



## Saint Vincent Seminary

Latrobe, Pennsylvania

PRIESTLY FORMATION

*Be shepherds, with the “odor of the sheep,”  
make it real, as shepherds among your flock, as fishers of men. –Pope Francis*



# SAINT VINCENT SEMINARY

Board of Regents

*Report of the Bishops' Committee on Priestly Formation*

The Saint Vincent Seminary Board of Regents established a Bishops' Committee on Priestly Formation in 2012. Each constituent bishop of Saint Vincent Seminary was invited to serve as a member of the Committee, whose charge was to make a thorough evaluation of the *Program of Priestly Formation (PPF)* at Saint Vincent.

The Committee examined the four pillars of the *PPF*—human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral—as they are currently implemented at Saint Vincent including an evaluation of their integration into the life of each seminarian. This Report contains recommendations which build upon existing strengths and on new initiatives.

*Remember the four pillars: spiritual life, intellectual life, apostolic life and community life.  
You must build your vocation on these four elements. – Pope Francis*

## Pre-Theology — Philosophical Formation Program

- THE SEMINARY'S CONSTITUENT BISHOPS designed a Pre-Theology program which immerses new students in an integrated manner into the full rigor of the *PPF* from the day of their entrance. The program offers focused *individual attention* on human and spiritual formation.
- A SUMMERTIME *Pre-Theology pastoral immersion experience followed by intensive formation weekends each semester* provides experience in the enhancement and integration of each of the formation pillars and offers a firm foundation for ongoing discernment of a call to priestly ordination and the ever-expanding role of the priest in leadership, evangelization, and ministry to persons with disabilities.
- IN THE FALL of 2015 Saint Vincent Seminary will offer a *Master's Degree in Catholic Philosophical Studies*. This degree satisfies the Congregation for Catholic Education's newest requirements for philosophical formation, set to take effect in the 2016-2017 academic year.
- SAINT VINCENT SEMINARY has the *on-campus presence of three licensed psychological counselors devoted solely to seminary formation* who stand fully in accord with the *PPF* standards on such counseling (cf. *PPF* §§51-57). They work closely with the seminarians in the formation process.
- THE SEMINARY'S DIRECTOR OF PRE-THEOLOGY FORMATION, Rev. Deacon Lawrence Sutton, Ph.D., is a licensed clinical psychologist and a permanent deacon of the Diocese of Pittsburgh. Deacon Sutton *addresses human formation issues as they come to light from the very beginning of a candidate's formation*, including the screening process of candidates from constituent dioceses.
- DEACON SUTTON is also the author of the critically-acclaimed book *How to Welcome, Include, and Catechize Children with Autism and Other Special Needs: A Parish-Based Approach*. His extensive experience in working with persons with disabilities provides the seminarians with an instructional foundation that helps them to integrate persons with disabilities into the sacramental and social life of their parishes and the entire Church.

*The four pillars should be integrated right from the first day of entrance. – Pope Francis*





## Human Formation

- POPE FRANCIS ARTICULATES a vision of seminary formation in which faculty and formators are to be genuinely familiar with each seminarian. *The size of Saint Vincent Seminary enables the formation faculty to truly know the men in their charge*, and to engage with them regularly in serious dialogue and mentoring, carefully tracking their progress and particular needs.
- THIS INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION *to the integrated formation of seminarians* is reflected in the outstanding record of Saint Vincent Seminary among all American seminaries in retaining priests in active ministry: more than 94 percent ordained over the past 25 years (1989 – present) are still in full time priestly ministry.
- THE SEMINARY has carefully crafted its seminarian assessment surveys, especially written profiles and review protocols. These assessments consistently result in *truly probative and absolutely frank annual seminarian profiles* that have been repeatedly commended by constituent bishops and diocesan vocation directors for their insight, objective detail, accuracy, and helpfulness in assessing the readiness of a seminarian for ordination.
- THE STANDARD PROTOCOL providing feedback to visiting constituent bishops and vocation directors includes *personal meetings with the entire Rector's Council*. Constituent bishops and vocations directors frequently laud this process as revealing the excellent rapport which Saint Vincent faculty and formators have with their seminarians.
- HUMAN FORMATION concerns are professionally addressed through the *on-campus presence of three psychological counselors devoted solely to seminary formation* who stand fully in accord with the PPF standards on such counseling (cf. PPF §§51-57). They are familiar with and available to all seminarians.
- A FULL RANGE of *psychological evaluation and assessment services* for candidates and seminarians, developed under the direction of the Seminary's constituent bishops, is offered to dioceses by Rev. Deacon Lawrence Sutton, Ph.D.
- VIRTUS TRAINING is provided to all seminarians immediately upon their entry at Saint Vincent, in accord with the standards established by the USCCB *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*.

