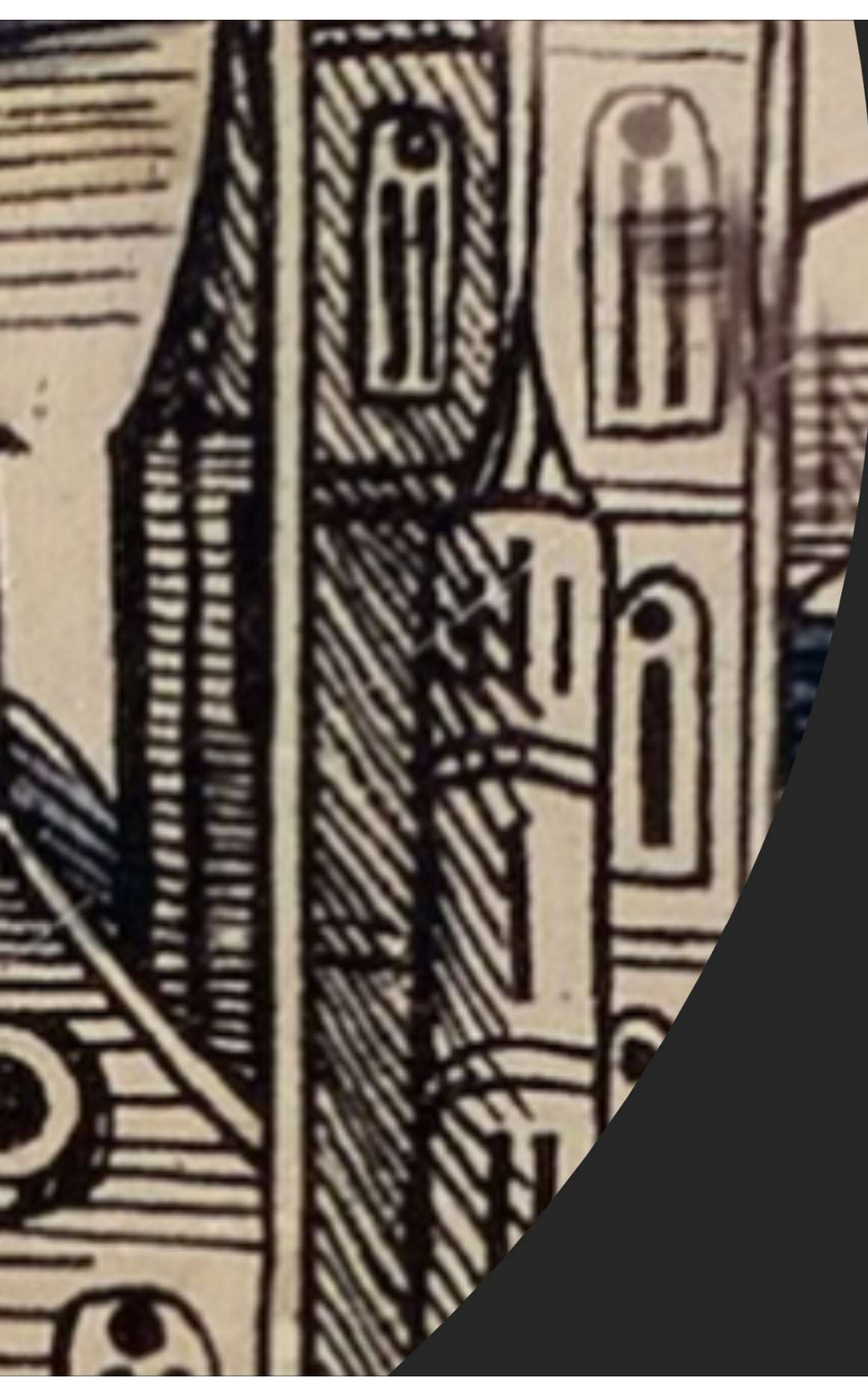




Support & Accountability:

Keys to
Healthy & Resilient
Communities

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Saint Meinrad Archabbey & Seminary

Agenda

- Support & Accountability as keys to Abuse prevention
 - Support & Accountability as keys to Health & Resilience
 - Research on why men leave
 - “Systems of support & accountability?”
 - Recommendations for utilization
-





What do we mean by Healthy & Resilient?

