In his 1992 Apostolic Exhortation on the Formation of Priests, Pastores Dabo Vobis (I will give you shepherds), Pope John Paul II wrote: “Holiness is intimacy with God, it is unreserved love for souls and a giving of oneself on their behalf and for their true good; it is a love for the Church which is holy and wants to be holy, because this is the mission Christ entrusted for her” (v. 33).

Since 1846, Saint Vincent Seminary has been committed to the preparation of seminarians for service as priests for the Church. Over the years, more than 2,400 diocesan and religious men have been ordained to the priesthood following their preparation at Saint Vincent. Our formation program follows the Program of Priestly Formation of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and provides our students with the human, spiritual, academic, and pastoral formation necessary to be effective priests.

The priestly formation program presumes that the students who enter the Seminary have already manifested clear and positive signs of a priestly vocation and have been entrusted to the Seminary so that this vocational choice may be tested, nourished, and guided. The testing of a seminarian’s vocation involves an ever more complete and penetrating self-knowledge. The nourishing of his vocation is understood as a clarification and reinforcement of his original call as he comes to a deeper understanding of the direction of his vocation. This is accomplished as one deepens his relationship with Jesus and comes to better realize his own gifts as well as the demands of ministry in the Church. Only by deepening his relationship with Christ can personal growth and spiritual growth be integrated.

Dear young people: Do not be afraid of Christ! He takes nothing away, and he gives you everything. When we give ourselves to him, we receive a hundred-fold in return. Yes, open, open wide the doors to Christ — and you will find true life.

— Pope Benedict XVI
Pope Benedict XVI
Vocations are indeed a gift from God for which we must pray unceasingly. Following the invitation of Jesus, we need to pray the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest (cf. Mt 9:37). Prayer, enriched by the silent offering of suffering, remains the first and most effective means of pastoral work for vocations. To pray means to keep our gaze fixed on Christ, confident that from him, the one High Priest, and from his divine oblation, there will be an abundant growth, by the work of the Holy Spirit, of the seeds of those vocations needed in every age for the Church’s life and mission.

— Pope John Paul II
Castel Gandolfo, August 11, 2004
A suitable human formation is the necessary foundation for the whole task of priestly formation (*Pastores dabo vobis*, 43). For this reason, the human formation program seeks to assist the future priest to develop his personality in such a way that he becomes a bridge for others in their meeting of Jesus Christ. He is first of all assisted to know the depths of his own heart, to understand his own gifts and difficulties, to learn trust and cooperation, and to exercise serene and objective judgment.

The seminarian is called to be a “man of communion,” and as a future priest he will be responsible for a community of faith. Such a call and trust requires that during his seminary years he learn to be affable, hospitable, sincere, prudent, discreet, generous, ready to serve, capable of opening himself to fraternal relationships, and quick to understand, forgive, and console (*Pastores dabo vobis*, 43).

Human formation in the seminary builds upon affective maturity which is a significant and decisive factor in the formation of candidates for the priesthood. Affective maturity itself presupposes an awareness that love has a central role to play in human life, a love that involves the entire person and that is not impoverished by a social and cultural atmosphere which links it solely with the body and selfish pleasure (*Pastores dabo vobis*, 44).

It is in this context of responsible love and affective maturity that formation for celibacy takes place. In view of the commitment to celibacy, affective maturity should bring to human relationships a love for Christ which overflows into a generous dedication of oneself to Christ, to the Church, and to the whole human family. In addition, candidates for the priesthood need to learn to be prudent in their relationships and renounce anything that is a threat to celibate chastity so that as future priests they will be able to live celibate chastity with faithfulness and joy (*Pastores dabo vobis*, 44).

Finally, human formation requires a clear and strong training in a freedom that allows the future priest to be master of himself, open to others, and generous in service to his neighbor (*Pastores dabo vobis*, 44).
Not without embarrassment does the priest learn how, through his weak and petty words, people can smile in the last moment of their life; how, through what he says, people find meaning again. He learns with gratitude how, through his ministry, people discover the glory of God. He learns how, through him, God does great things, and he is full of joy to know that to be able to be a priest is at once the greatest demand and the greatest gift.

