



**Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate
and the National Religious Vocation Conference
Survey of New Members**



*This survey is part of a study to assist NRVC and CARA in understanding religious life and religious vocations in the United States today. "Religious institute" refers to the congregation, province, or abbey/monastery to which you belong. **Your responses are very important.** Please respond by marking an "X" in the appropriate boxes. If you do not know how to respond to a question, or if it does not apply, please leave it blank.*

Please use the responses below for questions 1-17.

1=Not at All 3=Somewhat
2= Only a Little 4=Very Much

How much did the following attract you to religious life?

- | | | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|--|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
| G | G | G | G | 1. A sense of call to religious life |
| G | G | G | G | 2. Desire for prayer and spiritual growth |
| G | G | G | G | 3. Desire for a deeper relationship with God |
| G | G | G | G | 4. Desire to be of service |
| G | G | G | G | 5. Desire to profess and live vows |
| G | G | G | G | 6. Desire to be part of a community |
| G | G | G | G | 7. Desire to be more committed to the Church |

How much did the following attract you to your religious institute?

- | | | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
| G | G | G | G | 8. The life and works of your founder/ress |
| G | G | G | G | 9. The charism of the institute |
| G | G | G | G | 10. The mission of the institute |
| G | G | G | G | 11. The spirituality of the institute |
| G | G | G | G | 12. The prayer life of the institute |
| G | G | G | G | 13. The community life of the institute |
| G | G | G | G | 14. The ministries of the institute |
| G | G | G | G | 15. The example of members of the institute |
| G | G | G | G | 16. The cultural diversity of institute members |
| G | G | G | G | 17. Welcome and encouragement by members |

How did you first become acquainted with your religious institute? *Check all that apply.*

- | | |
|---|---|
| G | 18. In an institution where members served, e.g., school |
| G | 19. Through working with a member of the institute |
| G | 20. Through a relative or friend in the institute |
| G | 21. Through a presentation at a school/parish/youth ministry event |
| G | 22. Through a vocation fair or exhibit at an event or conference |
| G | 23. Through a vocation match or placement service (e.g., VISION Vocation Match) |

- | | |
|---|---|
| G | 24. Through your own internet search of websites |
| G | 25. Through on-line content (e.g., podcasts, videos, blogs, vlogs, webinars) |
| G | 26. Through printed materials (e.g., prayer cards, bookmarks, brochures, books, booklets) |
| G | 27. Social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) |

Did you participate in any of the following before you entered your religious institute? *Check all that apply.*

- | | |
|---|---|
| G | 28. Diocesan vocation programs (e.g., Quo Vadis, Fiat Days, dinner with the Bishop) |
| G | 29. Busy Persons Retreat, Nun Run, Open House, Theology on Tap, Cursillo, etc. |
| G | 30. On-line discernment forums, chats, etc. |
| G | 31. In-person meetings with a discernment group |
| G | 32. Discernment retreat(s) |
| G | 33. "Come and See" experience(s) |
| G | 34. Living at a Discernment House |
| G | 35. Live in experience with the institute |
| G | 36. Volunteer service immersion experience(s) with members of the institute |

Was religious life formally presented, in class or in campus ministry, as an option for you to consider seriously while you were in these settings? *Check all that apply.*

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------|
| G | 37. Elementary school | G | 39. High school |
| G | 38. Middle school | G | 40. College |

Please use the responses below for questions 41-51.

1=Not at All 3=Somewhat
2=Only a Little 4=Very Much

How helpful were the following when you were discerning your call to religious life?

- | | | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|--|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
| G | G | G | G | 41. Websites of religious institutes |
| G | G | G | G | 42. Talking with my pastor |
| G | G | G | G | 43. Printed materials (e.g., prayer cards, books, bookmarks, brochures, booklets, posters) |

- G G G G 44. Social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat)
- G G G G 45. On-line content (e.g., podcasts, videos, blogs, vlogs, webinars)
- G G G G 46. VISION Vocation Guide, online VISION Vocation Network, VocationMatch
- G G G G 47. Other media (e.g., OYE, A Guide to Religious Ministries, EWTN, Salt and Light Media)
- G G G G 48. Invitations to Receptions, Final professions, and Jubilees
- G G G G 49. Discernment with a vocation director
- G G G G 50. Meeting with a member(s) of the institute
- G G G G 51. Communal prayer and meals with a member(s) of the institute

SAMPLE

Please use the responses below for questions 52-79.

1=Not at All

3=Somewhat

2=Only a Little

4=Very Much

How much did these influence your decision to enter your religious institute?