- A community that **protects** the safety of minors
- A community that is **attractive** to potential members
- A community that **retains** the members it attracts
- A community where members are **psychologically healthy**
- A community where members **cope well** with challenges



PRAESIDIUM

Our passion. Your protection.

“What are your systems of
Support & Accountability?”

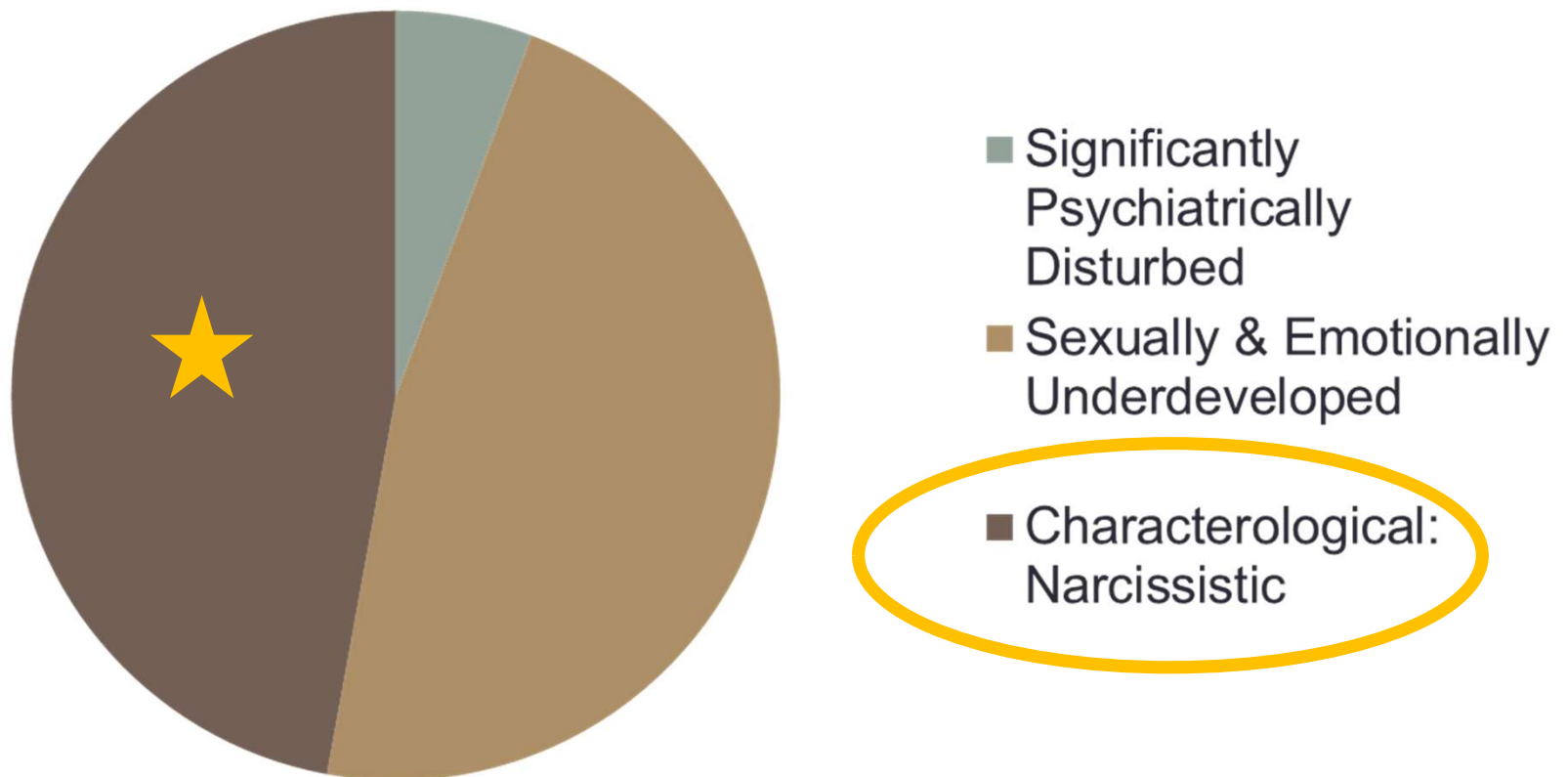
What do we know about Clergy Child Sex Offenders?

