a spiritual family, the parish, amongst other families in their different shades (Francis I 2013:#28, Pali 2019:265). There is a “need to develop a new congregational culture, in which the church becomes the church by living as the community of the all-encompassing reign of God” implementing and fostering communion at all levels (Senokoane & Kritzinger 2007:1699, Francis I 2021). All are called to be disciples, all are baptised, all have the right to know and receive appropriate formation, all are invited to participate in the mission of God by virtue of their baptism, and all are sent.

Impenetrable government structures that have become oppressive to South Africans can be penetrated and transformed by the theological institutions training and forming pastors in doing ministries through the laity who are co-responsible for *missio Dei* and *missio Ecclesia*. Rethinking priestly formation, therefore, is rethinking leadership that can bring deep change in

the life and mission of the Church through the laity in the multicultural democratic South African context.

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APPENDIX A

Ethical clearance



10-Oct-2018

Dear Miss Puseletso Mokone

Ethics Clearance: **Rethinking the priestly formation of St John Vianney Seminary: A critical practical theological analysis**

Principal Investigator: **Miss Puseletso Mokone**

Department: **Theology and Religion Faculty (Bloemfontein Campus)**

APPLICATION APPROVED

With reference to your application for ethical clearance with the Faculty of Theology. I am pleased to inform you on behalf of the Ethics Board of the faculty that you have been granted ethical clearance for your research.

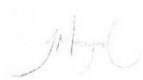
Your ethical clearance number, to be used in all correspondence is: **UFS-HSD2018/0870**

This ethical clearance number is valid for research conducted for two years from issuance. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension.

We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure we are kept up to date with your progress and any ethical implications that may arise.

Thank you for submitting this proposal for ethical clearance and we wish you every success with your research.

Yours faithfully


Dr. Juanita Meyer
Chairperson: Ethics Committee

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APPENDIX B

Informed consent form

Informed consent form from participants

I have read and understand the information on the form and I consent to volunteer to be a participant in this research study. I understand that my responses are completely confidential and that I have the right to withdraw at any time.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX C

Questionnaires

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE LAITY

1. How do you understand your calling as a parishioner?
2. Do you think the training and formation you received from your parish/priest has adequately empowered you for your calling as a Christian? (Yes/No? – Please explain your answer.)
3. The Roman Catholic Church in the priest training and formation focuses on four (4) main areas of priestly formation – human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral.
 - 3.1. Were you adequately empowered in these four areas as a lay Catholic?
 - 3.1.1. Human formation? (Yes/No? – Please explain?)
 - 3.1.2. Spiritual formation? (Yes/No? – Please explain?)
 - 3.1.3. Intellectual formation? (Yes/No? – Please explain?)
 - 3.1.4. Pastoral formation? (Yes/No? – Please explain?)
 - 3.2. Have all these formations you received empowered you to participate efficiently and effectively in the Church environment and society?
4. What is your conceptual understanding of God and His mission?
5. What is your conceptual understanding of the Church and her mission?
6. What kind of community projects are you involved with as individual and as a local church?
7. What kind of feedback do you receive about your ministry from your parish priest?
8. What kind of feedback to you give to your parish priest about their ministry and mission in society?

9. What should be considered for change in the priestly training and formation to empower the priests to be efficient and effective in their ministry to empower the laity?
10. What is your personal view on Church and state?

Thank you for taking part in this research.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARISH PRIESTS

11. How do you understand your calling as a priest?
12. Do you think the training and formation you received has adequately empowered you for your calling as a Catholic priest in the multicultural democratic South Africa? (Yes/No? – Please explain your answer.)
13. The Roman Catholic Church in the priest training and formation focuses on four (4) main areas of priestly formation – human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral.
 - 13.1. Were you adequately empowered in these four areas:
 - 13.1.1. Human formation? (Yes/No? – Please explain?)
 - 13.1.2. Spiritual formation? (Yes/No? – Please explain?)
 - 13.1.3. Intellectual formation? (Yes/No? – Please explain?)
 - 13.1.4. Pastoral formation? (Yes/No? – Please explain?)
 - 13.2. If so, how has each of these areas empowered you to contribute to the training and formation of priest candidates and the ministry of the Church?
14. Is priestly training and formation you received, relevant, practical, and appropriate for you as a South African priest?
15. What is your conceptual understanding of God and His mission?
16. What is your conceptual understanding of the Church and her mission?
17. To what an extent is your ministry impacting on the community as local, national and international?
18. What kind of community projects are you involved in as a parish community?
19. What kind of empowerment do you offer to your parishioners to be leaven in the society?

9.1. What kind of feedback do you receive about your ministry from your parishioners?

9.2. What kind of feedback do you give to your parishioners?

10. What should be considered for change in the priestly training and formation you received to make future priests efficient, effective, and relevant for the transformation of society?

11. What is your personal view on Church and state?

Thank you for taking part in this research.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FORMATORS OF FUTURE
PRIESTS

20. How do you understand your calling as a priest formator?
21. Do you think the training and formation you received has adequately empowered you for your calling as a Catholic priest formator in the multicultural democratic South Africa? (Yes/No? – Please explain your answer.)
22. The Roman Catholic Church in the priest training and formation focuses on four (4) main areas of priestly formation – human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral.
- 22.1. Were you adequately empowered in these four areas: Let us start with:
- 22.1.1. Human formation? (Yes/No? – Please explain?)
- 22.1.2. Spiritual formation? (Yes/No? – Please explain?)
- 22.1.3. Intellectual formation? (Yes/No? – Please explain?)
- 22.1.4. Pastoral formation? (Yes/No? – Please explain?)
- 22.2. If so, how has each of these areas empowered you to contribute to the training and formation of priest candidates and the mission of the Church?
23. Is priestly training and formation you received, relevant, practical, and appropriate for you as a South African formator?
24. What is your conceptual understanding of God and His mission?
25. What is your conceptual understanding of the Church and her mission?
26. To what an extent is your ministry impacting on the community as local, national, and international?
27. What kind of community projects are you involved in as a local institute of formation?
28. What kind of empowerment do you offer to your priest candidates' to be leaven in the society?

9.1. What kind of feedback do you receive about your ministry from your past priest candidates?

9.2. What kind of feedback do you give to your past priest candidates about their ministry in society?

10. What should be considered for change in the priestly training and formation you offer to make priests efficient, effective, and relevant for the transformation of society?

11. What is your personal view on Church and state?

Thank you for taking part in this research.