- 1 2 3 4
- G G G G 52. The size of the institute
G G G G 53. Its geographic location(s)
G G G G 54. The charism of the institute
G G G G 55. Prayer life or prayer styles in the institute
G G G G 56. Community life in the institute
G G G G 57. The way the vows are lived in the institute
G G G G 58. The living of the Gospel values
G G G G 59. The cultural diversity of the members
G G G G 60. The ages of members
G G G G 61. Other members also in initial formation
G G G G 62. The types of ministry of its members
G G G G 63. The diversity of languages among members
G G G G 64. The preferential option and commitment for the poor among its members
G G G G 65. The vitality of members
G G G G 66. The focus on possibilities for the future of the religious institute

How much encouragement did you receive from the following when you first considered entering your religious institute?

- 1 2 3 4
- G G G G 67. Members of your institute
G G G G 68. Vocation director/team
G G G G 69. Spiritual director, if applicable
G G G G 70. Religious sisters, brothers, and/or priests
G G G G 71. Diocesan priests, deacons, and/or bishop
G G G G 72. Your parents, if applicable
G G G G 73. Your grandparents, if applicable
G G G G 74. Your siblings, if applicable
G G G G 75. Other family members
G G G G 76. People in your parish
G G G G 77. Teachers, mentors, or others in your school or workplace
G G G G 78. Youth minister or college campus minister
G G G G 79. Friends outside the institute

80. After entering religious life, did familial support and encouragement for your vocation: *Check only one.*

G 1. Increase G 2. Stay the same G 3. Decrease

Yes No

G G 81. Do you have a relative who is a priest, deacon, or religious sister or brother?

Please use the responses below for questions 86-122.

1=Not at All

3=Somewhat

2=Only a Little

4=Very Much

G G 84. Were you ever married?

G G 85. Do you have any children?

How important to you are these types of prayer?

- 1 2 3 4
- G G G G 86. Personal private prayer
G G G G 87. Journal writing, poetry, prayer blogs
G G G G 88. Daily Eucharist
G G G G 89. Liturgy of the Hours
G G G G 90. Non-liturgical common prayer (i.e. rosary, devotions)
G G G G 91. Common meditation/centering prayer
G G G G 92. Faith sharing
G G G G 93. *Lectio Divina*/spiritual reading and reflection
G G G G 94. Ecumenical interfaith prayer (e.g. Taizé)
G G G G 95. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
G G G G 96. Prayer using an app/on-line resources

How important to you are these aspects of community life?

- 1 2 3 4
- G G G G 97. Living with other members
G G G G 98. Praying with other members
G G G G 99. Praying with lay partners in ministry
G G G G 100. Ministering/working with other members
G G G G 101. Ministering wherever the need is greatest
G G G G 102. Sharing meals with other members
G G G G 103. Sharing meals with lay partners in ministry
G G G G 104. Socializing/sharing leisure time together
G G G G 105. Celebrating holidays/feast days together
G G G G 106. Participating in neighborhood outreach
G G G G 107. Discussing local/global news and events
G G G G 108. Corporate stances on social justice issues
G G G G 109. Learning and implementing cultural competencies with other members
G G G G 110. Valuing cultural diversity beyond tolerance

G G G G 111. Ongoing formation and lifelong education

How much do you prefer living in these settings?

1 2 3 4

- G G G G 112. Singly (or with family members)
- G G G G 113. In a community of 2-3 unit members
- G G G G 114. In a community of 4-7 unit members
- G G G G 115. In a community of 8 or more unit members
- G G G G 116. With members close to you in age
- G G G G 117. With members of different ages
- G G G G 118. With members of different cultures
- G G G G 119. With members in different ministries
- G G G G 120. Living at or near your ministry site
- G G G G 121. Living simply, in solidarity with the poor, marginalized, and neglected
- G G G G 122. In community with non-vowed (e.g., volunteers, associates, refugees)

Please use the responses below for questions 123-142.

1=Poor
2=Fair

3=Good
4=Excellent

How would you rate the following in your religious institute?

1 2 3 4

- G G G G 123. Efforts to promote vocations
- G G G G 124. Welcome and support of newer members
- G G G G 125. Initial formation/incorporation programs
- G G G G 126. Ongoing formation and spiritual growth
- G G G G 127. Lifelong educational opportunities
- G G G G 128. Preparation for ministry
- G G G G 129. Opportunities to lead/learn leadership skills
- G G G G 130. Opportunities to voice opinions/be heard
- G G G G 131. Diversity of cultures within the institute
- G G G G 132. Sense of identity as institute members
- G G G G 133. Fidelity to the Church and its teachings
- G G G G 134. Vision for the future of religious life
- G G G G 135. Focus on mission and its relevance today
- G G G G 136. Care and support of the elderly members
- G G G G 137. Response to the needs of our time
- G G G G 138. Efforts to promote social justice
- G G G G 139. Quality of community life
- G G G G 140. Communal prayer experiences
- G G G G 141. Relationships with one another
- G G G G 142. Communal work around racism

