

## Guidelines for Reference Letters

### For lay applicants applying to the M.Div., B.Th. and Dip.Th. programs

Reference letters are to be supplied by someone who knows the applicant well and is able to judge their character and intellectual ability as well as aptitude for ministry. It is helpful if the referee has worked with the applicant in pastoral ministry but should NOT be their Spiritual Advisor. Referees are asked to state how long they have known the applicant, the amount of time they have spent with them and the nature of their relationship to the applicant.

Reference letters are to provide information that will assist the Admissions and Evaluation Committee in determining the applicants' suitability for professional pastoral ministry and will assist the lay formation team in preparing the applicant for pastoral ministry. Referees are asked to comment only on areas in which they believe they have a solid knowledge of the applicant. Referees are asked to comment in their letter in the following three areas.

1. Does the applicant have experience in either paid or volunteer pastoral ministry? Do you know, either from the applicant or from other sources, how successful these experiences have been? Can you assess the applicant's interest in and/or commitment to pastoral ministry? Are there many areas that stand out as special strengths or weakness of the applicant in relation to pastoral ministry?
2. Can you make any judgment about the applicant's understanding of his or her own motivations, strengths and weaknesses? Is the applicant willing to receive feedback about his or her performance? Does he or she attempt to address areas of concern that have been identified?
3. Does the applicant display solid practical judgment (prudence)? Can you think of particular instances or areas that illustrate your assessment of the applicant in this regard?

Beside these crucial areas, the following have been identified as desirable qualities that will be fostered by the program of human and spiritual formation for lay candidates in the M.Div. and B.Th. programs at Newman Theological College. If you feel able to comment on the applicant in any of these areas, please include those comments in your letters of reference. (Please refer to the following page.)



### **Human Maturity**

- Ability to deal with stress
- Willingness to accept criticism
- Capacity for friendship, empathy, sympathy
- Ability to work harmoniously and effectively with others
- Generosity with time and talents
- Industry, willingness to put forth effort
- Courage and perseverance in difficulties
- Sensitivity
- Habit of meeting deadlines
- Capacity for leadership
- Ability to deal with 'family of origin issues'
- Attempts to live a healthy lifestyle that includes exercise, health eating, rest, and recreation.
- Ability to balance family life with work, volunteer and recreational activities

### **Spiritual, Contemplative, Liturgical Formation**

- Active life of prayer
- A reflective attitude, understand things from a faith perspective
- Active participation in liturgy
- Equanimity and reliance in God
- Perseverance through difficulties
- Spirit of gratitude
- Sensitivity to a broad range of social issues
- Active participation in organizations that seek the common good
- Respect for others
- Lack of prejudice
- Pastoral attentiveness to others
- Willingness to serve and to let the needs of others influence one's behaviour