



**ST. BERNARD'S**  
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY  
AND MINISTRY

## Certificate in Theology: Evangelization

### *I. Vision Statement*

“You are the light of the world” (Mt 5:14). The Certificate in Evangelization aims to equip Catholics to be luminous witnesses to Christ in the world through deepened conversion of the mind. More than ever, we need a well-formed and mission-oriented laity capable of understanding the faith and sharing it with others. For this reason, the Certificate in Evangelization aims to:

1. **Provide serious and solid intellectual formation** that shapes minds after the mind of Christ. Through lectures, personal study, prayer, and group sharing, we seek to achieve deeper intellectual conversion.
2. **Develop a missionary mind and heart.** We aim to instill a sensitive, agile grasp of the methods and challenges of evangelization in a secular world. Following Saint John Henry Newman, we seek to confront the challenge of staying rooted in the Catholic faith while entering into dialogue with the issues that lay people face in a shifting world.
3. **Unite theology and spirituality.** The study of our faith should lead to a greater configuration with Christ. These studies deepen love for Jesus, creating a dynamic reciprocity – and even welding-together – of the intellectual and spiritual life.

In a series of lectures given in 1851 entitled “Present Positions of Catholics in England,” Newman wrote: “You must not hide your talent in a napkin, or your light under a bushel. I want a laity, not arrogant, not rash in speech, not disputatious, but men who know their religion, who enter into it, who know just where they stand, who know what they hold, and what they do not, who know their creed so well that they can give an account of it, who know so much of history that they can defend it. I want an intelligent and well-instructed laity... I wish you to enlarge your knowledge, to cultivate your reason, to get an insight into the relation of truth, to learn to view things as they are, to understand how faith and reason stand to each other, what are the bases and principles of Catholicism.” We take Newman’s comments as a mission statement, and we humbly add the summons to go forth boldly on Christ’s behalf! We hope that this certificate serves as an instrument to form well-instructed missionary disciples who will be salt and light in the world, both by their witness of life and also through their explicit proclamation of the New Life in Jesus.

### *II. Introduction to Curriculum*

This certificate program provides instruction in fundamental areas of the Catholic tradition (Christology, Sacred Scripture, Christian anthropology) while equipping participants to understand their personal mission to share the Gospel. Through exploration of the Catholic understanding of God, the human being, and reality, the program presents the

Church's mind on the all-embracing call of evangelization. Features of the program include study of key ecclesial documents that spell out the invitation to spread the Gospel in today's world, a close reading of Saint John Henry Newman's theological reflections on divine revelation, and personal direction on your role as an ambassador for Christ in a world that (despite apparent hardness of hearing) never ceases to long for the mercy and truth of Jesus Christ. The program is led by priests of the Saint John Society, a congregation founded in Argentina two decades ago to preach afresh the Good News, and by faculty members of St. Bernard's School of Theology and Ministry, a School founded in Rochester, NY to be a dynamic, vibrant, and responsive center for theological and ministerial education and training. The certificate also provides students with the opportunity to pursue a minimum of six academic credits towards a Master's degree in Catholic theology, should the participant wish to continue their formational journey on this path. The instructors teach what they express each day in their ministry across the globe: that there exists no greater joy than guiding hearts to the Lord.

### *III. Scope and Outcomes*

The certificate is carried out over two years, featuring three courses (offered consecutively) each year. New cohorts of certificate participants will begin each Fall.

**The first year** begins with an introduction to evangelization, examining the Church as a missionary body in dialogue with the core tenets and approaches of the Catholic faith. We offer a compressed historical picture of the Church's missionary approach in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries to bring us right up to the present moment. We discuss the intellectual, spiritual, and practical foundations of mission in the Church today, drawing insights from the rich missionary work of the Saint John Society. We ground our discussion of mission by presenting the Catholic vision of the human being – the human being who bears the weight of sin and yet, through Jesus Christ, is rendered capable of the full weight of glory. We also investigate Sacred Scripture from the believer's perspective, viewing the Bible as an inspired testimony of God's love; we learn how to read both Testaments with Christ at the center, and we ask how to enter into Scripture so as not only to be *informed* but also *transformed*.

