

**January 2014**

***New Sisters and Brothers  
Professing Perpetual Vows  
in Religious Life:  
The Profession Class of 2013***

Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate  
Georgetown University  
Washington, DC

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in Religious Life: The Profession Class of 2013*

**A Report to the Secretariat of Clergy, Consecrated Life  
and Vocations  
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops**



**January 2014**

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**Executive Summary**

This report presents findings from a national survey of women and men religious who professed perpetual vows in 2013 in a religious congregation, province, or monastery based in the United States. To obtain the names and contact information for these women and men, the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) contacted all major superiors of all religious institutes that belong to either the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) or the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious (CMSWR), the two leadership conferences of women religious in the United States. CARA also contacted the major superior of all religious institutes who belong to the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM). Finally, CARA contacted the major superiors of 173 contemplative communities in the United States that were identified by the USCCB Secretariat of Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations (145 communities of nuns and 28 contemplative communities of men). Each major superior was asked to provide contact information for every sister, nun or brother in her/his institute who was scheduled to profess perpetual vows in 2013. CARA then contacted these sisters, nuns or brothers by e-mail or mail to explain the project and ask them to complete a brief online survey.

After repeated follow-ups, CARA received a response from 460 of 823 major superiors, for an overall response rate of 56 percent among religious institutes. In all, 71 percent of LCWR superiors, 60 percent of CMSM superiors, 47 percent of CMSWR superiors, and 28 percent of superiors of contemplative communities provided contact information for 107 members that professed perpetual vows in religious life in 2013.

Of these 107 identified women and men religious, a total of 69 sisters and nuns and 11 brothers responded to the survey by January 3, 2014. These 11 brothers may include some brothers who intend to pursue studies leading to priestly ordination. This represents a response rate of 75 percent of the 107 potential members of the Profession Class of 2013 that were reported to CARA by major superiors.

## **Major Findings**

- Almost nine in ten religious institutes had no one professing perpetual vows in religious life in 2013. One in ten institutes had one perpetual profession and 3 percent reported two or more.
- The average age of responding religious of the Profession Class of 2013 is 41, identical for men and for women. Half of the responding religious are age 37 or younger. The youngest is 26 and the oldest is 73.
- Almost three-fourths of responding religious (74 percent) identify as white, one in seven (14 percent) identifies as Asian, and more than one in ten (12 percent) identifies as Hispanic.
- Most responding religious (76 percent) were born in the United States. Of those born outside the United States, the most common country of origin is Vietnam.
- Among those identifying as Hispanic/Latino(a) two-thirds (67 percent) are U.S. born and one-third (33 percent) are foreign born. Those identifying as Asian/Pacific Islander/ Native Hawaiian are predominantly (82 percent) foreign born. Nearly all identifying as Caucasian/white (88 percent) are U.S. born.
- On average, the respondents who were born outside the United States were 22 years old when they first came to the United States and lived here for 17 years before perpetual profession.

### ***Family Background***

- More than eight in ten (82 percent) responding religious have been Catholic since birth. Almost eight in ten (77 percent) come from families in which both parents are Catholic. Among the 18 percent of respondents who became Catholic later in life, the average age at which they converted was 22.
- More than eight in ten responding religious (85 percent) have at least one sibling and the most common number of siblings is two. Almost half (47 percent) of these responding religious have four or more siblings. The same proportions (42 percent) are either the oldest or a middle child, with similar proportions for men and women.

### ***Education, Work, and Ministry Experience***

- About four in ten responding religious (43 percent) attended a Catholic elementary school, which is similar to that for all Catholic adults in the United States (42 percent). These respondents are more likely than other U.S. Catholics, however, to have attended a Catholic high school (31 percent of responding religious, compared to 22 percent of U.S.

adult Catholics) and much more likely to have attended a Catholic college (30 percent of responding religious, compared to just 7 percent of U.S. adult Catholics). Responding women religious are less likely than brothers to have attended a Catholic college (26 percent for women compared to 55 percent for men).

- The responding religious are highly educated. Twenty-four percent of responding religious earned a graduate degree before entering their religious institute. Two in three (65 percent) entered their religious institute with at least a bachelor's degree or more (65 percent for women and 63 percent for men).
- Most religious did not report that educational debt delayed their application for entrance to their institute. Among those who did report educational debt, however, they averaged two years of delay while they paid down an average of \$31,100 in educational debt. Several of the women, but none of the men, reported receiving assistance in paying down their debt.
- Nearly all responding religious (89 percent) had work experience prior to entering their religious institute. Of those who were employed, a quarter (25 percent) were employed part-time and just under two-thirds (64 percent) were employed full-time before entering the institute. Women religious are more likely than men to have been employed in education, while men religious are more likely than women to have been employed in business. Men and women are equally likely to have been employed in health care or in church ministry.
- Many responding religious were active in parish life before entering their religious institute. Almost half (46 percent) participated in youth ministry or youth group. A third participated in Catholic campus ministry or a Newman Center. A quarter participated in a young adult ministry or group and/or in World Youth Day.
- Nine in ten (90 percent) had ministry experience before entering their religious institute, most commonly in faith formation (54 percent). Four in ten served in a social service ministry and one in ten taught in a Catholic school or served in hospital or prison ministry.
- Nearly all responding religious (94 percent) regularly participated in some type of private prayer activity before they entered their religious institute. Seven in ten participated in Eucharistic Adoration or retreats before entering. More than half regularly prayed the Rosary or participated in spiritual direction before entering.

