

## **1. OUR HISTORY AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

St. Patrick's Seminary was established at Katete in 1950 with Fr. J. O'Leary as its first Rector. Mons St. Denis started it with the intention of promoting vocations to the priesthood. It began as a Senior Primary School with standards 6, 7 and 8. After standard 8 pupils were sent to Kasina Seminary in Dedza where they did their secondary education and later went to Kachebere Major Seminary in Mchinji District.

In 1952 St. Patrick's Seminary moved to Rumphu because of its geographical position in relation to other parts of the Diocese. In addition, Katete was deemed overpopulated hence unsuitable for prayer and formation. Fr. Alex Chima was among the first group of students who were moved from Katete to Rumphu. His greatest achievement was championing the enculturation of liturgy in this country.

The Seminary was first built one mile north of where it is now. It was later moved to its present site because of the movement of the parish to where the Rosarian Sisters' convents are and the need to be close to the main road. Due to the rapid increase of students from Mzuzu Diocese and to the fact that admittance to Kasina was limited to 20 pupils, it was decided to up-grade St. Patrick's from Primary to Secondary level in October, 1972. Students sat for the first time for the M.C.E. examination, in June 1976. Out of this first group, four were ordained priests: Frs. Chirwa P, Shawa F, Nyirongo A, and Theu R. The Seminary is supported by funds from other countries, fees, and some local contributions.

On the academic front our achievements are equally impressive. Over the last 12 years or so the National Research Council of Malawi in Lilongwe has been assessing the schools' performance in science subjects in MSCE examinations and ranking them accordingly.

As mentioned above, the schools' performance is assessed only in science subjects. It is highly unlikely, however, that a school can establish a pattern of excellence in sciences and at the same time establish a pattern of failing in social sciences. The National Research Council of Malawi ratings, therefore, reflect the general performance of schools regarding their quality of teaching and learning. In this regard, the track record shown above is a gigantic achievement

To date, January 2012, of all the seven junior seminaries in the country, St. Patrick's is the only one that has attained the first position – and attained it four times – since the trophy was established.

The secret of our performance is threefold: high morale among staff and students; discipline among staff and students; and the quality of teachers. It is the Rector's responsibility to facilitate the maintenance of these three factors.

## **2. MISSION STATEMENT**

Our Mission is to PROMOTE VOCATIONS TO PRIESTHOOD by Providing Quality Catholic Secondary Education and Helping All Students to Live for The Greater Glory of God.

The aim of St. Patrick's Seminary is to give the boys who feel they might have a vocation to the priesthood the opportunity to reflect on it. It aims specially at preparing for Mzuzu Diocese, the country, and for God, priests who will be at the service of the community in which they will live and also of the Lord who is calling them. The Seminary exists in order to help students to discover whether or not they are called by God to be priests and also to help each one to prepare himself to a life of service, and possibly and hopefully, to a priestly life.

It must be remembered, however, that no young man can be sure of what God wants him to be in ten or twenty years' time. All that is wanted from those who wish to test their vocation at the Seminary is that they be open to God's call, that they avoid in their attitude and conduct, anything which could hinder themselves or other students in the pursuit of their vocation.

St. Patrick's Seminary differs from an ordinary secondary school by the great emphasis given to spiritual formation. In the daily distribution of activities, time is put aside for prayer, Holy Mass, spiritual talks and religious institution. Morning and evening prayers are said together in the Seminary Chapel.

The centre, however, of Seminary life as well as personal spiritual life is the daily celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Through the Eucharist, the seminary community answers the call of Jesus Christ and expresses the unity of all its members and their commitment to the services of the Church.

Every effort is made to make the Eucharistic celebration as beautiful and as meaningful as possible. Everyone is encouraged to give himself wholeheartedly to daily Holy Mass, co-operate generously in the singing classes and prepare well the readings and the ceremonies. Prayerful and attentive preparation is expected of each person.

In the student's preparation for their vocation, besides prayer, the Holy Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation, two elements are receiving a special emphasis viz. the development of a great sense of responsibility and of a spirit of service. In view of developing this sense of responsibility, which is expected from every good citizen, still more from a priest, opportunities are given to students to train themselves in this very important aspect of their lives. Each and every one is invited to consider his responsibility or functions as a service to the society.

To achieve this goal much responsibility is vested in students who through their various committees, are working for the common good of the whole family that the Seminary constitutes. In addition, students are asked to train themselves to co-operate with those in-charge and to obey those placed above them irrespective of age or advancement in studies.

In view of their future role in society, older students are asked to take part in some pastoral activities such as visiting the sick in the hospital and teaching religious education to children twice a month. This exercise opens the students' eyes to the needs of others as well as to the possibilities opened to them to help.

Obviously, the fact that St. Patrick's is a Seminary and not only a private secondary school, influences the way in which students are selected. Since the Diocese of Mzuzu has no preparatory school, selection is done through all the parishes of the Diocese. The Parish Priest together with his pastoral team and the headmaster, recommends to us a certain number of boys who seem to be serious and having the right intention. Then an entrance examination is set and marked by the seminary staff. The entrance test comprises of a paper in the following subjects: English, Mathematics, and Religious Knowledge. Then two members of staff interview each candidate separately. To be accepted, the candidate must:

- Have a positive recommendation from both his parish and his school that he has some signs of vocation.
- Pass the Government Primary Leaving Certificate Examination as well as the entrance test set by the Seminary.

This way of selection ends up usually by having in this Seminary, a majority of boys who are intellectually below the standard required by the Government in the normal secondary schools. The fact that the Seminary performs so well in State examinations as shown above, indicates the quality of teaching and learning in the Seminary.

### **3. SOME KEY ASPECTS OF SEMINARY LIFE**

#### **A. Spiritual Direction**

This role is most often required of the Vice-Rector. He assures that: -

- Each student receives the necessary personal guidance in his choice of vocation.
- That there is an exchange of information between himself and the Form Masters so that together they can give adequate spiritual and academic guidance to the students.
- Spiritual talks and retreats are arranged during the year for students.

#### **B. Mass and Prayers**

Community Mass is a celebrated daily which all students are required to attend.

Each Form celebrates Mass once a week with a priest/member of staff. Students are encouraged to take an active part in all liturgical celebrations by assisting in their preparation, by reading, by serving, and by preparing hymns.

Morning and Evening Prayers are said by the whole community. All students are expected to find time for personal prayer and meditation.

#### **C. Religious Education**

Each Form receives two classes of Religious Education a week given by a priest.

#### **D. YCS**

There is an active YCS group, which contributes to the Christian spirit of serving and sharing. The group meets regularly with other YCS sections in the Diocese and tries to help needy people in the neighbourhood.

#### **E. Pastoral Work**

Students in their final year are invited to participate in extra curricular activities (pastoral) designed to be of service to the local community and to help the students learn to be of service to others. The activities include visiting the sick in the local district hospital and preparing young children at the parish for the reception of the sacraments of Confession and Eucharist.

**F. The Curriculum**

Students are prepared for the JC and MSCE examinations in the following subjects:

Agriculture	English	Social and Developmental Studies
Chichewa	History	Mathematics
Geography	Physical Science	
Bible Knowledge	Biology	

At the end of each term their progress is assessed by internal examinations.