

**April 2012**

***The Class of 2012:  
Survey of Ordinands to the Priesthood***



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

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Survey of Ordinands to the Priesthood*

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



**April 2012**

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**Executive Summary**

This report presents findings from a national survey of ordinands to the priesthood in 2012. To obtain the names and contact information for these ordinands, the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) contacted all theologates and houses of formation in fall 2011 and requested each site to provide names and contact information for every seminarian who was scheduled to be ordained to the priesthood in 2012. CARA also notified the vocation director at all dioceses and archdioceses in the United States about the project and asked for their support in encouraging their potential ordinands to complete the survey. CARA then contacted the ordinands by e-mail, phone, or fax to explain the project and ask them to complete a brief online survey. At the same time, CARA also e-mailed or faxed a similar request to the seminary rector or president at all theologates in its Catholic ministry formation database as well as all major superiors of clerical and mixed religious institutes, asking them to contact their ordinands for CARA and invite them to participate in the online survey.

After repeated follow-ups by telephone, fax, and e-mail, a total of 304 ordinands responded to the survey by April 6, 2012 (four others were being ordained for a diocese outside of the United States and were removed). This represents a response rate of approximately 63 percent of the 487 potential ordinands reported to CARA by theologates, houses of formation, arch/dioceses, and religious institutes. These 304 ordinands include 242 ordinands to the diocesan priesthood, from 123 different dioceses and archdioceses, and 62 ordinands to the religious priesthood.

**Major Findings**

- The average age of ordinands for the Class of 2012 is 34.6. The median age (midpoint of the distribution) is 31. Two-thirds (66 percent) are between the ages of 25 and 34. This distribution is slightly younger than in 2011, but follows the pattern in recent years of average age at ordination in the mid-thirties.

- On average, diocesan ordinands lived in the diocese or eparchy for which they will be ordained for 15.6 years before entering the seminary. Religious ordinands knew the members of their religious institute an average of 9.3 years before they entered the seminary.

### ***Background and Country of Origin***

- Seven in ten responding ordinands (71 percent) report their primary race or ethnicity as Caucasian/European American/white. Compared to the adult Catholic population of the United States, ordinands are more likely to be of Asian or Pacific Islander background (9 percent of responding ordinands), but less likely to be Hispanic/Latino (15 percent of responding ordinands). Compared to diocesan ordinands, religious ordinands are *less* likely to report their race or ethnicity as Caucasian/European American/white.
- Almost three in ten ordinands were born outside the United States, with the largest numbers coming from Vietnam, Colombia, Mexico, Poland, and the Philippines. On average, responding ordinands who were born in another country came to America in their early twenties. Between 20 and 30 percent of ordinands to diocesan priesthood for each of the last ten years were born outside of the United States.
- Most ordinands have been Catholic since birth, although 6 percent became Catholic later in life. Eighty-four percent report that both of their parents are Catholic and more than a third (37 percent) have a relative who is a priest or a religious.
- More than half of ordinands of the Class of 2012 (55 percent) report having more than two siblings, while nearly three in ten (28 percent) report having five or more siblings. One in three (33 percent) is the oldest child and one in five is the youngest child (22 percent) in their family.

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

- Before entering the seminary, six in ten ordinands completed college (61 percent). Sixteen percent entered seminary with a graduate degree. Among those who completed college before entering the seminary, seven in ten (70 percent) entered the seminary at the pre-theology level and 23 percent entered at the theology level. One in three (29 percent) report entering the seminary while in college.
- The most common fields of study for ordinands before entering the seminary are theology or philosophy (19 percent), the social sciences (14 percent), liberal arts (13 percent), business (12 percent), and science (10 percent).
- Almost half of responding ordinands (47 percent) attended a Catholic elementary school, which is a rate slightly higher than that for all Catholic adults in the United States (42 percent). In addition, ordinands are somewhat more likely than other U.S. Catholic adults to have attended a Catholic high school and they are much more likely to have attended a Catholic college (45 percent, compared to 7 percent among U.S. Catholic adults).

- Just over a quarter (27 percent) carried educational debt at the time they entered the seminary, averaging a little over \$20,000 in educational debt.
- Many ordinands specified some type of full-time work experience just prior to entering the seminary, most often in education or management. Six percent of ordinands indicated that they had served in the U.S. Armed Forces at some point in their life. One in five (21 percent) report that either one or both parents were career military.
- Ordinands of the Class of 2012 have been active in parish ministries, with three-quarters indicating they served as an altar server and more than half (53 percent) participating in a parish youth group. One-fifth (22 percent) participated in a World Youth Day before entering the seminary.
- Nearly seven in ten ordinands report regularly praying the Rosary (68 percent) and participating in Eucharistic Adoration (65 percent) before entering the seminary.

### *Vocational Discernment*

- On average, responding ordinands report that they were nearly 17 when they first considered a vocation to the priesthood. Nearly seven in ten (68 percent) were encouraged to consider the priesthood by a priest. On average, ordinands reported four individuals giving them encouragement. Other than priests this commonly came from friends (47 percent), parishioners (42 percent), and mothers (41 percent).
- More than four in ten responding ordinands (43 percent) report that someone discouraged them from considering the priesthood. On average this came from one person— frequently a friend or classmate (70 percent).

