

Heather Hughes-Huff earns an M.A. in Theology with her Cor Unum cohort of Catholic laity.

Sacred Heart

HIGHLIGHTS ▪ Spring Semester 2026

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Celebrating Ordinations



Rev. John Akau
Diocese of Honolulu



Rev. Alex Becker
Archdiocese of Milwaukee



Rev. Mr. Jacob Bovee
Diocese of Green Bay



Rev. Mr. Jacob Bruns
Archdiocese of Milwaukee



Rev. Nathan Budde
Diocese of Green Bay



Rev. Casey Cooney
Diocese of Madison



Rev. Peter Danner
Archdiocese of Milwaukee



Rev. Mr. Nicholas Emsing
Diocese of Gary



Rev. Eric Frieb
Diocese of Dodge City



Rev. Yunior González-Díaz
Diocese of Colorado Springs



Rev. Esteban Hernández-Mejía
Diocese of Dodge City



Rev. Mr. Michael Hess
Diocese of Madison



Rev. Mr. Gilbert Kimaro
Diocese of Albany



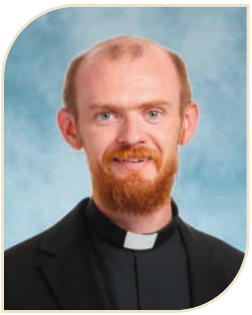
Rev. Joel Kolb
Archdiocese of Milwaukee



Rev. Barry Meinholz
Diocese of Madison



Rev. Mr. Carl Oman
Diocese of Superior



Rev. Mr. Scott Pederson
Diocese of Superior



Rev. Hung Pham, SCJ
Priests of the Sacred Heart, United States Province



Rev. Alfonso Pizano, Jr.
Diocese of Davenport



Rev. Luis Reyes
Diocese of Madison



Rev. Andrew Swietlik
Archdiocese of Milwaukee



Rev. Mr. Noah Townsend
Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee



Rev. Redmond Tuttle
Archdiocese of Milwaukee



Rev. Nicholas Waddell
Archdiocese of Milwaukee



Rev. Mark Wagner
Diocese of Madison and Military Vicariate



Rev. Mr. Adam Widder
Archdiocese of Milwaukee



Rev. Mr. Scott Zarling
Archdiocese of Milwaukee

Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology congratulates 17 alumni from the Class of 2025-2026 ordained to the priesthood and ten seminarians ordained as transitional deacons.

Bringing Excellence to Academic Formation

Congratulations to the Class of 2025–2026!

SHSST held its Solemn Vespers, Commencement Ceremony, and Dinner in celebration of the graduating Class of 2025–2026. Graduates were recognized for earning Master of Divinity degrees, Master of Arts in Catholic Studies, Master of Arts in Theology degrees, and certificates for Individualized Ordination Tracks.

The commencement address was delivered by Fr. John Czyzynski, SCJ, who encouraged graduates to continue growing spiritually and intellectually in their ministry. Speaking to the class, Fr. John said: "I hope you go forth with an open mind and an open heart to keep learning how to be a good servant-minister of God's people. Keep taking time to pray, to be connected with God, so that the work you do is God's, not yours. Keep studying and reading and listen to the people whom you serve in ministry. They have much to teach us."

During the ceremony, Fr. John was also honored by the SHSST Board of Directors with the title of Professor Emeritus in recognition of his years of dedicated service to the seminary community. At the conclusion of the evening, SHSST faculty and staff continued the annual tradition of walking to the SCJ mausoleum behind the seminary to remember and give thanks for the Dehonians who helped build the U.S. Province. The gathering concluded with a toast in honor of those who came before and whose legacy continues through the ministry and formation of today's graduates.













Words that Bind Us:

The Connection Between the First Reading and the Gospel

















Annual Preaching Conference

Priests and deacons from across the United States gathered for inspiration and renewal at the Eighth Annual SHSST Preaching Conference, titled "Words That Bind Us: The Connection Between the First Reading and the Gospel." Organized by Dcn. Steve Kramer, the Annual Preaching Conference, aims to equip ministry leaders with resources to enhance their work.

Drawing from their own ministry experiences, Deacon Steve Kramer, D.Min., and Deacon Dale Nees shared practical approaches to preaching that mindfully connect the readings.

Sacred Heart's own faculty members, Dr. Charles HughesHuff, Ph.D., and Dr. Katherine Milco, Ph.D., provided an insightful talk, using their expertise in languages to reveal deeper meaning and connections between readings.

Rabbi Joshua Herman further opened the conversation by offering a Jewish scriptural lens, illuminating how sacred texts speak to one another across traditions.

The conference closed with a lively and thoughtful panel discussion. Panel members Fr. Mark Mastin, SCJ, Dr. Julie Newberry, Ph.D., Deacon Steve Kramer, and Fr. Pat O'Loughlin engaged with questions posed by attendees.