— Pope Benedict XVI
The decisive factor in the seminarian’s spiritual development is his faith, his relationship with Jesus Christ, and his love and commitment to the Church. As his faith grows, it should gradually color and illumine his attitudes until it eventually dominates his entire outlook on life. The primary characteristic of this faith is a deeply personal conviction about the reality and goodness of God and creation. Thus, faith leads the believer to give the benefit of the doubt to goodness in all the ambiguous elements of life. This discovery of God’s love and presence in human life continues through ongoing conversion of mind and heart and perfects the liberating affirmation that enables a person to become self-giving and to attain freedom on the human level.

The formation program is designed to remind the student constantly of the true characteristics of faith and to test its authenticity so that it may be clearly distinguished from romantic, fanciful, or pietistic views of reality. Progressively liberated from preoccupation with himself and his needs, the seminarian is free to be sensitive to the situations of others and better prepared to assist those in need by supportive presence and effective action. This understanding of faith as a discovery of God’s goodness involves conversion through the liturgy, Tradition, and the life of the Church, and will result in an identification with Jesus who revealed the fullness of divine goodness of God, His Father.

This identification with Jesus will take on special significance for the seminarian who is convinced that he is called to conform himself to Jesus in the particular mode of Christian priestly ministry. The formation program seeks to nourish that conviction by examples of joyful priestly service and by constant reminders of the extraordinary opportunity that priesthood offers to those who choose to use their freedom as Jesus did. In a word, every effort is made to bring the student to that state of calm joy that is the hallmark of those who live in the Spirit and which enables the focus to move from self to others.

An intimate personal relationship with Christ is fundamental for priestly life and ministry. All priestly formation should lead to the fostering of this relationship. The priest should be a person who knows Jesus intimately, has met Him and learned to love Him. The priest should therefore be a man of prayer, a truly “spiritual” man. Without strong spiritual substance he cannot last in his ministry. From the mystery of Christ he should also learn in his life not to seek himself nor his own promotion. He should learn to spend his life for Christ and for his flock.

The training of candidates for the priesthood should make them true shepherds of souls after the example of our Lord Jesus Christ — teacher, priest and shepherd.

— Bishop Donald Wuerl
The academic formation for ordination candidates is a vital component of the preparation of men for the Roman Catholic priesthood. *The Program of Priestly Formation* (1992, 334) states, “In a significant way, intellectual formation for priesthood means a theological education in which a thorough and comprehensive grounding in the Catholic faith is conveyed.” At Saint Vincent Seminary, this foundation in the Catholic faith is provided through an in-depth study of Sacred Scripture, Systematic Theology, Church History, and Pastoral Studies. The goal of the academic program resonates with the *Program of Priestly Formation* (1992, 335), which states, “The goal in intellectual formation is the conversion of mind and heart, which is the only sure foundation for a lifetime of teaching and preaching.”

The faculty teaches from an historical perspective so that students know what the Church teaches, as well as why. In addition, ordination students meet monthly in small groups for theological integration seminars, which provide a forum for exchanges between students and faculty where they reflect upon how conversion and integration are taking place in their lives.

**Holiness is intimacy with God, it is the imitation of Christ, who was poor, chaste and humble; it is unreserved love for souls and a giving of oneself on their behalf and for their true good; it is a love for the Church which is holy and wants us to be holy, because this is the mission that Christ entrusted to her.**

— Pope John Paul II
*Pastores Dabo Vobis*
The Second Vatican Council was a pastoral council. It is not surprising then, that a strong note of pastoral concern resounds throughout the Decree on Priestly Formation formulated by the Council. This concern is particularly clear in the directive that “pastoral concern ought to permeate thoroughly the entire training of the students” (n. 19).

In addition, the Program of Priestly Formation (1992, 404) states, “Theological field education fosters general integration in the formational process. The field-education program can be an integrating factor in seminary education by forging a close link between ministerial, academic and spiritual formation.” The Program of Priestly Formation also states that theological field education provides opportunities for ecumenical and interreligious cooperation. It can engender a sensitivity for justice, peace and the integrity of human life as well as provide an opportunity for collaboration (405, 407, 408).

At Saint Vincent, the pastoral formation of seminarians is built upon the pastoral foundation inherent in the entire curriculum, of which field education is an integral part. The purpose of the field education program is to engage students actively in parish and other ministries under the supervision of qualified priests, religious, and lay professionals. Weekly theological reflection on ministry experiences is an essential component of the program.

