

RESPONSIBLE AUTO- FORMATION AT THE WAKE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

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Abstract

The dawn of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has its impacts on every area of human society, including seminary formation. These impacts demand a renewed and deeper commitment from all agents involved in seminary formation, especially the formandi, that is, the one undergoing formation. Central to the formation program is the formandi who is charged not only with his personal growth in spiritual, human, intellectual, and pastoral aspects of formation, but also with embracing the reality, complexities and potentials of AI. This paper employs conceptual analysis to break down intricate concepts such as responsibility and adaptation, as related to formation and AI, in order to enhance our interrogation of the value of AI in seminary formation in the 21st century. Consequently, the paper argued that it is essential to redefine the position of the formandi from a consequentialist perspective, highlighting the need for the formandi to be both epistemically and ethically predisposed to his responsibilities in the engagement with AI. Epistemic responsibility involves having the knowledge crucial for the formandi to interact

with AI effectively, while avoiding its potential negative impact on his formation for the Catholic priesthood. Moral responsibility on the other hand, predisposes him to accept the consequences of his interactions with AI. Thus, building on the idea of auto-formation, the model of responsible auto-formation highlights the need to be aptly aware of the unique challenges instantiated by this new technological advancement, ensuring it is used as an effective instrument to aid seminary formation.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Consequentialist, *Formandi*, Responsible Auto-Formation

Introduction

The way we learn, develop, and shape our identities is changing dramatically in a time when artificial intelligence (AI) is a revolutionary reality rather than a far-off prospect. The difficulties we face as AI technologies transform knowledge, communication, and decision-making are not only to adapt, but also to properly mould ourselves in the light of this new reality. This is particularly so for seminarians in formation for the catholic priesthood, who are expected to embrace responsibly. This heightens the demand of auto-formation that already calls for the *formandi* (a Latin term commonly used in seminary and religious formation circle. It simply means: “those who are being formed.” It refers to candidates undergoing spiritual, pastoral, academic, and human formation in preparation for priesthood or religious life.) to be deliberate about self-directed development of his intellect, character and spirituality.

The arrival of AI necessitates seminarians to critically interact with this performing technology, watchful defence of moral agency whose acceptance has become inevitable. Appropriate auto-formation is more

than just personal growth for individuals training for ministry; it is a moral and spiritual requirement. This paper examines how *Formandi* can handle the deluge of information produced by AI without losing their ability to make vital decisions is the key question. How can they include the use of AI tools without compromising the integrity of their line of work? This conversation is crucial for developing leaders who are not only intellectual and spiritually capable but also responsible, leaders who can lead communities with compassion and wisdom in an increasingly digital environment, as the lines between human cognition and machine intelligence become increasingly hazy.

Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence refers to computer systems designed to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence. These tasks include learning, reasoning, problem-solving, language understanding, visual perception, and decision-making. These help computers figure out patterns in data, learn new things, and complete certain jobs on their own.¹ Although AI systems can simulate elements of cognition, they do not possess consciousness, moral will, critical distinctions or spiritual capacity when integrating technology into seminary formation or pastoral ministry.² Within the ecclesial and educational spheres, AI increasingly informs administrative efficiency, research practices, content generation, and personalized learning environments. And as such, the Church has recognized AI's transformative potential while also warning against ethical risks such as depersonalization, epistemological manipulation, and diminished human agency. Thus, responsible engagement with AI must maintain a human-centred, morally discerning posture sensitive to the dignity of the human person.³

Seminary Formation

Seminary formation is a holistic, ecclesiastically guided, and anthropologically grounded process through which candidates (*formandi*) are prepared for ordained ministry or religious life. Rooted in the theological vision articulated in *Pastores Dabo Vobis* and further developed in the *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*, formation is understood as a dynamic and integral journey encompassing four interrelated dimensions: human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation. These dimensions do not operate as isolated components but as a unified pathway designed to shape the seminarian into a mature, responsible, and mission-ready disciple capable of representing Christ and serving the People of God.⁴ These aspects of formation are:

