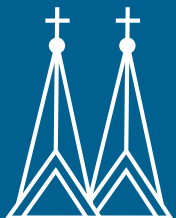


5TH CONFERENCE ON HUMAN FORMATION

THE COMPLICATED CANDIDATE:
NAVIGATING PERSONALITY
IN DISCERNMENT & FORMATION

August 31–September 3, 2026 / St. Meinrad, IN



**SAINT
MEINRAD**
ARCHABBNEY, SEMINARY
& SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY



SAINT LUKE INSTITUTE

WELCOME

Welcome to the fifth Conference on Human Formation, "The Complicated Candidate: Navigating Personality in Discernment & Formation." Thank you for joining us for these days of learning, reflection, and conversation. Through a series of plenary sessions and interactive workshops, this conference brings together experienced practitioners and leaders to explore the complexities of personality in discernment and formation for candidates for diocesan priesthood and religious life.

We encourage you to engage fully in discussions, share your experiences, and learn from one another. The wisdom found in this gathering comes not only from our presenters but also from the collective experience of those committed to the important work of human formation. We hope you leave with practical insights, renewed perspective, and meaningful connections that will strengthen your ministry. Thank you for being part of this conference, and welcome to Saint Meinrad.

Rev. Patrick McDevitt, CM, Ph.D.
President & CEO | Saint Luke Institute

Right Reverend Kurt Stasiak, OSB
Archabbot | Saint Meinrad Archabbey

GENERAL INFORMATION

CONCIERGE DESKS

Staff members are available at the reception desks at the Guest House and St. Bede Lobby to assist you.

WIFI ACCESS

Network: SMA | Click the link to register for a guest account, enter your name and email, then accept the terms of use to register.

DINING

All meals will be served in Newman Dining Room. Please check the conference schedule for meal times.

BREAKS

Coffee, tea, and light refreshments will be available in the meeting rooms between workshop sessions.

MASS AND PRAYER

All are invited to join the monastic community for Mass and prayer in the Archabbey Church. Times are listed in the conference schedule.

LOUISVILLE AIRPORT SHUTTLE

Reservations are required. For assistance, contact Beth Davis (502-693-9934) or stop by a concierge desk.

TIME ZONES

All times noted are Central time. Louisville and Ferdinand (including the Comfort Inn) are in the Eastern time zone.

AMENITY	LOCATION	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.
Concierge Desks	Guest House (812.357.6611 campus ext. 6611) St. Bede Hall (812.357.6096 campus ext. 6096)	Guest House: 7 a.m.-9 p.m. St. Bede Hall: 7 a.m.-4:30 p.m.		
Commuter Lounge	St. Bede Hall - 3rd Floor (St. John Vianney Center)	8 a.m.-8 p.m.		8 a.m.-noon
Books & Gifts	Newman Hall - 1st floor	8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.		
Exercise Facilities	Newman Hall - ground floor	24 hours (use room card to enter)		

PLENARY SESSIONS

All sessions will be held in St. Bede Theater

1 What Are Personality Disorders?

Emily Cash, Psy.D. | Tuesday, 9:00 a.m.

This plenary session provides an overview of personality disorders and their impact on discernment, seminary formation, community life, and ministry. Participants will explore how personality disorders differ from personality styles, review major types of personality disorders, and identify language in psychological reports that may suggest problematic personality patterns. The session will also examine why individuals with personality disorders can present unique challenges in formation and communal settings, offering practical insights for those involved in accompaniment, assessment, and leadership.

2 Handling Transference & Countertransference

Ryan LaMothe, Ph.D. | Tuesday, 3:00 p.m.

Asymmetrical relationships in ministry and leadership often involve complex interpersonal dynamics that shape discernment, accompaniment, and care. This plenary session explores the concepts of transference and countertransference as tools for recognizing unconscious communications that emerge in pastoral relationships. Through practical examples, participants will examine how greater self-awareness and the ethical use of one's own subjectivity can support healthy leadership and promote the well-being of those entrusted to their care.

