

Monsignor James Patrick Shea serves as president of the University of Mary.

Monsignor Shea was inaugurated in 2009 as the sixth president of the university and, at the age of 34, became the youngest college or university president in the United States.

He succeeded the late Sister Thomas Welder, O.S.B., who had served as president for 31 years.

The oldest of eight children, Monsignor Shea grew up on a dairy and grain farm near Hazelton, North Dakota, just 38 miles from the University of Mary campus. He began his undergraduate work at Jamestown College, majoring in English and history. He then entered the seminary for the Diocese of Bismarck, earning a bachelor's degree and a pontifical master's degree (licentiate) in philosophy at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. He studied classical Greek at the University of Texas at Austin and continued at the Vatican's North American College, studying theology at the Gregorian and Lateran universities in Rome. He has studied management at the University of Chicago's Graduate School of Business and is also an alumnus of the Institutes for Higher Education at the Graduate School of Education, Harvard University.

Monsignor Shea has worked with Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity at the Gift of Peace AIDS Hospice while teaching religion at two inner-city elementary schools in Washington, D.C. In Rome, he served as chaplain for the Bambino Gesù Children's Hospital and also at the Rome campus of the Center for Catholic Studies at the University of Saint Thomas. Following his ordination to the priesthood in 2002, he returned to North Dakota and served as an associate pastor in Bismarck and Mandan. During that time, he was also the chaplain and an instructor at Saint Mary's Central High School in Bismarck. He then served as pastor to parishes in Killdeer and Halliday (North Dakota), while teaching at Trinity High School in Dickinson. Deeply committed to the education and formation of young people, he has been an inspirational teacher and mentor for many students.

Monsignor Shea is a Knight Commander of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem and serves on the Board of Directors for FOCUS, the Fellowship of Catholic University Students. He has served on the National Advisory Council to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Governor's Commission on Education Improvement for the State of North Dakota. Monsignor is also a Trustee of Saint John Vianney Seminary in Denver and a member of the Executive Committee of the Board for the Association of Benedictine Colleges and Universities.

August 2016