I had the opportunity to follow the life of this School and am a witness of the high academic quality of the faculty members and their dedication to the formation and training of more than 650 canonists who obtained canonical degrees of Licentiate and Doctorate. The specificity of the program of studies contributes to a deeper learning of the technical aspects of the law of the Church.

The Church has an urgent need of excellently trained canonical personnel in ecclesiastical tribunals. The formation granted by this School, either in curricular or refresher courses, satisfies this need.

The thoroughly and rigorously academic formation received at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross has been very helpful in carrying out my assigned duties as Secretary for Canon Law to the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria since 2003. This office places on me the responsibility of assisting the Episcopal Conference, dioceses, and associations of the faithful with professional advice on canonical issues as well as the formulation and review of their canonical documents, the ongoing formation of the Marriage Tribunal officials of the dioceses through regular seminars and workshops, and the basic canonical formation of priests and lay faithful in different forums. I am very happy to assist the youthful Church in Nigeria in this capacity, thanks to the excellent preparation received from my alma mater. I remain ever grateful to those who made my studies in Rome possible.
The program of study in Canon Law is divided into three cycles: the first cycle for students who have not yet fully completed the required courses in philosophy and theology; the second cycle focusing on the Institute in Canon Law; and the third cycle leading to the Doctorate in Canon Law.

FIRST CYCLE
The first cycle consists of at least two years of study and provides the basic theoretical and juridical background necessary to prepare the student for the second cycle or the licentiate program. To gain admission to the first cycle, the candidate must have received a degree which would allow them to begin university studies in their own country.

Students attend courses in the first cycle in the Schools of Theology or Philosophy, or in the University’s Higher Institute of Sacred Sciences.

SECOND CYCLE (LICENTIATE IN CANON LAW)
The second cycle (licentiate) consists of three years (six semesters) of study. Upon satisfactory completion of the course work and a comprehensive examination, the student is awarded the academic title of Licentiate in Canon Law.

The courses for all three years of the second cycle are offered in a systematic and theoretical way which enables the student to work in the juridical field.

Students attend courses within the Schools of Theology or Philosophy, or in the University’s Higher Institute of Sacred Sciences.

During the second and third years, students take elective courses among those presented by the School. Some are more theoretical while others are more practical. They are taught by professors of the Faculty, Judges of the Roman Rota and other ecclesiastical tribunals, as well as officials of the Roman Curia. With these courses, the student acquires more specific training for their future professional tasks (judges, diocesan chancellor, advocate, defenders of the Faith). The following are some of the elective courses offered in recent years:

- Matrimonial Canon
- Jurisprudence of the Roman Rota on Matrimony
- Penitentials on Matrimonial Cases I
- Penitentials on Matrimonial Cases II
- Penal Procedure
- Causes of the Grega
- Administrative Procedure
- Jurisdiction in Personal Condition in the Parish
- Human Rights: Foundation, Formulation and Protection
- Administrative Reorganization
- Procedure Regarding the Clerical State
- Structure and Function of the Roman Curia
- Jurisdiction of the Church Ministry and Contents
- Administrative Reorganization
- Canon Law and State Law: a Comparative Analysis of Legal Systems in the World
- Religious law in Comparative State Law at the Dawn of the 21st Century

THIRD CYCLE (Doctorate)
The doctoral program is designed for those who plan to dedicate themselves to academic research and the teaching of Canon Law at the university level.

In the doctoral program, the student attends microcourses and courses based on a dissertation under the supervision of a professor. To gain admission to the third cycle, a student must have completed a licentiate in Canon Law with a minimum grade average of magna cum laude (minimum grade point average of 8.6 on a 10-point scale). The student must reside in Rome for at least the first academic year of doctoral studies.

Further information on the School, the Faculty and the program of studies, can be found at http://www.pec.it

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