### ***Consideration of Religious Life and Choice of Community***

- On average, responding religious report that they were 20 years old when they first considered a vocation to religious life, but half were 17 or younger when they first did so.

- Eight in ten responding religious (81 percent) say they were encouraged to consider religious life by someone in their life. Just under half (46 percent) say they were encouraged by a religious. Four in ten were encouraged by a parish priest or by a friend.
- Almost two-thirds (62 percent) report that they were *discouraged* from considering a vocation by one or more persons. These respondents are most likely to report that they were discouraged by a family member other than a parent (36 percent) or by friends or classmates (30 percent). Women were more likely than men to say they were discouraged by a relative other than a parent (41 percent compared to 9 percent).
- On average, these religious report that they knew the members of their religious institute for four years before they entered, but half knew them for two years or less. One in four (24 percent) first became acquainted with their institute through promotional material published by the institute. One in five first learned of their institute through the recommendation of a priest or advisor.
- Nearly all of the religious of the Profession Class of 2013 (91 percent) participated in some type of vocation program or experience prior to entering their religious institute. Most commonly, this was a vocation retreat (59 percent) or a “Come and See” experience (52 percent). Men were slightly less likely than women to have participated in a “Come and See” experience (46 percent and 58 percent, respectively) or in a vocation retreat (36 percent for men compared to 62 percent for women).

## **Introduction**

Since 2010, the Secretariat of Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has commissioned the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University to conduct a survey of women and men religious who profess perpetual vows each year in a religious congregation, province, or monastery based in the United States. For this project, CARA was asked to gather information about the characteristics and experiences of these religious and report the findings to the Secretariat for use with the World Day of Consecrated Life in February. CARA worked with the Secretariat to revise two questionnaires – one for women religious and another for brothers – that were used for the “Profession Class of 2012” study of women and men religious professing perpetual vows in 2012. CARA then programmed the questionnaires into an online survey to give respondents the option of completing the survey either online or on paper. This report presents results of this survey of women and men religious of the Profession Class of 2013.

To obtain the names and contact information for the religious professing perpetual vows in 2013, CARA contacted all major superiors of all religious institutes that belong to either the Leadership Conference of Women Religious or the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious, the two leadership conferences of women religious in the United States. CARA also contacted the major superior of all religious institutes who have brothers and who belong to the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM). Finally, CARA contacted the major superiors of 173 contemplative communities in the United States that were identified by the USCCB Secretariat of Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations (145 communities of nuns and 28 contemplative communities of men). Each major superior was asked to provide contact information for every sister, nun, or brother in the institute who was scheduled to profess perpetual vows in 2013. CARA then contacted these sisters, nuns, or brothers by e-mail or mail to explain the project and ask them to complete a brief online survey.

CARA received a response from 460 of 823 major superiors, for an overall response rate of 56 percent among religious institutes. In all, 71 percent of LCWR superiors, 60 percent of CMSM superiors, 47 percent of CMSWR superiors, and 28 percent of superiors of contemplative communities provided contact information for 107 members that professed perpetual vows in religious life in 2013.