Additional goals of the field education program are: to assist students in developing a life-style that is consistent with the Gospel; to understand more fully the nature of the Church and its mission; to become more deeply committed to the Church’s mission; to develop the habit of reflecting theologically on experience; to acquire a beginning professional competence for priestly ministry, which involves appropriating the role of spiritual leaders and public persons in the Church, and to develop the skills needed for effective priestly ministry.

The people have a right to turn to priests in the hope of “seeing” Christ in them (cf. Jn 12:21). The young feel the need especially; Christ continues to call them, to make them his friends and to challenge some to give themselves completely for the sake of the Kingdom. Vocations will certainly not be lacking if our manner of life is truly priestly, if we become more holy, more joyful, more impassioned in the exercise of our ministry. A priest “won” by Christ (cf. Phil 3:12) more easily “wins” others, so that they too decide to set out on the same adventure.

— Pope John Paul II
Holy Thursday, 2005
The seminary which educates must seek really and truly to initiate the candidate into the sensitivity of being a shepherd, in the conscious and mature assumption of his responsibilities, in the interior habit of evaluating problems and establishing priorities and looking for solutions on the basis of honest motivations of faith and according to the theological demands inherent in pastoral work.

— Pope John Paul II
Pastores Dabo Vobis
Saint Vincent Seminary was founded by Father Boniface Wimmer in 1846. He came from Saint Michael’s Abbey in Metten, Bavaria, to establish the first Benedictine monastery in North America. The Seminary, the fourth oldest seminary in the United States, was officially established on August 24, 1855.
There is always a true and blessed satisfaction in doing this work; no effort goes to waste; every hardship is rewarded; every seed brings forth some fruit; every brick adds to the structure; on every side there is development where before there was nothing, and where there never would have been anything had not someone weighed the possibilities and put forth the effort.

— Archabbot Boniface Wimmer, O.S.B.
Since 1847, the Seminary has formed 2,469 priests, both diocesan and religious, and the list of alumni includes 28 bishops, archbishops and cardinals. In 1977 the Seminary began offering Master’s degrees, and so the Seminary has also educated religious sisters, members of the laity, and monks called to serve the Church as brothers.

At Saint Vincent Seminary our goal is to train priests who think with the mind and heart of the Church—priests who have a deep love of Christ, who are devoted to the Eucharist, who have come to know and love the Mother of God and the saints, who are faithful to praying the Liturgy of the Hours, who engage in concrete work for the physically and materially poor, and who are actively Pro-Life—in short, priests who love God, who love the Church, and who love God’s people.

—Very Rev. Kurt Belsole, O.S.B., Rector
The Seminary shares the campus with a monastery of Benedictine monks, a Catholic Benedictine liberal arts and science college, and a parish, and thus affords unique opportunities for living and learning.

The proximity of the Archabbey Basilica and monastery exposes the student to the Benedictine heritage of regular daily liturgical prayer combined with both intellectual and manual labor. The Benedictine value of stewardship is evident from the good care of the grounds and buildings.

The coeducational liberal arts college enrolling approximately 1,400 students affords ready access to many cultural and educational events.
Young people need Christ, but they also know that Christ chose to be in need of them. Trust Christ; listen attentively to his teachings, fix your eyes on his face, persevere in listening to his Word. Allow Him to focus your search and your aspirations, all your ideals and the desires of your heart.

— Pope John Paul II
Castel Gandolfo, August 11, 2004

Committing to a religious vocation means accepting a reality that is bigger than oneself. Vocations are out there. Today, in Europe and the United States, secularism is separating individuals from their faith. This is the milieu in which you will be preaching.