- 1. Human Formation:** Human formation serves as the foundational dimension upon which all others are built. It seeks to cultivate emotional maturity, relational capacity, self-discipline, affective maturity, integrity, and psychological stability, qualities essential for pastoral charity and leadership. According to the *Ratio Fundamentalis*, the human person is the “*habitus*” of the priesthood; therefore, *formandi* must develop virtues such as honesty, empathy, responsibility, and freedom. Human formation also includes growth in self-knowledge, communication skills, and interpersonal maturity to ensure that candidates can relate authentically and compassionately within diverse pastoral contexts.⁵
- 2. Spiritual Formation:** Spiritual formation aims at deepening the seminarian’s relationship with Christ through prayer, sacramental life, meditation, spiritual direction, and fidelity to personal and communal disciplines. The goal is the formation of a heart

configured to Christ the Good Shepherd. Spiritual formation cultivates interiority, discernment, humility, pastoral charity, and a stable rhythm of prayer that sustains the vocation. In *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, John Paul II emphasizes that without spiritual maturity, all other aspects of formation risk becoming hollow or merely technical. Thus, seminarians are formed to grow in holiness, docility to the Spirit, and a life of service marked by grace.⁶

3. **Intellectual Formation:** Intellectual formation equips the *formandi* with theological, philosophical, and pastoral knowledge necessary for preaching, teaching, evangelization, and the defence of the faith. It includes rigorous study, critical thinking, research skills, and openness to the Church's intellectual tradition. *Ratio Fundamentalis* highlights that intellectual formation must be both faithful to the Magisterium and dialogical with contemporary culture, equipping future ministers to articulate the faith in ways meaningful to modern society. Intellectual formation also aims to foster intellectual virtues such as diligence, accuracy, epistemic humility, and truth-seeking.
4. **Pastoral Formation:** Pastoral formation integrates the previous three dimensions into concrete ministry through supervised apostolic work, pastoral practice, leadership development, and practical experience in parishes or ecclesial settings. Seminarians learn pastoral charity, evangelization, catechesis, liturgical leadership, and the art of accompaniment. This dimension ensures that the theoretical and spiritual aspects of formation converge in the service of real people with real needs. The goal is to form priests who are "shepherds after the heart of Christ," capable of

discerning, listening, and responding compassionately to the faithful.

Epistemic Responsibility

Epistemic responsibility is about being accountable for one's beliefs and having a reason for holding such beliefs. It means having a moral obligation to search for evidence, examine assumptions, and ensure epistemic beliefs are grounded in truth. Epistemic responsibility, a relatively recent lexicon, has gained an appreciable interest in epistemology, business ethics, sociology, education, behavioural science and organization studies. In different ways, scholars in these fields of human endeavour emphasize the importance of epistemic responsibility. In philosophy, epistemic responsibility is designated as the obligation to "know well".⁷ The obligation defines epistemic responsibility as a knower's commitment to form or hold beliefs and knowledge claims based on good evidence and sound reasoning. Erwan Lamy points out that 'epistemic responsibility' as discussed by epistemologists pertains to the formation of beliefs from a first-person perspective.⁸ This underscores that the end product of epistemic responsibility is the knower's attaining and retaining beliefs in the best way possible. This is also evident in Ali Intezari and David Pauleen's definition of "epistemic responsibility or epistemic consciousness as one's desire to find the truth while avoiding errors".⁹ Chun Wei Choo defines epistemic responsibility as "the commitment to have done all that should be done in order to bring about the acquisition of true beliefs".¹⁰ This implies that a knower has the impetus to consciously prioritize the truth of his beliefs and ensure that he filters out all taint of possibility of falsehood or error, so that his justification does become the evidence for the truth of his knowledge claim. This is an obligation of an agent's

subjecting his epistemological activities to critical evaluation, and ascertaining that his knowledge claims are products of sound intellectual and ethical virtues. The ethical and intellectual obligations aid a knower to acquire and maintain reasonable grounds in the process of belief formation and holding those beliefs. This description underscores an agent's obligation to conduct his epistemic activities thoroughly and employ the necessary intellectual and cognitive abilities to arrive at a credible claim to knowledge. Inferably, knowing is a creative process that is guided by the principle of epistemic responsibility.