As always, the preaching conference served as a time for inspiration, shared dialogue, and faith.





Faithfulness in Love of the Church

Mass and Holy Hour for Peace

As our nation faces deep division and hardship, the USCCB has called Catholics to unite in prayer during a Holy Hour for Peace. Archbishop Coakley said in his reflection and invitation, "May this Holy Hour be a moment of renewal for our hearts and for our nation. Entrusting our fears and hopes to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, let us ask the Lord to make us instruments of his peace and witnesses to the inherent dignity of every person."

The SHSST community joined together at all-school Mass, to lift up prayers for peace, justice, and reconciliation in our country and the world. Fr. José González presided and preached at the Mass. In his moving homily Fr. José said, "The heart of Jesus is the heart of the world, and it continues to be moved by the pain and suffering of our brothers and sisters". May we carry these words and prayers beyond the chapel, allowing Christ's peace to shape our words, our actions, and our care for one another in the days ahead.

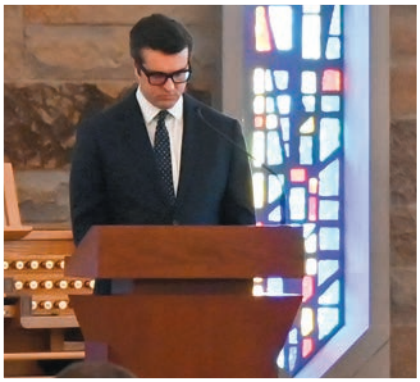
Formation Workshops

All third-year seminarians participated in the annual two-day Adveniat Workshop alongside their instructors. The workshop was led by Bishop Donald Hying of the Diocese of Madison, who served as the featured presenter and instructor. Using case studies as the primary teaching method, the workshop combined instructor-led lectures, small-group collaboration, and plenary discussions. This dynamic and engaging format delivered course material in a way that reflects the principles of adult learning.

In addition to the Adveniat Workshop, this year, first- and second-year seminarians took part in the Ecce Venio Workshop. This workshop was led by Grace Mazza Urbanski, Assistant National Director of the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network, and Dr. Charles Hughes-Huff of the SHSST faculty. The Ecce Venio Workshop integrated both the spiritual and intellectual dimensions of priestly formation, enriching the seminarians' overall formation experience.













Ash Wednesday

Day of Recollection

On Ash Wednesday, the SHSST community gathered for a Day of Recollection led by Fr. Jim Kubicki, S.J. The day began and ended in prayer, as the community came together for Morning Prayer, the celebration of Ash Wednesday Mass, and Evening Prayer.

In his morning reflection, titled "Beloved Dust," Fr. Kubicki invited us to consider the true purpose of Lent. He said, "Once a year the Church puts reality right in our faces: this earthly life is not forever. So how do we live the life we have been given?" He encouraged the community to reflect on the gift of life and the responsibility to live each day on Earth rooted in Christ's teaching as tomorrow is not promised. He challenged us not to lose ourselves to the temptations of sin or the distractions of an increasingly technological world, but instead to remain present to one another.

Following Mass and a shared community lunch, Fr. Kubicki offered a second reflection: "Our Triple Response." During this time, he focused on the three traditional Lenten practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, and asked us to embrace them not as "self-help asceticism," but as responses to God's love for us.

The day provided the SHSST community with the opportunity to pause amid the busyness of the semester, to pray together, and to be spiritually renewed as we begin our Lenten journey.





Renewing Faith and Purpose

Starting the Semester in Community

New and returning SHSST seminarians began their Spring semester with a retreat to take time to center themselves before the academic hustle begins. The retreat was designed to reflect, rejuvenate, and connect with God.

Following their first day back in class, the students gathered with Sacred Heart's President-Rector, Very Rev. Stephen Huffstetter, SCJ, for their Rector's Conference.

The Rector's Conference provided an opportunity for the community to check in at the start of the semester. During the meeting, Fr. Steve addressed topics of interest to the students and encouraged them to engage in shared dialogue.

Both the conference and the retreat served as meaningful time of connection as students begin the new semester together.



Diaconate Promises

During Solemn Evening Prayer, Noah Townsend, a seminarian for the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee, made his Diaconate Promises. This important step in his journey toward ordained ministry was a powerful reminder of the purpose at the heart of our seminary community: preparing evangelizing disciples through specialized formation to conform our world to the Heart of Christ. Congratulations, Noah, on your Diaconate Promises! May God continue to bless you abundantly on your formation journey.

Holy Mass with the Institution of Lectors

Five seminarians at SHSST took an important step in their formation journey. Congratulations to the five candidates for the Ministry of Lector who were instituted. The Mass was presided over by Bishop Jeffrey M. Fleming of the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings and was attended by members of the seminary's Board of Directors, the seminary community, and family.

