Priestly Formation Program

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.

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. Academic degrees and academic tracks include a **Master of Arts in Catholic Studies**, the **Master of Divinity** (M.Div.) degree, a **Pontifical Baccalaureate in Theology** through partnership with the Pontifical Gregorian University, a **Master of Arts in Theology**, and an **Individualized Ordination Track**.

Priestly formation takes place within community life as each seminarian takes responsibility for his own priestly formation through self-reflection, which prompts 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.

Profile of Priestly Formation

This profile governs the development of the curricula in the four dimensions of priestly formation. It consists of eight (8) characteristics, each containing at least three benchmarks relating to the *Program of Priestly Formation,* 6th Edition that should represent something observable in the seminarian.

Faithful Chastity

The seminarian fashions his desires, thoughts, passions, and behaviors in such a way that he is able to live a healthy, celibate lifestyle that expresses self-gift in fruitful and life-giving love for the kingdom.

1.1 Articulates his understanding of God's call to a lifelong commitment of celibate chastity. (PPF6, no. 238)
1.2 Embraces the Church's moral teachings in all matters of sexuality. (PPF6, no. 334)
1.3 Cultivates self-knowledge of his strengths and challenges in the area of sexuality. (PPF6, no. 183)
1.4 Maintains appropriate interpersonal boundaries with others. (PPF6, no. 377)

Fervent Discipleship

The seminarian orients the whole person (mind, will, affections, body) towards the person of Christ and life in the Spirit.

2.1 Discerns interior and moral life within the life of the Church and her Tradition. (PPF6, no. 232)
2.2 Nurtures interior life and relationship with God by engaging in regular spiritual practices like personal prayer, the Liturgy of the Hours, the Sacrament of Penance, the Eucharist, adoration, and retreats. (PPF6, no. 229)
2.3 Manifests zeal for the life of discipleship marked by the ability to perceive God's grace concretely active in his life and the lives of others. (PPF6, no. 239)

Intellectual Insight

The seminarian cultivates wisdom through a solid understanding of the Western intellectual heritage traditions and Catholic cultural and theological traditions, and displays openness to non-Western conceptual frameworks.

3.1 Exhibits ongoing development as a broadly educated Christian man who engages with society. (PPF6, no. 272)
3.2 Utilizes philosophical concepts and logical arguments in forming his reason and positions. (PPF6, no. 272)
3.3 Articulates the relationship between reason, human sciences, revelation, and faith. (PPF6, no. 289)
3.4 Explores the truths of faith in light of sound theological method and Catholic theological tradition. (PPF6, no. 292)
3.5 Interprets the Bible utilizing Catholic exegetical and hermeneutical principles when spiritually and pastorally applying the Word of God. (PPF6, no. 324)
3.6 Applies moral theology to the lives of the people of God. (PPF6, no. 332)
3.7 Incorporates sound liturgical and sacramental theology in his understanding of the worship of the people of God. (PPF6, no. 291f)
3.8 Pursues individual study and ongoing intellectual formation that will serve him throughout his life as a priest. (PPF6, no. 293)
3.9 Grasps lessons to be learned from the faithfulness and frailties of the Church throughout history. (PPF6, nos. 275, 338)

Theological Integration

Seminarians can bridge the gap between theological insight, human excellence, the spiritual life, and pastoral practice.

4.1 Integrates theology with other elements of human understanding, especially philosophy and the natural and human sciences. (PPF6, no. 291)
4.2 Synthesizes spiritual and theological components into ministerial activities in ways that are consistent with Church teaching and the practices of an effective priestly shepherd. (PPF6, no. 292)

4.3 Reflects theologically on human, spiritual, and pastoral issues encountered in his ministry. (PPF6, no. 345)

Intercultural Engagement

The seminarian values cultural diversity in relation to theological expressions, spiritual approaches, and devotional practices which enable ministerial adaptability in intercultural contexts.

5.1 Demonstrates intercultural sensitivity and openness to all people in speech and action. (PPF6, no. 377)
5.2 Shows growth in freedom from prejudices against any class or group of individuals. (PPF6, no. 183g)
5.3 Works effectively in ecumenical and interreligious contexts. (PPF6, no. 380)
5.4 Identifies the various unique and beautiful ways the Holy Spirit is working to bring about a new evangelization in our time. (PPF6, no. 379)

Relational Communication

The seminarian communicates verbally and non-verbally so as to foster communion among people and with the Triune God.