Given the above concerns, epistemic responsibility can be viewed as the moral and intellectual accountability people have in pursuing, sustaining, and applying knowledge. It entails being responsible for one's beliefs, the methods through which they are established, and the implications of having those beliefs. Being responsible for our beliefs and knowledge also extends to behaving in a manner that promotes accuracy and understanding. It follows from this that failure to uphold epistemic obligations or responsibilities can lead to formation of false beliefs or beliefs that are incoherent to truth, thereby leading to spreading misinformation, entrenching damaging beliefs, and undermining collective knowledge and group decision.¹¹ This is succinctly captured in Boyd Millar's contention that:

For an individual to be epistemically responsible means that the individual deserves epistemic praise or blame for a belief. According to standard view, whether an individual deserves epistemic praise or blame for some belief is determined by the individual's epistemic obligations: in order to be epistemically blameworthy for forming or maintaining some

belief, an individual must violate some epistemic obligation by (or in the process of) forming or maintaining that belief: and in order to be epistemically praiseworthy for forming or maintaining some belief, an individual must fulfil her epistemic obligations by forming and maintaining that belief.¹²

The above establishes that epistemic responsibility in epistemology deals with the intellectual and moral obligations of epistemic agents as knowers, believers, and knowledge transferers. It encompasses the obligations to seek truth, avoid or reduce the possibility of error to the most insignificant level that such does not affect the truth of the belief, and such beliefs are justified by means of trustworthy evidence and sound reason. This establishes that epistemic responsibility is based on virtue epistemology, where intellectual virtues such as honesty, open-mindedness, and diligence are pivotal in the pursuit of knowledge.¹³ Epistemic responsibility, therefore, is a practice or set of habits of the mind and the cultivation of basic epistemic virtues, such as open-mindedness, epistemic humility, and diligence, that enable knowers to seek information about themselves, others, and the world around them. To further put this in perspective, Jose Medina explains that open-mindedness is the process of seeking and considering views that are not like one's own. Epistemic humility is the practice of engaging in the right sort of self-reflection so that one pays attention to "one's cognitive limitations and deficits."¹⁴ Epistemic diligence involves responding to "epistemic challenges" such as questions about the effectiveness of previous knowledge and demands for self-criticism or further proof.¹⁵ Simply put, epistemic responsibility refers to the moral responsibility people have when it comes to gathering,

assessing, defending, and sharing knowledge. In the digital age, this idea, which has its roots in philosophy, education, and theology has grown in significance. Thus, epistemic responsibility is using one's cognitive abilities with caution, honesty, and criticality while avoiding carelessness, prejudice, and intellectual sloth. Linda Zagzebski and Roderick Chisholm stress the importance of intellectual virtues like justice, humility, and attentiveness for responsible knowing, while Alvin Plantinga notes that responsible knowledge acquisition necessitates the right use of cognitive abilities in suitable settings.¹⁶ So, within seminary formation, epistemic responsibility is vital because seminarians engage deeply with Scripture, doctrine, tradition, and pastoral knowledge. In this light, Bernard Lonergan pointed out the need for critical self-awareness and reasoned judgment.¹⁷ As such, seminarians must develop hermeneutical precision, doctrinal accuracy, intellectual honesty, and pastoral discernment.

In our time, without prejudice to its proposed advantages, the digital and artificial intelligence age poses new challenges to epistemic responsibility. This is because the proliferation of misinformation, algorithmic biases, and the rise of AI-generated content require individuals to be even more vigilant. For seminarians undergoing formation, the responsible use of AI tools for study, exegesis, and preaching demands critical evaluation, transparency, and awareness of limitations, integrating epistemic responsibility into responsible auto-formation.¹⁸

Moral Responsibility

This pertains to the accountability individuals bear for their actions, choices, and character. Rooted in classical philosophy, Aristotle teaches that moral responsibility arises from voluntary actions performed with rational deliberation and cultivated virtue. Immanuel Kant

emphasizes autonomy and duty, holding that individuals are accountable because they freely act according to moral law. Existentialist philosophers like Jean-Paul Sartre further argue that humans bear radical responsibility for shaping their own being through choices.¹⁹ Theologically, moral responsibility is grounded in the relationship with God, the Church, and community. Thomas Aquinas highlights that moral responsibility flows from reason and free will, while Augustine stresses human freedom as the basis of moral accountability. The role of conscience is emphasized by John Henry Newman, who calls it the “aboriginal Vicar of Christ,” and Pope John Paul II in *Veritatis Splendor* underscores that human dignity is expressed through morally responsible action aligned with truth. Furthermore, Karl Rahner’s theology stresses that moral responsibility involves lifelong self-formation through free decisions, making the moral life an ongoing project. Thus, Moral responsibility within seminary formation is a foundational dimension of preparing Seminarians, because the priest is not merely a functionary but a moral agent whose life must embody the Gospel he proclaims. Moral responsibility encompasses personal integrity, pastoral accountability, and sound ethical decision-making.²⁰

