

2. SKILLS FOR CELIBATE LIVING – Br. John Mark Falkenhain, O.S.B.

Formation staff must be able to foster and evaluate a candidate's

skills for celibate living. *The Program for Priestly Formation, Fifth Edition* (2006) provides a helpful list of skills to be fostered among candidates, and these include:

1. appropriate self-disclosure (openness, ability to trust);
2. capacity for self-reflection (reflectiveness);
3. capacity for solitude;
4. ability to hold all persons in the mystery of God (respect);
5. vigilance and mastery over one's impulses (self control);
6. capacity for peer relationships;
7. effective boundary setting;
8. care for others;
9. commitment to mastering sexual temptations;
10. capacity for giving and receiving love.

Carolyn Saarni (2000) articulates a set of **eight skills associated with emotional competence** that may serve nicely as benchmarks for assessing and fostering affective maturity. They include:

1. awareness of one's emotional state;
2. skill in discerning others' emotions;
3. skill in naming emotions;
4. capacity for sympathy and empathy;

5. skill in adaptively coping with unpleasant emotions;
6. awareness of the relationship between the type/quality of relationship and the immediacy and genuineness of emotional display (i.e. boundaries);
7. capacity for emotional self-efficacy.

While it would be impossible to list all the skills helpful to a life of celibate chastity, a few others come to mind as particularly important:

1. a healthy and regular prayer life;
2. insight into the effects of one's emotions on behavior;
3. capacity for vulnerability in relationships;
4. impulse control;
5. ability to delay gratification;
6. capacity to deal with loneliness;
7. social problem-solving skills;
8. the ability to rely on close relationships for support and personal accountability.

The work of fostering skills for celibacy happens across a variety of settings, e.g. lectures, readings and workshops.