

Prerequisites for intellectual formation in the Configuration Stage are:

- “a working knowledge of Sacred Scripture and the Catechism of the Catholic Church” (PPF6, no. 289)
- a minimum of 30 credits in philosophical studies reflecting the subjects of the PPF6 (no. 306)
- a minimum of 12 credits in introductory theology, religious studies, or Catholic Studies (PPF6, no. 308)

Exceptions to these requirements will be considered at the request of the sponsor based on a seminarian’s life experience, prior formation, or ordination trajectory. SHSST may require an equivalency examination.

Desired Outcomes

Following the goals and benchmarks of the PPF6 (nos. 291–292), intellectual formation during the Configuration Stage inculcates:

- steadfast faithfulness to the Word of God and the teachings of the Magisterium
- a clear articulation of the relationship between reason, science, revelation, and faith
- the prudent exploration and defense of the truths of faith through sound theological methods and Church dogmas
- sound hermeneutics in the interpretation of Sacred Scripture alongside a spiritual

and pastoral application of the Word of God, especially in preaching

- the thoughtful application of Catholic moral theology and social teaching to the lives of the People of God
- the diligent incorporation of liturgical and sacramental theology in one’s understanding and practice of divine worship
- insightful lessons from the faithfulness and frailties of the Church in her members throughout her history
- an ecclesial prudence in applying canon law to pastoral situations
- authentic theological reflection on experiences from pastoral ministry
- an intercultural sensitivity and openness to all people in speech and action
- the theological integration of human virtue and the spiritual life for effective pastoral ministry as a priestly shepherd

MASTER OF DIVINITY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

As the academic framework for Sacred Heart’s Program of Priestly Formation, the Master of Divinity Program presents an integrated approach through the four dimensions: human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral. The seminarian actively engages in his own priestly formation through self-reflection, self-gift, and spiritual fortitude. Academic coursework conforms heart and mind to the person of Jesus Christ as present in the Church.

Seminarians engage in experiential learning through reflection upon pastoral placements and activities to develop pastoral charity. All of this takes place with a supportive seminary community including faculty, staff, priest-formation advisors, spiritual directors, and peers. Each seminarian program recognizes and acknowledges the uniqueness of each person's life and experience as well as the needs of the sponsor diocese or religious community.

For the 2025–2026 academic year, SHSST will introduce a **new, revised Master of Divinity degree curriculum** to align better with the vision of the PPF6. This new curriculum maintains previous credit hours while introducing new integration opportunities via workshops and seminars, developed through extensive consultation of priest alumni, faculty, sponsors, and the formation team at St. Francis de Sales Seminary. The new curriculum accommodates either **seven-semester or eight-semester plans**, depending on a sponsor's model for Vocational Synthesis (PPF6, no. 147). The new curriculum applies to seminarians entering either Configuration I or II.

All four dimensions of priestly formation take place within a faith community in Christ, reflecting the communion of the Church as rooted in the Blessed Trinity. According to the 2016 *Ratio Fundamentalis*, "Formation comes about every day through interpersonal relationships, moments of



exchange and discussion which result in the development of that 'fertile soil', in which a vocation matures concretely" (no. 50). Further, "Seminarians are bound, both individually and as a group, to demonstrate—and not only in their external behavior—that they have internalized an authentically priestly way of life, in humility and service of their brothers. This is a sign of a mature choice to give themselves to following Christ in a special way" (*Ratio Fundamentalis*, no. 131).

M.Div. Admission & Graduation Requirements

Sacred Heart's Master of Divinity Program is open only to those admitted to the Program of Priestly Formation. Seminarians who advance to the Configuration Stage and possess a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree are automatically admitted to the M.Div. Program. If a seminarian's background warrants an exception, a sponsor may request a different course of study or a Certificate in Priestly Formation.

Full-time status is defined as nine academic credit hours, which may include a pastoral placement and/or novitiate.

The M.Div. degree is granted to students who have satisfactorily completed **117 credit hours** in intellectual and pastoral formation and the components of the human and spiritual formation program.

Seminarians must have a cumulative GPA of 2.5 in Sacred Heart courses to be eligible for the Master of Divinity degree.

Transfer Credits

Graduate credits from accredited higher education institutions can be transferred to fulfill the M.Div. course requirements. These courses must be equivalent to SHSST courses and must not have been taken more than 10 years before the student's matriculation at Sacred Heart. There is no limit to the number of credits that can be transferred. However, at least 50 credits must be earned at Sacred Heart during at least four semesters as a full-time seminarian to earn the M.Div. degree.