*If the seminary is too large, it ought to be divided into smaller communities with formators who are equipped really to accompany those in their charge. Dialogue must be serious, without fear, sincere. – Pope Francis*



## Spiritual Formation

- SPIRITUAL FORMATION has been at the heart of the Saint Vincent Seminary formation program for the last quarter century. Constituent bishops and Seminary alumni have regularly praised the strong spiritual formation at Saint Vincent. This formation has continued to animate their faithful service to the Church through their years of priestly ministry.
- ON-GOING FORMAL TRAINING is required for all adjunct spiritual directors—only those priests who participate in annual spiritual direction workshops serve as adjunct spiritual directors. Recent training sessions include:
  - Bishop Mark Bartchak, J.C.D., Bishop of Altoona-Johnstown, on “The Nature and Purpose of Spiritual Direction in Seminaries” (September 18, 2013).
  - Archbishop Rino Fisichella, S.T.D., President of the Pontifical Council for the New Evangelization, on “Spiritual Conversion and the New Evangelization” (February 18, 2014).
  - Br. John Mark Falkenhain, O.S.B., Ph.D., of the Saint Luke Institute, on “Celibacy Formation and Sexual Identity” (September 24, 2014).
- A BROAD SELECTION of formally trained and approved diocesan and Benedictine spiritual directors guide the men in their care to a fruitful priestly spirituality, centered on the Eucharist, and looking prayerfully to Mary as the model Christian disciple and the devoted patron of evangelization.
- THE SPIRITUALITY OF SAINT VINCENT SEMINARY is grounded in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the living tradition of the Church in accord with the Magisterium, and shaped by the Benedictine heritage of liturgical prayer, study, hospitality and community.
- THE STRONG SPIRITUAL BONDS formed during their years of formation at Saint Vincent are witnessed by the more than one hundred priest alumni and clergy from constituent dioceses who make their canonical retreat at Saint Vincent each year.
- CELIBACY and affective maturity formation are addressed clearly and in a positive and affirming manner across all four pillars of priestly formation.

*How beautiful it is to see priests who are joyous in their vocation! This never happens without prayer, prayer of the heart, that dialogue with the Lord that is the heart of the priestly life. – Pope Francis*



## Intellectual Formation

- POPE BENEDICT XVI observed that Saint Benedict referred to his monastery as a school of the Lord's service, which serves the education of man, including the formation of reason through which man learns to perceive the Living Word itself.
- THE FACULTY OF SAINT VINCENT SEMINARY possess world-class credentials, and include members who have studied at Pontifical Faculties in Rome, Louvain, Munich, Jerusalem, Ottawa, Toronto, and Washington, and at outstanding universities such as Cambridge and Oxford.
- THE LONG-TERM stability of the Saint Vincent Seminary Faculty stands in contrast to the Faculties of many American seminaries (see the concerns in this regard of the *Apostolic Visitation Report on American Seminaries*, p. 7; and *Pastores Dabo Vobis* §66).
- THE WORLD-CLASS INTELLECTUAL FORMATION at Saint Vincent Seminary has been strengthened by its affiliation with the Pontifical Athenaeum of Sant' Anselmo in Rome to grant the S.T.B. degree, and has been commended for its excellence by the Congregation for Catholic Education.
- THE STRENGTH of the intellectual formation at Saint Vincent Seminary builds on the Pre-Theology program, created by the Seminary's constituent bishops, and provides a basis and a desire for life-long learning.
- ANTICIPATING THE NEWEST philosophical requirements of the Congregation for Catholic Education, set to take effect in the 2016-2017 academic year, Saint Vincent Seminary will offer a Master's Degree in Catholic Philosophical Studies beginning in the fall of 2015.
- SAINT VINCENT SEMINARY shares a campus with Saint Vincent College, a nationally recognized 1,800 student Benedictine liberal arts college which provides an outstanding range of cultural, intellectual, artistic, musical, and athletic offerings which enrich seminarians' formation experiences and deepen their desire for life-long learning.

