

VISION Vocation Network tracks vocation trends annually. Find the most recent statistics on VISION readers and site visitors who have gone through Vocation Match online at VocationNetwork.org. Don't forget to sign up to receive our award-winning *E-Vocation* newsletter to stay up-to-date on vocation news. Or email us at mail@vocationnetwork.org, and we'll enter your free subscription.



KEY VOCATION INFLUENCERS

Parental encouragement

Catholic education

Participation in parish ministry

Volunteer service

Invitation by pastor, mentor, family, or friends

WHO'S CONSIDERING RELIGIOUS LIFE?

Just who is considering religious life is tracked by a number of different organizations, including the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the National Religious Vocation Conference, and VISION Vocation Network.

MEN

- Among male never-married Catholics, 3 percent (or approximately 350,000) have very seriously considered becoming a priest or religious brother.
- Men who have attended a Catholic secondary school are six times more likely to consider being a priest or brother.
- Among college students involved in Catholic campus ministry: 66 percent have seriously considered becoming a priest or religious brother.
- Among men involved in diocesan young adult ministry: 84 percent have seriously considered becoming a priest or religious brother.
- Among the 2,083 men who completed online VISION Vocation Match profiles in 2013, the majority are under 30, desire to wear a habit or distinctive religious garb, prefer to enter an apostolic community, and attended Catholic school.

WOMEN

- Among female never-married Catholics 2 percent (or approximately 250,000) have very seriously considered becoming a religious sister.
- Women who have attended a Catholic primary school are three times more likely than those who did not to consider being a religious sister.
- Among college students involved in Catholic campus ministry: 39 percent have seriously considered becoming a religious sister.
- Among women involved in diocesan young-adult ministry: 30 percent have seriously considered becoming a religious sister.

- Among the 2,642 women who completed online VISION Vocation Match profiles in 2013, the majority are under 30, desire to wear a habit or distinctive religious garb, prefer to enter an apostolic community, and attended Catholic school.

WOMEN & MEN

- Among former full-time volunteers of Catholic Volunteer Network 37 percent have considered religious life or the priesthood and 6 percent have chosen a religious vocation.
- Among men and women discerning a vocation, the average educational debt is \$28,000. (A majority of religious congregations have turned an inquirer away within the last 10 years because of educational debt.)

WHO'S ENTERING RELIGIOUS LIFE?

Newer entrants identify their primary reasons for coming to religious life as a sense of call, a desire to deepen their prayer and spiritual life, and a desire to live and work with others who share their faith and values.

WORLDWIDE

In 2014 there were nearly 1.2 million religious brothers, sisters, and order and diocesan priests in the world:

705,529 religious sisters and nuns
279,561 diocesan priests worldwide
134,752 religious order priests
55,314 religious brothers

IN THE UNITED STATES

- Newer entrants are attracted to communities that have a strong Catholic identity, are hopeful about their future, have members who live together in community, and have a structured prayer life.
- There are more than 66,000 religious sisters, brothers, and priests in the United States in more than 800 religious institutes (approximately 600 institutes of women and 200 of men).

- Nearly 1,000 U.S. women are in formation preparing to become sisters.
- More than 100 women and men in the U.S. profess perpetual vows annually.
- Fifty percent of new religious report that they were 17 or younger when they first considered a vocation to religious life.
- In 2014 approximately 477 entered priesthood—266 to diocesan priesthood (from 114 dioceses) and 96 to religious priesthood. Among religious orders, the largest number of respondents came from the Jesuits, Dominicans, and Benedictines.
- The average age of entrance to religious life is 30 for men and 32 for women.
- Newer entrants are 58 percent Caucasian; 21 percent Hispanic/Latino/a; 14 percent Asian/Pacific Islander; 6 percent African American; 1 percent other.
- 70 percent of newer entrants have a bachelor's degree when they enter.

The information above was gathered from a number of recent studies and reports. For the list of sources, see the Vocation Fact Sheet online at VocationNetwork.org, under the Year of Consecrated Life tab.

■ GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The call to “religious life” in the Catholic Church—also known as “vowed life” or “consecrated life”—is a call to become more like Christ by living the values of prayer, ministry, and community. This call can be lived out in a number of unique ways (see main forms outlined below). Yet all religious priests, sisters, and brothers take vows of poverty, celibacy, and obedience, commonly called the “evangelical counsels.”

APOSTOLIC/ACTIVE While prayer and community life are important to them, apostolic religious communities are engaged for the most part in active ministries, such as teaching, parish ministry, health care, social work, care for the elderly, work with young people, service to the poor, and many others.

MISSIONARY Missionary communities focus their lives on spreading the gospel in areas in need of evangelization and service. These communities serve in a variety of ministries, such as preaching, teaching, healthcare and other forms of witness among the people with whom they live.

CONTEMPLATIVE Members of contemplative religious communities focus on daily prayer, especially the Mass, the Liturgy of the Hours, and individual prayer. They tend to live in greater solitude than apostolic communities so that they can direct their prayer and work toward contemplation, though some communities that consider themselves contemplative are also engaged in apostolic ministries.

SEMI-CLOISTERED/CLOISTERED Often, contemplative religious communities are cloistered or partially cloistered. That is, they live separated from the outside world and focus on prayer,

including prayer for the needs of the world. As cloistered religious, they rarely leave their monasteries, and all or most of their work is done within the monastery.

MONASTIC Monastic communities fall somewhere in between apostolic and cloistered. Monastic men and women place a high value in prayer and community life, but many are also engaged in active ministries. Monasticism centers on living in community, common prayer, and Christian meditation.

Find an expanded glossary of terms at VocationNetwork.org under the Year of Consecrated Life tab.

■ ADDITIONAL VOCATION RESOURCES

- » VISION Vocation Network for hundreds of articles and videos, podcasts, and interactive features including:
 - Vocation Match (VocationMatch.com)
 - Spirituality Quiz | Celibacy Quiz | Catholic Quiz
 - Vocation Events Calendar (VocationNetwork.org/opportunities)
 - VISION Vocation Guide (www.digitalvocationguide.org or order print copies online at VocationNetwork.org/orders)
 - VISION bookmarks (these free resources come in packs of 25. Order online at VocationNetwork.org/orders)
 - E-books: *Discover your path*; *Being Catholic: A user's guide*
 - Year of Consecrated Life banners (Order banners at nrvc.net/store or download a PDF at VocationNetwork.org under the Year of Consecrated Life tab.)
 - Year of Consecrated Life song downloadable sheet music and audio files
- » National Religious Vocation Conference (Find recent vocation studies at nrvc.net and vocation resources in the online store.)
- » United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB.org)
- » Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (cara.georgetown.edu)
- » A Nun's Life Ministry (anunslife.com)
- » National Catholic Sisters Week (nationalcatholicsistersweek.org)
- » Global Sisters Report (globalsistersreport.org)
- » Men Religious in the U. S. (yearforconsecratedlife.com)
- » Catholic Volunteer Network (catholicvolunteernetwork.org)
- » Take Five for Faith: Daily renewal for busy Catholics (takefiveforfaith.com)
- » Prepare the Word: Whole parish evangelization (PrepareTheWord.com, featuring weekly prayers of the faithful for the Year of Consecrated Life)
- » Many other Catholic publishers have books and articles on prayer and discernment, religious life, and the lives of saints. Please check out their websites and catalogs for additional resources to build your library of vocation-related resources. Find a list of Catholic Press Association Member publications at www.catholicpress.org under the About Us tab.