Part 1: Statistical Information

Table 1: Distribution of grades awarded in May 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Abs</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>9.15</td>
<td>15.69</td>
<td>30.07</td>
<td>13.07</td>
<td>11.76</td>
<td>10.46</td>
<td>9.80</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

153 candidates registered for Religious Knowledge at Advanced level.

With the exception of a small number of candidates who answered very well, the candidates gave generic and standard answers and at times very poor and short ones. Candidates are to show mastery appropriate to an advanced level of study in discussing their topics and avoid basing their answers on general knowledge and/or puerile arguments, such as devotional customs.

Candidates should substantiate their arguments by referring to Biblical and Magisterial teachings. This should be strongly emphasized in the preparation for this subject. The candidates are to include such teachings in their answers.

Almost all candidates preferred to answer in Maltese. 9 candidates wrote all answers in English. The handwriting of some of the candidates was extremely difficult to read. Very poor grammatical and spelling mistakes are becoming more common.

Part 2: Comments regarding candidates’ performance

Comments regarding Paper 1

Question 1a was the most popular question in this paper. The vast majority answered this question regarding divine revelation. Some candidates wrote very good and sharp essays. The other candidates opted for question 1b. A good number of candidates could not focus on the real issues raised by the question that dealt with Jesus’ revelation of God as Father as well as that of the dignity of the human persons as children of God.

An almost equal number of candidates answered question 2a and 2b. Instead of writing a focused answer on either of the questions, many candidates gave vent to the most varied interpretations on original sin and evil. Question 2a was about the place of human beings in the order of creation and their relationship to the rest of creation. Question 2b dealt with the reality of sin.

Two thirds of the candidates decided to answer question 3a regarding St. Luke’s message. While some of the essays were very good, the majority were more of the same general information one learns by heart. Question 3b was about the episode of the three temptations of Jesus and its relationship to the theology of Luke’s gospel. The candidates gave a correct answer to the first part of the question; but many gave an invented interpretation to the latter part of the question.

Comments regarding Paper 2

An equal number of candidates answered question 1a and 1b. Question 1a was about the images of the Church as the mystical body of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit. Most candidates failed to point out that Christ is the Head of the Church and the importance of baptism. Many of them gave little importance to the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church. Many candidates who answered question 1b mentioned the biblical references to Mary but few of them mentioned the so-called Proto-Evangelium. Some students
presented very poor answers and talked more about Marian devotions, prayers, shrines and pilgrimages. Some candidates even referred to apocryphal teachings regarding Mary.

Question 2a proved to be the most popular question of this paper. Many candidates gave a satisfactory answer regarding the sacraments of Holy Orders and Marriage. Most of the candidates who answered question 2b wrote very good essays. They referred to the relevant events in which water played an important part as symbolising and pre-figuring the sacrament of baptism.

More than half of the candidates answered question 3a regarding the convocation of the Second Vatican Council by Pope John XXIII. A good number of candidates addressed the question very well and quite rightly pointed out the importance of the documents, *Gaudium et Spes* and *Nostra Aetate*. The other candidates wrote general essays on the council’s documents and consequently, went out of point. A good number of candidates who answered question 3b failed to put the life and work of St. Benedict in the historical situation of his time as well as to address the impact of the Benedictine order on European society and culture.

**Comments regarding Paper 3**

Two thirds of the candidates answered question 1b regarding reconciliation. The other candidates opted for question 1a that dealt with the dignity of human persons. In answering either question the candidates provided a general idea and not a good grasp of the topic. A good number of essays were out of point. A number of candidates who answered question 1a did not know the meaning of universal and inviolable. Many of the answers given to 1b give the impression that the candidates studied notes without engaging in serious research and study of the sacrament of reconciliation.

More than half of the candidates answered question 2a regarding abortion. Many of the answers were very rudimentary. Some misconceptions are quite alarming. Many failed to establish a clear link between abortion and the dignity of the unborn. A number of candidates, who answered question 2b about sexuality and married love, gave vague answers. Instead of discussing the Christian vision of sexuality or married love, they listed a number of things that go against marriage.

Most candidates preferred to answer question 3b about solidarity. The other candidates answered question 3a regarding human development. The answers to question 3a were very general in nature and addressed the first part of the question regarding the distinction between having and being. Only few candidates discussed human development. A number of candidates mistook human development for economic development. The candidates who answered question 3b did better and showed that they are familiar with the theme. The standard, however, is low referring only to a general knowledge of the subject. It seems that the Social Teaching of the Church is not being given the importance it deserves.

Chairperson
Board of Examiners
July 2009