## Introduction

In December 2005, the Secretariat for Vocations and Priestly Formation (now the Secretariat of Clergy, Consecrated Life, and Vocations) of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) commissioned the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University to conduct an annual survey of ordinands to the priesthood. The survey was initially developed by the Secretariat in 1998 and has been administered online since 2005. CARA assumed responsibility for the project in 2006, using the online survey developed by the Secretariat. CARA worked with the Secretariat to upgrade the online survey and to incorporate it into the data collection process for CARA's annual survey of priestly formation programs. This report presents results of the survey of ordinands of the Class of 2012.

To obtain the names and contact information for these ordinands, the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) contacted all theologates and houses of formation in fall 2011 and requested each site to provide names and contact information for every seminarian who was scheduled to be ordained to the priesthood in 2012. CARA also notified the vocation director at all dioceses and archdioceses in the United States about the project and asked for their support in encouraging their potential ordinands to complete the survey. CARA then contacted the ordinands by e-mail, phone, or fax to explain the project and ask them to complete a brief online survey. At the same time, CARA also e-mailed or faxed a similar request to the seminary rector or president at all theologates in its Catholic ministry formation database as well as all major superiors of clerical and mixed religious institutes, asking them to contact their ordinands for CARA and invite them to participate in the online survey.

After repeated follow-ups by telephone, fax, and e-mail, a total of 304 ordinands responded to the survey by April 6, 2012 (four others were being ordained for a diocese outside of the United States and were removed). This represents a response rate of approximately 63 percent of the 487 potential ordinands reported to CARA by theologates, houses of formation, arch/dioceses, and religious institutes. These 304 ordinands include 242 ordinands to the diocesan priesthood, from 123 different dioceses and archdioceses, and 62 ordinands to the religious priesthood.

The questionnaire asked ordinands about their demographic and religious background, education, previous ministry and work experience, encouragement and discouragement to consider the priesthood, and experience with vocation programs. This report presents analyses of each question from all ordinands combined as well as separately for diocesan and religious ordinands. The report also contains trend data on selected items since 1999, the first year for which comparable data on both diocesan and religious ordinands are available.



## Ordination to Diocesan or Religious Priesthood

Responding ordinands represent 123 dioceses and eparchies and 49 distinct religious congregations, provinces, or monasteries. The Archdiocese of Newark had the largest number of respondents (14 ordinands), followed by the Archdiocese of Chicago (seven ordinands) and the Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon (seven ordinands). The Diocese of Duluth had five respondents.

The largest numbers of responses from ordinands to the religious priesthood were from the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) with 12 respondents. Ten of the responding ordinands are Franciscans and six are from the Order of Preachers (the Dominicans).<sup>1</sup>

*On average, responding diocesan ordinands report they lived in the diocese or eparchy for which they will be ordained for more than 15 years before they entered the seminary.*

***How long did you live in this diocese or eparchy before entering the seminary?***

	<b>Years</b>
Mean	15.6
Median	18
Range	0-52

About one in ten diocesan ordinands (12 percent) report that they lived in the diocese or eparchy for which they will be ordained less than a year before they entered the seminary.

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<sup>1</sup> These numbers refer only to ordinands who responded to the survey and do not necessarily mean that these dioceses or religious institutes will ordain the largest number of priests in 2012.

*On average, ordinands from religious institutes report that they knew the members of their religious institute more than nine years before they entered the seminary.*

<b><i>How long did you know the members of this religious institute before entering the seminary?</i></b>	
	<b>Years</b>
Mean	9.3
Median	6
Range	0.5-46

One in eight ordinands from religious institutes (12 percent) report that they knew the members of their religious institute only a year or less before they entered the seminary.

### **Age of Ordinands**

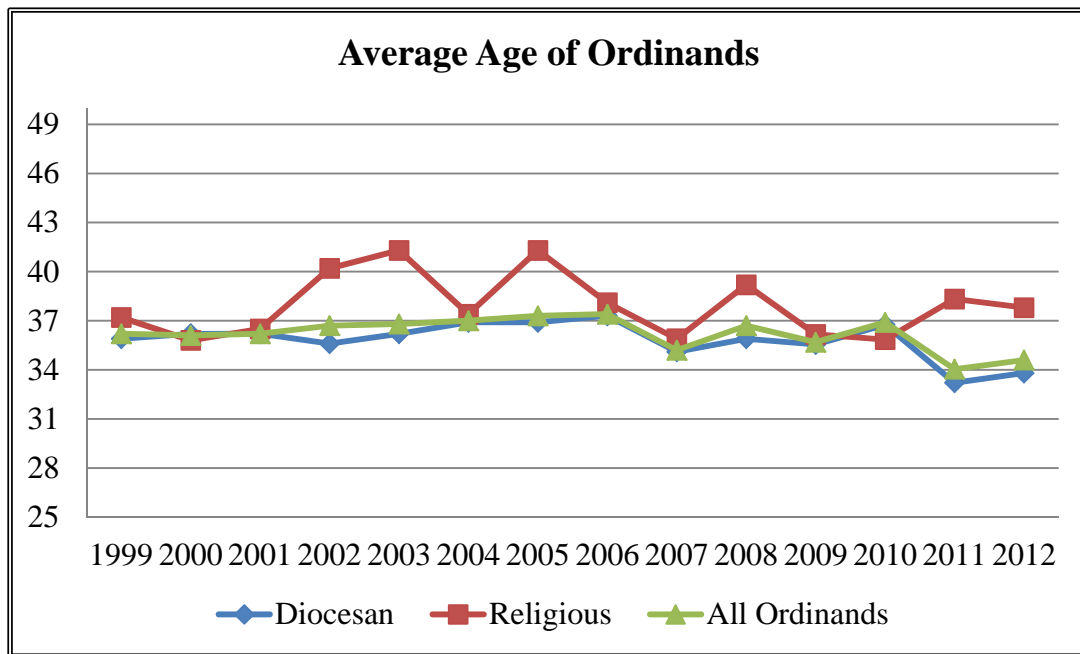
*The average age of responding ordinands of the Class of 2012 is 34.6. Two-thirds (66 percent) are between 25 and 34.*