Intellectual and Pastoral Formation Requirements

- Sacred Scripture – 20 credits
- Church History – 12 credits
- Systematic Theology – 43 credits
- Pastoral Studies – 24 credits
- Pastoral Formation – 14 credits
- Elective Courses – 4 credits

Human and Spiritual Formation Requirements

- Program of spiritual direction
- Participation in the liturgical life of the seminary
- Involvement in weekly prayer groups
- Attendance at weekly formation group seminars
- Regular meetings with a formation advisor
- Attainment of satisfactory annual formation evaluation
- Participation in annual retreats and days of recollection

M.Div. Desired Outcomes

The four dimensions of priestly formation, human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral, are governed by a profile of desired outcomes that SHSST has developed for graduates of the Master of Divinity Program. This profile articulates the qualities a successful graduate of SHSST is expected to have cultivated while at SHSST and to exhibit when he enters into the ministry of the Church. Each of the four dimensions has ten qualities, which are then elaborated in several specific desired outcomes. The faculty and administration use these qualities and desired outcomes to develop, implement, and assess all components of the program—courses, individual and group formational components and activities, and pastoral training.

HUMAN FORMATION

- Healthy physically and psychologically
- Mature emotionally
- Moral in character and actions
- Compassionate
- Insightful
- Open to other viewpoints
- Approachable in human interaction and relationships
- Appropriate as a public persona
- Accountable in work habits and professional performance

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

- Growing in relationship with Jesus Christ
- Embodying a priestly identity in persona Christi
- Enthusiastic about the sacramental life and vision of the Church
- Steadfast in prayer and solitude
- Chaste for the kingdom
- Respectful of ecclesial authority
- Simple in lifestyle
- Dedicated to the works of social justice
- Zealous for evangelization
- Persevering in ongoing formation and spiritual growth

INTELLECTUAL FORMATION

Following the goals and benchmarks of the PPF6 (nos. 291 – 292), intellectual formation during the Configuration Stage inculcates:

- steadfast faithfulness to the Word for God and the teachings of the Magisterium
- a clear articulation of the relationship between reason,

science, revelation, and faith

- the prudent exploration and defense of the truths of faith through sound theological methods and Church dogmas
- sound hermeneutics in the interpretation of Sacred Scripture alongside a spiritual and pastoral application of the Word of God, especially in preaching
- the thoughtful application of Catholic moral theology and social teaching to the lives of the People of God
- the diligent incorporation of liturgical and sacramental theology in one's understanding and practice of divine worship
- insightful lessons from the faithfulness and frailties of the Church in her members throughout her history
- an ecclesial prudence in applying canon law to pastoral situations
- authentic theological reflection on experiences from pastoral ministry
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- the theological integration of human virtue and the spiritual life for effective pastoral ministry as a priestly shepherd



PASTORAL FORMATION

- Inspiring as a prayer leader and minister of the sacraments
- Skilled in preaching and teaching
- Capable in servant leadership
- Collaborative with all in ministry
- Engaged with the cultures of the community
- Caring toward the sick, suffering, and marginalized
- Available to others appropriately
- Effective in counseling and the practice of helping skills
- Vigilant in safeguarding the welfare of Church members
- Attentive to lifelong development of pastoral skills

M.Div. Academic Curriculum

The M.Div. curriculum challenges, deepens, and enriches the candidate's personal understanding of Jesus Christ and the gospel. Coursework teaches the seminarian how to frame and communicate Christ's message to the world through the living tradition of the Church.

- Professors employ a variety of pedagogical methods and interface with formation faculty.
- Small class sizes facilitate personal exchanges.
- The Leo Dehon Library offers personal writing and research assistance.

- Faculty attend to the individual growth of each seminarian, following St. John Henry Newman's vision that a Catholic theologate remains "an Alma Mater, knowing her children one by one."

