



Sacred Heart

PRIESTLY FORMATION

shsst.edu | HALES CORNERS, WI | *Apostolate of the Priests of the Sacred Heart*



Why Sacred Heart?



Trusted

More than 50 dioceses and religious orders trust Sacred Heart through our programs for Priestly Formation and English and Culture Studies. Our unique specialized formation tracks have been created to meet the needs of each student and the diverse communities they are preparing to serve.

Integrated Approach

The Program of Priestly Formation at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology serves sponsor dioceses and religious communities in preparing seminarians for ordained priestly ministry. Seminarians have diverse life experiences, educational backgrounds, and academic needs. But they have a common goal: to serve the people of God's Church through the Roman Catholic priesthood.

Through an integrated program across the human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral dimensions, seminarians participate in the initial program of priestly formation through discernment, prayer, study, and service. Successive stages of formation that include Propaedeutic (preparatory), Discipleship, Configuration to Christ, and Vocational

Synthesis, all take place within the seminary community of faith. Growth in holiness for each seminarian leads to pastoral charity serving to conform our world to the Heart of Christ. *The Program of Priestly Formation*, 6th Edition, (PPF6) serves as the foundation for our specialized formation program.

Specialized Formation

The mission of Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology is *"preparing evangelizing disciples through specialized formation to conform our world to the Heart of Christ."* The "specialized formation" presents several different paths in preparation for priestly formation through an integrated approach involving human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral dimensions.

Customized Student Plans

Academic studies include a Master of Arts in Catholic Studies, the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) program, a Pontifical Baccalaureate in Theology (the “S.T.B.”) through partnership with the Pontifical Gregorian University, a Master of Arts in Theology (Lumen Cordis Pathway), and an Individualized Ordination Track or Certificate programs.

Formation in Community

Priestly formation takes place within community life as each seminarian takes responsibility for his own priestly formation through self-reflection, prompting generosity and self-gift, accompanied by a priest formation advisor, spiritual director, formation team, and the entire seminary community including faculty and staff.

Seminarians in Discipleship and Configuration meet weekly in affinity learning groups and bi-weekly with their formation advisor and spiritual director. “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” (*Ratio fundamentalis*, no. 50).

Community life and spiritual growth develop through collaborative efforts directed toward the common good and arising through self-discipline as seminarians develop skills for healthy interpersonal relationships. At each stage, community life is formative, encouraging dialogue, mutual trust and support, and development of leadership skills. The seminary serves as a place for the development of human virtues, authenticity, integrity, hard work, and solidarity.

Days of Recollection

Days of Recollection are scheduled as an integral part of the school year. Silence is observed to facilitate a spirit of prayer. All seminarians, faculty, administrators, and staff participate.

Liturgical Prayer

The Eucharist is celebrated daily. The Angelus is prayed every class day. Reconciliation is scheduled weekly. Communal Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and the Liturgy of the Hours are incorporated into the regular liturgical life of the seminary.





Stages of Priestly Formation



Propaedeutic House

The Dehon House is a beautiful five-bedroom home on campus which serves as the communal living space for the Propaedeutic stage. Men living here become familiar with Sacred Heart's people, places, and prayer schedules, providing a smooth transition into seminary life.

Propaedeutic Stage

Sacred Heart offers a one-of-a-kind Propaedeutic Stage program which is provided on campus for seminarians living together in the Dehon House, and off-site for seminarians living in a diocesan formation house. This stage lays the foundation of the formational journey, emphasizing human and spiritual development. It is also a time of preparation for seminary studies. Men live in a community of discernment and accompaniment, apart from the seminary, for 12 months to two years.

Discipleship Stage

Continuing to grow in relationship with Jesus Christ, seminarians move into philosophical studies. Through prayer and human formation, seminarians grow in the Christian virtues. The main goal of the

Discipleship Stage is "growing in an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ through the life of meditation and contemplation, as well as the training of one's character in Christian virtue" (PPF6, no. 132). This stage typically lasts at least two years, continuing the discernment process of seminarians.

Academic Tracks

During the Propaedeutic and Discipleship Stages, seminarians have the option to work toward either program: 1) Master of Arts in Catholic Studies, or 2) Bachelor of Arts in University Studies with a minor in philosophy (B.A./M.Div. Program) through affiliation with the University of Mary in Bismark, N.D.

