



Christ the Teacher Institute

a mission of the Sheil Catholic Center at Northwestern University

2110 Sheridan Road Evanston, IL 60201 847-328-4648

<https://sheilcatholiccenter.org/learn/christ-the-teacher-institute-faith-formation/>

Catholic Scholars Program

For Rising Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors

DESCRIPTION & APPLICATION 2026-2027

CHRIST THE TEACHER INSTITUTE

The *Christ the Teacher Institute* (CTI) is a mission of the Sheil Catholic Center (Sheil) at Northwestern University. Its purpose is to form Catholic leaders for the Church and the world through the integration of scholarship, prayer, service, and leadership. The Institute oversees the Sheil Seminars, the Catholic Scholars Program, the Catholic Fellowships in Church leadership, the Simpson Essay Prize, and the Sheil Speaker's Series.

CATHOLIC SCHOLARS PROGRAM

The Catholic Scholars Program assists students in taking seriously the commitment to deepen their understanding of faith, pray on a regular basis, serve the needs of others and provide leadership that is distinctively Catholic. Catholic Scholars are theologically grounded, spiritually alive, articulate in their faith, and joyfully involved in Catholic tradition. Scholars who complete this program are able to bring Christian principles to their post-graduation paths. They will be well-prepared to serve on parish councils, teach Religious Education, participate in liturgy committees, and lead social justice efforts. The normal length of the program is six quarters. Rising seniors may apply for a modified program of three quarters. Applications for the 2026-2027 Catholic Scholars Program are open May 23 and due by August 27, 2026.

STIPENDS

Stipends help pay for the expenses of the Catholic Scholars Program and provide additional income to pay for any other expenses, including conferences or retreats in which the Scholars may participate to supplement their experience in the program. All first year Scholars will receive \$2,000 (less the cost of mission trips, retreats and/or other expenses). Scholars who continue into the second year will receive an additional \$2,000 which may be used to pay for additional retreats or mission trips or for other expenses. Stipends are paid out at the end of the academic year, unless special arrangements are made. **Students who become Catholic Scholars may decline all or part of their stipend so that others might take advantage of the program.**

The stipend money given here will not reduce Northwestern's commitment to meet full demonstrated need. Any part of the stipend not used for required costs of the program (i.e. cost of mission trips) is considered an outside source of income to reduce the self-help portion of the student's financial aid award. In very rare instances, the stipend may affect Northwestern financial assistance. Students participating in a coop or study abroad must discuss with the director how they will complete the program and how that will affect the distribution of their stipend. Entry into the program assumes completion of at least three quarters. **If a student drops out of the program without completing at least three quarters, the student is obligated to reimburse Sheil for all stipend funds given up until the point of departure.**

PROGRAM DIRECTOR

CTI is directed by Sr. Belinda Monahan, OSB, who holds a PhD in anthropology from Northwestern and a Certificate in Spiritual Direction from St. John's University School of Theology. She recently completed her Master of Theological Studies in Spirituality also at St. John's. She entered the Benedictine Sisters of Chicago in 2007. Sr. Belinda has worked with college and university students since 2000. In her work, she has participated in archaeological excavations in Jordan, Turkey, India, Armenia, Belize, and New Mexico. Sr. Belinda is currently the Director of Transformative Learning for the Sheil Catholic Center at Northwestern. She interacts personally with the students, and teaches many of the Seminars for *Christ the Teacher*, as well as serving as an advisor to all Catholic Scholars.

ELIGIBILITY

Any full-time undergraduate student at Northwestern, who wants to deepen their Catholic faith and is willing and able to meet the requirements, can apply to participate in *Christ the Teacher* Catholic Scholars Program.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Scholars must be involved and committed to a process of deepening their spirituality and achieving a more mature understanding of their Catholic faith and be willing to participate in the program until requirements are met. The program is designed to allow for study abroad or internships off campus during the process in consultation with the Director.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS (minimum 6 quarters)

Exceptions to these requirements are possible and must be discussed with the program director. Catholic Scholars must:

1. Maintain a GPA of 2.8
2. Attend the Scholars Retreat at the beginning of the Fall Quarter
3. Participate in four core seminars in theology, liturgy, morality, and scripture plus two additional seminars (or equivalent in NU courses as determined by the director)
4. Participate in the theological reflection at the end of each quarter
5. Practice daily prayer and meet regularly with a spiritual director (who will be provided by the program)
6. Participate regularly in Sheil liturgies and other activities: All Scholars are expected to attend Mass at Sheil at least weekly
7. Participate in one Sheil overnight retreat annually
8. Participate in a Sheil mission trip and at least 15 hours of service and participation in service reflection in the year that a mission trip is not taken (The latter can be fulfilled with another mission trip in the second year)
9. Practice Christian leadership by "Putting on the Mind of Christ" and living out one of Sheil's values of empathy, encounter, and engagement in a leadership role at Sheil or at Northwestern
10. Meet quarterly with the director of the program
11. Complete a final integrative paper in the last year

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS in the ONE-YEAR TRACK (rising seniors only can apply - minimum 3 quarters).