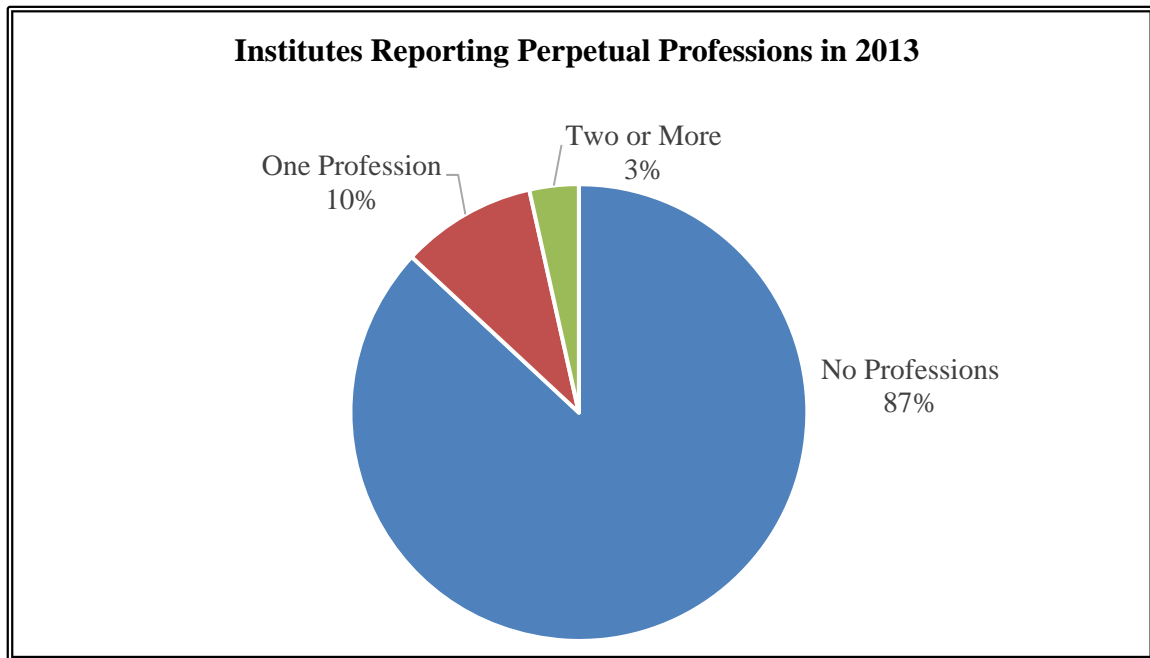
After repeated follow-ups to the major superiors and to the women and men religious who had been identified by them, a total of 69 sisters and nuns and 11 brothers responded to the survey by January 3, 2014. (These 11 brothers may include some brothers who intend to pursue studies leading to priestly ordination). This represents a response rate of 75 percent of the 107 potential members of the Profession Class of 2013 that were reported to CARA by major superiors.

The questionnaire asked these religious about their demographic and religious background, education and work experience, previous ministry or service and other formative experiences, encouragement and discouragement to consider religious life, initial acquaintance with their institutes, and vocation/discernment programs and experiences. This report presents analyses of each question from all responding religious.



## Institutes Reporting Perpetual Professions

CARA asked the 823 religious congregations, provinces, or monasteries in the United States that were identified by the two leadership conferences of women religious, the CMSM, or the USCCB Secretariat of Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations to provide the names of women religious or brothers who professed or were planning to profess perpetual vows in 2013. A total of 460 major superiors responded (56 percent) with 107 names of women religious and brothers.



A total of 400 major superiors (87 percent of those responding) reported that they had no one professing perpetual vows in 2013, 44 major superiors (10 percent) reported one member professing perpetual vows, and 16 major superiors (3 percent) reported from two to eleven.

The sisters and nuns who responded to the survey represent 45 religious congregations, provinces, or monasteries. Similarly, the brothers who responded come from 10 different religious congregations, provinces, or monasteries of men religious.

## Age of Professed

*The average age of responding religious of the Profession Class of 2013 is 41. Half of the responding religious are age 37 or younger, among women as well as men.*

<b>Age of Professed Women and Men</b>			
Percentage in each age category			
	<b>Both</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
29 and younger	18%	21%	0%
Age 30-39	37	34	55
Age 40-49	18	17	18
Age 50-59	18	16	27
Age 60 and older	10	12	0
Average age	41	41	41
Median age	37	37	35
Range in years	26-73	26-73	30-59

The youngest responding sister or nun of the Profession Class of 2013 is 26 and the oldest is 73 years of age. Eight women respondents are professing perpetual vows at age 60 or older. Among brothers, the youngest is 30 and the oldest is 59. More than half of the responding brothers are in their thirties.

## Race and Ethnic Background

*Three in four responding religious (74 percent) report their primary race or ethnicity as Caucasian, European American, or white.*

<b>Race and Ethnic Background</b>			
Percentage in each category			
	<b>Both</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
Caucasian/European American/white	74%	73%	74%
Asian/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian	14	9	15
Hispanic/Latino(a)	12	18	11
African/African American/black	0	0	0
Native American	0	0	0

One in seven (14 percent) of the Profession Class of 2013 identifies as Asian, and just over one in ten (12 percent) identifies as Hispanic or Latino/a. In general, religious of the Profession Class of 2013 are more likely than other adult Catholics nationally to be Asian and less likely to be Hispanic.

### ***Differences by country of birth***

Responding religious who identify themselves as Caucasian/European American/white are nearly all (88 percent) U.S. born. Just over one in ten (12 percent) were born outside the United States. Among those identifying as Hispanic/Latino(a) two-thirds (67 percent) are U.S. born and one-third (33 percent) are foreign born. Those identifying as Asian/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian are predominantly (82 percent) foreign born. One in five (18 percent) are U.S. born.

## Country of Birth and Age at Entry to United States

*About three in four (76 percent) responding religious were born in the United States.*

<b>Country of Birth</b>			
Percentage in each category			
	<b>Both</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
United States	76%	77%	73%
Asia	11	12	9
Europe	5	4	9
Latin America	4	3	9
Canada	4	4	0

Vietnam is the most frequently mentioned country of birth among responding religious women who were born outside the United States. These respondents identified a total of 13 different countries of origin.