The following new core curriculum reflects the standards of the PPF6. (*Seminarians in Configuration III and IV continue to follow the old M.Div. curriculum, found in the 2024–2025 SHSST Catalog.*)

SACRED SCRIPTURE (SS)

Course number, credits, and name

SS 510	2	Scriptural Foundations
SS 517	3	Pauline & Catholic Epistles
SS 521	3	Synoptic Gospels and Acts of Apostles
SS 526	2	Prophetic Literature
SS 540	2	Historical Books
SS 545	3	Pentateuch
SS 595	3	Johannine Literature
SS 601	2	Psalms and Wisdom Literature

CHURCH HISTORY (CH)

Course number, credits, and name

CH 510	3	History of the Universal Church I
CH 515	3	History of the Universal Church II
CH 520	3	Patrology and Patristics
CH 625	3	The Catholic Church in America

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Dogmatic Theology (DT);
Moral Theology (MT);
Sacramental Theology (ST)

Course number, credits, and name

DT 511	3	Fundamental Theology
DT 518	3	Trinity
DT 519	3	Creation, Anthropology, & Eschatology
DT 521	3	Christology and Soteriology
DT 526	3	Ecclesiology and Mariology
DT 527	3	Ecumenism & World Religions
MT 510	3	Fundamental Moral Theology
MT 521	3	Biomedical Ethics
MT 606	3	Sexual Ethics
MT 620	3	Catholic Social Teaching
ST 520	3	Liturgy and Sacramentology
ST 525	2	Baptism and Confirmation
ST 601	2	Reconciliation and Anointing
ST 605	2	Marriage and Theology of Family
ST 620	2	Eucharist: History and Theology
ST 625	2	Holy Orders and Spirituality of the Priesthood

PASTORAL STUDIES

Spirituality (SP); Canonical Studies (CS);
Liturgical Studies (LS); Pastoral Studies (PS);
Integration Workshops (SDWS, HDWS, PDWS)

Course number, credits, and name

SP 510	3	Foundations in Spirituality
CS 600	2	Canon Law I
CS 602	2	Canon Law II
CS 605	2	Canon Law III (Marriage)
LS 510	2	Fundamental Preaching Skills
LS 611	3	Preaching the Word of God
LS 625	2	Liturgical Preaching
LS 530	2	Sacred Music in the Roman Rite
PS 510	3	Pastoral Care and Counseling
PS 620	3	Parish Administration

SDWS 500	0	Ecce Workshop (Configuration I)
HDWS 600	0	Sint Unum Workshop (Configuration II)
PDWS 700	0	Adveniat Workshop (Configuration III)

See Core Course descriptions beginning on page 61.

See Financial Information beginning on page 87.

M.Div. Electives

In addition to the core curriculum, four credits of electives are required. Elective courses vary from semester to semester. Topics include philosophy and systematic theology, sacramental and moral theology, spirituality, Scripture, biblical languages, Hispanic studies, and Jewish studies.

PHILOSOPHY & SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

- Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas
- Thought of St. John Henry Newman
- Providence, Predestination,
and the Problem of Pain
- Saint Augustine of Hippo: Sinner to Saint
- Theology of Grace

SACRAMENTAL AND MORAL THEOLOGY

- Science of Forgiveness
- The 20th-Century Liturgical Movement

SPIRITUALITY

- Sacred Heart: Devotion and Doctrine
- Spirituality of St. Bonaventure
- Marian Spirituality and Devotion

SCRIPTURE

- New Testament Soteriology
- Book of Revelation & Apocalyptic Literature

BIBLICAL LANGUAGES

- Biblical Greek
- Biblical Hebrew
- Ecclesiastical Latin

HISPANIC MINISTRY PREPARATION

- Hispanic Devotional Practices
- Preaching and Presiding in the Hispanic Community
- Pastoral Spanish

JEWISH STUDIES

- Life of Holiness: Introduction to Judaism
- Introduction to Jewish Prayer and Liturgy
- Messianism & Salvation in Judaism

Pastoral Formation

Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology's Pastoral Formation Program seeks to form future priests in the Christ the Good Shepherd model. Our program cultivates the development of an array of pastoral skills needed to serve God's people. Working in conjunction with the other dimensions of formation, a genuinely pastoral heart is formed through instruction, supervised ministry in pastoral settings, and theological reflection on pastoral experiences.

The call to priestly life and ministry is an invitation to act in concert with the same love and compassion as Jesus. As the PPF6 notes, formation “permeated by a pastoral spirit” requires more than skill acquisition (*Ratio Fundamentalis*, no. 119). It also requires personal formation and transformation fitting for one who is called to assume the role of shepherd and “man of communion” for a community (PPF6, no. 370c).

Seminary life prepares individuals for a life lived in communion with one's bishop and members of the local presbyterate, “cultivating bonds of affective communion and learning how to be at home in the place where one will serve and with the priests with whom one will serve.”

