



Special Report

Ecclesiastical Faculties and Canonical Degree Programs in the United States

This report summarizes findings from a study of Ecclesiastical Faculties and canonical degree programs in the United States that was conducted by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University for the *Sapientia Christiana* Committee of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

CARA completed the first comprehensive study of Ecclesiastical Faculties and canonical degree programs for the USCCB in Spring 2002. Since that time, CARA has also included questions about canonical degrees in its annual data collection and reports for the CARA *Catholic Ministry Formation Directory*. The present report, which is based primarily on a survey of Ecclesiastical Faculties and canonical degree programs that was conducted in 2004 and 2005, builds on findings from the earlier studies. It is also informed by communications from the Congregation for Catholic Education as well as consultation with the *Sapientia Christiana* Committee and the rectors, presidents, and deans of the institutions that confer or offer canonical degrees.

Sapientia Christiana

Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties and the awarding of canonical degrees are governed by the Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia Christiana*, promulgated by Pope John Paul II in 1979, and the “Norms of Application” for the implementation of the Apostolic Constitution, issued by the Congregation for Catholic Education that same year. Other documents from the Congregation outline the policies and procedures regulating the affiliation, aggregation, and incorporation to an Ecclesiastical Faculty in greater detail. Unless otherwise noted, all citations in this report refer either to *Sapientia Christiana* or the Norms of Application.

Ecclesiastical Faculties

Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties “have been canonically erected or approved by the Apostolic See” and “have the right to confer academic degrees by the authority of the Holy See.” (Article 2) This canonical erection or approval is “reserved to the Sacred [sic] Congregation for Catholic Education, which governs them according to law.” (Article 5) “Only Universities and Faculties canonically erected or approved by the Holy See and ordered according to the norms of [*Sapientia Christiana*] have the right to confer academic degrees which have canonical value. . . .” (Article 6) The academic

Ecclesiastical Faculties in the United States

SACRED THEOLOGY

- School of Theology of St. Mary’s Seminary and University, Baltimore, MD
- Faculty (School) of Theology and Religious Studies, The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC
- Faculty of Theology of the University of St. Mary of the Lake, Mundelein, IL
- Weston Jesuit School of Theology, Cambridge, MA
- Pontifical Faculty of Theology of the Immaculate Conception, Dominican House of Studies, Washington, DC
- Jesuit School of Theology, Berkeley, CA

CANON LAW

- Faculty (School) of Canon Law, The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC

PHILOSOPHY

- Faculty (School) of Philosophy, The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC

degrees conferred by an Ecclesiastical Faculty are the Baccalaureate, the Licentiate, and the Doctorate.

The word “Pontifical” in the title of a university does not imply the existence of an Ecclesiastical University or Faculty. “Pontifical” is a title of honor bestowed upon an institution by the Holy Father. It does not necessarily refer to the institution’s degree-granting capacity.

There are currently eight Ecclesiastical Faculties in the United States: six Ecclesiastical Faculties of Sacred Theology, one Ecclesiastical Faculty of Canon Law, and one Ecclesiastical Faculty of Philosophy. Three of these Faculties are at The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC, in the Schools of Theology and Religious Studies, Canon Law, and Philosophy.

Affiliation, Aggregation, and Incorporation

In certain circumstances, an Ecclesiastical Faculty may request that the Congregation for Catholic Education affiliate to itself an institution “for the purpose of being able to grant the bachelor’s degree.” (Article 62) Such an affiliation “is usually granted only when the affiliating Faculty and the affiliated institution are in the same country or cultural region.” (Norms of Application, Article 47) Affiliation is ordinarily and almost exclusively granted to seminaries.

Similarly, in certain circumstances an Ecclesiastical Faculty may request that the Congregation for Catholic Education aggregate to itself an institution “for the purposes of also granting higher academic degrees.” (Article 63) “Aggregation is the linking with a Faculty of some Institute which embraces only the first and second cycle, for the purpose of granting the degrees corresponding to those cycles through the Faculty.” (Norms of Application, Article 48). The degrees corresponding to the first and second cycle are the Baccalaureate and the Licentiate, respectively.

Another means of collaborating with an Ecclesiastical Faculty at another institution is through incorporation. “Incorporation is the insertion into a Faculty of some Institute which embraces either the second or third cycle or both, for the purpose of granting the corresponding degrees through the Faculty.” (Article 48) Like affiliation and aggregation, incorporation requires approval by the Congregation for Catholic Education. (Article 63) The degrees corresponding to the second and third cycle are the Licentiate and the Doctorate, respectively.

