



McGrath-Cavadini Director
University of Notre Dame, McGrath Institute for Church Life
Notre Dame, IN

Where higher learning meets faithful service.

THE SEARCH

The University of Notre Dame, a leading global Catholic research university invites applications for the McGrath-Cavadini Director of the McGrath Institute for Church Life (MICL).

For nearly half a century, the dedicated faculty and staff of the McGrath Institute for Church Life have partnered with Catholic dioceses, parishes, and schools to address contemporary pastoral challenges with theological depth and rigor. By connecting Catholic intellectual life to the life of the Church, MICL endeavors to form and empower faithful Catholic leaders for service to the Church and the world. As a collaborative partner with clerical and lay Catholic leaders at all levels, MICL provides theological tools and spiritual formation directed towards confronting today's most pressing challenges with urgency and impact. MICL proudly serves as a preeminent source of creative Catholic programming for evangelization and formation. Currently, MICL is home to 10 faculty members and 26 staff members; the Institute has an operating budget of approximately \$9 million.

Reporting to the vice president and associate provost for faculty affairs, the director will lead an Institute at the forefront of scholarly and pastoral engagement with the Catholic Church. They will be entrusted with advancing MICL's mission by supporting existing programs while envisioning innovative, interdisciplinary initiatives that anticipate the evolving needs of the Global Church – particularly in light of shifting demographics and emerging challenges. The director will be a strategic and collaborative leader capable of fostering deeper integration between MICL and the broader Notre Dame academic community, thereby enhancing the Institute's capacity to convene rigorous theological dialogue and address critical social and pastoral issues. They will also be responsible for cultivating a culture of affiliation amid contemporary trends of disaffiliation, empowering faculty and staff through effective delegation and process improvement, and sustaining MICL's unique role as a bridge between the academy and ecclesial leadership. As a leader committed to advancing the intellectual tradition of the Catholic Church within a research university setting, the director will contribute meaningfully to both the Church and society.

A search committee has been formed, and Isaacson, Miller, a global executive search firm, has been retained to support the search. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications can be directed to the firm as indicated at the conclusion of this document.

ABOUT THE MCGRATH INSTITUTE FOR CHURCH LIFE

The McGrath Institute for Church Life operates from a position of strength in terms of personnel and finances. MICL has 10 faculty members, 26 staff members, and one postdoctoral fellow. MICL is supported by a 75-person advisory council that it shares with the Institute for Social Concerns. MICL's operating budget is approximately \$9 million, and as of March 2025, the market value of its endowment was over \$134 million.

MICL is home to a number of centers, initiatives, and programs all aimed at forming Catholic leaders and connecting Catholic intellectual tradition to the life of the Church. These include:

[The Church Communications Ecology Program](#)

In a time when media technology is dramatically reshaping culture, this program offers Church leaders a Catholic philosophical foundation for engaging the digital environment with virtue and wisdom.

[Church Life Journal](#)

Church Life Journal is published by the McGrath Institute for Church Life and opens up readers to first-rate Catholic scholarship – past and present. It is a publication that both deepens the faith of all members of the Church, while also serving as a place where Catholic leaders can think through intellectual and pastoral problems of our day.

[Echo Graduate Service Program](#)

Echo's mission is to train the next generation of theologically-educated and pastorally-creative lay leaders to pass on the beauty and truth of the Catholic faith. Echo's 60 students engage some of the most pressing issues facing the Church today as catechetical leaders in parishes and theology teachers in Catholic schools across 15 partner dioceses. In partnership with the Department of Theology, students earn a tuition-free MA in theology alongside robust formation in Christian discipleship, communal living, and pastoral leadership.

[Fiat Program on Faith and Mental Health](#)

The Fiat Program on Faith and Mental Health supports the Church in embracing its call to accompany those living with serious mental challenges and their loved ones. By uplifting the dignity and goodness of each person, the Fiat Program assists dioceses, parishes, and communities in fostering a culture of communion wherein the whole person can be known and uplifted and can experience the grace of Christian friendship and sacramental life.

[Notre Dame Center for Liturgy](#)

Since its founding in 1970, the Notre Dame Center for Liturgy has sought to renew the Church through robust liturgical formation, serving as a source of education, formation, and inspiration for the men and women of faith who have dedicated their lives of Christian discipleship to building up the Church.