Those instituted as lectors were:

- ***Mr. John Beiting***
  Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee
- ***Mr. Randall Bebeau***
  Diocese of Great Falls-Billings
- ***Mr. Jesús Mendoza***
  Diocese of Lubbock
- ***Friar Anthony Ruffolo, OFM Conv.***
  Order of Friars Minor Conventual, St. Bonaventure Province
- ***Mr. Joseph Schones***
  Diocese of Salina

The Ministry of Lector is a significant step in the journey toward priesthood. In his homily, Bishop Fleming drew inspiration from the Lenten message of Pope Leo, encouraging the seminarians to continually meditate on the Word of God. The celebration marked a joyful moment for the seminary community as these men continue their formation and preparation to serve the Church. Congratulations to our new Lectors and many thanks to Bishop Fleming!









Ministering in a Global Church

ECS Program Celebrates Spring Certificate Ceremony

SHSST hosted the Spring 2026 Certificate Ceremony for the English and Culture Studies Program. The event recognized the hard work and accomplishments of six international students who successfully completed the program:

- ***Rev. Rodrigo Bento, SCJ***
  Priests of the Sacred Heart, Province of South Brazil
- ***Rev. Técio Lima***
  Archdiocese of Vitória da Conquista
- ***Mr. Tien Nguyen***
  Diocese of Salina
- ***Fra. Alexandre Caetano, SCJ***
  Priests of the Sacred Heart, Province of South Brazil
- ***Mr. Jos Nguyen***
  Diocese of Salina
- ***Mr. James Tran***
  Diocese of Salina

The program is designed to support clergy and religious from around the world as they deepen their English language skills and cultural understanding, is an important part of Sacred Heart's mission to form leaders for the global Church. Congratulations to the Spring 2026 graduates of the English and Culture Studies Program!

That They May Be One

SHSST was honored to host the conference "That They May Be One: Bridging Cultural Gaps in Your Parish."

As our Church continues to grow in diversity, the call to build welcoming, united, and intercultural parish communities becomes ever more important. This inspiring gathering brought together clergy, religious, lay leaders, and ministry professionals to explore the opportunities and challenges that come with serving an increasingly global Church.

We were blessed to hear from an outstanding group of presenters and panelists who shared their wisdom, experience, and vision for fostering unity across cultures, languages, and traditions.

A special thank you to all of our speakers, participants, and organizers who made this day of learning, dialogue, and fellowship possible. Together, we continue the mission of building communities where all are welcomed, valued, and united in Christ.





Beyond the Classroom

The Catholic Heritage II: Sint Unum Excursion

As part of the The Catholic Heritage II: Sint Unum course, propaedeutic seminarians from Saint Francis de Sales Seminary and the Diocese of Green Bay experienced the richness and diversity of the universal Church during a four-day excursion to the Chicago area.

Their journey included visits to Catholic communities representing Hispanic, Chaldean, Ukrainian, and Syro-Malabar traditions, where they learned about each community's liturgy, customs, history, and pastoral ministry from local clergy.

The seminarians also made pilgrimages to the National Shrine of St. Maximilian Kolbe at Marytown, the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the National Shrine of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, and several historic churches.

A special highlight was meeting Bishop Turley at the Cabrini Shrine, where he shared stories from his missionary ministry in Peru and his longtime friendship with Pope Leo XIV.

The group also visited Pope Leo XIV's childhood home and former parish, joining in prayer for peace before touring the historic church.





Model Passover Seder

The Lux Center for Catholic-Jewish Studies

Seminarians, faculty, staff, and guests from the wider community all came together to experience the rich traditions of the Jewish holiday of Passover. Led by Rabbi Steve Adams, the Seder took participants on a journey through ancient rituals, powerful storytelling, and songs that commemorate the miracle of the Exodus. The room came alive as attendees recited blessings, sang traditional songs in Hebrew, and tasted the symbolic foods of the Seder plate. The atmosphere was one of learning, celebration, and deep connection. It was a true reflection of the spirit of interfaith engagement that The Lux Center seeks to cultivate.



Supporting our Sponsors

Sacred Heart serves over 28 US and Canadian sponsors, and many international bishops and religious superiors entrust their international students to us.

HOW CAN WE SERVE YOU?

From helping with vocations outreach, assisting with visas, providing scholarships and creating tailored student plans, to providing speakers at events, organizing alumni events and offering continuing formation programs, we want to be YOUR seminary for lifelong ministry.

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SACRED HEART
Seminary and School of Theology

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Schedule a Visit:
We are located in Hales Corners, Wisconsin, on a 250 acre partially wooded campus, 20 minutes from the Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport and 75 minutes from the Chicago O'Hare International Airport.

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