Dear Friend,

Thank you for your interest in St. Bernard’s. This brochure provides you with a brief introduction to our school and the necessary information to get you started. I invite you to visit us at any time at either our beautiful campus in Rochester or at our extension site in Albany.

This is truly an exciting time to be a part of St. Bernard’s. Our students, both women and men, married and single, lay and ordained, are coming together to learn more about their faith and about God. Many come to us with the goal of serving God and the community in parishes, schools and all kinds of human service agencies. Others simply want to know more—about God, about themselves and about our faith. At St. Bernard’s, our goal, through our degree, certificate and community education programs, is to guide, educate, form, train and inspire our students while preparing them for lives of dedicated service to others. We are at once humbled and honored to serve the Church in this capacity and we are proud of the profound and enduring effect God has had and continues to have through us.

Everyone, of course, knows about the decline in the number of Catholic priests nationwide. But an equally important trend is the nearly 55 percent nationwide increase in lay leadership. Right now we are witnessing the emergence of whole new professions for dedicated lay people who choose to take up a career in the Church, and we continue to see an increasing number who have committed themselves in a new way to learning about Jesus.

Now and in the future, new positions of leadership and increased opportunities for learning will continue to emerge for both married and single Catholic women and men. God calls each of us to grow and learn more about our faith, our God, and each other. St. Bernard’s can help you realize that call and reach your full potential. Come visit us and experience the excitement Christ has to offer you in the extraordinary community of St. Bernard’s.

Patricia Schoelles, SSJ
President
Each of us is called into a life of the Spirit through Jesus Christ. We have been called from all walks of life and come from all places.

We are teachers, passing on the wisdom of our past and the richness of tradition. We are scholars, shaping the future of the church and interpreting God’s word for generations to come. We are social workers who knit grace into lives in need of healing, and healthcare professionals that care about more than the body, seeking to nurture the spirit. We are parents who want to give the best of our faith to our children, and we are the countless women and men who dedicate their lives in the service of others.

Since 1893, St. Bernard’s Seminary and its successor St. Bernard’s School of Theology and Ministry have been assisting men and women to answer their call. Our exciting, innovative classes, dynamic fellowship and diverse professional development opportunities have inspired generations to be leaders in the church and in their communities. Together, our students deepen their faith through the pursuit of knowledge and learn to engage the prophetic voice within them. Together, we learn to listen to the still, small voice of God that calls us to a life we have only dreamed possible.

Together, let’s answer your calling.
HISTORY & ACCREDITATION

Opened as a Roman Catholic Seminary in 1893 by Bishop Bernard J. McQuaid, St. Bernard’s has a heritage of bold innovation in theological studies. For more than a century, St. Bernard’s has steadily pursued a course of dedication and service to a changing Catholic Church in a changing world.

In 1981, St. Bernard’s became one of the first accredited Roman Catholic theological schools in the eastern U.S. to offer graduate education to lay people in preparation for parish and community ministry. Now in its second century, St. Bernard’s continues to thrive, meeting the Church’s diverse and ever changing needs for theological and ministerial education.

St. Bernard’s is accredited by the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada.

St. Bernard’s Mission

St. Bernard’s School of Theology and Ministry, a Roman Catholic graduate and professional school, educates and assists women and men in academic, ministerial, interpersonal and spiritual formation for the purpose of serving the church through diverse forms of lay and ordained ministries, theological scholarship and Christian service in society.
Programs of Study

St. Bernard’s offers three graduate degree programs in theology, as well as a range of certificate programs, lectures, workshops, and continuing education opportunities. Our goal is to integrate classroom learning with personal, spiritual and professional development and open our students to a fuller grasp of the deeper meanings of the Catholic faith tradition.

GRADUATE PROGRAMS

- Master of Divinity
- Master of Arts (Theological Studies)
- Master of Arts in Pastoral Studies
- Graduate Certificate in Pastoral Studies (for students who lack a bachelor’s degree)

CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Students at St. Bernard’s Rochester location may enroll in the Certification Program. This program is designed for those students who are not pursuing a graduate degree, but who have a thirst to learn more, to grow closer to the Lord Jesus, and to share their gifts. Courses can be taken for personal enrichment or to discern a call to ministry. Certificates are offered in areas such as youth ministry, catechetical leadership, pastoral ministry and parish business management.