*Responding religious who were born outside the United States have lived in the United States for an average of 17 years. Half first came to live in the United States in 1997 or earlier.*

<b>Entrance to the United States</b>				
	<u><b>Year</b></u>	<u><b>Age at Entry</b></u>		
	<b>Both</b>	<b>Both</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
Mean	1996	22	25	6
Median	1997	23	24	0
Range	1978-2006	0-42	8-42	0-18

On average, responding foreign-born religious came to live in the United States at age 22. Half were age 23 or younger when they came to live in the United States. Two men were infants when they entered the United States and two woman were under age ten; the oldest woman was 42 at the time she entered the United States.

## Family Background

*More than eight in ten responding religious (82 percent) have been Catholic since birth. Among those who became Catholic later in life, their average age at the time of their conversion was 24.*

<b>Catholic Background</b>			
	<b>Both</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
Catholic since birth	82%	79%	100%
Became Catholic later in life	18	21	0
Average age at conversion	22	22	–

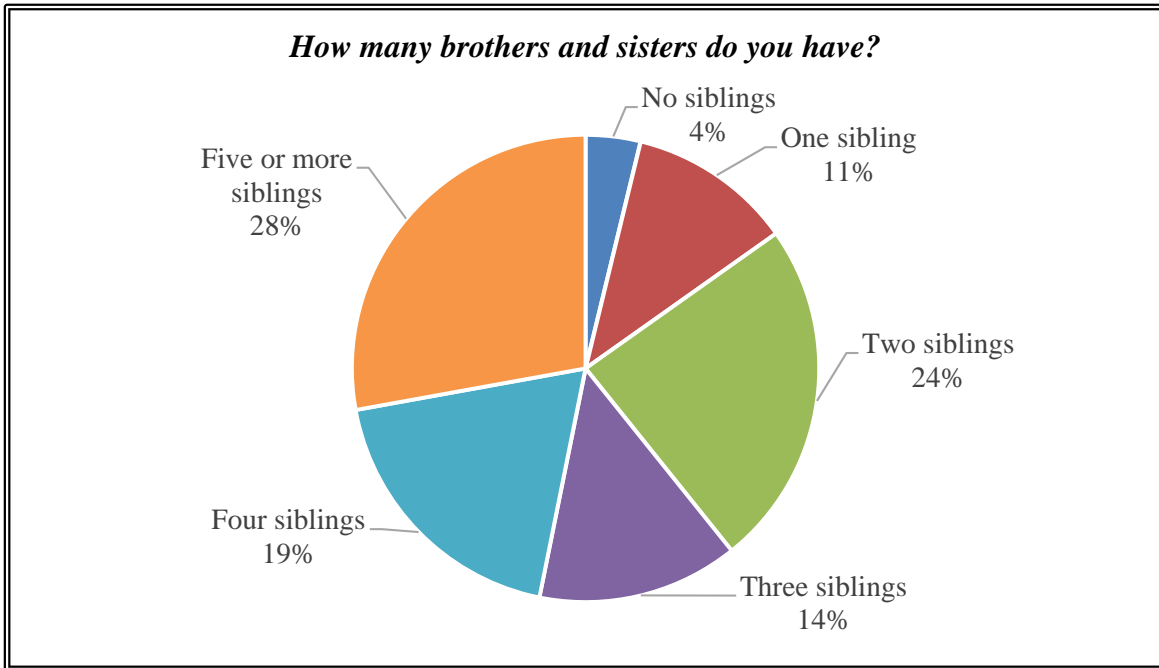
Those who came into full communion with the Catholic Church from another denomination or those who converted from another faith tradition came from a variety of faiths: Buddhism, Christian, Episcopalian, Evangelical, Protestant, United Church of Christ, as well as some saying they were previously of no religion.

*Just under nine in ten respondent (86 percent) report that when they were children they had at least one parent who was Catholic; about three in four (77 percent) report that both parents were Catholic.*

<b><i>What was the religious background of your parents when you were a child?</i></b>			
Percentage responding			
	<b>Both</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
Both parents Catholic	77%	75%	91%
Neither parent was Catholic	14	16	0
Mother Catholic, father not	8	7	9
Father Catholic, mother not	1	2	0

In addition, nearly half of responding religious (46 percent) report having a relative who is a priest or a religious. This proportion is equal among both men and women religious of the Profession Class of 2013.

More than eight in ten responding religious (85 percent) of the Profession Class of 2013 have more than one sibling. Nearly one in six (15 percent) has one brother or sister and one in five (20 percent) report having two or three. More than four in ten (52 percent) have four or more siblings.



On average, respondents have four siblings. Four percent from the Profession Class of 2013 report being an only child and only two respondents report ten or more brothers and sisters. The most common response to this question, among women as well as men, is two siblings.

