

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology
Appoints Fr. Tom Cassidy, SCJ, as Interim President-Rector**

HALES CORNERS, WISCONSIN - Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology (SHSST) announces the appointment of Fr. Tom Cassidy, SCJ, as its interim President-Rector. Fr. Cassidy begins a one-year appointment on July 8, 2024.

Fr. Raúl Gómez-Ruiz, SDS, will be stepping down as President-Rector to serve in leadership for his religious order, the Society of the Divine Savior (Salvatorians).

Sacred Heart is an apostolate of the Priests of the Sacred Heart (also referred to as Dehonians after their founder). The Dehonians, faculty, staff, seminarians, and students of SHSST are grateful for Fr. Gómez' nearly 30 years of service, with the last five as President-Rector. Fr. Gómez shepherded the school through the pandemic, raised the profile of the seminary through collaborations and scholarship, led the school through growth in faculty and students, and began the implementation of the Program of Priestly Formation Sixth Edition. He leaves SHSST with a bright future in the service of the Church.

Fr. Cassidy is a seasoned leader with extensive experience in education and leadership. He served two terms on the Dehonians' General Council in Rome, was provincial superior of the US Province, provincial councilor, principal and superintendent of several schools in the US, worked in formation, and served as president of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men in the United States.

“His extensive experience, commitment to forming men and women for church ministry, and his deep knowledge of the apostolate make him an excellent choice for this role,” said Fr. Vien Nguyen, SCJ, current provincial superior of the US Province and president of the SHSST Board of Directors.

A Milwaukee native, Fr. Cassidy professed his first vows with the Priests of the Sacred Heart in 1962 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1971. Although retired, he is anything but inactive. Since completing his second term as provincial superior he has regularly done extended periods of service in Asia assisting with formation and leadership development.

Fr. Stephen Huffstetter, SCJ, has been named as the President-Rector designate. He is currently completing his second term on the Dehonians' General Council in Rome. When he returns to the United States, he will be a member of the Sacred Heart Monastery Community, which will allow him to familiarize himself with SHSST while on sabbatical. He will assume his new position at the start of the 2025 academic year.

“I know both of these men,” added Fr. Vien. “Fr. Cassidy supported my pursuit of higher education and prepared me for leadership roles when he was provincial superior. Fr. Huffstutter was my formation director. I admire his ability to listen and welcome feedback. They are competent and spiritual leaders. I am confident that their leadership will inspire and guide us all.”

Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology provides the four dimensions of priestly formation (spiritual, pastoral, human and intellectual) for over 28 US and Canadian dioceses and religious orders. Sacred Heart also provides the intellectual formation for the seminarians of St. Francis de Sales Seminary and serves numerous international dioceses and religious orders through the English and Culture Studies program. SHSST is in Hales Corners, WI.

(Photo of Fr. Tom Cassidy, SCJ, is attached)

