



UNIVERSITY  
OF  
SAINT MARY  
OF THE LAKE

## **University of Saint Mary of the Lake Announces Establishment of the School of Parish Leadership and Evangelization**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fr. John Kartje, President/Rector of the University of Saint Mary of the Lake (USML) and Mundelein Seminary, announced the creation of a new "School of Parish Leadership and Evangelization" effective July 1, 2023. Focusing on the formation of lay leadership and the permanent diaconate, the School will complement the mission of Mundelein Seminary, which is not affected by the restructuring. Under the guidance of a single dean, the new school will both encompass and advance the programs formerly offered by four separate institutes at USML: Institute of Diaconal Studies, Instituto de Liderazgo Pastoral, Liturgical Institute, and Institute of Pastoral Leadership. Dr. Theodore (Ted) Whapham, former dean of the School of Ministry at the University of Dallas, and experienced university administrator has accepted the role of Dean for the School of Parish Leadership and Evangelization. Dr. Whapham will begin April 3 to guide the transition to the new school.

"This new school will provide fresh opportunities for the education and spiritual development of the laity, building their capacity to contribute their gifts and talents and experiences as disciples for the benefit of the entire Church as envisioned by the Second Vatican Council," said Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, archbishop of Chicago.

This organizational change positions the school to grow and meet the increasingly challenging needs of parishes throughout the Archdiocese of Chicago and the Church in the United States. Programs currently offered through the four institutes will be expanded to include both graduate degrees and certificates, and other ongoing educational opportunities in Spanish and English, employing online, in-person, and hybrid formats.

"The School of Parish Leadership and Evangelization allows us to situate USML's rich history of preparing men and women for lay and diaconate ministry within a new vision for fostering personal encounters with Jesus Christ." Fr. Kartje said, "Because the identity and mission of our parishes are constantly evolving, we recognize the critical importance of forming leaders in the Church who are faithful to the timeless truths of Christianity, but also flexible enough to adapt to the spiritual longings and needs of present and future generations."

The School will offer extensive courses including catechetics, liturgy, Sacred Scripture, Church history, and theology. It will have a specific, though not exclusive, focus on forming parish leaders to catechize and evangelize amid the challenges facing the Church today.

"This reorganization positions the School to meet the needs of the Archdiocese of Chicago while, as its name suggests, having a greater impact on the Church in the United States, thus

becoming a national center for parish leadership and evangelization,” Dr. Brian Schmisek, Provost and Vice President for Development at USML said.

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*About University of Saint Mary of the Lake at Mundelein Seminary*

*The University of Saint Mary of the Lake is the home to Roman Catholic theological education located within the Archdiocese of Chicago. The University maintains schools and programs that prepare students for ministry: Mundelein Seminary, The Pontifical Faculty of Theology, and now the new School of Parish Leadership and Evangelization.*

*To learn more about USML, visit [www.usml.edu](http://www.usml.edu).*