*What you learn today is what you will communicate tomorrow, when the sacred ministry will have been entrusted to you by the Church. – Pope Benedict XVI*



## Pastoral Formation

- EXPERIENCED LOCAL CLERGY provide a broad range of practical pastoral leadership and administrative training, including the areas of finance, employment, strategic planning, and direction of religious education and sacramental preparation programs.
- SAINT VINCENT SEMINARY offers a thorough hospital visitation program of two semesters length for second theologians which provides excellent training and experience in this critical area of pastoral ministry.
- THE WIDE RANGE of available pastoral placements for first and third theologians, including service as chaplains to Saint Vincent College sports teams, service to persons with disabilities, visiting the elderly in nursing homes, visiting the mentally ill in residential treatment facilities, and visiting prisoners, allows seminarians to experience a variety of real-life situations involving pastoral care.
- SAINT VINCENT SEMINARY DEACONS have the opportunity to complete a diaconate assignment in their home diocese. The well-established network of reputable and experienced pastors in the local dioceses who serve as diaconate supervisors provides pastoral practice which is diligently mentored and documented.
- THE POPE BENEDICT XVI CHAIR IN BIBLICAL THEOLOGY AND LITURGICAL PROCLAMATION demonstrates the Seminary's commitment to excellence in preaching.
- THE SEMINARY'S BROWNFIELD CENTER classroom building features a Practice Chapel which enables the seminarians to experience the celebration of the sacraments and preaching in a realistic liturgical environment, and which allows for constructive feedback from their professor and their peers.
- SAINT VINCENT SEMINARY is expanding the training available to seminarians in the area of Hispanic ministry, encouraging students to actively seek out opportunities in their home dioceses to serve this growing population.
- SAINT VINCENT SEMINARY WELCOMES SEMINARIANS preparing for priestly ministry from countries around the world, including developing nations and countries where Catholics are often persecuted. Studying with these men offers a profound experience of the universality of the Church and the unity of the Body of Christ.

*Every vocation is for the mission, and the mission of ordained ministers is evangelization. – Pope Francis*



*The formator should keep in mind that that the person in formation will be called to care for the People of God.*

*In the end we must not form administrators or managers, but fathers, brothers, traveling companions.*

– Pope Francis



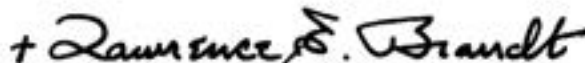
# Commendation of the Bishops' Committee on Priestly Formation Saint Vincent Seminary Board of Regents

**A**s members of the Bishops' Committee on Priestly Formation we personally attest to the quality of the priestly formation program offered at Saint Vincent Seminary. We reaffirm our commitment to provide guidance to the administration and faculty at Saint Vincent in their continued effort to provide world class priestly formation for the clergy serving in their respective dioceses and in the universal Church.

The Bishops' Committee on Priestly Formation is grateful for the positive response of the administration and faculty in implementing the Committee's recommendations to enhance the Program of Priestly Formation at Saint Vincent Seminary. Moreover, Saint Vincent Seminary is to be commended for its resolve to build on our counsel to establish a model life-long formation program for priests.



Most Rev. Mark L. Bartchak, J.C.D.  
Bishop of Altoona – Johnstown



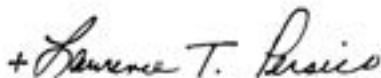
Most Rev. Lawrence E. Brandt, J.C.D., Ph.D.  
Bishop of Greensburg



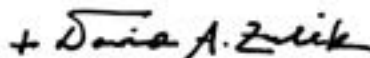
Most Rev. Roger J. Foys, D.D.  
Bishop of Covington



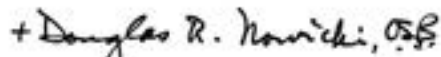
Most Rev. Jeffrey M. Monforton, S.T.D.  
Bishop of Steubenville



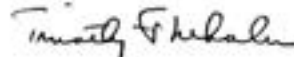
Most Rev. Lawrence T. Persico, J.C.L., D.D.  
Bishop of Erie



Most Rev. David A. Zubik, D.D.  
Bishop of Pittsburgh



Rt. Rev. Douglas R. Nowicki, O.S.B., Ph.D.  
Chancellor – Saint Vincent Seminary



Very Rev. Timothy F. Whalen  
Rector – Saint Vincent Seminary