Prevalence of SCA among Clergy (John Jay, 2004)

- Overall Prevalence: 4 % of priests (1950-2002)
 - 4.5 % Diocesan
 - 2.7 % Religious
- Points to:
 - Importance of Support
 - Role of Accountability: Real & Perceived

What do we know about Clergy Child Sex Offenders?

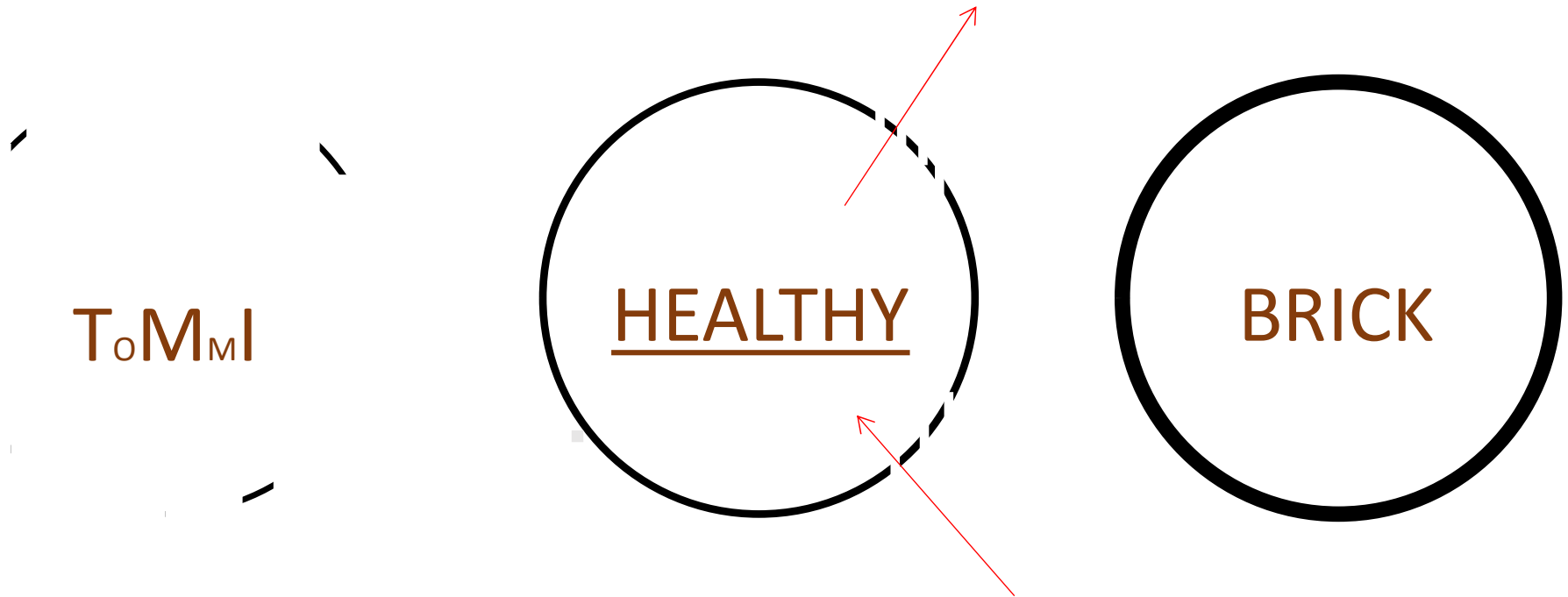
Subtypes of Offenders





Let's consider this
narcissistic
subtype in terms
of boundaries

Examples of Boundary Types



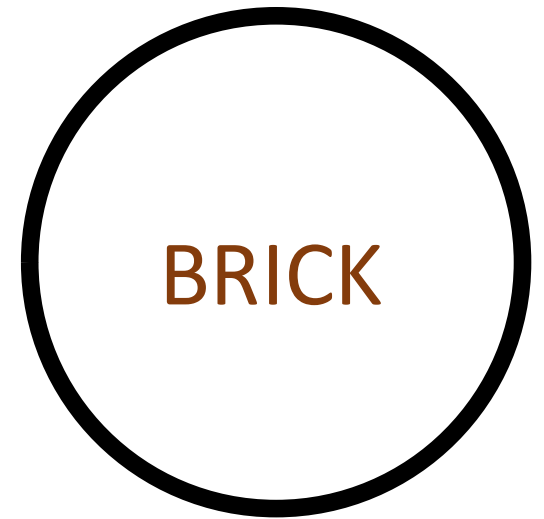
GOALS:

- To have individuals with whom we allow ourselves to be vulnerable/known (**SUPPORT**)
- Allows feedback, a reality check, another frame of reference (**ACCOUNTABILITY**)

Narcissism

- When we make ourselves the sole frame of reference for making decisions
- When we are no longer consulting others
- One of the dangers of celibacy
- Who decides when you...?

Accountability *is the antidote to Narcissism*



Falkenhain & Davis, 2015

- What behaviors do you associate with unhealthy celibacy?

Women

- Exclusive relationships, “coupling” (Over-engagement)

Men

- Overly-independent, “mavericks” (Disengagement)
- Tending to Narcissism



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What do we know
about why men
leave priesthood &
consecrated life?



Hoge, 2002

Why are men leaving in the first 5 years?

Lonely and/or Unappreciated

+

Specific Crisis of Commitment

(Fall in Love, discover one's sexuality, conflict with superior)

(The first must be present)



Falkenhain & Becker, 2005

- Looked at monks in the first 10 years of solemn vows.
- Found that 13% of monks left within the first 10 years of making solemn vows.
- Reasons (given by Priors):
 1. Sexuality Related Issues (i.e., falling in love)
 2. Difficulty Keeping Commitments
 3. Psychological concerns (addictions, authority)



Falkenhain & Becker, 2005

Challenges (reported by priors & solemnly professed monks):

1. Balancing work with monastic life
2. Loss of support & Structure
3. Concerns about how to use new freedom
4. Generational Concerns

In other words, same as Hoge 2002...

*Feeling Overworked, Underappreciated,
Under-supported, Out of Balance*

+

These we have some
control over

Crisis of Commitment

*Falling in Love, Sexuality,
Conflict with Superior, Generational Conflict*



Falkenhain & Becker, 2005

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Praesidium: What are your structures of
Support & Accountability?