<b><i>What is your birth order?</i></b>			
Percentage in each category			
(Among respondents with one or more siblings)			
	<b>Both</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
Oldest	42%	42%	36%
Middle	42	41	46
Youngest	17	17	18

Overall, respondents with one or more siblings are equally likely to be the oldest child or one of the middle children in their family. Brothers are a little more likely to be a middle child (46 percent) than the oldest child (36 percent). Respondents, whether men or women, are least likely to be the youngest child of their family.

## Education

*Over four in ten (43 percent) of those responding attended a Catholic elementary or middle school. Three in ten (31 percent) attended a Catholic high school and an equal proportion (30 percent) attended a Catholic college before entering their religious institute.*

<b>Attendance at Catholic School*</b>			
Percentage responding			
	<b>Both</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
Elementary or middle school	43%	41%	55%
High School	31	30	36
College	30	26	55

\*Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one category.

Members of the Profession Class of 2013 are about as likely as other U.S. Catholics to have attended a Catholic elementary school. In a 2008 national poll conducted by CARA,<sup>1</sup> 42 percent of U.S. adult Catholics report having attended a Catholic elementary school, compared to 43 percent among these religious. Responding religious of 2012 are also slightly likely than other U.S. adult Catholics to have attended a Catholic high school (31 percent among responding religious, compared to 22 percent of U.S. adult Catholics) and much more likely to have attended a Catholic college (30 percent of responding religious, compared to just 7 percent of U.S. adult Catholics). Men were more likely than women to have attended a Catholic elementary or middle school (55 percent for men compared to 41 percent for women) or a Catholic college (55 percent for men compared to 26 percent for women).

In addition, 19 percent of responding women religious and brothers report that they participated in a Catholic ministry formation program before they entered their religious institute (not shown in the table).

Whether or not they ever attended a Catholic elementary or high school, half (51 percent) of the respondents participated in a religious education program in their parish. However, only 18 percent of men compared to 57 percent of women respondents have participated in parish-based religious education. Among respondents who said they participated in a religious education program in their parish, 85 percent did *not* report attend a Catholic elementary school and 93 percent did *not* attend a Catholic high school.

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<sup>1</sup>*Sacraments Today: Belief and Practice among U.S. Catholics.* April 2008. Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate.



Five percent of responding religious report being home schooled at some time in their educational background. Among those religious who were home schooled, the average length of time they were home schooled was ten years. None of the men religious report being home schooled.

*The responding religious are highly educated. Nearly two in three (65 percent) earned an undergraduate or graduate degree before entering their religious institute.*

<b>Highest Education Completed Before Entering</b>			
Percentage responding			
	<b>Both</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
Elementary school (K-8)	1%	1%	0%
High school	8	9	0
Some college, no degree	26	25	37
Undergraduate degree	41	42	36
Graduate degree	24	23	27

Less than one in ten (9 percent) religious of the Profession Class of 2013 completed only elementary or high school before entering the religious institute. A quarter (26 percent) completed trade school or some college before entering. Four in ten (41 percent) had an undergraduate degree and a quarter (24 percent) had a graduate degree before entering their religious institute. Responding sisters or nuns are a little more likely than responding brothers to have an undergraduate degree before entering their religious institute but brothers are a little more likely than sisters or nuns to have a graduate degree.

## Educational Debt

*One in ten responding religious (10 percent) report that educational debt delayed their application for entrance to the religious institute.*

<b>Impact of Educational Debt on Entrance to Religious Life</b>			
	<b>Both</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
Application delayed by debt	10%	10%	9%
Average length of delay	2 years	2 years	1 year
Average amount of debt	\$31,100	\$31,222	\$30,000
Median amount of debt	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000

Most responding religious of the Profession Class of 2013 report that educational debt did not delay their application for entrance. Among those that were delayed by educational debt, however, the average delay was two years.

On average, responding religious had \$31,100 in educational debt at the time they first applied for entrance to their religious institute. Men and women were about the same in the amount of educational debt they reported.

None of the brothers reported receiving assistance in paying down their educational debt prior to entering their religious institute. Among women religious, several reported assistance from these groups in paying down their debt:

- Three reported assistance from family members
- Three reported assistance from their religious institute
- Two reported assistance from their parish
- Two received assistance from the Labouré Society
- One reported assistance from friends/co-workers
- One received assistance from the Mater Ecclesiae Fund for Vocations
- One received assistance from the Serra Fund for Vocations
- One received assistance from the Knights of Columbus Fund for Vocations

## Work Experience

*Almost nine in ten (89 percent) responding religious report some type of work experience prior to entering the religious institute. A quarter (25 percent) were employed part-time and just under two-thirds (64 percent) had been employed full-time before entering their institute.*

<b>Prior Work Experience</b>			
Percentage in each category			
	<b>Both</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
Business/Occupational	49%	44%	73%
Education/Academic	30	34	9
Health care	10	10	9
Church ministry	9	9	9
Government/Military	3	3	0

These religious, especially the brothers, were most likely to report that they were in some form of business, or an occupation or trade, prior to entering their religious institute. Women were most likely to report that they were employed in business or education prior to entering their institute. Women who had been in business were about as likely to report that they had done skilled labor (such as bank manager or social worker) as unskilled (such as waitress or child care) before entering.