3 Is It a Good Fit? Considerations for Discerning a Candidate's Future

Br. John Mark Falkenhain, OSB, Ph.D. | Wednesday, 10:45 a.m.

This plenary session discusses the relationship between discernment and formation as well as the ongoing and interpersonal nature of vocational discernment. Participants will explore issues related to internal and external forum relationships and the critical role that vocations and formation personnel play in safeguarding the interests of both the candidate and the larger Church. The concept of freedom in relation to discernment of a candidate's future will be emphasized in addition to the moral and ethical responsibilities placed on those charged with discernment of candidates.

4 Case Scenarios

Emily Cash, Psy.D., Br. John Mark Falkenhain, OSB, Ph.D., and Kathy Galleher, Ph.D. | Wednesday, 3:00 p.m.

In this interactive plenary session, our presenters will offer case studies illustrating different personality disorders or problematic personality styles. The panelists will explore contributing background factors, challenges to community life and formation, and practical strategies for discernment, accompaniment, and ongoing pastoral management. Participants will gain deeper insight into recognizing personality dynamics and responding effectively.

The Impact of Childhood Trauma on Personality Disorders | Kathy Galleher, Ph.D.

This session examines the complex impact of childhood trauma and abuse on emotional development, behaviors, and relationship style as an adult. We will discuss the biological and relational impact of childhood trauma and abuse and how this can lead to maladaptive relationship styles and personality disorders. We will also explore protective factors and healing from childhood trauma. Participants will learn how to recognize warning signs of serious personality disturbance that can interfere with healthy community living and long-term suitability for ministry and community life.

Intersectionality: Personality & Culture | Crystal Taylor-Dietz, Psy.D.

Human behavior is shaped by the complex interaction of culture, personality, and identity. When working with international candidates, it can be difficult to discern whether particular ways of relating, expressing emotion, or responding to stress reflect cultural norms or personality structure. This session explores how cultural and personality factors influence identity development and the expression of self. Participants will examine the importance of attending to the whole person in order to avoid misinterpretation, foster empathic understanding, and promote healthy discernment and formation.

Self-Care Skills for Leaders: Managing Interpersonal Conflict | Rev. Patrick McDevitt, CM, Ph.D.

This session invites vocation and formation personnel and other religious leaders to reflect prayerfully and practically on the relationship between self-care, healthy leadership, and interpersonal conflict. Drawing on psychology, spiritual wisdom, and the lived experience of ministry life, participants will explore how conflict impacts emotional, spiritual, and relational well-being. The presenter will offer practical skills for maintaining healthy boundaries, emotional balance, resilience, and compassionate presence during difficult conversations. Participants will explore how to navigate conflict from a grounded, mission-centered, and emotionally healthy place—leading with clarity, empathy, hope, and renewed purpose.

Spotting the Red Flags: Interviewing for Personality Disorders | Kathy Galleher, Ph.D.

This session offers practical guidance for vocation directors and formators on interviewing candidates to identify problematic relationship patterns and personality disorders that may interfere with healthy ministry and community life. Participants will learn how to ask about trauma, relationship patterns and mental health history, as well as how to recognize common “red flags” for personality disorders. Particular attention will be given to how to conduct a transparent, effective, and focused assessment to identify areas of concern while maintaining the candidate’s sense of dignity, safety, and trust.

Understanding Avoidant & Dependent Personalities | Rev. Mike Ritter, Psy.D.

This session provides an overview of avoidant and dependent personality styles and disorders, with particular attention to how these personality traits and patterns might be expressed in seminary and religious formation. Discussion includes implications for understanding a candidate’s capacity for healthy autonomy, successful community living, and effective pastoral ministry. Practical recommendations will be offered to help formation staff distinguish between traits and pathology, make referral decisions, and more fully integrate psychological insight into vocational discernment and human formation.

Understanding Narcissism | Br. John Mark Falkenhain, OSB, Ph.D.

