

## History

*Christifideles* began with the vision of supporting the formation and education of lay ecclesial ministers and defining better their vocation in service to the local Church. The program is in collaboration with Seattle University, University of Portland, and University of Dallas, offering graduate theological and ministerial formation/education to lay ecclesial ministers. Participants completing the program are eligible to become certified ministers in the Archdiocese of Seattle.

*Christifideles* was initiated in 2004 at Seattle University with the acceptance of ten students into the Master of Arts in Pastoral Studies. *Christifideles* was designed to offer formation events, academic counseling, and spiritual support to participants while participating in the academic program. From the start, participants of the *Christifideles* community met annually with the Archbishop to report on both their graduate education and ongoing assignments in pastoral ministry.

New participants have been invited into the program every year. In 2008, the first two students were accepted in the Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry Program at University of Portland (UP). UP's program, which exclusively uses a weekend format, has been especially welcomed by participants from the Southern Deanery. In 2013, the first student was admitted at University of Dallas in the Master of Arts in Theological Studies Program, which strictly uses the online, web-based format.

*Christifideles* has been a successful effort to welcome and prepare lay ecclesial ministers to serve in the Church. The Archdiocese of Seattle has been a pioneer in the development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry beginning in the early 80s with Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen. *Christifideles* is a great addition to that heritage.