<b>Age of Ordinands</b>			
Percentage of all responding ordinands in each age category			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
Age 25-29	37%	43%	13%
Age 30-34	29	28	34
Age 35-39	11	10	17
Age 40-44	8	6	15
Age 45-49	4	3	8
Age 50-54	7	6	10
Age 50-59	2	2	0
Age 60 and older	2	2	3
Average age	34.6	33.8	37.8
Median age	31	30	37
Range in years	25-66	25-66	27-63

The youngest responding ordinand of the Class of 2011 is 25 and the oldest is 66 years of age. Seven respondents are being ordained to the priesthood after age 60.

Diocesan ordinands are younger than religious ordinands in the Class of 2012. The median age of diocesan ordinands is 30, which means that half of the diocesan ordinands responding to the survey this year are 30 years old or younger. By contrast, the median age of religious ordinands is 37.

Ordinands of the Class of 2011 average 34.6 years of age, slightly younger than the average age of 36.2 years among ordinands of the Class of 1999. On average, ordinands from religious institutes are somewhat older than diocesan ordinands.<sup>2</sup>



The Class of 2012 follows the pattern in recent years of average age at ordination in the mid-thirties.

<sup>2</sup> Because the total number of religious ordinands is relatively small each year, the line representing the average age of religious ordinands varies widely across years.

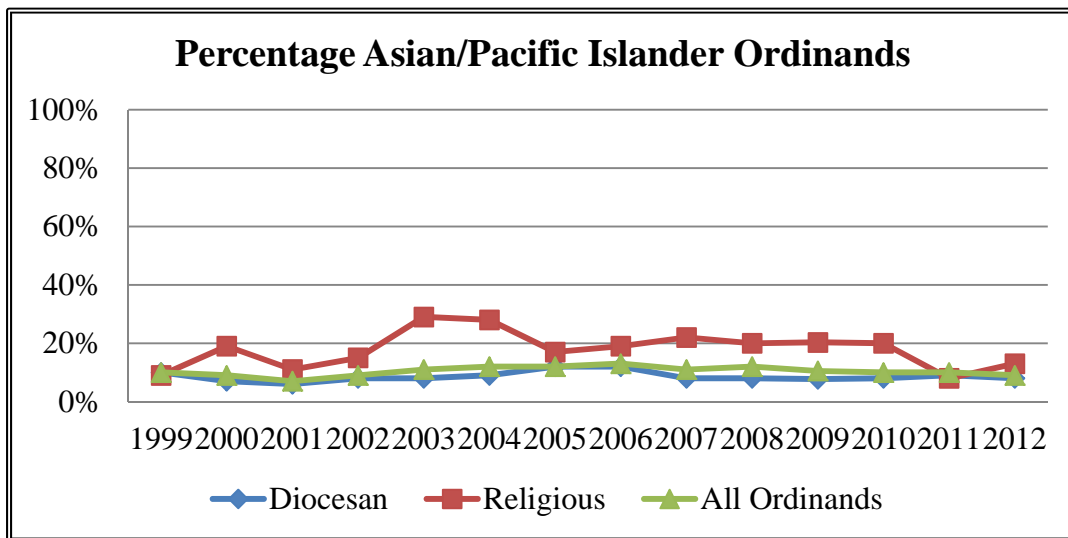
## Race and Ethnic Background

*Seven in ten responding ordinands (71 percent) report their primary race or ethnicity as Caucasian, European American, or white.*

<b>Race and Ethnic Background of Ordinands and Adult Catholics</b>				
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>	<b>Adult Catholics Nationally</b>
Caucasian/European American/white	71%	73%	65%	58%
Hispanic/Latino	15	15	13	34
Asian/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian	9	8	13	4
African/African American/black	3	3	5	3
Native American	0	0	0	1
Other	1	1	3	----*

\*Data unavailable.