Narcissism is a personality style and disorder characterized by extreme egocentricity, over-valuation of the self, and a pattern of exclusive self-referencing. This session explores clinical manifestations of narcissism that can lead to disruptions in ministry and community life and – in the extreme – harm to others. Participants will learn to identify personal history data and behaviors that suggest narcissistic personality traits and explore additional questions and interventions to consider when making decisions about a candidate’s future.

Understanding Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder | Rev. Mike Ritter, Psy.D.

This session offers a clinically informed overview of Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder (OCPD). The presenter will discuss how OCPD traits may be manifested in human and spiritual formation as well as in vocational discernment. Participants will examine how perfectionism, rigidity, excessive conscientiousness, scrupulosity, and over-control might initially present as strengths in a formation context. They will also consider the potential impact of these traits on community life, pastoral ministry, and personal well-being. We will distinguish OCPD from OCD, discuss indicators of severity, and consider practical strategies and challenges when addressing OCPD in the context of religious and priestly formation.

A Unified Approach: Communication Strategies for Diocesan Vocations, Formation, & Leadership | Emily Cash, Psy.D. & Rev. Tyler Tenbarge

This session explores the relational nature of seminary formation and the vital role of communication among vocation directors, formation personnel, and diocesan leadership when forming and discerning with candidates for priesthood. Participants will examine key issues such as fostering transparency, navigating situations where candidates share conflicting information, determining appropriate access to psychological evaluations, and clarifying how formation and leadership personnel can remain appropriately involved when a candidate is receiving treatment.

A Unified Approach: Communication Strategies for Religious Vocations, Formation, & Leadership | Sr. Anita Louise Lowe, OSB & Br. John Mark Falkenhain, OSB, Ph.D.

This session explores the relational nature of religious formation and the vital role of communication among vocation directors, formation personnel, and community leadership when forming and discerning with candidates for consecrated life. Participants will examine key issues including fostering transparency, the importance of clear and consistent criteria for acceptance into formation, appropriate access to psychological evaluations, and clarifying how formation and leadership personnel can remain appropriately involved when a candidate is receiving treatment. Questions about how much to share about a candidate's mental health history with the entire community will also be addressed.

Using the Psychological Report as a Guide for Formation | Michael Day, Psy.D.

This session offers practical guidance on understanding and utilizing the psychological report in admission as well as setting individualized goals and assessing progress in formation. Practical considerations related to informed consent, validity and reliability of findings, need for re-evaluations or additional assessments, as well as how to translate findings into specific and measurable goals will be addressed. Participants will also explore ways to determine when adequate progress is not being made and how to respond. Finally, moral and ethical considerations related to the intersection of mental health/personality and formation for service in the Church will be discussed.



Emily Cash, Psy.D., is a licensed psychologist and a member of the clinical services department at Saint Luke Institute since 2006. She received her graduate degree in clinical psychology from Spalding University in Kentucky and completed her doctoral training in a community mental health

setting in New York City. Her clinical services include individual and group therapy, psychological evaluation and assessment, and facilitation of psycho-educational groups for mental health and well-being. Dr. Cash is the director of the candidate assessment program for Saint Luke Institute and the director of Saint Luke Center, a ministry of Saint Luke Institute in Louisville, Kentucky. She is a popular national speaker and facilitator for Catholic religious and clergy.



Michael Day, Psy.D., received his doctorate in clinical psychology from Spalding University and an M.A. and M.T.S. from Saint Meinrad School of Theology. Dr. Day is the director of counseling and psychological services at Indiana University Southeast, is a member of the clinical faculty at

Spalding University's School of Professional Psychology, and works on a consultation basis with Saint Luke Center. His experience includes work in higher education and children/family residential treatment. He is licensed in Kentucky and Indiana and his clinical interests include trauma informed care, developmental related issues, candidate assessment for clergy and religious, clinical supervision, and education.