6.1 Communicates clearly in both the written and spoken word. (PPF6, no. 290)
6.2 Conveys the teachings of the Church in pastoral settings with charity and zeal. (PPF6, no. 383).
6.3 Models sensitivity and prudence regarding behavior and language in pastoral settings. (PPF6, no. 377)

Pastoral Charity

The seminarian functions as a priestly shepherd who nurtures, guides, encourages, and guards the community of faith in sacramental, pastoral, administrative, and teaching roles, lending help, comfort, and healing to those in need.

7.1 Manifests the identity of the priesthood – Head and Shepherd, Servant and Spouse. (PPF6, no. 242)
7.2 Displays a capacity to compassionately and decisively lead a community of faith. (PPF6, no. 202)
7.3 Celebrates the liturgical rites competently, faithfully, and fruitfully. (PPF6, no. 374)
7.4 Exercises the Ministry of the Word by proclaiming the Gospel and by teaching and defending the Catholic faith. (PPF6, nos. 292, 293)
7.5 Exercises careful, compassionate listening and thoughtful pastoral guidance. (PPF6, nos. 183, 332, 382)
7.6 Integrates the Church's Social Doctrine in his personal life and pastoral activity (PPF6, nos. 277, 284g, 330, 335)

Affective Maturity
The seminarian guides his emotional life by the exercise of reason and knowledge of the genuine good for self, others, and the community.

8.1 Possesses the level of self-knowledge, self-possession, self-motivation, self-care, and interiority necessary for self-reflection, prayerful discernment, and critical thinking. (PPF6, nos. 100, 193, 198)
8.2 Understands the seminary and lifelong formation processes as central to his continued affective growth. (PPF6, nos. 192, 206)
8.3 Exhibits a simple lifestyle and stewardship. (PPF6, nos. 160, 230n)
8.4 Relates well with others, both in the seminary and in pastoral settings. (PPF6, no. 374)

Basic Admission Requirements

These requirements apply to the Propaedeutic Program, Discipleship Program and the Master of Divinity Program.

Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology (SHSST) follows all the norms for admission of candidates as stated in the PPF6.

Admission to the Priestly Formation Program of the seminary requires sponsorship by a diocese or religious community. This means he must be accepted as a potential candidate for priesthood by a sponsoring diocese or religious order.

Sacred Heart requires certain **physical and psychological exams**.

The seminary may request **a personal visit and interview** with any applicant.

Certain other documentation is also required. Application for admission will be considered by the Admissions Board when it receives the following documentation. These must be submitted by July 31 for fall applicants and by November 30 for spring applicants. We encourage anyone with visa requirements to let the Director of Recruiting know early, and contact the International Programs Coordinator.

The applicant is responsible for having the following documents sent to the school:

- The completed admission application and fee
- Final official transcripts of any post-secondary work
- A current certificate of baptism and a certificate of confirmation
- An autobiography containing information about early life; past education and/or specialized training; military service, if any; employment record; Church activity and service; and a brief description of the persons and events that have influenced the applicant's motives and decision to consider the priesthood (3 pages or less).
- Applicants who have attended another seminary must provide a letter of recommendation from the rector of that seminary, and former religious must request one from the present major superior. These letters must be sent directly from the official to the President-Rector of SHSST.

The sponsoring diocese or religious community should forward the following documents to the school:

- A letter of sponsorship indicating that the applicant is a candidate for that diocese or religious community
- Assurance of a criminal background check
- Assurance of a canonical impediments check (canons 1040-49)
- Psychological test results

Health Insurance

Each seminarian must have health insurance.

Technology

All seminarians and other students must provide their own computer or other device capable of word processing, creating presentations, and accessing the internet and email.

Seminarians and other students are responsible for the purchase and maintenance of all their own software including protection against computer viruses, spyware, and other malware.

SHSST provides basic technical support for personal computers, tablets, printers, mobile phones, and other devices essential to the educational mission.

The seminary provides wired and wireless high-speed internet access and email service.