Compared to data from a recent CARA telephone poll, Asian/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian ordinands are over-represented among responding ordinands, relative to their proportion of the U.S. adult Catholic population, while Hispanics/Latinos are somewhat under-represented. Asians/Pacific Islanders constitute 4 percent of U.S. Catholics overall but are 9 percent of responding ordinands. By contrast, Hispanics/Latinos constitute approximately 34 percent of U.S. adult Catholics but only 15 percent of responding ordinands.



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

*Seven in ten responding ordinands (71 percent) were born in the United States.*

<b>Country of Birth of Ordinands</b>			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
United States	71%	72%	66%
Vietnam	5	3	11
Colombia	5	5	2
Mexico	4	5	0
Poland	3	4	2
Philippines	2	3	0
Nigeria	1	1	2
El Salvador	1	1	2
Canada	1	0	5
Other countries	7	6	10

Ordinands from religious institutes are more likely than diocesan ordinands to have been born outside the United States. About seven in ten (72 percent) diocesan ordinands were born in the United States, compared to two-thirds (66 percent) of ordinands from religious institutes.

Vietnam is the most frequently mentioned country of birth among responding ordinands who were born outside the United States. The responding ordinands identified a total of 26 different countries of origin.

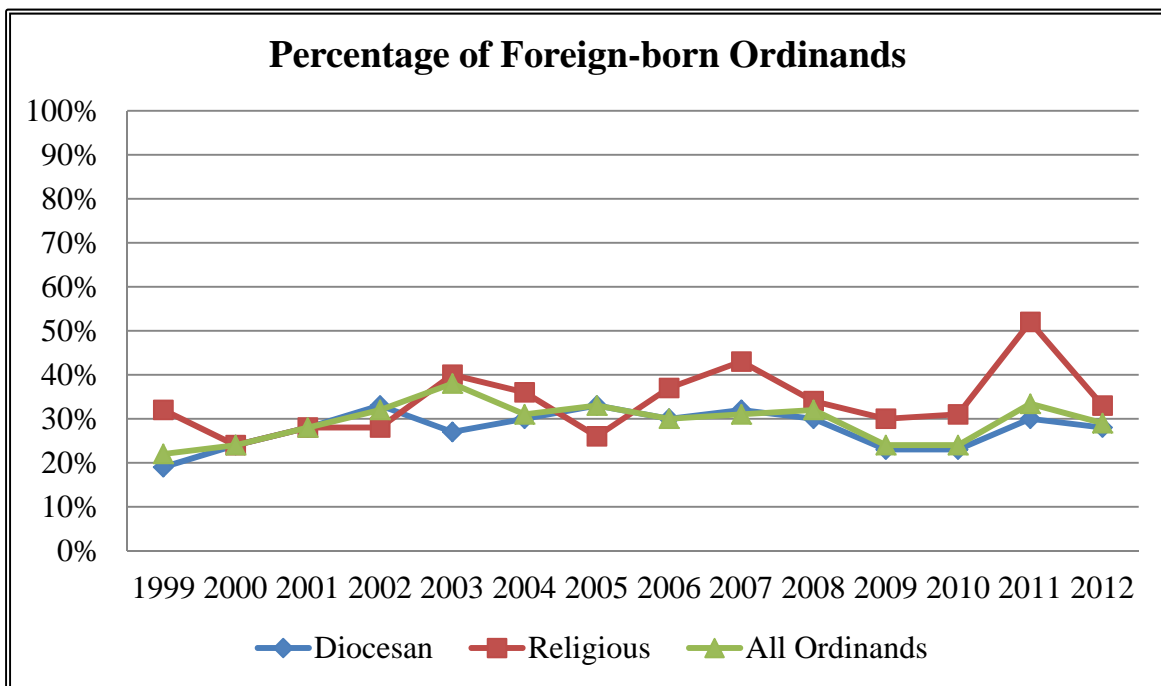
*On average, responding ordinands who were born outside the United States have lived in the United States for 12 years. Half first came to live in the United States in 2004 or earlier.*

<b>Year of Entry to the U.S. of Foreign-born Ordinands</b>			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
Mean	2000	2001	1995
Median	2004	2005	1997
Range	1975-2010	1977-2010	1975-2009

On average, responding foreign-born ordinands came to live in the United States at age 22. Religious ordinands were, on average, slightly younger than diocesan ordinands when they came to live in the United States.

	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
Mean	22.2	22.7	20.4
Median	23.5	24	22
Range	0-44	0-41	0-41

The percentage of ordinands who are foreign-born increased from 22 percent in 1999 to 38 percent in 2003, but has declined since that point and is now at 29 percent in 2012.



While the percentage of foreign-born ordinands from religious institutes has fluctuated somewhat since 1999 due to the relatively smaller number of religious ordinands, the diocesan percentage has remained relatively steady at approximately 20 to 30 percent of all diocesan ordinands.

## Catholic Background

*Ninety-four percent of responding ordinands have been Catholic since birth. Among those who became Catholic later in life, the average age of their conversion was about 23.*

<b>Catholic Background</b>			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
Catholic since birth	94%	95%	90%
Became Catholic later	6	5	10
Average age at conversion	22.7	22.9	22.2

Most ordinands who converted from another denomination or faith tradition are from a Protestant tradition (Episcopalian, Methodist, Baptist, Pentecostal). One ordinand was formerly of the Coptic Orthodox tradition. Two ordinands converted from a non-Christian religious background (Buddhist, Taoist). Six responding ordinands were raised without a faith tradition.

