

# CATHOLIC COURIER

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## Specialty of the House...

▣ **Priestly Formation Program:** *A program designed to prepare candidates for service in the church as priests.*

## Entrees...

▣ **Master of Divinity:** *The basic professional degree for church workers, this program is generally open to lay students, seminarians and priests who have not already earned graduate degrees.*

▣ **Master of Arts in Theology:** *An academic degree program intended to give students mastery of some aspect of theology. Includes tracks in pastoral ministry, church doctrine and Scriptures.*

▣ **Deacon Formation Program:** *A program designed to prepare candidates for service in the church as permanent deacons.*

▣ **Certification Program:** *A program intended to offer individuals not seeking academic degrees or those who lack undergraduate degrees an opportunity for continuing education and for certification in such areas as religious education and youth ministry.*

## Modern seminaries serve diverse menus

ROCHESTER — As it prepared for the turn of the 20th century, the U.S. Catholic Church set out to develop a pool of well-educated, American-born priests.

The result was a rash of seminary establishments — among them the 1893 opening of Rochester's St. Bernard's Seminary.

By 1910, St. Bernard's had the second-largest enrollment of all seminaries in the United States, even though Rochester was a relatively small diocese.

And in the decade following World War II, St. Bernard's — like many other U.S. seminaries — reached its enrollment peak, several times enrolling more than 250 seminarians.

Little more than 25 years later, however, St. Bernard's Seminary closed its doors in 1981. (Shortly thereafter the former seminary's board of directors founded St. Bernard's Institute,

which has evolved into a graduate school of theology open to lay people as well as clergy and religious.)

The rise and fall of St. Bernard's Seminary typifies a trend that affected many seminaries and other church institutions in the 25 years following Vatican II.

During those years, total enrollment for all U.S. seminaries dropped from more than 48,000 diocesan and religious-order seminarians in 1965 to approximately 6,000 seminarians in 1990. More than half of the nation's seminaries closed.

These closings came in response to a shrinking pool of seminarians and the mounting costs of maintaining schools, supporting programs and paying faculties. Smaller dioceses could no longer afford to operate their own seminaries.

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*Server Lee Strong*