**The second year** applies and deepens the principles developed in the first, relates the transformational impetus of the missionary call to the person and mission of Jesus Christ, the philosophical foundations for faith, and the features of the moral life. Serious Christian ethical commitment entails self-gift in mission: consequently, we discuss the relationship between growth in virtue and fervor in proclamation of the Gospel. Along with treating the contributions of reason to the Christian vision of ethical flourishing, we explore the role played by reason in the grounding of Divine Revelation. We examine the Church's dogmatic teachings about Jesus Christ from the vantage point of the first seven ecumenical councils to answer the all-important question: Who is Jesus Christ, and what did he accomplish?

### *IV. Program Outline*

The individual unit is made up of three individual courses designed to accomplish the aforementioned scope and outcomes particular to each.

#### **Year I**

1. **The Missionary Church (Fall):** Begins from the statement of Pope Paul VI: "The Church does not have a mission. The Church *is* mission." The course traces the history of the New Evangelization, reading relevant sections of several documents of the Second Vatican Council, along with encyclicals of recent popes: Pope Paul VI's groundbreaking *Evangelii Nuntiandi (Evangelization of the Modern World)*, Pope John Paul II's landmark elaboration of the same theme in *Redemptoris Missio (The Mission of the Redeemer)*, and Pope Francis' fresh summons in *Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel)*. Answers the question: How does evangelization not only shape the Church, but *give* the shape of the Church? Develop the intellectual, spiritual, and practical insights that drive the mission work of the SSJ. History of the missionary work of

the Church. The proclamation of the Kerygma. [Instructed by Fr. Ignacio Llorente, SSJ] (one academic credit)

2. **Christian Anthropology (Winter): Christian Anthropology (Winter):** Personalism and Dualism: Understand these fundamental positions, elucidating how the personalist and biblical conception of the human person stands in contrast with the dualistic anthropologies that prevail in post-Enlightenment culture. Develop the basic notions of intelligence, will, freedom, passions, sexual identity, social life, and culture. Analyze how these are viewed differently, depending on whether one departs from a personalist or from a dualistic perspective. The consequences of the fall and how we understand the new identity in Christ. [Instructed by Fr. Lucas Laborde] (one academic credit)
3. **Sacred Scripture as Text(s) of Transformation (Spring):** What is Scripture? Inspiration. How to read Scripture: The history of salvation in the light of the New Life that Jesus prepared in the Old Testament and made present in the New Testament. How reading Scripture can deliver not only an increase in information but the fire of transformation. Study of the book of Luke and Acts in application of this “hermeneutic of personal transformation.” [Instructed by faculty member of St. Bernard’s] (one academic credit)

## Year 2

4. **Philosophical Foundations for Faith (Fall):** We will explore the basic philosophical concepts that undergird an objective and supernatural Revelation. The Fundamental option: Immanentism versus Realism. Basic principles of gnoseology, including the nature of human knowledge and the capacity of the intellect to know truth. Objectivism versus relativism. Natural and supernatural knowledge of God. God’s Revelation and the act of faith as a response to Revelation. Understanding the act of faith (reasons of credibility, objective and subjective elements, intellectual and cordial elements: dispositions for faith). [Instructed by priest of Saint John Society] (one academic credit)
5. **Christology (Winter):** True God: attributes of the divine essence. The divine missions and the missions of the Son. True Man: The Incarnation; how to speak of Christ; the human nature of Christ; the grace of Christ; knowledge and love of Christ; the weaknesses of Christ; Christ head and mediator; the mysteries of the life of Christ; the many ways in which Christ saves us. [Instructed by priest of Saint John Society] (one academic credit)
6. **The New Life in Christ: Morality and Mission (Spring):** Principles of Ethics. Natural and Revealed Morality. Conscience. Introduction to virtue ethics: virtues of the moral life and their place in attaining freedom for excellence. Principles to live by as a Christian in the world. Mission as character-shaping crucible and life-renewing adventure. [Instructed by Saint John Society priest or affiliated instructor] (one academic credit)

**Saint John Henry Newman Symposium (Portland, OR)** [Discovering and Implementing your Personal Mission]: A yearly multi-day summer symposium exploring gifts within yourself and opportunities within your city/region. Featuring speakers who embody the sanctifying power of dedicated mission. A collaborative endeavor, providing students a chance to share experiences, principles, and the work of Christ in their lives! Dedicated time for small group discussion and assimilation. An invitation to take a critical look at yourself and at the surrounding culture, and ask: In what way am I sent out? How can I spend

myself for Christ? We seek to equip participants not only with a wealth of knowledge but also a firm sense of direction, an experience of communion, and a taste of inspiration.