— Most Rev. Lawrence E. Brandt
Bishop of Greensburg
The Seminary classroom building, the John and Annette Brownfield Center, has an impressive glass-paneled elevator overlooking Father Sebastian’s Garden. Inside, the latest technological upgrades include a Teaching Chapel and digital capabilities in every classroom.
In 2004, the John and Annette Brownfield Center underwent a substantial renovation. In addition to wireless Internet access, each classroom is equipped with cutting edge technology that facilitates teaching and learning utilizing the most effective tools available today. The centerpiece of the renovation is a teaching chapel, a hybrid of a classroom and a chapel which allows for video taping of mock services and homilies, with immediate playback capacity to permit future priests to evaluate their effectiveness at the altar and pulpit. The desk configuration includes a center aisle to allow for practice of weddings and funerals. A congregation can even be projected on the back wall, to give the presider the feel of preaching at an actual service.
We have noted that biblical revelation is contained ultimately in the saving events described in the Bible. In order to receive this deeper revelation, we must in some way enter into those events; we must experience in some way the Exodus movement from bondage to freedom and the journey of Jesus from death to life. ... Only those who enter into the reality of their own lives can establish vital contact with those supremely real events of salvation.

— Rev. Demetrius R. Dumm
Flowers in the Desert
I count myself an eager pupil of such Benedictine luminaries as Cyprian Vagaggini, Dom Virgil Michel, Dom Anscar Vonier, Dom Columba Marmion, Damasus Winzen, and Godfrey Diekmann. In their day, these men were at the heart of the Church’s great renewal movements — the liturgical, biblical, and patristic movements that laid the sure foundations of the Second Vatican Council. I also have come to know these men through their spiritual descendants, whom I met here at Saint Vincent. They are faithful heirs to a legacy that St. Benedict himself bequeathed to his spiritual progeny, and to the entire Church.

I am convinced that we are still in the process of discovering what Dom Gueranger declared, near the dawn of the modern liturgical movement: “It is in the liturgy that the Spirit who inspired the Scriptures speaks again: the liturgy is Tradition itself at its highest degree of power and solemnity.”

—Dr. Scott Hahn
Chair of Biblical Theology and Liturgical Proclamation
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Br. Benedict Janecko, O.S.B.
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Br. David Kelly, O.S.B.
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Br. Elliott C. Maloney, O.S.B.
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Vice Rector
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B.A., Saint Vincent College; M.A., Saint Vincent Seminary; S.T.D., University of Munich; Diploma, Liturgical Institute, Trier, Germany; Research Semester, American Indian Culture Research Center, Marvin, South Dakota; Instituto de Idiomas (Maryknoll) Cochabamba, Bolivia. 1969-1981, Jan. 1982-2000. 2001-

Rev. Chrysostom V. Schlimm, O.S.B.
Associate Professor of Languages, Special Collections Librarian
B.A., Saint Vincent College; M.Div., Saint Vincent Seminary; M.A., The Catholic University of America; M.L.S., University of Pittsburgh; Graduate Studies: Tufts University. 1961-1969. 1970-

Mr. Michel Therrien
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Our theological, pastoral and spiritual formation have become successful because we have sought to integrate them in Jesus Christ. Saint Vincent Seminary continues to follow the course Archabbot Boniface charted, seeking the “road to the true faith, through the beauties of the Catholic Church, the holiness of its ministers, the fervor of the faithful, and through prayers.”

— Rev. Thomas Acklin
Professor of Theology

“I am the Good Shepherd... I lay down my life for the sheep,” Jesus says of himself (John 10:14f). It is not power but love that redeems us!

— Pope Benedict XVI
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Rev. Cyprian G. Constantine, O.S.B.

Director of Spiritual Formation
Rev. Charles A. Byrd, Jr.

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Saint Vincent Seminary continues to be in the forefront of training future priests with the development of a Pastoral Stewardship Program. The aim of the program is to enhance the pastoral preparation of seminarians by fostering leadership and management skills through providing a structured forum for the presentation and discussion of:

- Practical realities in light of the social teachings of the Church;
- Critical topics in managing human, physical, and financial resources;
- Ways of maximizing the opportunities of the ecclesial, civil and communal, and corporate contexts in which the priest ministers.