Configuration Stage

The Configuration Stage prepares men for Holy Orders, guiding seminarians in the sacrifice of self to be God's shepherds. During the Configuration Stage, seminarians are to be instituted to the Ministries of Lector and Acolyte, preparing more diligently for Holy Orders. They are to "enter profoundly into the contemplation of the person of Jesus Christ" (PPF6, no. 135) and integrate "the sentiments and attitudes of the Son, understood as self-offering for the pastoral care of the sheep" (PPF6, no. 136). There is also a focus on graduate-level theology concentrating on the knowledge of Scripture, divine mysteries rooted in the Magisterium, ecumenical practices, and priestly ministry (PPF6, no. 135).

Academic Tracks

During the Configuration Stage, seminarians may choose to work toward multiple programs: 1) Master of Divinity, 2) Certificate in Priestly Formation, 3) Individualized Formation Track with Modified M.Div. Curriculum, 4) Master of Arts in Theology, and 5) Pontifical Baccalaureate in Theology (S.T.B.).

Vocational Synthesis Stage

The Vocational Synthesis Stage "is a gradual realization of the cleric's responsibility for the care of the souls while he resides full-time in a pastoral setting, usually a parish" (PPF6, no. 137). The goal of this stage is to introduce seminarians (some as newly ordained deacons) to the daily experiences of priestly life and pastoral service. Seminarians apply the knowledge, skills, and spiritual development gained through seminary formation to serve ministries within their diocese or ecclesial entity. SHSST can work with sponsors on placements, benchmarks, rubrics, and training for supervising priests.



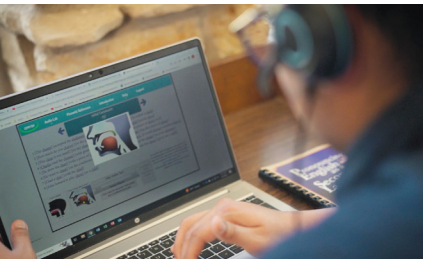
Immersive Experiences

Courses in the classroom are complemented by powerful, shared learning experiences that foster collaboration and enrich understanding. One example is the Annual Biblical Pilgrimage. The 2026 Summer group will explore *Biblical Italy*.





English and Culture Studies



Clear Pronunciation

Personalized instruction, study, and practice in the Accent Modification course are enhanced by technology that shows the placement of the tongue inside one's mouth to achieve better pronunciation.

Global Impact

Each year, over 50 global Catholic priests and seminarians come to pursue English fluency for ministries or graduate programs.

Core Courses

Priests and seminarians gather from around the globe for our English and Culture Studies Program. Based on placement testing, students learn beginner, intermediate, or advanced skills in **reading, writing, grammar, and oral communication**. Students are integrated into daily seminary activities alongside native English-speakers, such as daily Mass, prayer, dining room conversation, and cultural outings. Courses are offered during the seminary's fall and spring semesters, and also over the summer break.

Graduate Program Preparation

Sacred Heart also helps students master English so they can effectively engage in graduate-level theology programs (Master of Divinity, Master of Arts, etc.) and parish ministry. The **Seminary Bridge Program** introduces philosophical and theological reading and academic writing. A **Book Talks** course develops deep reading skills, vocabulary, and speaking fluency. **Clear Pronunciation (Accent Modification)**, available **100% online**, provides personalized feedback and skilled instruction to students as they study, practice, and record their pronunciation of the entire Eucharistic liturgy.

Making a Difference

Hispanic Ministry Preparation

Our Hispanic Ministry Preparation Program prepares our graduates to minister effectively with a cultural understanding of the diverse Hispanic cultures present in the U.S. Church. Course plans can be specialized for specific ministries.

Immigration Resources

Because our students come to SHSST from around the world, we have a dedicated international student programs coordinator ready to assist sponsoring dioceses and religious orders with the immigration plans for their admitted students.

The Lux Center for Catholic-Jewish Studies

Inspired by *Nostra Aetate*, we are the only U.S. Catholic seminary that has its own Catholic-Jewish studies center. Through education, encounter, and community engagement, The Lux Center works to form future Catholic leaders who are knowledgeable about Judaism and committed to mutual respect and collaboration between faith communities.



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An apostolate of the Priests of the Sacred Heart

CONTACT US

Priestly Formation:

Deacon Steve Kramer, D.Min.
Director of Recruitment,
discerning@shsst.edu

English and Culture Studies:

Ryan Stubbs, Director
ecsp@shsst.edu

Schedule a Visit:

We are located in Hales Corners, Wisconsin, on a 250 acre partially wooded campus, 15 minutes from the Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport and 75 minutes from the Chicago O'Hare International Airport.