Moral Responsibility in Seminary Formation

In line with the discourse on the nature of moral responsibility, certain characteristics are essential in the building up of morally upright, intellectually sound, spiritually fortified and pastorally minded Seminarians. One of these is personal integrity. Personal integrity requires the formandi to cultivate interior coherence between belief, character, and conduct. This includes the virtues of honesty, chastity, humility, prudence, and justice, virtues consistently emphasized in *Pastores Dabo*

Vobi. This teaches that the moral life of the priest must be “a living reflection of the heart of Christ the Good Shepherd.” Without such integrity, ministers risk leading double lives that compromise both their vocation and the community’s well-being.²¹ Similar to personal integrity is pastoral accountability, which is the duty of candidates to use their authority responsibly and transparently. *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* stresses that seminarians must be trained to understand the weight of pastoral power, particularly in areas of spiritual guidance, sacramental ministry, and interpersonal relationships. Failures in pastoral accountability, often stemming from unchecked clericalism, inadequate supervision, or moral immaturity, can result in grave abuses of power.

In addition, Seminarians must acquire both theoretical and practical moral wisdom to navigate complex pastoral situations, especially in an age marked by technological, social, and cultural shifts. According to Keenan, moral theology today emphasizes the capacity to “discern the good in concrete situations” rather than merely applying rules.²² Formation, therefore, involves training in conscience formation, critical thinking, conflict resolution, and pastoral judgment. This equips future ministers to respond ethically to issues such as confidentiality, digital conduct, emotional boundaries, financial integrity, and stewardship of ecclesial resources.

The consequences of failing in moral responsibility are severe. History has shown that moral lapses in clergy can lead to scandal, abuse, loss of trust, and deep wounds within the Body of Christ. The sexual abuse crisis, for example, exposed the devastating effects of moral negligence and institutional failures.²³ Because the credibility of the Church’s mission is intimately tied to the credibility of its ministers, formation must address not only

academic and spiritual knowledge but also the emotional, moral, and relational maturity necessary for healthy ministry. For this reason, contemporary formation programs must emphasize virtue development, spiritual discipline, ethical maturity, and pastoral prudence. *Pastores Dabo Vobis* underscores that the priest must be a “man of communion,” capable of healthy human relationships and marked by mature virtues. The *Ratio Fundamentalis* further outlines the need for affective formation, ongoing psychological discernment, responsible digital behaviour, and continuous moral evaluation to ensure holistic growth. In this way, moral responsibility enables the *formandi* to minister authentically, safeguard the dignity of the people of God, and model a life worthy of the Gospel (Phil 1:27).

Artificial Intelligence and Seminary Formation

The rapid growth of artificial intelligence (AI) is profoundly changing education, communication, and the pastoral landscape. As ministers, priests, and pastors increasingly serve in a technologically mediated world, seminary education must address AI not merely as a technical instrument, but also as a reality with profound theological, epistemological, spiritual, and moral consequences. Algorithms shape modern culture by influencing what individuals read, believe, and desire, and digital systems discreetly construct imaginations and social interactions. AI-assisted tools are now involved in research, communication, translation, and pastoral administration; therefore, seminaries are obligated to explore how such technologies affect the training of Church leaders.²⁴ As Pope Francis emphasizes in *Laudato Si'* and *Laudate Deum*, emerging technologies must be evaluated critically in the light of human dignity, moral responsibility, and the common good.²⁵

AI interacts with and influences the pillars of formation highlighted in *Pastores Dabo Vobis* in ways that are both beneficial and problematic. For example, it provides useful instruments for intellectual formation, such as adaptive language systems for Biblical Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, digital theological databases, and research assistants capable of summarizing texts or finding major academic discussions. These advances can improve learning and academic performance, but they also necessitate the development of epistemic responsibility to avoid overreliance on automated technologies and the degradation of intellectual qualities. In the same vein, AI-driven applications can support personal growth through guided prayer aids, digital tools, or mental-health support systems. However, spiritual maturity grows primarily through embodied relationships, sacramental life, contemplative practice, and interior freedom realities that AI cannot replicate or replace. Thus, while AI may assist formation, it must not become a substitute for genuine spiritual accompaniment.