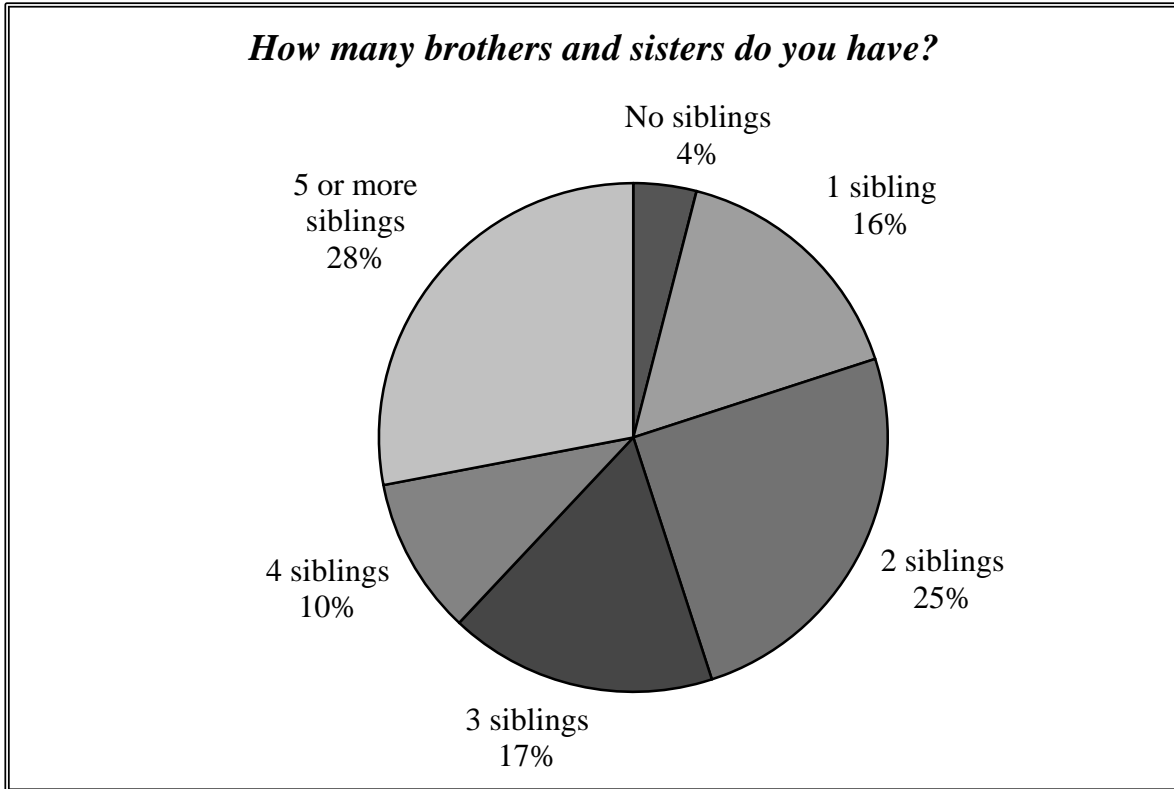
*Nearly all ordinands report that when they were children they had at least one parent who was Catholic; more than eight in ten report that both parents were Catholic.*

<b><i>What was the religious background of your parents when you were a child?</i></b>			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
Both parents Catholic	84%	85%	82%
Mother Catholic, father not	7	7	5
Father Catholic, mother not	4	4	5
Neither parent was Catholic	5	4	8

In addition to the predominantly Catholic background of their parents, many ordinands also report that they have a relative who is a priest or a religious. In the Class of 2012, 37 percent of responding ordinands report that they have a relative who is a priest or a religious (not shown in the table above). Religious ordinands are more likely than diocesan ordinands to report this (52 percent compared to 34 percent)

## Siblings

*Almost all ordinands in the Class of 2012 (96 percent) have at least one sibling. More than half (55 percent) report having more than two siblings, while nearly three in ten (28 percent) have five or more siblings.*



On average, ordinands have three to four siblings (i.e., mean=3.5). Ordinands from religious orders have, on average, slightly more siblings (mean=3.8) than diocesan ordinands (mean=3.5). Likewise, fewer than 2 percent of the ordinands from religious orders are only children, while 5 percent of diocesan ordinands are only children.



*What is your birth order?*

	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
Middle	40%	40%	40%
Oldest	33	32	33
Youngest	22	22	23
Only child	4	5	3
Twin	1	1	0

Overall, ordinands are slightly more likely to be the middle child in their family. Due to family size, this is to be expected. There can be only one youngest and one oldest child but multiple middle children in-between.