Br. John Mark Falkenhain, OSB, Ph.D., is a licensed psychologist and the author of *How We Love: A Formation for the Celibate Life*. He lectures internationally on issues related to celibacy formation, perseverance in religious life, and healthy psychosocial/psychosexual adjustment

of clergy and religious. He is an adjunct professor of psychology at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology and a member of the clinical staff at the Saint Luke Center in Louisville providing candidate assessments and individual psychotherapy.



Kathy Galleher, Ph.D., a licensed psychologist, received her doctorate from Colorado State University in 1993. From 1998-2006 she was a staff psychologist at Saint Luke Institute. In 2006, Dr. Galleher started KMG Consultation, which is focused on promoting healthy ministry through

workshops and consultations. She offers trainings for formators and workshops on mental health and sexuality issues in formation, healthy boundaries, self-care, and transitions. She is director of the Healthy Sexual Integration program for men in formation in Washington, D.C., and Chicago.



Ryan LaMothe, Ph.D., recently retired from serving as professor of pastoral care and counseling at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology. Over the past 30 years, he has written 15 books and over 200 articles in the areas of pastoral theology, psychoanalysis, and political

theology/philosophy. In addition, Dr. LaMothe has lectured at academic institutions and psychoanalytic institutes in the United States, Europe, and Asia. He was past president of the Society for Pastoral Theology and has worked on several editorial boards of academic journals.



Sr. Anita Louise Lowe, OSB, of the Sisters of St. Benedict, Ferdinand, Indiana, is in her eighth year of service as prioress of her community. She holds a master's degree in theology from the University of Notre Dame and has given presentations on prayer, Liturgy of the Hours, community living,

discernment, and ethical issues in vocation ministry. From 1997 to 2007, she served as vocation director for her community and during that time served a six-year term as a board member of the National Religious Vocation Conference.



Rev. Patrick McDevitt, CM, Ph.D., currently serves as the president and CEO of Saint Luke Institute. He is a member of the Congregation of the Mission (informally known as the Vincentians). Fr. McDevitt holds a Ph.D. and M.S. in pastoral counseling from Loyola University in Baltimore,

Maryland. He received his M.Div. from St. Thomas Seminary in Denver, Colorado, and his B.A. from St. Mary's College Seminary in Perryville, Missouri. Fr. McDevitt has taught graduate courses in psychological assessment, psychopathology, and counseling theory and his research interests include the psychology and spirituality of professional ministers, exploring effective methods in clinical practice, and clinical work related to personality disorders.



Crystal Taylor-Dietz, Psy.D., is a licensed psychologist and the national director of behavioral health services for Devereux Advanced Behavioral Health. From 2015 to 2020 she worked with Catholic priests and religious in both an outpatient and residential treatment setting at Saint

Luke Institute. She received a doctorate in clinical psychology from Chestnut Hill College and completed her pre-doctoral internship at the Center for Multicultural Training in Psychology at Boston Medical Center, along with a post-doctoral fellowship at The George Washington University Professional Psychology Program. She is currently on the faculty at The George Washington University and was also previously a faculty member at the Washington School of Psychiatry. Her research and clinical interests include issues related to intercultural living, race/ethnicity, the intersection of spirituality and psychology, and wellness promotion.



Rev. Tyler Tenbarger was ordained in 2016 and serves as the director of the Office of Vocations for the Diocese of Evansville. Prior to ordination, Fr. Tyler served in leadership for the National FFA Organization, and his current ministries still focus on accompanying young people. Before being assigned

full time in vocations ministry, Fr. Tyler served at several parishes within the diocese. He has degrees from Marian University in Indianapolis and Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology. In May 2026, Fr. Tyler released his first book, *The Savio Project*, a formation program for young men.



Rev. Mike Ritter, Psy.D., is a Catholic priest of the Diocese of Sacramento. He holds a doctorate in psychology (Psy.D.) and is currently a postdoctoral fellow at Saint Luke Institute in Silver Spring, Maryland, where he works primarily with clergy, religious, and seminarians. His clinical interests

include psychological assessment, psychospiritual integration in treatment, and the study of moral injury.



