



The [diocese of Haarlem](#) comprises the north-western part of the Netherlands, including its capital, Amsterdam. Haarlem's name has become well known since Dutch settlers named it now a famous district of New York. More than half a million Catholics live in this area, whereas the population of this highly secularized territory, numbers 2.650.000.

In 1996 the diocesan bishop of that time, the late msgr. [Henricus BOMERS](#) c.m., founded a diocesan missionary house "Redemptoris Mater" for the formation of priests willing to dedicate themselves to the new evangelization. One year later his auxiliary, mgr. Jozef PUNT, with the full support of his Bishop, set up a new diocesan major seminary in Vogelenzang, a little village close to Haarlem.

In order to guarantee a solid formation of the seminarians of both houses, in 1997 a theological institute was created in Vogelenzang. The Institute was dedicated to Saint Willibrord, patron-saint of the Dutch ecclesiastical province. A benedictine monk, Saint Willibrord, with the help of his companions, first evangelised the Netherlands.

Unfortunately, in 1998 Bishop Bomers passed away. He was succeeded by Mgr. Punt, first as Apostolic Administrator and since 29 september 2001 as diocesan Bishop.

Now more than 25 professors, many of them priests from the diocese or from other dioceses in the Netherlands, provide the seminarians with a sound and solid intellectual formation, faithful to

the teaching of the Church.

Each year, one or two professors are invited from abroad to teach an intensive course. Among them were the late Cardinal L Scheffczyk, prof. J. Galot sj, Dr. M. Lochbrunner and several professors of Roman Pontifical Universities. The Major Seminary is affiliated to the Faculty of Theology of the Pontical Lateran University since 3 October 2000.

The curriculum includes two years of philosophy, four years of theology, and a pastoral year. In the first year however, several introductory subjects are taught, while in the first year of theology the philosophical studies are to be completed.

On 7 November, 2005 the Major Seminary moved to its current location in Vogelenzang, called "The Tiltenberg". On the same day the relics of the [Holy Martyrs of Gorkum](#) were placed under the new altar, which was consecrated by the Apostolic Nuntio Mgr. Francois Bacqué. In 1572, 17 priests and two laybrothers were captured in the Dutch town of Gorkum. They were thrown into prison, cruelly tortured and hanged on 9 July 1572 for refusing to deny their belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament and Papal Supremacy.