It must be noted that AI also introduces significant risks and theological challenges. One concern is the reduction of human agency, since machine-learning systems often operate with opaque internal logic, creating illusions of objectivity or certainty that mask human biases embedded in algorithms. This can undermine personal freedom and moral judgment, both essential to Christian anthropology and pastoral ministry. There are also concerns about authenticity in preaching and pastoral communication, especially when ministers might be tempted to rely on AI to generate sermons, prayers, or spiritual counsel. Ministry requires the personal engagement of the pastor's heart, mind, and prayer, something that cannot be delegated to machines.

Formation in the age of AI must, therefore, include ethical and epistemic literacy. Seminarians need to understand how AI works, what its limitations are, and how to evaluate its epistemic reliability. They must also develop digital pastoral competencies in areas such as responsible communication, online evangelization, media literacy, and data ethics. Additionally, formation must emphasize the cultivation of intellectual and moral virtues, such as prudence, humility, attentiveness, wisdom, and discernment, which equip future ministers to use AI in ways consistent with Christian ethics.²⁶

Epistemic and Ethical Responsibilities in Responsible Auto-Formation

At this point, there is no gainsaying the fact that the emergence of digital technologies, especially Artificial Intelligence (AI), has reshaped the landscape of education, spirituality, and ecclesial formation. Within seminary formation, the role of the *formandi* as active, responsible agents of their own development has become increasingly central. The Church documents that we have examined, particularly *Pastores Dabo Vobis* and the *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*, emphasize that priestly formation is not merely external instruction but a process of self-engagement, discernment, and intentional appropriation of growth. This self-directed dimension is known as auto-formation; a deliberate cooperation of the seminarian with grace, formation structures, and personal responsibility.

In the general sense, auto-formation refers to the seminarian's active participation in shaping their identity, knowledge, virtues, and pastoral competency. While external formators guide the process, the interior transformation necessary for the priesthood requires the free and conscious engagement of the *formandi*. Self-

formation does not replace institutional formation but complements it through: interior discipline, intentional learning, responsible decision-making, spiritual self-examination, intellectual curiosity and moral commitment. Responsible auto-formation, therefore, requires the intentional, self-directed, and ethically-aware participation of a person (a seminarian) in their own process of formation.

Epistemic Responsibility in Auto-Formation

Epistemic responsibility refers to the moral and intellectual duties associated with seeking, using, evaluating, and applying knowledge. In seminary formation, this involves truthfulness, intellectual honesty, diligence, critical reflection, and the proper stewardship of knowledge.²⁷ A seminarian must ensure that their academic work reflects authentic effort, personal understanding, and integrity. AI-generated texts, summaries, or analyses must not replace genuine study, thought, or theological engagement.²⁸ Epistemic responsibility also requires evaluating the accuracy, quality, and theological coherence of information. AI systems can contain biases, errors, or non-Catholic theological assumptions.²⁹ The cultivation of epistemic virtues such as humility, open-mindedness, diligence, and truth-seeking is essential to priestly identity. These virtues counteract epistemic vices such as: laziness, credulity, overconfidence, reliance on superficial information, etc. Auto-formation demands intentional development of these virtues, especially in a technological culture that rewards speed rather than depth.

Beyond intellectual duties, seminarians bear moral and spiritual responsibilities that influence how they shape themselves. Ethical responsibility encompasses character formation, moral decision-making, and alignment with Gospel values. Seminary formation aims to form priests

who are morally upright and spiritually mature. Auto-formation involves: examination of conscience, growth in virtues such as temperance, prudence, fortitude, justice, responsibility for one's habits and lifestyle, accountability in personal and digital life. Ethical responsibility ensures that learning is integrated into character, not merely accumulated as knowledge. Technology, including AI, presents new ethical challenges: digital addiction, distraction from prayer, misuse of information, violation of privacy and superficial engagement with formation. Seminarians must cultivate digital temperance, ensuring that technology supports and does not undermine prayer, community life, human relationships, and pastoral readiness.

Integrating Epistemic and Ethical Responsibility

Epistemic and ethical responsibilities cannot be separated, because they complement one another. Intellectual dishonesty is a moral shortcoming, while moral irresponsibility can cloud intellectual judgment. In seminary formation, these two dimensions merge in the person of the *formandi*, who is called to be an epistemic seeker of truth and an ethical witness to truth. They constitute the basis for responsible auto-formation. When using AI, epistemic responsibility asks, "Is this true?" while ethical responsibility asks, "Is this good?" The integrated question becomes: "Does this action, particularly in relation to technology, help me grow authentically into the priest God has called me to be?"