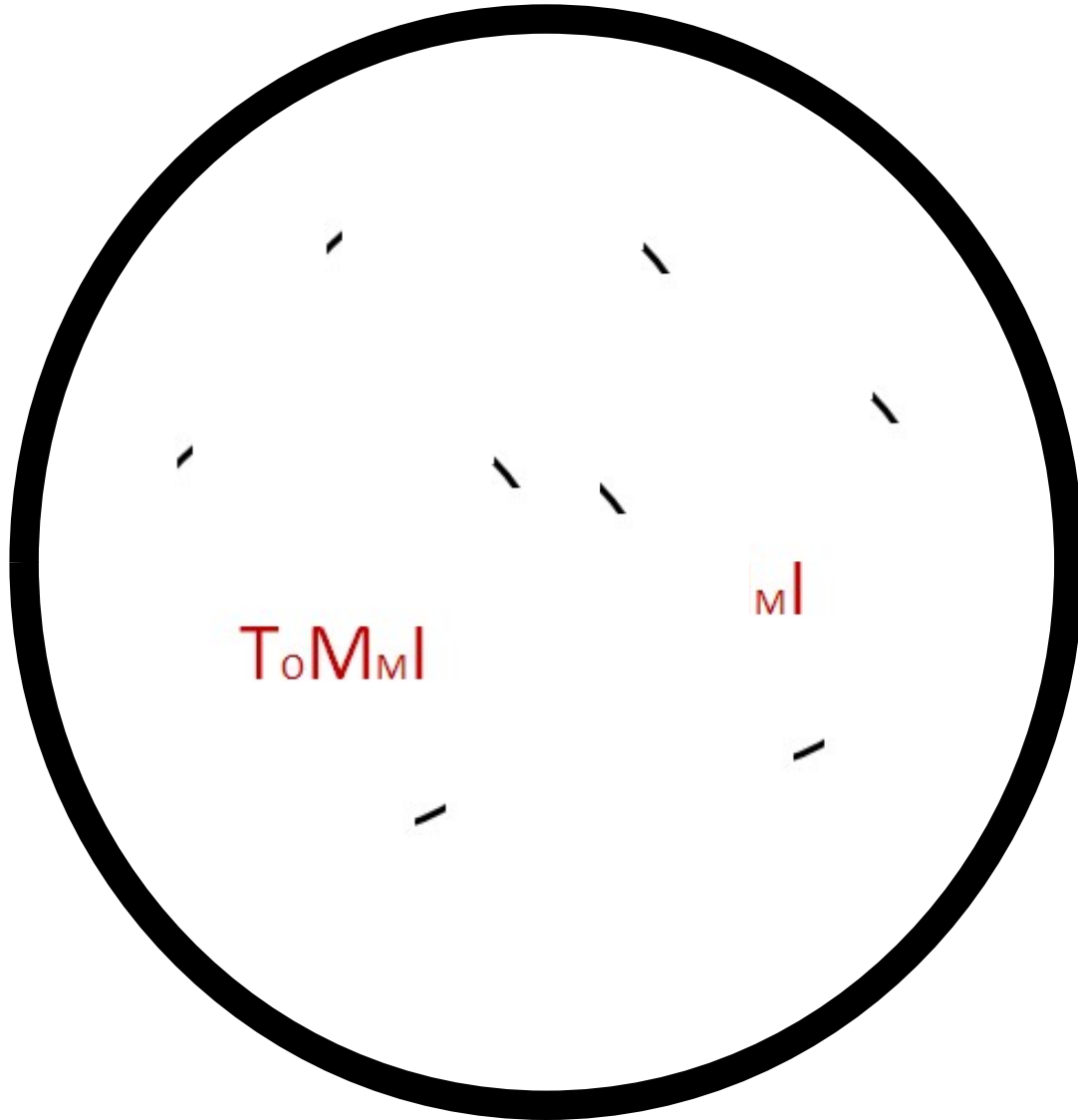
Falkenhain & Becker, 2005

Have you ever had serious thoughts about leaving?

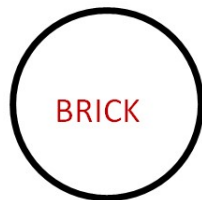
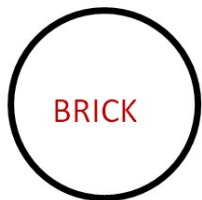
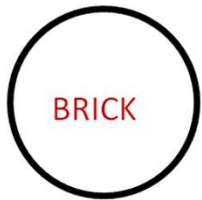
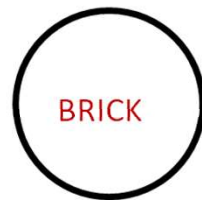
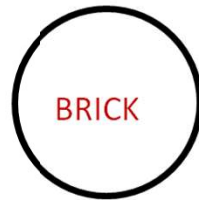
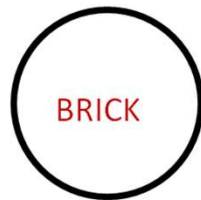
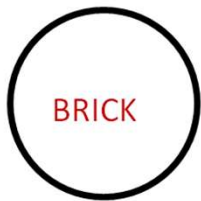
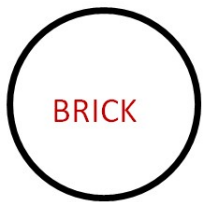
- 30% - survey
- 47% - follow-up telephone conversation

