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## A second career in theology?

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## Quad 136

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### A Second Career in Theology?



Many parts of higher education are facing challenges, but few are under the stress that theological education is. Total enrollment in theological schools across the country has decreased 10% in the last decade.

Against this backdrop, it was interesting to see a recent *Wall Street Journal* [article](#) noting the increase in individuals over 50 who are going back to study theology or divinity as a second career. (The usual journalistic caveat applies: anecdotes do not qualify as a statistically significant trend, though it is true that 23% of current graduate theology students are over 50.)

The School of Theology\*Seminary at Saint John's is working hard to address the changing demand for graduate programs. Naturally the number of seminarians is down as the number of Catholic priestly vocations has fallen, so the SOT is focused on increasing the number of laypeople studying for leadership positions in the church. In addition, new programs are being designed to meet the specific needs of this new student demographic—for example a program in Spiritual Direction has been popular.

It will be intriguing to see if the aging baby boomers will continue to find the study of theology interesting—either as a second career or for personal reasons. If you fall in either of those categories, Collegeville could be the place for you! Check out the [SOT website](#). (Can't make it to campus? There are on-line courses designed for you as well.)

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Michael Hemesath is the 13th president of Saint John's University. A 1981 SJU graduate, Hemesath is the first layperson appointed to a full presidential term at SJU. You can find him on Twitter [at] [PrezHemesath](#).