[Notre Dame Office of Life and Human Dignity](#)

The Notre Dame Office of Life and Human Dignity connects Catholic teaching on the sanctity of life to education and research programs at Notre Dame. By fostering a respect for human dignity among students, faculty, and staff, the office forms Catholic leaders equipped to promote pastoral practices supportive of major issues in parishes, schools, and all levels of Church life.

[Notre Dame Vision](#)

Notre Dame Vision offers a space for young people to explore their relationship with Christ. The program serves high school students, campus and youth ministers, and undergraduates from Notre Dame, Saint Mary's College, and Holy Cross College who want to serve as mentors-in-faith.

[Online Courses \(STEP Online Courses and Camino: Cursos en Español\)](#)

MICL offers a flexible course of theology study that maintains a faithful and intellectually rigorous curriculum. The program is specially designed for Church leaders actively working in a Church, school, or other workplace. STEP Online Courses are taught in English, and Camino courses are taught in Spanish.

[Science & Religion Initiative](#)

While acknowledging the integrity of the disciplines, the Science & Religion Initiative at the McGrath Institute for Church Life attends to areas where dialogue between religion and science can be fruitful and where integration is possible. The programming of the Science & Religion Initiative equips educators to be competent and effective communicators of the complementarity of faith and reason, science, and religion.

[Pastoral Enrichment Programs](#)

Through a wide variety of specialized programming, Pastoral Enrichment Programs support those who have been called to a life of ministry through intellectual and spiritual renewal, resources, and guidance on navigating pastoral challenges, and promoting affiliation within the multicultural Church.

ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR

The director will report to the vice president and associate provost for faculty affairs and will inherit a vibrant, entrepreneurial organization well-positioned, in both human capital and financial resources, for continued success and growth. They will build on the success of MICL's external work, support and envision programs responsive to the Church's needs, provide a strategic vision and operational guidance,

bridge the academy to the Church, serve as a campus partner across Notre Dame, and foster a culture of affiliation.

Reporting to the director of the Institute are the following:

- Director, Finance & Operations
- Program Director, Notre Dame Office of Life and Human Dignity
- Associate Director, McGrath Institute

As well as the following with faculty appointments:

- Academic Director, Science & Religion Initiative; Professor of the Practice, Theology
- Director of Undergraduate Studies; Academic Director, Notre Dame Vision
- Director of Research & Development for McGrath Theology Online; Senior Learning Designer
- Associate Director for Outreach; Associate Professor of the Practice
- Associate Director for Research; Professor of the Practice
- Editor-in-Chief, *Church Life Journal*; Associate Research Professor
- Two Assistant Professors of the Practice
- Two Associate Professors of the Practice
- Two Professors of the Practice

The director will have flexibility in strategically restructuring the organization.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE DIRECTOR

Support current MICL programs while working with the faculty and staff to envision programming for the Catholic Church of the future.

The director will balance successful programming for the Catholic Church's current needs with innovative and interdisciplinary research and practice that anticipates its future needs. They will understand the Global Church's current demographic landscape and the twin realities of declining membership in countries of the industrial North and rising membership in the Global South. The director will also be attuned to the demographics in the Church that are underserved. MICL already serves as a resource to many dioceses across the country, but the director will ensure that MICL is also sharing methodologies and processes to support the Church.

Explore synergies between MICL's mission and Notre Dame's Strategic Framework; promote a culture of integration of research and practice within the Institute and between the Institute and the broader Notre Dame academic and research community.

MICL enjoys an enviable reputation as a trusted partner to the Church and a highly valued convener of stakeholders around critical pastoral and societal issues. Despite its external visibility, however, there is an important opportunity for the next director to partner across campus. The rich resources of Notre

Dame's academic departments, centers, and institutes invite deeper collaboration around their common mission, particularly to realize the promise of the University's [Strategic Framework](#).

Develop a strategic and sustainable plan for growth in programs and initiatives.