Consequentialist Ethics to Responsible Auto-Formation

Consequentialist³⁰ ethics assesses the morality of human behaviour by looking at its results or ramifications. Consequentialism analyzes whether an action has positive

or negative outcomes rather than basing morality largely on obligation, purpose, or virtue. According to Sinnott-Armstrong, consequentialism emphasizes accountability for the predictable repercussions of one's decisions by “judging actions by the overall balance of good over bad consequences they bring about.” Even though the Catholic moral tradition is based on natural law, virtue ethics, and deontological principles rather than consequentialism, consequentialist analysis can still be a useful supplementary lens in seminary formation, particularly in the era of artificial intelligence (AI).³¹ The Church acknowledges the value of prudent consideration of outcomes within the broader moral act, particularly in the principles of *prudence*, *double effect*, and *responsible discernment*.³² These frameworks encourage thoughtful evaluation of potential benefits and harms, which aligns well with responsible auto-formation.³³ It is germane to state that within the context of AI and the life of the *formandi*, consequentialist reflection becomes an important tool for evaluating the moral impact of technological choices. Nonetheless, the Catholic ethics does not rely solely on consequences when evaluating human action. *Intentions* and the *moral object* remain foundational to moral evaluation.³⁴ Yet, the Church also urges prudence: the habit of weighing foreseeable effects in order to choose the good. Here, consequentialist analysis becomes an ally to virtue. Thus, within responsible auto-formation, it must be understood that virtue ethics shapes the interior disposition and character of the seminarian. And then, deontological norms set the non-negotiable moral boundaries such as honesty, obedience, accountability and pastoral confidentiality. Still, responsible auto-formation requires continual self-examination and accountability. A consequentialist lens

assists by prompting *formandi* to ask: *Does my use of AI lead me toward deeper study, virtue, and pastoral maturity? Does it hinder my prayer, responsibility, or intellectual honesty? Do the outcomes reflect the kind of priest or religious I am called to become? Are the long-term consequences forming me into a faithful servant of God and His people or distancing me from that identity?* By synthesizing these frameworks, seminarians engage in holistic moral discernment, evaluating not just *whether* they use AI, but *how, why, and with what effects*.

Conclusion

Artificial intelligence is ever more changing how information is accessed, processed, and communicated. This development also affects candidates in formation for the Catholic priesthood. As seminarians inevitably interact with AI in its various forms, it becomes important for them to remain attentive to the ethical, epistemological, formative, and pastoral concerns that go with such engagement. Within this context arises the call for responsible auto-formation, understood as a path toward critical, continuous learning and disciplined self-reflection in moral decision-making at both the personal and communal levels. Responsible auto-formation recognizes both the opportunities and the potential dangers inherent in interacting with AI. When seminarians make prudent use of AI's capabilities, they are capable of enhancing their intellectual competencies and pastoral skills. This will be evident in research and communication, and in the development of creative approaches to evangelization and pastoral care later in life. However, this engagement must be balanced by a critical consciousness of the inherent limitations of AI. Such limitations include its lack of consciousness, moral agency, and spiritual insight, as well as the risks of depersonalization, bias, and epistemic

distortion. Only through such critical discernment in the engagement of AI can priestly formation remain truly holistic. In this way, the use of technological tools must be grounded in the virtues of prudence, humility, and justice, remaining focused on the demands of being formed as agents to safeguard the Church's fundamental mission of serving the human persons in all of their dignity. Ultimately, responsible auto-formation advocates that *formandii* ought to adopt a critical approach to engagement of AI despite the unique challenges associated with this new technological advancement, and ensure its usage as a valuable aid in the seminary formation.

Endnotes

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- ²⁹ Zagzebski, Linda. *Virtues of the Mind: An Inquiry into the Nature of Virtue and the Ethical Foundations of Knowledge*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. pp. 83–102, 149–184
- ³⁰ Consequentialist approach refers to an ethical perspective grounded in Consequentialism a moral theory that evaluates the rightness or wrongness of actions based on their outcomes or consequences. A consequentialist approach asks: “What action produces the best results or minimizes harm?” within digital culture or AI, consequentialist thinking might involve evaluating whether the

use of technology leads to good outcomes, such as better learning, improved formation, or reduced human error.

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