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NRVC
National Religious
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CMSM

The Art of Aging Gratefully: Learning from Religious Women

A Global Virtual Conference & Inaugural Event

 Saturday, October 10, 2026 | World Mental Health Day
Time: 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Eastern

Global Institute for Mental Health, *a ministry of Saint Luke Institute* 



This global virtual event will lift up the way in which Catholic Sisters model, resource, and respond to the needs of aging in ways that are holistic, holy, and reflect a proven model from which everyone in the Church can learn—religious, clergy and lay.

The Art of Aging Gratefully virtual event is being held in October to align with the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network intention for mental health ministry.

Continuing education units (CEUs) available for registrants.

Contact us for details: gimh@slu.org | Learn more and register: slu.org/gimh

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Monday | August 31

2:00 p.m.	Registration/check-in opens
5:00 p.m.	Vespers in Archabbey Church
5:30 p.m.	Dinner (Newman Dining Room)
6:30 p.m.	Opening Session – Welcome and Keynote Address (St. Bede Theater)
7:45 p.m.	Reception in Alumni Commons

Tuesday | September 1

7:30 a.m.	Mass with Benedictine Community in the Archabbey Church
8:15 a.m.	Buffet breakfast (Newman Dining Room)
9:00 a.m.	Plenary 1 – What Are Personality Disorders? (St. Bede Theater)
10:15 a.m.	Break
10:45 a.m.	Workshops • Understanding Narcissism (St. Bede Theater) • Understanding Avoidant & Dependent Personalities (Rm. 502) • Intersectionality: Personality & Culture (Rm. 503)
12:15 p.m.	Lunch (Newman Dining Room)
1:15 p.m.	Workshops • Understanding Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder (St. Bede Theater) • Communications Strategies for Religious Vocations, Formation, & Leadership (Rm. 502) • Intersectionality: Personality & Culture (Rm. 503)
2:30 p.m.	Break
3:00 p.m.	Plenary 2 – Handling Transference & Countertransference (St. Bede Theater)
5:00 p.m.	Vespers in Archabbey Church
5:30 p.m.	Dinner (Newman Dining Room)
7:00 p.m.	Compline
7:30 p.m.	Social Activity

Wednesday | September 2

7:30 a.m.	Mass with Benedictine Community in the Archabbey Church
8:15 a.m.	Buffet breakfast (Newman Dining Room)
9:00 a.m.	Workshops • The Impact of Childhood Trauma on Personality Disorders (St. Bede Theater) • Understanding Narcissism (Rm. 502) • Communications Strategies for Diocesan Vocations, Formation, & Leadership (Rm. 503)
10:15 a.m.	Break
10:45 a.m.	Plenary 3 – Is It a Good Fit? Considerations for Discerning a Candidate's Future (St. Bede Theater)
12:15 p.m.	Lunch (Newman Dining Room)
1:15 p.m.	Workshops • The Impact of Childhood Trauma on Personality Disorders (St. Bede Theater) • Understanding Avoidant & Dependent Personalities (Rm. 502) • Self-Care Skills for Leaders: Managing Interpersonal Conflict (Rm. 503)
2:30 p.m.	Break
3:00 p.m.	Plenary 4 – Case Scenarios (St. Bede Theater)
5:00 p.m.	Vespers in Archabbey Church
5:30 p.m.	Dinner (Newman Dining Room)
7:00 p.m.	Compline
7:30 p.m.	Social Activity

Thursday | September 3

7:30 a.m.	Mass with Benedictine Community in the Archabbey Church (Feast of St. Gregory)
8:15 a.m.	Buffet breakfast (Newman Dining Room)
9:30 a.m.	Workshops • Spotting the Red Flags: Interviewing for Personality Disorders (St. Bede Theater) • Using the Psychological Report as a Guide for Formation (Rm. 502) • Self-Care Skills for Leaders: Managing Interpersonal Conflict (Rm. 503)
10:45 a.m.	Pack up and networking
11:30 a.m.	Lunch and departure