Were you involved in any of the following before you entered? *Check all that apply.*

- G 143. Youth ministry, parish youth group, or LifeTeen
- G 144. Young adult ministry or group
- G 145. College campus ministry/Newman Center
- G 146. Liturgical ministry (e.g., lector, extraordinary minister)
- G 147. Music ministry (e.g., cantor, choir, musician)
- G 148. Adult faith formation, catechist, RCIA team
- G 149. Other volunteer work in a parish or ministry setting
- G 150. Bible study group
- G 151. Military service/Armed Forces, active or reserve
- G 152. FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students)
- G 153. National Catholic Youth Conference
- G 154. Steubenville High School Youth Conference
- G 155. Right to Life March in Washington, D.C.
- G 156. World Youth Day
- G 157. From Service to Sisterhood volunteer program
- G 158. Volunteer service immersion experiences (e.g., Mercy Corps or Jesuit Volunteer Corps)

Yes No

- G G 159. Did someone invite you to consider vocation discernment?
- 160. How long were you in a formal discernment process?
 - G 1. Less than 6 months
 - G 2. 6-11 months
 - G 3. One to two years
 - G 4. More than two years

About You

- 161. What is your current status in your religious institute?
 - G 1. Candidate/postulant
 - G 2. Novice
 - G 3. Temporary vows/commitment
 - G 4. Final/perpetual vows/commitment

Yes No

- G G 162. Were either of your parents born outside the United States?
 - 163. *If yes to #162, country(ies) of birth:*

- G G 164. Were you born outside the United States?
 - 165. *If yes to #164, country of birth:*

 - 166. *If yes to #164, age you first came to live in the United States*

- 167. *If no to #164, in what U.S. region did you grow up?*
 Northeast (CT, MA, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT)

- _2 South Atlantic (DE, DC, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, WV)
- _3 South Central (AL, AR, KY, LA, MS, OK, TN, TX)
- _4 Midwest (IA, IL, IN, KS, MI, MN, MO, ND, NE, OH, SD, WI)
- _5 Mountain West (AZ, CO, ID, MT, NM, NV, UT, WY)
- _6 Pacific West (AK, CA, HI, OR, WA)
- _7 Puerto Rico, Guam, or other U.S. Territory

168. What is your first language? _____

169. How many languages do you speak fluently?

G 1. One G 2. Two G 1. Three G 2. Four or more

170. Which socioeconomic category best describes your family when you were in elementary school?

G 1. Poverty G 3. Middle class

G 2. Working poor G 4. Wealthy

Yes No

G G 171. Were you employed before you entered?

172. *If yes to #171*, were you employed

G 1. Full-time G 2. Part-time

G G 173. Were you in ministry before you entered?

174. *If yes to #173*, were you engaged in ministry

G 1. Full-time G 2. Part-time G 3. Volunteer

175. Are you: G 1. Male G 2. Female

176. If male, are you (or do you expect to be) a

G 1. Brother G 2. Priest

177. What best describes your racial or ethnic background?

G 1. African American/African/black

G 2. Asian/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian/Middle Eastern

G 3. Caucasian/European American/Anglo/white

G 4. Hispanic/Latino(a)

G 5. Native American/Alaskan Native

G 6. Other/Mixed races or ethnicities

_____ 178. Year you were born

_____ 179. Year you entered your religious institute

_____ 180. Year you professed/expect to profess final vows/perpetual commitment

_____ 181. Year you were ordained/expect to be ordained to the priesthood (if applicable)

_____ 182. Age you first considered religious life

before this one?

_____ 184. *If yes*, number of years in that institute

G G 185. Were you raised Catholic?

_____ 186. If you became Catholic as an adult, age you entered the Catholic Church

G G 187. Were you ever home-schooled?

_____ 188. *If yes*, number of years home-schooled

Yes 197. What are the greatest obstacles in vocation discernment for discerners and vocation directors?

G

Did you attend any of the following before you entered?

Check all that apply.

G 189. Parish-based religious education/CCD/RCIA

G 190. Catholic elementary or middle school

G 191. Catholic high school

G 192. Catholic college or university

193. What was the highest level of education you completed before you entered your religious institute?

G 1. High school diploma

G 4. Bachelor's degree

G 2. Some college credits

G 5. Master's degree

G 3. Technical college or

G 6. Doctoral degree

Associate degree

194. Would you be willing to participate in a focus group?

G 1. Yes

G 2. No

Please provide your contact information:

Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

CARA/Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University

2300 Wisconsin Ave., NW, Suite 400A, Washington, DC 20007

Phone: 202-687-8080 Fax: 202-687-8083

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