Sacred Theology

As already noted, six of the eight Ecclesiastical Faculties in the United States are Faculties of Theology. These Faculties have the right to confer the Baccalaureate (S.T.B.), the Licentiate (S.T.L.), and the Doctorate (S.T.D.) in Sacred Theology.

In addition, there are seven institutions in the United States, all seminaries, that offer the Baccalaureate in Sacred Theology (S.T.B.) by way of affiliation. Four of these are affiliated to Ecclesiastical Faculties in Rome while three are affiliated to Ecclesiastical Faculties in the United States. The Pontifical College Josephinum, affiliated to the Pontifical Lateran University in 2005, is the most recent addition to the list.

Currently, only one institution in the United States is aggregated to an Ecclesiastical Faculty. Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit is aggregated to the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (*Angelicum*) in Rome for the purposes of conferring both the Baccalaureate and the Licentiate in Sacred Theology (S.T.B. and S.T.L.). This has been the case since 2004. Prior to that Sacred Heart Major Seminary was affiliated to the *Angelicum* (since 2000).

Marian Library

The International Marian Research Institute at the University of Dayton is incorporated into the Pontifical Theological Faculty *Marianum* in Rome. Incorporation authorizes the Marian Library to offer the second and third cycle ecclesiastical degrees, namely, the Licentiate and the Doctorate in Sacred Theology (S.T.L. and S.T.D.).

Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family

The Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family in Washington, DC is an external section of the central section of the *Pontificio Istituto Giovanni Paolo II per Studi su Matrimonio e Famiglia*, which is located in Rome at the Pontifical Lateran University. The Licentiate and Doctorate in Sacred Theology (S.T.L. and S.T.D.) are granted through the Washington section by the central section at the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome.

Affiliation, Aggregation, and Incorporation to an Ecclesiastical Faculty in Sacred Theology

INSTITUTION

St. Patrick Seminary, Menlo Park, CA
St. Joseph Seminary, Yonkers, NY
St. John Vianney Seminary, Denver, CO
St. Vincent Seminary, Latrobe, PA

Mt. Angel Seminary, Mt. Angel, OR
St. Mary's Seminary, Houston, TX
Pontifical College Josephinum, Columbus, OH

Sacred Heart Major Seminary, Detroit, MI

International Marian Research Institute at
the University of Dayton

AFFILIATED TO

St. Mary's Seminary and University, Baltimore, MD
Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (*Angelicum*), Rome
Faculty of Theology, Pontifical Lateran University, Rome
Pontifical Faculty of Theology of the Immaculate Conception,
Dominican House of Studies, Washington, DC
Pontifical *Athenaeum* of St. Anselm, Rome
St. Mary's Seminary and University, Baltimore, MD
Faculty of Theology, Pontifical Lateran University, Rome

AGGREGATED TO

Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (*Angelicum*), Rome

INCORPORATED INTO

Pontifical Theological Faculty *Marianum*, Rome

Canon Law

The School of Canon Law at The Catholic University of America is the only institution in the United States that grants canonical degrees in Canon Law. At The Catholic University of America, these are the Licentiate and the Doctorate (J.C.L. and J.C.D.)

Philosophy

The School of Philosophy at The Catholic University of America is the only institution in the United States that currently grants canonical degrees in Philosophy (Ph.B., Ph.L., and Ph.D.) through its status as an Ecclesiastical Faculty. In addition, two institutions offer the Baccalaureate in Philosophy (Ph.B. or B.Phil.) by way of affiliation to Ecclesiastical Faculties in Rome:

- Our Lady of Thornwood Academic Center in Thornwood, NY, the philosophate of the Legionaries of Christ, is affiliated to the Faculty of Philosophy at the Pontifical Athenaeum Regina Apostolorum.
- St. John Vianney Seminary in Denver is affiliated to the Faculty of Philosophy at the Pontifical Lateran University. The seminary is also affiliated to the Faculty of Theology at the Pontifical Lateran University.

Degree Programs and Requirements

The curriculum of studies in each Faculty is ordinarily organized in three cycles. In the first cycle, “a general instruction is imparted, covering a coordinated presentation of all the disciplines, along with an introduction into scientific methodology.” Next, “one section of the disciplines is studied more profoundly, at the same time that the students practice scientific research more fully.” Finally, “there is progress toward scientific maturity, especially through a written work which truly makes a contribution to the advance of the science.” (Article 40) The three cycles culminate in the academic degrees of Baccalaureate, Licentiate, and Doctorate, respectively. The prerequisites for each cycle, the disciplines that are taught within a particular cycle, the length of time (semesters or years) it takes to complete a particular cycle, and the exam requirements at the end of each cycle vary by subject area.