## Participation in Religious Programs, Activities, or Ministries

*Many responding religious were active in parish life before entering their religious institute. Just under three-quarters (71 percent) participated in one or more of these programs or activities before entering.*

<b>Participation in Religious Programs or Activities*</b>			
Percentage checking each response			
	<b>Both</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
Youth ministry or youth group	46%	46%	46%
Catholic campus ministry/Newman Center	35	38	18
Young adult ministry or group	25	23	36
World Youth Day	24	23	27
National Catholic Youth Conference	9	6	27
Franciscan University of Steubenville High School Youth Conference	6	7	0
Religious institute volunteer	5	6	0
St. Vincent de Paul Society	5	3	18
National Evangelization Team	3	3	0
Fellowship of Catholic University Students	1	1	0
Sodality	—	1	***
Catholic Scouting	—	**	10
Knights of Columbus	—	**	18
Catholic Daughters	—	0	***

\*Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one category.  
 \*\*Not asked of women.  
 \*\*\*Not asked of men.

- Almost half (46 percent) of responding religious participated in youth ministry or a youth group. About a third (35 percent) participated in Catholic campus ministry or a Newman Center. Women are a little more likely than men to have had this experience.
- One in four (25 percent) respondents participated in young adult ministry or a young adult group before entering. About the same proportion participated in a World Youth Day prior to entering their religious institute.
- One in ten (9 percent) participated in the National Catholic Youth Conference. Men are a little more likely than women to have had this experience.

*A great majority of responding religious (90 percent) served in one or more specified ministries before entering their religious institute, either in a paid ministry position or as a volunteer. The most common ministry service reported was some form of faith formation.*

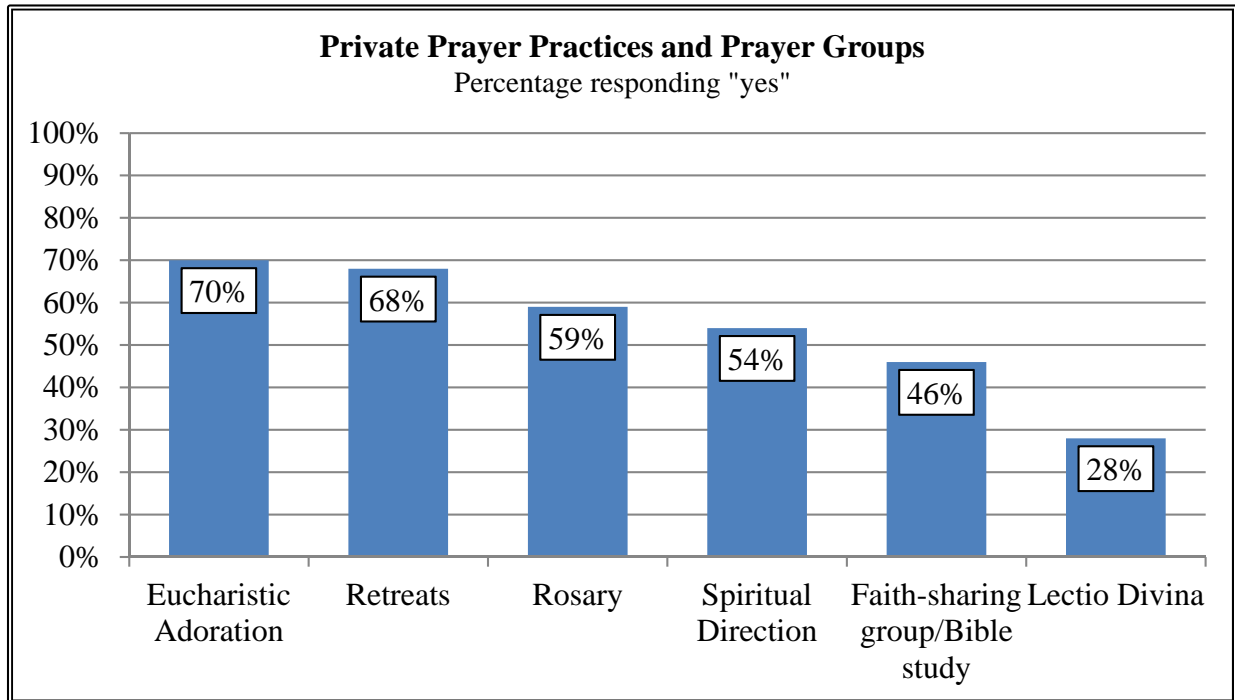
<b>Ministry Experience*</b>			
Percentage checking each response			
	<b>Both</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
Faith formation, catechetical ministry, RCIA	54%	54%	55%
Music ministry, cantor, or choir	49	48	55
Lector	45	46	36
Social service ministry (e.g., Catholic Charities program, other community service)	41	41	46
Extraordinary Minister of Communion	38	38	36
Altar server	21	16	55
Teacher in a Catholic school	11	10	18
Hospital or prison ministry	9	8	9

\*Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one category.