## Education

*The responding ordinands are highly educated. Six in ten (61 percent) completed college before entering the seminary.<sup>3</sup>*

<b>Highest Education Completed Before the Seminary</b>			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
Elementary	4%	4%	2%
High school	15	17	12
Trade or technical school	1	1	0
Some college, no degree	19	19	17
Undergraduate degree	45	45	48
Graduate degree	16	14	22

A small number of ordinands (4 percent) report that they only completed elementary school before entering the seminary. All ordinands of this group (100 percent) entered the seminary in high school. Fifteen percent of ordinands of the Class of 2012 completed only high school before entering the seminary. One in five (20 percent) attended some college or a technical school. Most responding ordinands (61 percent) completed college before entering the seminary. Religious ordinands are more likely than diocesan ordinands to have a graduate degree before entering the seminary (22 percent compared to 14 percent).

The education level prior to entering the seminary for responding ordinands of the Class of 2012 is somewhat lower than the education level reported a decade ago. In 1999, 25 percent of responding ordinands had less than a college degree before entering seminary, compared to 39 percent of ordinands in 2012. This could be due in part to a larger number of ordinands entering the seminary at the college level rather than after completing undergraduate studies.

<i>At what level did you first enter the seminary?</i>			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
High school	8%	8%	7%
College	29	29	29
Pre-theology	48	53	29
Theology	14	10	35

<sup>3</sup> Some respondents entered the seminary at the high school or college level and thus would not complete these levels of education before entering the seminary.

Three in four ordinands (76 percent) who report their highest level of education before seminary is high school entered the seminary while in college. Among those who completed their undergraduate education before entering the seminary (including those who went on to graduate school), seven in ten (70 percent) entered the seminary at the pre-theology level and 23 percent entered at the theology level.

One in five ordinands (19 percent) studied philosophy or theology before entering the seminary. Religious ordinands are slightly more likely than diocesan ordinands to have done so (23 percent compared to 18 percent). Social Sciences and Liberal Arts are the second and third most common areas of study.

<b>Field of Study before the Seminary</b>			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
Theology or Philosophy	19%	18%	23%
Social Sciences	14	13	16
Liberal Arts	13	12	16
Business	12	14	6
Science	10	9	14
Engineering	7	8	4
Computers or Information Technology	6	7	4
Education	5	6	2
Medicine	5	5	6
Law	1	1	2
Other	8	8	8

## Catholic Education

About half of responding ordinands (47 percent) attended a Catholic elementary school. Four in ten (39 percent) attended a Catholic high school and 45 percent attended a Catholic college.

<b>Attendance at Catholic School*</b>			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
Elementary	47%	46%	52%
High School	39	39	45
College	45	41	63

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

Ordinands are slightly more likely than other U.S. Catholics to have attended a Catholic elementary school. In a 2008 national poll conducted by CARA,<sup>4</sup> 42 percent of U.S. adult Catholics report having attended a Catholic elementary school, compared to 47 percent of ordinands who have done so. Ordinands are also more likely than other U.S. Catholics to have attended a Catholic high school (39 percent of ordinands, compared to 22 percent of U.S. adult Catholics) and much more likely to have attended a Catholic college (45 percent of ordinands, compared to just 7 percent of U.S. adult Catholics).

Whether or not they ever attended a Catholic elementary or high school, 64 percent of responding ordinands (65 percent of diocesan ordinands and 58 percent of religious ordinands) participated in a religious education program in their parish. On average, they completed seven years of parish religious education.

Only 3 percent of ordinands report being home schooled at some time in their educational background. There is no difference between diocesan and religious ordinands in this regard. Among those who were home schooled, the average length of time they were home-schooled was seven years.

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<sup>4</sup>*Sacraments Today: Belief and Practice among U.S. Catholics.* April 2008. Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate.

## Educational Debt

*Just over a quarter of responding ordinands of the Class of 2012 carried educational debt at the time they entered the seminary (or at the time they entered the religious institute, for those in religious orders).*

<b>Educational Debt</b>			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
Percentage with debt	27%	27%	24%
Amount of debt at entrance			
Mean	\$21,125	\$19,614	\$29,364
Median	\$18,000	\$16,500	\$20,000
Range	\$1,400- \$110,000	\$1,400- \$110,000	\$5,000- \$60,000
Current educational debt			
Mean	\$19,956	\$20,966	\$14,100
Median	\$16,500	\$19,000	\$2,500
Range	0-\$110,000	0-\$110,000	0-\$50,000

Diocesan ordinands are just as likely as men being ordained from religious institutes to have educational debt, but the amount of such debt is higher on average among men being ordained to diocesan priesthood.

- Diocesan ordinands who have educational debt average \$19,614 in educational debt at the time they entered the seminary. Several report that their educational debt is paid off by the time they are ordained, but those who still carry educational debt average \$20,966 in educational debt at the time of ordination.
- Religious ordinands are just as likely to have educational debt, averaging \$29,364 in educational debt at the time they entered their religious institute. Among those who still have educational debt at the time of ordination, the average amount of that debt is \$14,100 but the median amount is \$2,500. This means that half the ordinands who entered their religious institute with educational debt have paid down that debt to \$2,500 or less by the time they are ordained.