Students

When the data were collected in 2004-2005, there were a total of 336 seminarians (including 18 transitional deacons) enrolled in S.T.B. programs in the United States. A little more than half were enrolled in Ecclesiastical Faculties (174), with the rest in affiliated (154) or aggregated (8) programs. Most of these, 84 percent, were candidates for diocesan priesthood. These figures do not include

seminarians at the Pontifical College Josephinum, which was affiliated to the Pontifical Lateran University after the research period. These figures also do not include U.S. seminarians at the Pontifical North American College in Rome or the American College in Louvain (see below).

During that same period, there were a total of 199 students enrolled in S.T.L. programs in the United States. Almost three-fourths, 73 percent, were enrolled in Ecclesiastical Faculties, with the rest in the aggregated (6), incorporated (33), or external section (15) programs at Sacred Heart Major Seminary, the International Marian Research Institute, and the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family, respectively. More than half of the S.T.L. candidates, 56 percent, were diocesan priests (62) or religious priests (60).

During 2004-2005, there were a total of 96 students enrolled in the S.T.D. programs, with approximately two-thirds, 69 percent, at Ecclesiastical Faculties (66) and the rest at the International Marian Research Institute (10) and the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family (20). Three-fourths, 75 percent, of the S.T.D. candidates were diocesan priests (41) or religious priests (31).

Ecclesiastical Faculties outside the United States

It should be noted that there are students from the United States studying in Ecclesiastical Faculties throughout the world. Many of these are seminarians for U.S. dioceses at the Pontifical North American College in Rome and, to a lesser extent, the American College of the Immaculate Conception in Louvain, Belgium. Seminarians at these institutions receive their degrees from Ecclesiastical Faculties at institutions located near them.

- Students at the Pontifical North American College in Rome receive their degrees from the Ecclesiastical Faculties of the Ecclesiastical Universities and Institutions in Rome, typically the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (*Angelicum*) or the Pontifical Gregorian University (*Gregoriana*).
- Students at the American College in Louvain receive their degrees from the Ecclesiastical Faculties of either the *Katholieke Universiteit Leuven* (KUL) in Leuven or *L'Universite Catholique de Louvain* (UCL) in Louvain-la-Neuve.

In addition, some students residing at the Pontifical North American College (primarily priests residing at Casa Santa Maria, the post-graduate house at the Pontifical North American College) are enrolled in Licentiate and Doctorate programs of the various Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties in Rome. There are also other students from the United States studying in these institutions as well as in Ecclesiastical Faculties in other parts of the world.

In 2004-2005, there were a total of 199 students residing at the Pontifical North American College who were enrolled in canonical degree programs.

- 117 students, all diocesan seminarians, were enrolled in Baccalaureate programs.
- 57 students, mostly diocesan priests and transitional deacons, were enrolled in Licentiate programs.
- 25 students, all priests (22 diocesan and 3 religious), were enrolled in Doctoral programs.

Teachers

According to *Sapientia Christiana*, “there must be a number of teachers, especially permanent ones,” in each Ecclesiastical Faculty “which corresponds to the importance and development of the individual disciplines as well as to the proper care and profit of the students.” (Article 22) A permanent teacher in an Ecclesiastical Faculty must have “a suitable doctorate or equivalent title or exceptional and singular scientific accomplishment.” (Article 25) The Norms of Application define “a suitable doctorate” as one that “corresponds to the discipline that is being taught. If the discipline is sacred or connected with the sacred, the doctorate must be canonical. In the event that the doctorate is not canonical, the teacher will usually be required to have at least a canonical licentiate.” (Norms of Application, Article 17) Another part of *Sapientia Christiana* also notes that “the doctorate is the academic degree which enables one to teach in a Faculty and which is therefore required for this purpose, the licentiate is the academic degree which enables one to teach in a major seminary or equivalent school and which is therefore required for this purpose.” (Article 50) The document further specifies that “all teachers, before they are given a permanent post or before they are promoted to the highest category of teacher, or else in both cases, . . . must receive a declaration of *nihil obstat* from the Holy See.” (Article 27)