Pastoral formation, first of all, is the work of Christ, who calls and guides. Furthermore, it is the work of the Church, which enlists many in the pastoral formation process. Finally, it is the work of the seminarian, who is open to learning from experience.



Components of Pastoral Formation

INTELLECTUAL FORMATION

In addition to courses in Pastoral Studies, all seminarians must complete at least 14 credits in Pastoral Formation for the M.Div. degree. Courses include practica in Sacramental Rites, Pastoral Placements, Preaching Placements, Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), and an Integrating Seminar capstone. For the M.Div. degree, SHSST recognizes select equivalency courses in Pastoral Formation offered directly through St. Francis de Sales Seminary.

Courses are designed to help students develop skills of pastoral care and intercultural competency in ministerial functioning in the Roman Catholic Church today. These courses are based on theory and practice and will include classroom lectures, discussion groups, and presentations.

PASTORAL PLACEMENTS

Pastoral placements are intentionally balanced between sites in sponsoring dioceses/religious communities and the metropolitan Milwaukee area. The seminary's strategic location in the Milwaukee area enhances its ministry options, which include diverse cultural and ethnic settings as well as a variety of parish models. The type, style, and location of the pastoral placements are adapted to the differing needs of the sponsoring dioceses, religious communities, and seminarians.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

Now integrated with Pastoral Placements, students are asked to choose a specific incident from their own recent ministry experience which caused them to reflect on the application of the Church's teaching. How is the power, presence, activity, and the will of God active in this event? How do Scripture, theology, church history, and pastoral studies inform and guide?

CLINICAL PASTORAL EXPERIENCE

This is an 11-week intensive program of Pastoral Formation conducted under the auspices of the National Association of Clinical Pastoral Education. It is typically conducted in hospital settings in a cohort model that emphasizes peer-to-peer processing and supervisory feedback. Programs must meet the certification requirements of the Association of Clinical Pastoral Education.

INTEGRATING SEMINAR

The Integrating Seminar is intended to help seminarians evaluate the ways in which they have grown in meeting the benchmarks of the priestly formation program, as well as identify areas of growth where they can focus as they enter into priestly ministry. The seminar is coordinated with academic and formation faculties and typically accomplished during the final semester as a student (during the Vocational Synthesis Stage).

See Pastoral Formation course descriptions beginning on page 63.

PASTORAL FORMATION COURSES (PF)

Course number, credits, and name

PF 510	0	Introduction to Pastoral Formation
PF 620	1	Sacramental Rites Practicum I: Baptism, Marriage
PF 625	1	Sacramental Rites Practicum II: Eucharist, Paraliturgical
PF 630	1	Sacramental Rites Practicum III: Eucharist, Reconciliation
PF 650	3	Integrating Seminar

SUPERVISED FIELD EDUCATION (FE)

Course number, credits, and name

FE 535	2	Summer Pastoral Placement I (w/ integrated Theological Reflection and focus on evangelization & on the poor)
FE 540	2	Summer Pastoral Placement II (w/ integrated Theological Reflection and focus on catechesis & on the poor)
FE CPE	3	Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)
FE 625	1	Diaconal Preaching Placement

If the Summer Pastoral Placement courses are not possible, a seminarian can pursue the following alternatives:

Course number, credits, and name

FE 520	1	Concurrent Field Placement I (with Theological Reflection): Evangelization
FE 525	1	Concurrent Field Placement II (with Theological Reflection): Evangelization

FE 555	1	Concurrent Field Placement I (with Theological Reflection): Catechesis
FE 560	1	Concurrent Field Placement II (with Theological Reflection): Catechesis

CERTIFICATE IN PRIESTLY FORMATION

Sacred Heart offers a **Certificate in Priestly Formation** candidates whose sponsors may not wish them to pursue an undergraduate degree. The Certificate Program consists of the same four components as the Master of Divinity Program: human formation, spiritual formation, intellectual formation, and pastoral formation. Admission requirements are the same as for the Master of Divinity Program except for the requirement of an undergraduate degree. The certificate is conferred upon completion of all the required program components. To be eligible, the candidate must be at least 30 years old and have at least 60 undergraduate credits from accredited institutions.

INDIVIDUALIZED ORDINATION TRACK

An individual program through the four dimensions of Priestly Formation is designed for candidates who enter the seminary as Permanent Deacons or have previous seminary formation. Plans are based on the prior coursework and life experience of the candidate in conversation with the sponsoring diocese.