## Work Experience

*More than six in ten ordinands (62 percent) report some type of full-time work experience prior to entering the seminary. There is no single predominant form of prior work experience and ordinands are drawn from a wide variety of fields and occupations.*

<b>Prior Full-time Work Experience</b>			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
Education	7%	6%	8%
Management	7	6	11
Construction, labor, farming	6	5	8
Sales, customer service	5	5	5
Church ministry, parish life	5	5	6
Student	5	5	3
Engineer, architect	5	5	3
Medical, scientist	4	3	8
Accounting, finance, insurance	3	3	2
Computers, IT	2	2	2
Military	2	2	0
Business	2	2	2
Social worker	1	1	2
Attorney	1	1	2
Government, law enforcement	1	1	2
Other	7	7	8
No prior work experience listed	38	41	29

Ordinands that mentioned prior work experience were most likely to report that they were educators. Nearly four in ten indicate that they had no full-time work experience before entering seminary (7 percent) or did not provide an answer to the work experience question or indicated it was not applicable (31 percent). Seven percent reported prior full-time work experience that was not classifiable using the categories listed above.

## Military Experience

*Six percent of responding ordinands reports having served in the U.S. Armed Forces (7 percent of diocesan ordinands and 2 percent of religious ordinands). Among those with military experience, four in ten served in the Army.*

<b>Service in the U.S. Armed Forces*</b>			
(Percentage checking each response)**			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
Army	41%	38%	100%
Navy	24	25	0
Air Force	18	19	0
Reserve	18	19	0
National Guard	18	13	100
Marines	6	6	0
Coast Guard	0	0	0

\*Includes only those reporting service in the U.S. Armed Forces.

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

The table above shows the branch of service among those who reported military service. Only one religious ordinand reported service and indicating experience in both the Army and National Guard. Diocesan ordinands are most likely to indicate service in the Army (38 percent) and the Navy (25 percent).

Ordinands were also asked whether either of their parents was a career military person. About one in five ordinands (21 percent) report that either parent had a military career in the U.S. Armed Forces. Diocesan ordinands are less likely than religious ordinands to report having a parent with a military career (20 percent compared to 27 percent).

## Consideration of Priesthood

*On average, ordinands report that they were nearly 17 years old when they first considered a vocation to the priesthood. Religious ordinands indicate a slightly older age than diocesan ordinands (19.3 compared to 16.2).*

<b>Age When Ordinands First Considered Priesthood</b>			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
Mean	16.8	16.2	19.3
Median	16	16	18
Range	2-54	2-54	5-52

### *Encouragement to Consider Priesthood*

More than nine in ten ordinands (93 percent) report being encouraged to consider the priesthood by someone in their life. On average, responding ordinands indicated encouragement from a total of four types of individuals. Nearly seven in ten (68 percent) say they were encouraged by a parish priest. Other frequent encouragers include friends (47 percent), parishioners (42 percent), and mothers (41 percent).

<b>Encouragement to Consider Priesthood*</b>			
(Percentage checking each response)			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
Parish priest	68%	70%	61%
Friend	47	47	46
Parishioner	42	44	36
Mother	41	41	39
Father	31	33	25
Teacher/Catechist	26	27	22
Other relative	24	23	27
Grandparent	24	25	20
Religious Sister	22	20	27
Bishop	18	20	10
Youth minister	16	15	19
Campus minister/School chaplain	15	15	15
Religious Brother	13	9	29
Deacon	8	9	5
Military chaplain	2	3	0

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



There are few differences between diocesan and religious ordinands in the encouragement they reported.

- Diocesan ordinands are more likely than religious ordinands to have been encouraged by parishioners (44 percent compared to 36 percent) and their fathers (33 percent compared to 25 percent).
- Religious ordinands are more likely than diocesan ordinands to report encouragement from religious brothers (29 percent compared to 9 percent) and religious sisters (27 percent compared to 20 percent).
- Diocesan ordinands are more likely than religious ordinands to say they were encouraged by a bishop (20 percent compared to 10 percent).

***Discouragement from Considering Priesthood***

More than four in ten responding ordinands (43 percent) indicated that they were *discouraged* from considering the priesthood by one or more persons (not shown in the table below). Among those who reported discouragement, on average, one individual is said to have discouraged them. Seventeen percent indicated that two people discouraged them and 2 percent reported three or more discouragers.

<b>Discouragement from Considering Priesthood*</b>			
Among ordinands reporting someone discouraged them			
(Percentage checking each response)			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
Friend or classmate	70%	65%	84%
Other family member	18	16	29
Colleague or co-worker	13	12	19
Priest or other clergy	11	6	28
Mother	8	7	14
Father	8	8	10
Teacher	6	5	9
Religious sister or brother	5	3	9
Youth minister	0	0	0
Someone else	9	7	13

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

Among those who reported being *discouraged* from considering a vocation to the priesthood, ordinands are most likely to report that they were discouraged by friends or classmates (70 percent).

- One in five responding ordinands said they had been discouraged from considering a priestly vocation by some other family member (but not a parent). Fewer than one in ten were discouraged from considering a vocation by their mother or father.
- About one in seven were discouraged from considering a vocation by a colleague or co-worker.
- Very few responding ordinands report being discouraged from considering a priestly vocation by clergy, teachers, religious sisters or brothers, or youth ministers. About one in ten mentioned someone else who had discouraged them from pursuing their vocation, including girlfriends, acquaintances, peers, roommates, lay ministers, and campus ministers.

