

**JOINT AGREEMENT FOR SEMINARIAN FORMATION  
BETWEEN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF LOUISVILLE  
AND THE DIOCESE OF VINH\***

**I. Introduction to the Project**

1. The Diocese of Vinh agrees to send two distinguished Vietnamese seminarians to the United States to pursue priestly formation on behalf of the Archdiocese of Louisville. The Archbishop of Louisville, or one of his representatives, is invited to visit the Diocese of Vinh and interview candidates. Of the forty seminarians accepted by the Diocese of Vinh annually, at least two candidates will be selected for consideration and a possible interview.
2. Two seminarians from the Diocese of Vinh began formation for the Archdiocese of Louisville in the 2014-2015 academic year. In the event that both dioceses find the existing arrangement satisfactory, it might reasonably be expected that two new seminarians from the Diocese of Vinh begin studies for the Archdiocese of Louisville in even-numbered years (2014, 2016, 2018, etc.) or at intervals acceptable to both dioceses.
3. Upon arrival, the two men will begin an Orientation Year during which they will reside in a local parish in the Archdiocese of Louisville. This year will be spent in coming to know the local church through apostolic work and transitioning to a new cultural setting. Further study of the English language at the formal level may also be pursued during this time.
4. At the conclusion of the Orientation Year, the two men will begin major seminary on behalf of the Archdiocese of Louisville. Because of the quality of its priestly formation and its proximity to the Archdiocese of Louisville, St. Meinrad Seminary would be the most likely destination.
5. During the four years of seminary formation, the two men will be subjected to the same expectations and receive the same benefits as other men studying on behalf of the Archdiocese of Louisville. This includes those activities occurring during the academic year as well as during the summer and winter break from seminary.
6. It is expected that upon completion of priestly formation the seminarians will be ordained as priests and receive incardination in the Archdiocese of Louisville.
7. Both newly ordained priests can be expected to serve in the Archdiocese of Louisville for a reasonable period of time, (c. five years) after their ordination. The Archbishop of Louisville and the Bishop of Vinh will make the final determination regarding where the two men will ultimately serve as priests. Input from the newly-ordained priests regarding this decision will be taken into due consideration. It is to be generally expected that one of the two men will remain in the Archdiocese of Louisville indefinitely in service to the local church. Due attention will be paid to ensuring that any priest returning to the Diocese of Vinh will have incardination transferred.

## **II. Educational and Moral Qualities of the Seminarians**

1. He must be a faithful Catholic with a sincere commitment to completing priestly formation and serving as a priest.
2. He must have a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university.
3. He must have proficiency in the English language and possess an aptitude and willingness to become fluent.

## **III. Required Training Before Sending to the Archdiocese of Louisville**

1. He must successfully complete all requirements from the pre-seminary program in the Diocese of Vinh. In light of the parish placement that will take place during the Orientation Year in the Archdiocese of Louisville, a year of parish practicum in the Diocese of Vinh subsequent to minor seminary training can be used to study English fulltime.
2. He must successfully take the TOEFL English language test in Vietnam.

## **IV. Responsibility for Training Costs**

1. The Diocese of Vinh is responsible for all training-related costs in Vietnam.
2. The Archdiocese of Louisville is responsible for all training-related costs in the U.S.

The Archdiocese of Louisville and the Diocese of Vinh enter into this Joint Agreement in good faith with the firm desire of mutual and collective service to the Catholic Church, locally and universally.



+ Paul Nguyen Thai Hop. O.P.  
Bishop of Vinh  
(Signed and sealed)

Faithfully in Christ,

+ Joseph E. Kurtz, D.D  
Archbishop of Louisville  
(Signed and sealed)

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\*The joint agreement for seminarian formation prepared by Dr. Joseph Hieu was presented at a joint meeting between the Archbishop of Louisville and the Bishop of Vinh on May 14, 2014 in the Archdiocese of Louisville. The final agreement was approved by Bishop Paul Nguyen Thai Hop and Archbishop Joseph Edward Kurtz on January 30, 2017 in the Diocese of Vinh.