In addition to the Master of Divinity and Master of Arts degrees, Saint Vincent Seminary has offered the Bachelor of Sacred Theology degree since the fall semester, 2000.
Pastoral Stewardship Program

Pastoral Stewardship Program conference topics include:

- Defining the Vision of Pastoral Stewardship
- Leadership of the Church in the Modern World
- Stewardship: Theology and Practice
- Leadership: Management of the Church’s Financial Assets
- Faithful Citizenship
- Leadership–Communications–Public Relations
- Management of Employment Related Matters
- Management of Parish Reconfiguration
- Parish Vision and Long-Range Planning

Lecturers for the Pastoral Stewardship Program include:

Mr. John C. Marous, Jr., Chairman, Saint Vincent Seminary Board of Regents
Most Rev. Bernard W. Schmitt, Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston
Rev. Robert Sirico, Founder of the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty
Rev. John Haney, Pastor of Saint Gabriel of the Sorrowful Virgin Parish, Whitehall, PA
The Hon. Maureen E. Lally-Green, Judge, Superior Court of Pennsylvania
Most Rev. Donald W. Wuerl, Bishop of Pittsburgh
Carl A. Eck, Esq., Meyer, Darraugh, Buckler, Bebenek & Eck
Nicholas P. Cafardi, J.D., J.C.L. Dean and Professor of Law at Duquesne University School of Law; Chairman, USCCB National Review Board,
Rev. William Byron, S.J., Interim President, Loyola University
Very Rev. Lawrence DiNardo, Director of Department of Canon and Civil Law Services, Diocese of Pittsburgh
Ms. Rita Ferko Joyce, JD, JCL, Director of the Office for Civil Legal Services, Diocese of Pittsburgh
Mr. Fred O’Brien, Chief Financial Officer of the Diocese of Pittsburgh
Mr. John M. Lally, CPA, MBA, CVA, Managing Partner, Lally, Lally & Co., LLC
Most Rev. Paul Bradley, General Secretary and Auxiliary Bishop, Diocese of Pittsburgh
Very Rev. Roger Statnick, Vicar General, Diocese of Greensburg
Facilities on campus are available to those interested in swimming, weightlifting, basketball and physical conditioning. Soccer and lacrosse fields, tennis courts, baseball, softball and football fields are maintained for students interested in outdoor sports. A fitness trail and numerous areas for jogging and hiking are located on the campus grounds. Skiing facilities are within a half hour drive from the school. The Seminary also has a fitness room in Leander Hall for the convenience of the seminarians.
Seminarians are involved in social concerns. Many participate in the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C., pray outside an abortion clinic in the city of Pittsburgh, hold weekly Bible study sessions at a homeless shelter in Latrobe, and volunteer at a local food bank.
The priesthood is intimately tied to the Eucharist, which continues to make present the life-giving effects of the great Passover. On the same first Holy Thursday on which he instituted the sacrament of the Eucharist, Christ conferred priesthood on the apostles: ‘Do this in remembrance of me.’

— Bishop Donald Wuerl

Rev. Jonas Christal, of the Archdiocese of Campinas, Brazil, serves five of the poorest parishes in the archdiocese, with over 20,000 parishioners.
Seminary alumni come from and have served all parts of the world: from archdioceses, dioceses and religious communities in Georgia, Ohio, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, New Jersey, Oklahoma, and other parts of the United States to China, Brazil, Vietnam, Taiwan, Israel, Afghanistan and Iraq.

The late Bishop Nicholas C. Dattilo of the Diocese of Harrisburg was an alumnus of Saint Vincent Seminary. Above, he is pictured scoring a run during a baseball game at Saint Vincent.

Rev. Lee Yoakam served as a military chaplain in Operation Desert Storm, in Afghanistan, and is now stationed in Iraq.
The task of the fisher of men can often seem wearisome. But it is beautiful and wonderful, because it is truly a service to joy, to God’s joy which longs to break into the world.

— Pope Benedict XVI
A priest is a true father—and more of a father than any husband. As father to a family, I’ve given natural life to six children. I’ve given them my name, and I provide for their daily bread. But a priest gives supernatural life to a multitude over the course of his ministry; he gives them God’s name as their own; and he feeds his vast family with the Bread of Life. God made us as men and ordered us toward fatherhood. If you don’t see how intrinsically desirable holy orders is, then you have not understood it.

—Dr. Scott Hahn
Chair of Biblical Theology and Liturgical Proclamation

The will of the Church finds its ultimate motivation in the link between celibacy and sacred Ordination, which configures the priest to Jesus Christ the Head and Spouse of the Church. The Church, as the Spouse of Jesus Christ, wishes to be loved by the priest in the total and exclusive manner in which Jesus Christ her Head and Spouse loved her. Priestly celibacy, then, is the gift of self in and with Christ to his Church and expresses the priest’s service to the Church in and with the Lord.

—Pope John Paul II