## *V. Course Structure and Design*

We welcome students who intend to pursue the whole program in sequence, as well as students who would like to take individual courses. The students who take courses according to the series will be joined to a cohort and will be put in contact with their fellow cohort members in addition to instructors. We also encourage and facilitate in-person gatherings for students who reside in the same geographical area, especially those in our “hub cities” of Portland, OR, Corvallis, OR, Washington DC, and Rochester, NY. Students who take courses out of sequence are still permitted to move towards completion of the program over time and will also be given the opportunity to connect with fellow students.

Each 10-meeting course includes six lectures of 1.5 hours each and 4 discussion sections of 1 hour each. Students will be able to participate in lectures synchronously on Thursdays at 6 pm PST. Discussion groups meet on Wednesdays at 3 pm PST and Thursdays at 6 pm PST. The lectures will also be recorded. Discussion sections will be offered online and in-person in Portland, OR. There is 2 hours of recommended reading per lecture. A lecture response (based on questions delivered by the lecturer) is due on the Friday following each lecture. The following is an example schedule for Course I for the Tuesday schedule (The Missionary Church):

|                  |                      |
|------------------|----------------------|
| Thurs., Oct. 7:  | Lecture 1            |
| Thurs., Oct. 14: | Lecture 2            |
| Thurs., Oct. 21: | Discussion Section 1 |
| Thurs., Oct. 28: | Lecture 3            |
| Thurs., Nov. 4:  | Discussion Section 2 |
| Thurs., Nov. 11: | Lecture 4            |
| Thurs., Nov. 18: | Discussion Section 3 |
| Tues., Nov. 25:  | Lecture 5            |
| Thurs., Dec. 2:  | Discussion Section 4 |
| Thurs., Dec. 9:  | Lecture 6 & Review   |
| Thurs., Dec. 16: | Final paper Due      |

The courses run on the following schedule for the 2021-2022 academic year:

Course 1: Thurs., October 7<sup>th</sup> — Thurs., December 16<sup>th</sup> (Fall)  
Course 2: Thurs., January 6<sup>th</sup> — Thurs., March 17<sup>th</sup> (Winter)  
Course 3: Thurs., April 7<sup>th</sup> — Thurs., June 16<sup>th</sup> (Spring)  
Summer Symposium: Dates TBD (July or August)

In addition to lecture and discussion section attendance and the course readings, the course design also features the following:

- Students are expected to complete a series of questions proposed by the lecturer and bring their responses to the discussion section. Student responses will serve as the basis for the group conversation. The discussion sections will be led either by the lecturer or a teaching assistant.
- A final paper is due at the end of the week following the final lecture.

The courses will be supported by Canvas, a Learning Management System. Canvas will assist the course by providing an online space that will allow students to:

- Access course readings
- Communicate with the lecturer/teaching assistant
- Review course outline and access the course Zoom link

#### *VI. Program Administration and Commencement*

The administrative and procedural details of the Certificate will be supported by St. Bernard's staff and Populi, St. Bernard's Student Information Software. Applications to the program, registration in courses, and tracking completion of coursework will be located and tracked within Populi for ease of process and data management.

As an institution of higher education accredited through the Association of Theological Schools and the New York State Education Department, St. Bernard's is able to grant a certificate to those who satisfactorily complete the above requirements. Accordingly, they will be invited to participate in St. Bernard's annual Commencement ceremony as graduates, and they will have their certificates awarded by the Chancellor of St. Bernard's, the Bishop of the Diocese of Rochester, NY. A closing ceremony for graduates will be held at the Saint John Henry Newman Symposium in Portland, OR.

#### *VII. Cost*

The Certificate in Evangelization aims to provide an opportunity for theological and missional formation at a reasonable cost to the participant. Accordingly, the cost per course is \$200 plus a \$20 technology and registration fee, totaling \$220. In sum, the entire certificate will cost the participant \$1,320 (cost of the Summer Symposium not included). Auditing is available at a lower cost, but students are permitted to audit only a single course, given that the audit option is conceived as a means of discerning participation in the program.

#### *VIII. Conclusion*