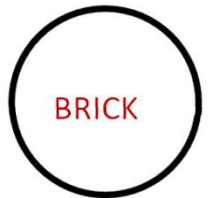
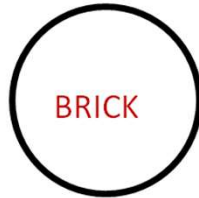
What would you do if you had serious thoughts about leaving?

- Talk to someone (Abbot, confrere, friend)
- Pray
- Wait

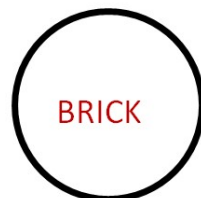


- Abusive Families
- Cults
- Authoritarian Communities





- No Corporate Identity – Difficulty Attracting Vocations
- Little Support & Accountability → People Leave
- Those who stay have greater chance of becoming unhealthy
- It becomes very difficult to fulfill our religious charism – offering a window to the Kingdom of Heaven



Let's revisit Praesidium standards around Support & Accountability



STANDARD 6: The Institute provides specialized support and accountability at each stage in the initial formation of Members.

- For the purpose of abuse prevention, this Includes information related to sexual offending: boundaries, healthy sexual development, mechanisms for reporting boundary violations & abuse.

STANDARD 6: The Institute provides specialized support and accountability at each stage in the initial formation of Members.

But if we are also concerned about resilience...

- Include a strong formation in the theology of celibacy tailored to the charism of the order.
- Teach & practice the discipline of theological reflection for the purpose of distilling MEANING.
- Assist candidates in maintaining a proper balance between work (ministry) and spiritual life
- As transition to final vows, foster relationships with new superior & other men in final vows
 - Restudy the congregation's rule with select seniors
 - Consider assigning a socius for men in first 5 years.

STANDARD 7: The Institute identifies and utilizes systems of support and accountability for its Members.

Systems of Support

- Common prayer
- Common meals
- Community recreation
- Yearly meeting with superior
- Community meetings & Abbot's conferences
- Annual retreat
- Spiritual direction
- Availability of Counseling at on-campus counseling center

Systems of Accountability

- Blessings out
- Monthly report to abbot of inappropriate internet use
- Culpa & Penance Services
- Yearly meetings with superior
- Spiritual Direction
- Lenten Bona Opera
- Permission to attend Alcoholics Anonymous and similar meetings
- Specific to Initial Formation:
 - Yearly evaluations for seminarians
 - Mid-novitiate and Mid-juniorate Chapter reports

How well are you utilizing these?

Standard 7, R3: The Institute ensures the Major Superior of his delegate meets at least annually with each Member

- Recall that “talking with the Abbot” was one of the main strategies a young member imagined he would use if he were thinking of leaving
- Underscores the importance of the relationship being in place.
- Formulate an interview schedule (prepared list of questions) to maximize this opportunity.
 - Assists with early detection of problems
 - Makes inquiring about personal things less personal
 - Can be facilitated by a communication ahead of time explaining the purpose:

Standard 7, R3: The Institute ensures the Major Superior of his delegate meets at least annually with each Member

“As part of our annual meeting this year, I am interested in learning about how you are doing physically, emotionally and spiritually. Monastic life is challenging at times and most of us hit periods when we struggle or are not coping as well as we would like. The purpose of a community is to provide support and accountability on our journey towards conversion and my checking in on these things is one way that we can exercise our responsibility for one another.”