- Among the ministries listed on the survey, respondents were *most* likely to report that they served in catechetical ministry or faith formation, including RCIA. Men were equally as likely as women to have served in this capacity.
- About a third to half of respondents served in liturgical ministries, such as lector (45 percent), Extraordinary Minister of Communion (38 percent), or music ministry (49 percent) before entering their religious institute. More than half of men served as an altar server, compared to about a sixth of women.
- Four in ten respondents (41 percent) reported that they served in a social service ministry, such as a Catholic Charities program, or some other community service.
- Responding religious were *least* likely to have served in a hospital or prison ministry or as a teacher in a Catholic school before they entered their religious institute.
- Eighty-four percent of respondents report being involved in ministry either in a full-time, part-time or volunteer capacity prior to entering their religious institute. Women and men are equally likely to have so served in ministry or to have served full-time, while men were more likely than women to have served as a volunteer (not shown in the table).

## Private Prayer Practices and Prayer Groups

*Private prayer and prayer groups are another type of formative experience that can help shape one's religious faith and openness to consider a vocation. Almost all (94 percent) responding religious of the Profession Class of 2013 participated in one or more of these prayer practices or groups on a regular basis prior to entering her or his religious institute.*



- Eucharistic Adoration and retreats are the most common types of formative prayer experience, reported by more than two-thirds of religious of the Profession Class of 2013.
- Six in ten respondents regularly prayed the Rosary (59 percent) prior to entering their religious institute.
- More than half (54 percent) report participating in spiritual direction and just under half (46 percent) regularly participated in a faith-sharing group or a Bible study group.
- A little more than a quarter (28 percent) regularly participated in *Lectio Divina* prayer prior to entering their religious institute. This is an ancient prayer practice from the Order of St. Benedict.

*Women religious are more likely than men religious to report participating in Eucharistic Adoration or making retreats prior to their entry into religious life. About three in four women religious reported these prayer practices, compared to just over half of responding men religious.*

<b>Private Prayer Practices and Prayer Groups*</b>		
Percentage checking each response		
	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
Eucharistic Adoration	73%	55%
Retreats	70	55
Rosary	62	36
Spiritual direction	52	64
Faith-sharing group/Bible study	51	18
Lectio Divina	28	27

\*Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one category.

- Women are also more likely than men to say they pray the rosary (62 percent for women compared to 36 percent for men).
- In contrast, men are more likely than women to have participated spiritual direction before they entered (64 percent for men compared to 52 percent for women).
- Women are more likely than men to have been involved in a faith-sharing group or Bible study (51 percent for women compared to 18 percent for men).

## Consideration of a Vocation to Religious Life

*On average, responding religious report that they were 20 years old when they first considered a vocation to religious life, but half were 17 or younger when they first considered a vocation.*

<b>Age When First Considered a Vocation to Religious Life</b>			
	<b>Age</b>		
	<b>Both</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
Mean	20	20	17
Median	17	17	17
Range	5-56	5-56	5-27

### *Encouragement to Consider a Vocation*

*Eight in ten (81 percent) responding religious report that someone encouraged them to consider a vocation to religious life. Close to three-quarters of men (73 percent) compared to 83 percent of women report that they were encouraged by someone to consider a vocation.*

<b>Encouragement to Consider a Vocation to Religious Life*</b>			
Percentage checking each response			
	<b>Both</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
Religious sister or brother	46%	46%	46%
Parish priest	39	39	36
Friend	39	44	9
Mother	29	26	46
Parishioner	24	22	36
Father	23	20	36
Other relative	19	17	27
Campus minister/School chaplain	10	9	18
Teacher/Catechist	10	7	27
Youth minister	6	6	9
Bishop	1	1	0
Deacon	0	0	0

\*Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one response.



- Close to half of responding religious (46 percent) say that a religious sister or brother encouraged their vocation. Men and women are equally likely to have been encouraged by a religious sister or a brother.
- Four in ten report that they were encouraged to consider a vocation by a parish priest or another friend. Women are more likely than men to have been encouraged by a friend.
- Respondents are less likely to report that they received encouragement from their family members than from other religious, friends, or a parish priest. Three in ten (29 percent) report that their mother encouraged them to consider religious life. Just under a quarter received encouragement from their father (23 percent) or another relative (19 percent).
- One quarter responding religious received encouragement from a parishioner (24 percent).
- Respondents were least likely to report being encouraged to consider a vocation by a teacher, a campus minister, a youth minister, a bishop, or a deacon.

