



The Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree through Vilatte Theological Seminary

Important Notice to students: *The Vilatte Theological Seminary plans to achieve and maintain a standard of excellence in all coursework and degree programs. While we are not an accredited academic institution, we propose to approximate those standards and we hope eventually to be able to apply for and obtain state and regional recognition of our coursework and degrees. Realistically, that is not going to happen anytime soon. Currently and for the foreseeable future, VTS degrees are what the Missouri State Division of Higher Education calls “Bible Degrees”, that is, non-academic degrees from a church related educational program. Thus, the student needs to be aware that receiving a “bible degree” through VTS does not have the same status and stature as a degree from a state or regionally accredited educational program such as Saint Louis University or Fulton Theological Seminary, or other fully accredit college or university.*

On the other hand, a degree from Vilatte Theological Seminary does provide the cleric or layperson with a title and recognition indicating that they have achieved the level of competence in ministerial studies that is described below and in our Seminary catalog.

Finally, the VTS degree program serves a need within the Old/Independent Catholic Church community for an educational program that prepares clergy and laity to be leaders knowledgeable in Catholic theology and Scripture. The administration and faculty of VTS give their personal and professional assurance that a person who places M.Div. or D.Min. behind his/her name based on the degree having been awarded by VTS has earned that degree through a demonstration of educational competence in ministerial studies. VTS does not award honorary degrees and does not “sell” degrees.

+Rev. Carl T. Swaringim, President

February 20, 2008

General Description

The Master of Divinity degree through VTS is designed to enable the degree candidate to identify and complete a **project** in his/her preferred area(s) of ministerial competencies. This project integrates competencies and focuses them on a particular problem, clarification, or identified need in the Old/Independent Catholic movement. At

this Masters level, the project may be locally focused rather than focused on the independent movement at large as is required in the Doctor of Ministry program.

In addition to completing a course of studies, either by successfully completing courses through VTS, or at another acceptable institute, or through a combination of study and experience, the candidate must complete a project which may include a supportive research component, but must clearly address some need either within a given congregation, jurisdiction, or even the universal movement. At the Master level the candidate may limit the perimeters of the project so that the work itself has a practical and applicable value to his/her present or future ministry. The scope of the project is one important specific difference from the requirements of the Doctorate of Ministry.

Each Master's project must meet the writing and publication standards of the Vlatte Theological Seminary and receive the approval of a faculty committee consisting of the President or his representative and two other members of the faculty.

Pre-requisite Coursework

The Masters candidate must have completed 32 Credit Hours prerequisite coursework or its equivalent as described in the current VTS catalog. While specific course titles may vary, prerequisite course work must include successful broad study in the following areas: Sacred Scripture, Doctrinal and Moral Theology, Church History, Homiletics, Catechizing, Spiritual Direction, Spirituality, Liturgy, and Church Administration.

This required coursework is available through VTS in a 32 Credit Hour course of studies divided by coursework preparatory for ordination to the Diaconate and Priesthood. The 32 Credit Hour prerequisite as described above may be from courses in both the Diaconate or Priesthood courses of study.

Requirements

- 1) Completion of course competencies as described above (32 Credit Hours).
- 2) Selection of an approved topic for the project. *(Sign-off required)*
- 3) Development and presentation of a "plan of completion" of project to Masters Committee. *(Sign-off required)*
- 4) Chapter by Chapter approval by Masters Committee. *(Sign-off required)*
- 5) Final approval and sign-off by the Masters Committee. *(Sign-off required)*
- 6) Bound copy of project presented to VTS library.
- 7) Certified pdf copy (CD) of project presented to VTS library.
- 8) Release to post project on VTS library's public website.
- 9) The student has three (2) years to complete the project from the time that the project topic is approved.
- 10) Fee payment schedule: fees for three credit hours are paid when the topic is presented for approval; fees for the final three hours are due when Chapter Three is presented for review and approval. The graduation fee is due when the library copies of the project are accepted by VTS.

Project

Showing integrated competence in areas of study related to Ministry.

The project is a major writing task and normally will be between 75 - 100 one sided pages typed (Times New Roman #12 size font, double spaced, with margins 1 ½” on left and right; 1 ½ ” on top and bottom of page; page number at bottom in middle of footer. Footnotes to clarify a statement in the text are placed at bottom of page; references are placed at end of document presented numbered by chapter; bibliography after reference list, and Vita of author after bibliography. (See the VTS publication Style Sheet in the Student Resource Center of our website.)

Chapters of the Masters Project

Chapter One: Rationale for the Project

“Why is this project needed?”

Chapter Two: Review of topic in the literature.

“What is in the literature about this need?”

Chapter Three: Research Design.

“How will the project be completed?”

Chapter Four: Presentation of the Project.

Details and artifacts. For example, if the project is a handbook for a parish, the book would be included here.

Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations.

Identifying a topic.

The topic should be one that interests and motivates the student to develop and execute the project. It should be something useful to his or her ministry or jurisdiction.

Example Projects:

- Codification of Jurisdiction’s Church Law.
- Parishioner Handbook for a congregation.
- Power Point Presentation on a Jurisdiction.
- Prayer Book for Congregational Use.
- Develop an Internet based Catechetical Course of Studies for a congregation or jurisdiction.

Bound copies for Seminary Library

One hard copy bound according to VTS standards.

One certified pdf copy presented on a CD.

Release to post project on VTS library webpage.

Conferral of Degree

The degree is conferred only after all requirements have been met and signed off on by the appropriate person and all fees are paid. A formal letter and document will be sent when the degree is actually conferred. A conferral ceremony will be arranged at a time and place mutually agreeable to the student and VTS, if the candidate wishes to have his/her degree presented in this manner.

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