

Vatican finishes work on psychological testing of seminary candidates

VATICAN CITY - The Vatican has finished work on a long-awaited document on the psychological testing of seminary candidates.

The document, titled "Guidelines for the Use of Psychology in the Admission and Formation of Candidates for the Priesthood," was to be released at a Vatican press conference Oct. 30, the Vatican announced.

Prepared by the Congregation for Catholic Education, the text was being issued in several languages, including English. The congregation has worked on the document for at least six years.

In 2005, Pope John Paul II told the education congregation that a candidate's ability to live a life of priestly celibacy must be "carefully verified" so that there is moral certainty about the candidate's emotional and sexual maturity.

"In light of present-day social and cultural changes, it can be at times useful that educators turn to the work of competent specialists to help seminarians comprehend more thoroughly the requirements of the priesthood, recognizing celibacy as a gift of love to the Lord and to one's brothers," Pope John Paul said.

Later in 2005, the congregation issued norms that ruled out the priestly ordination of homosexuals, but without spelling out who should determine whether a candidate for the priesthood had homosexual tendencies.

Sources have said one reason the document took so long to prepare was that the psychological testing of priesthood candidates remains a controversial issue at the Vatican.

Speaking to journalists at the press conference will be Cardinal Zenon Grocholewski, prefect of the education congregation; Archbishop Jean-Louis Brugues, secretary of

the congregation; and Father Carlo Bresciani, a psychologist and a consultant to the congregation who has written on bioethics and sexual morality.