MICL has been a responsive and successful partner in convening conversations around critical social and pastoral problems, offering academic and pastoral programming, and creating fora for showcasing cutting-edge research with practical application. The next director will have the responsibility of working with the Institute faculty and staff in forging a disciplined and focused strategic plan for expanding existing programs, initiating new programming, or sunseting programming within a realistic assessment of human and financial resources.

Maintain MICL's mission as a bridge builder between the academy and the Church, and across religious and cultural divides.

The next director will build on the collegiality and trust that exists between MICL and ecclesial leaders, which allows MICL to serve as a place for convening theologically rigorous, respectful dialogue that heals and unites. Given increasingly polarized religious and political cultures in the United States, it will be essential for MICL to continue to bring the best theological minds together with teachers, ministers, parents, and policy makers to mine the riches of the Catholic intellectual tradition for the challenges of our time. The director will understand this dual responsibility to serve both the University and the Church, and more broadly, the world.

Review and update organizational structure.

MICL has a passionate and high-functioning faculty and staff and has experienced significant growth in recent years. The next director will empower the faculty and staff, review and make changes to the current organizational structure where necessary to establish greater clarity of responsibilities as well as ensure maximum efficiency across the centers, programs, and initiatives.

Work with academic and pastoral leaders to foster a culture of affiliation.

Its location on the campus of the University of Notre Dame provides MICL a special view into the challenges facing young adults as they move through college and transition to life beyond it. The next director will support the research, educational, and pastoral work underway in MICL and beyond to understand and address the causes of disaffiliation and build vibrant and inviting faith communities.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate will possess many of the following:

- Passion for the Catholic mission of the McGrath Institute for Church Life and the University of Notre Dame, as well as a commitment to the Church.
- Administrative experience in complex settings.

- Intellectual leadership and capaciousness.
- Reverence for the good and the Church.
- Evidence of global citizenship and engagement; a worldview of Catholicism.
- Transparency, reliability, humility, and gratitude in leadership; an ability to instill trust and confidence among others.
- Strong emotional intelligence with relationship-building, conflict resolution, and teamwork skills; leads by example.
- An excellent listener and a consensus builder.
- Bilingual abilities are welcome.
- An above-the-fray persona; not an ideologue.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Nominations, inquiries, and application materials (CVs and letters of interest) can be submitted electronically and in confidence to Phillip Petree, Partner, and Jonathan Sanchez, Senior Associate, at:

[McGrath-Cavadini Director Search, McGrath Institute for Church Life](#)

Isaacson, Miller

The University of Notre Dame is dedicated to equal employment opportunity and to the implementation of positive programs designed to ensure the prevention of any discriminatory practices, either intentional or inadvertent, with respect to race, color, national or ethnic origin, disability, veteran status, age, or sex.

APPENDIX: ABOUT NOTRE DAME

The University of Notre Dame was founded in November 1842 by Rev. Edward F. Sorin, C.S.C., a priest of the Congregation of Holy Cross, a French missionary order. It is located adjacent to South Bend, Indiana, the center of a metropolitan area with a population of more than 315,000. Chartered by the state of Indiana in 1844, the University was governed by the Holy Cross priests until 1967, when governance was transferred to a two-tiered, mixed board of lay and religious trustees and fellows. Notre Dame has grown from the vision of Father Sorin, who sought to establish a great Catholic university in America, and has remained faithful to both its religious and intellectual traditions.

Since its founding, Notre Dame has been heavily residential, with about four in five undergraduates living on campus. Students come to Notre Dame to learn not only how to think but also how to live, and often the experiences alumni carry from residence hall communities at Notre Dame remain vivid over a lifetime. The University has always attracted scholars who are interested in teaching and scholarship, men and women who know that a Notre Dame education is more than what is taught in classrooms and laboratories.

Notre Dame has also been at the forefront of research and scholarship. The aerodynamics of glider flight and the formulae for synthetic rubber were pioneered at the University. Today, researchers are achieving breakthroughs in areas as diverse as ethics, democracy, poverty reduction, drug discovery and precision

medicine. The University of Notre Dame's Department of Theology has been ranked number one in the world for theology, divinity, and religious studies by QS World University Rankings for multiple years. Notre Dame was admitted to the Association of American Universities in 2023.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by the University of Notre Dame. The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and information provided by University of Notre Dame would supersede any conflicting information in this document.