## ***Discouragement from Considering a Vocation***

*About two-thirds of responding religious (62 percent) reported that they were discouraged from considering a vocation by one or more persons. Women were almost twice as likely as men (67 percent compared to 36 percent) to report that someone discouraged them from considering a vocation.*

<b>Discouragement from Considering a Vocation to Religious Life*</b>			
Percentage checking each response			
	<b>Both</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
Other relative	36%	41%	9%
Friend or school classmate	30	30	27
Mother	26	28	18
Father	21	22	18
Colleague or coworker	10	10	9
Teacher	6	7	0
Priest or other clergy	6	7	0
Religious sister or brother	6	7	0
Youth minister	1	1	0
Someone else	3	3	0

\*Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one response.

Those who reported being *discouraged* from considering a vocation are most likely to report that they were discouraged by a family member (36 percent) other than their mother (26 percent) or father (21 percent) or by friends or classmates (30 percent).

- Men are less likely than women to have been discouraged by their mother (18 percent compared to 28 percent) or by another relative apart from a parent (9 percent compared to 41 percent).
- Very few respondents (all of them women religious) say they were discouraged from considering a vocation by teachers, youth ministers, clergy, or religious sisters or brothers.
- One in ten (10 percent) were discouraged from considering a vocation to religious life by a colleague or coworker. Men and women were equally likely to report being discouraged from their vocation by a colleague or coworker.

## Initial Acquaintance with the Religious Institute

*On average, responding religious report that they knew the members of their religious institute four years before they entered.*

	<b>Years</b>		
	<b>Both</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
Mean	4	4	2
Median	2	2	2
Range	0-40	0-40	1-4

On average, sisters report that they knew members of their institutes about twice as long (four years) as brothers (two years). Half of all responding religious (men and women) report that they knew the members of their religious institute for two years or less before they entered. More than a third (36 percent) knew the members of their religious institute for one year before they entered and one in twenty (5 percent) knew the members for less than a year.

*Responding religious were asked to indicate how they first became acquainted with their religious institute. A quarter (24 percent) report that they first became acquainted with their institute through print or online promotional material published by the institute.*

<b><i>How did you first become acquainted with your religious institute?*</i></b>			
Percentage checking each response			
	<b>Both</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
Through print or online promotional material published by the institute	24%	25%	18%
Through the recommendation of a priest or advisor	18	17	18
Through working with a Sister/Brother from the institute	16	17	9
In/through a sponsored institution or work of the institute (e.g., school, hospital)	15	12	36
Through a friend or relative in the institute	11	10	18
Through a vocation matching or placement service	6	4	18
At a vocation event (e.g., Vocation Fair)	5	4	9
Other	35	35	36

\*Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one response.

Respondents also indicate that they first became acquainted with their institute through a priest or advisor (18 percent), through working with someone from the institute (16 percent), or through a sponsored institute or work of the institute (15 percent). Just over a third (35 percent) said they first became acquainted with their religious institute through some other means. Some of those “other” responses included:

- A friend who knew sisters in the institute
- Found their website as I was searching for communities
- Volunteering with them and worshipping at the same parish
- Spiritual Director
- Retreat experience, recommended by a friend who was an alumnus of a school the institute
- Cursillo friend who attended Oblate meetings
- Through a master retreat
- A seminarian whose sister is in our congregation
- A friend who entered a cloistered community suggested looking at the community.
- World Youth Day Toronto
- Through a television program on EWTN
- I was born in one of the hospitals the sister's sponsored
- Through meeting and forming a friendship with a pre-novice in the formation program

## Vocation/Discernment Programs and Experiences

*Among the vocation programs and experiences about which they were asked, respondents are most likely to have participated in a “Come and See” experience. Nearly all (91 percent) had participated in at least one of these programs or experiences prior to entering their religious institute.*

<b><i>Vocation/Discernment Programs and Experiences*</i></b>			
<i>Percentage checking each response</i>			
	<b>Both</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
Vocation retreat	59%	62%	36%
“Come and See” experience	56	58	46
Live-in experience	34	33	36
“Nun Run”/“Andrew Dinner”	8	7	9
Other	13	15	0
<p>*Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one response.</p>			

- Nearly three in five (59 percent) responding religious participated in a vocation retreat before entering their religious institute. Women were almost twice as likely as men (62 percent compared to 36 percent) to report participating in a vocation retreat before entering their religious institute.
- “Come and See” experiences are another popular vocation program, experienced by more than half (56 percent) of respondents before they entered their religious institute.
- A third (34 percent) participated in some sort of live-in experience with their religious institute before entering.
- Very few responding sisters or nuns (7 percent) report that they participated in a “Nun Run” (asked only of women) experience, and only one of the brothers had participated in an “Andrew Dinner” (asked only of men).

Respondents were also allowed to add any “other” vocational discernment experiences which they might have had. Their responses included the following:

- Dinner invites with communities
- Discernment group at the Newman Center
- FIAT (Boston)
- Focolaire, Vietnamese Eucharistic Youth Society
- Formal discernment process with a guide
- I'd also visit outside of formal 'Come & Sees'
- Monastic live-in organized by monks in a Benedictine Abbey
- My congregation's formal discernment program
- private week-end visit
- Xavier house: an intentional community experience with lay women and religious