ALBANY PROGRAMS

The Albany extension site offers students in the Capital region enviable opportunities. Blessed by visionary and energetic leadership, the Diocese of Albany is in the forefront of supporting advanced theological and ministerial formation. In addition to a sequence of graduate level courses leading to the Master of Arts (Theological Studies), Master of Arts in Pastoral Studies, and Master of Divinity, and a non-degree Graduation Certificate, the Albany program offers a variety of timely lectures, workshops and seminars.

PERMANENT DIACONATE PROGRAM

St. Bernard’s is central to the education and formation of men who wish to pursue ordination to the permanent diaconate, offering the required course of study and assistance in discernment together with the Roman Catholic Dioceses of Rochester and Albany.

EL INSTITUTO DE PASTORAL HISPANO

La misión del Instituto de Pastoral Hispano “San Bernardo” es proveer un programa de formación integral que a su vez sea incluyente y pastoral para todos los Católicos de las diferentes comunidades de habla hispana en nuestra diócesis. Es un llamado a quienes tienen el deseo de servir a las comunidades en un ministerio pleno y en una entrega como bautizados.

The mission of the Instituto is to provide a program of formation that is integral, inclusive and pastoral to all baptized Catholics from the various Spanish-speaking communities of the Diocese who feel called to serve in their communities in a new and vibrant way.

CONTINUING EDUCATION AND SPECIAL PROGRAMMING

In conjunction with the Dioceses of Rochester and Albany, St. Bernard’s offers a variety of professional development opportunities for priests, deacons and lay ecclesial ministers. It also provides opportunities for the general public to explore topics and issues from various faith perspectives.

People interested in personal enrichment/adult faith formation opportunities will find a wide range of programs and courses from which to choose. Students may participate in any course or program offered by St. Bernard’s, including those in the Graduate, Certificate and Continuing Education programs.

FACULTY

Theological scholars, retreat masters, lecturers, authors and pastoral counselors, St. Bernard’s faculty is made up of a diverse team of faithful men and women. They share a passion—for learning, Christian service, and the success of their students. Highly accessible as advisors, they assist in course selection as well as intellectual, pastoral and spiritual formation.

Learning takes place mostly in small seminar classes where professors encourage the sharing of ideas and pastoral experiences. Faculty also are available for individual study, small group guided study, and distance learning through video conferencing.
I went to St. Bernard’s to find out where and how I could get good information about the Catholic Church, its rules and traditions. I was so tired of listening to people with old or bad information, which they still believed was correct. There was never a desire to teach or do anything with it other than being an informed Catholic laywoman. However, the further I got into study, the more I began to realize that I should “put my talents to work.”

The call of God took shape when I took a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education at Strong. After 4 more units of CPE, I applied for and received the position of Evening Chaplain at Lourdes Hospital in Binghamton, NY. My education at St. Bernard’s is the bedrock of my ministry. I wouldn’t be the chaplain I am today without it.
The decision to come to St. Bernard’s hardly feels like one that I made; it was one driven by the prayer and inspiration from countless individuals who entered my life at different times. Through them, I had grown in my faith, that sacred gift, and desired to know more. Now as a student, I have entered more deeply into faith’s divine mystery through the development of deeper theological and spiritual understanding.

Throughout my time at St. Bernard’s, my life in ministry has been infused with wisdom and knowledge, enhancing the quality of the pastoral care I can offer the families I work with.

Now more than ever, people need to experience the love of God. We who are the church, whether we are lay or ordained, are called to be the face of Jesus and bring the love of God to that world. St. Bernard’s serves that call and guides students to engage in our Baptismal vocation. This program has helped me to work toward being a blessing to my family, my church, and my community.
For further information on current course offerings, applying to St. Bernard’s or arranging a tour, contact us:

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