Exceptions to these requirements are possible and must be discussed with the program director. One-year Catholic Scholars must:

1. Maintain a GPA of 2.8
2. Attend the Scholars Retreat at the beginning of the Fall Quarter
3. Participate in one core and two other seminars which may be CTI core or elective seminars (or the equivalent in NU courses as determined by the director)
4. Participate in theological reflection at the end of each quarter for all Catholic Scholars
5. Practice daily prayer and meet regularly with a spiritual director (who will be provided by the program)
6. Participate regularly in Sheil liturgies and other activities: All Scholars are expected to attend Mass at Sheil at least weekly
7. Participation in one Sheil overnight retreat
8. Participate in a Sheil mission trip
9. Practice Christian leadership by "Putting on the Mind of Christ" and living out one of Sheil's values of empathy, encounter, and engagement in a leadership role at Sheil or at Northwestern
10. Meet quarterly with the director of the program
11. Complete a final integrative paper at the end of the year

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

The following materials must be submitted to the Sheil office no later than 5:00 p.m. on **Thursday, August 27, 2026**

1. The official Catholic Scholar application form: attached to this document or downloaded from the Sheil website: <https://sheilcatholiccenter.org/learn/christ-the-teacher-institute-faith-formation/>. For more information, contact belinda.monahan@northwestern.edu.
2. A one or two-page typed statement indicating the applicant's reasons for wanting to participate in the program and willingness and ability to meet the requirements, especially the time commitments. Applicants may also note their financial situation if they wish.
3. A one-page explanation of the Sheil values of empathy, encounter, and engagement their relationship to "putting on the mind of Christ"? Which do you feel will be the easiest for you to adopt? Which the hardest? And why?
4. A recommendation from one of the pastoral staff at Sheil or a letter of recommendation from a pastoral leader, youth minister, or campus minister who can attest to the applicant's commitment to the Catholic tradition, involvement in a faith community, as well as potential for leadership and reflection.
5. A letter of recommendation from a professor or academic advisor who can attest to the applicant's potential to successfully complete additional college-level coursework and extracurricular requirements.

SELECTION PROCESS

The director of the program (and others as needed) will review all the fully completed applications received by the deadline. They will make their selections on the following criteria:

1. Student's enthusiasm and purpose in applying for the program as demonstrated in the application essay
2. Commitment to embracing all aspects of faith and learning from them
3. Leadership potential
4. Academic abilities and current level of engagement as demonstrated in the recommendations
5. Ability to manage the time demands
6. Willingness to participate until the requirements are met



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Catholic Scholars Program
For Rising Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors
OFFICIAL APPLICATION FORM

Applications will be accepted between May 19, 2026 and Aug 27, 2026.

Please *type* or *print* all responses on this application.

I am applying to be a Catholic Scholar _____

I am a senior and will apply for the one-year certificate _____

Name:

Last Name, First Name, Middle Initial

Permanent Address:

Street, City, State / Zip Code

Your Cell Phone _____

NU Address:

Please include zip code if you are not living in a NU residence hall

NUEmail: _____

Other E-mail if you are using that: _____

(For students attending area parishes other than Sheil)

Home Parish:

Church Name and City

Pastor (if not Sheil Director): _____

Cumulative GPA:

Sheil Activities:

Leadership Positions at Sheil or at NU:

Past Sheil Seminars taken:

Name of the Sheil pastoral staff member asked for recommendation:

Name of other pastoral minister asked for recommendation (recommendation letter must be sent separately or included in application):

Name of professor or academic advisor asked for recommendation

The following items must be submitted with this application form:

1. This application.
2. A one or two-page typed statement indicating the applicant's reasons for wanting to participate in the Catholic Scholars Program and willingness and ability to meet the requirements, especially the time commitments. Applicants may also note their financial situation if they wish.
3. A one-page explanation of the Sheil values of empathy, encounter, and engagement and their relationship to "putting on the mind of Christ." Which do you feel will be the easiest for you to adopt? Which the hardest? And why?
4. A letter of recommendation from a pastoral minister who can attest to the applicant's commitment to the Catholic tradition, involvement in the faith community, and demonstrated potential for leadership (Recommendation forms may be downloaded separately from <https://sheilcatholiccenter.org/learn/christ-the-teacher-institute-faith-formation/>. If you prefer a word document or if you have any questions, please email Sr. Belinda (belinda.monahan@northwestern.edu).
5. A letter of recommendation from a professor, academic advisor, or leadership supervisor who can attest to the applicant's potential to successfully complete university level coursework in addition to current course load. (Recommendation forms may be downloaded separately from <https://sheilcatholiccenter.org/learn/christ-the-teacher-institute-faith-formation/>. If you prefer a word document or if you have any questions, please email Sr. Belinda (belinda.monahan@northwestern.edu).

I would pursue this program even if you did not offer a stipend ____yes ____no

I will be a full-time student at Northwestern University in the 2026/2027 academic year. I wish to deepen my Catholic faith and I intend to fulfill the program requirements. I understand that if I do not complete at least the first year of the program, I must reimburse Sheil for any stipend money I have received to that point.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Applications and recommendations can be submitted electronically to Belinda Monahan, OSB (belinda.monahan@northwestern.edu) or delivered to the front office at Sheil Catholic Center, Evanston.