Standard 7, R3: The Institute ensures the Major Superior of his delegate meets at least annually with each Member

- *How is your work – is it enough, too much?*
- *How is your sleep? What time are you getting to bed?*
- *How are your relationships in and outside the community? Are you getting enough social support?*
- *What is your relationship with technology like?*
- *How is your mood over all? Do you ever hit periods when things are really difficult? Do you feel you are able to cope with them adequately?*
- *Is there anything you are particularly worried about?*

Standard 7, R3: The Institute ensures the Major Superior of his delegate meets at least annually with each Member

- *How is your relationship with God?*
- *How is your prayer life?*
- *Do you have a spiritual director and are you meeting regularly?*
- *I'd like for you to think of a goal for your spiritual life this year. I'm going to write it down.*
- *Is there anything else you would like me to ask you about?*
- *How could the community / leadership better support you in this life?*

What does this accomplish?

- Increases chance of early detection of concerns
- Establishes the foundation of the relationship if concerns arise in the future
- Communicates interest (support)
- Provides accountability
- Encourages reflection on the life
- Communicates the superior is open to having concerns brought to him – maybe important for later.
- Remember...

Why do men leave?

*Feeling Overworked, Underappreciated,
Under-supported, Out of Balance*

+

This does not
develop overnight

Crisis of Commitment

*Falling in Love, Sexuality,
Conflict with Superior, Generational Conflict*

What if meetings are delegated?

- Sometimes it is advantageous for a local superior to conduct the interview, still...
- Consider meeting with the major superior every other year
- Have delegate communicate a message from the superior
 - Expression of support
 - Invitation to communicate directly
- Set up a system and explain how information will be shared with the superior

Following up on concerns

- Consider follow-up meetings when needed
- Could be conducted by the delegate with system in place to communicate to major
- Consider a policy or custom of meeting regularly (monthly/quarterly) with members who are in counseling / receiving treatment
- Express interest in participating in members' treatment

Standard 7, The Institute maintains a list of Members who are living outside the typical systems of support and accountability and ensures these Members have an individualized system of support and accountability or that they are re-engaged in the typical systems of support and accountability.

- People leave from the periphery, not from the center of community life.
- Of men leaving from solemn vows in our congregation in the last 3 years, nearly two-thirds (64%) left to incardinate into dioceses.
 - Problem with forming members in the charism?
 - Charism of priesthood overshadows order's charism?
 - We did not maintain adequate ties while out.

Standard 7, The Institute maintains a list of Members who are living outside the typical systems of support and accountability and ensures these Members have an individualized system of support and accountability or that they are re-engaged in the typical systems of support and accountability.

Possibly Consider:

- Term limits for living outside community
- Non-negotiables for community engagement:
 - Annual retreat
 - Professions
 - Founder's feast celebration
 - Major holidays
- Publish dates & set expectation well in advance
- Find ways of communicating that the Institute is their primary relationship



To Summarize

- Support & Accountability are two major benefits of community
- Research identifies these as key to prevention of abuse & major hinges for Praesidium
- These are also key to healthy and resilient communities and community members



To Summarize

- Changes in level of perceived support is a major challenge for new finally professed members.
- Surprisingly, newly professed members also struggle with diminished levels of accountability.



To Summarize

- We may be able to better utilize our “systems of support & accountability”
 - Annual Visits with Superior
 - Identification for those living outside typical systems of support & accountability
- Early detection/intervention of problem behaviors & personal struggles is best



To Summarize

- There is probably a need for us to do better formation (initial and ongoing) on the charism of consecrated life and our particular community's charism.
- Explore ways to keep community's charism at center for ordained members.



To Summarize

- Teaching & encouraging theological reflection for the purpose of distilling meaning is essential to perservence.
- Men are not likely to stay in a life they perceive as meaningless when tempted by another opportunity.



To Summarize

Two of the most important jobs of the major superior are:

- To be convinced of the wisdom and value of this life.
- To communicate it regularly to members.

Final Questions

- What thoughts have you had in response to this presentation?
- What are one or two simple practices you could implement to improve your utilization?
- What are one or two initiatives you could take that would require more effort?
- What would be one radical or even prophetic strategy that would make a big impact on the way the community perceives support & accountability within your province/community?