## Participation in Programs, Activities, or Ministries

*Many ordinands were active in Church-sponsored programs and activities before entering the seminary. Parish youth groups, Boy Scouts, and campus ministry programs are among the most common programs or activities reported by ordinands.*

<b>Participation in Programs or Activities*</b>			
(Percentage checking each response)			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
Parish youth group	53%	54%	46%
Boy Scouts	30	28	37
Catholic campus ministry/Newman Center	28	24	19
Parish young adult group	24	24	25
Knights of Columbus	23	25	10
Right to Life	16	16	17
Religious institute volunteer	5	5	9
St. Vincent de Paul Society	5	5	7
Serra Club	<1	0	2

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

More than half of responding ordinands participated in parish youth groups (53 percent). About three in ten participated in the Boy Scouts (30 percent) or Catholic campus ministry (28 percent). One in four participated in a parish young adult group (24 percent) or in the Knights of Columbus (23 percent). Sixteen percent have been active in Right to Life groups. Among the activities or programs about which they were asked, ordinands were *least* likely to have been involved as a volunteer in a religious institute or in the Serra Club or the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

<b>Participation in Other Youth Ministry Programs</b>			
(Percentage checking each response)			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
World Youth Day	22%	23%	20%
Franciscan University of Steubenville			
High School Youth Conference	11	12	5
National Catholic Youth Conference	6	7	3

More than one in five ordinands (22 percent) reports having attended World Youth Day before entering the seminary. Diocesan ordinands are more likely than religious ordinands to have attended the Franciscan University of Steubenville High School Youth Conference (12 percent compared to 5 percent). Six percent of ordinands overall have attended the National Catholic Youth Conference.

*Most ordinands participated in one or more liturgical ministries in the parish before entering the seminary. Three in four were altar servers.*

<b>Participation in Parish Ministries*</b>			
(Percentage checking each response)			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
Altar server	75%	78%	63%
Lector	57	57	58
Minister of Holy Communion	42	42	42
Catechist	37	37	40
Confirmation sponsor/godfather	37	38	32
Campus ministry/Youth ministry	34	35	32
Cantor or music minister	26	26	25
Usher/minister of hospitality	15	16	10
RCIA team member/sponsor	13	12	13
Parish pastoral council member	12	12	12
Liturgy committee member	12	12	12
Full-time parish/diocesan employee	6	6	5

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

Among the parish ministries listed on the survey, responding ordinands were most likely to report that they served in liturgical ministries such as altar server, lector, or Minister of Holy Communion before entering the seminary. Some served in educational roles within the Church, with nearly four in ten serving as catechist or as confirmation sponsor/godfather. A third served in campus ministry or youth ministry.

Diocesan ordinands are more likely than religious ordinands to have served as altar servers (78 percent to 63 percent).

## Prayer Practices

*About seven in ten (68 percent) responding ordinands regularly prayed the Rosary before entering the seminary. Another two-thirds (65 percent) regularly participated in Eucharistic Adoration before entering the seminary.*

<b><i>Did you participate in any of these prayer practices or groups on a regular basis before entering the seminary?*</i></b>			
(Percentage checking each response)			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
Rosary	68%	69%	61%
Eucharistic Adoration	65	67	58
Prayer group/Bible study	49	48	53
High School Retreats	38	39	33
College Retreats	31	30	37
Lectio Divina	26	26	28

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

Religious ordinands are similar to diocesan ordinands in their prayer practices prior to entering the seminary.

- Religious ordinands are a little less likely than diocesan ordinands to participate in Eucharistic Adoration (58 percent compared to 67 percent) before entering the seminary. They are slightly more likely than diocesan ordinands to participate in a prayer group or in college retreats before entering the seminary, although the differences are not statistically significant.
- Half of responding ordinands regularly participated in a prayer group or Bible study before entering the seminary and about a quarter regularly participated in Lectio Divina.

## Vocation Programs and Vocational Advertising

*Among the vocation programs identified, responding ordinands are most likely to have experienced a “Come and See” weekend. However, less than half participated in any of the listed vocation programs before entering the seminary.*

<b>Vocation Programs*</b>			
(Percentage checking each response)			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
“Come and See” weekend at the seminary or at the religious institute/society	46%	41%	63%
High school vocation programs	15	17	9
Quo Vadis retreat/Discernment retreat	9	11	4
Other parish vocation programs	9	10	5
Elementary school/CCD voc. programs	9	9	9
Operation Andrew	5	5	2
Traveling Chalice/Cup/Cross/Statue programs	3	3	4
*Respondents could select more than one category.			

- About one in ten responding ordinands participated in elementary school, CCD, parish, or high school vocation program or a Quo Vadis or discernment retreat before entering the seminary.
- Religious ordinands were more likely than diocesan ordinands to report having attended a “Come and See” weekend. More than six in ten religious ordinands (63 percent) attended such a program, compared to four in ten diocesan ordinands (41 percent).

In addition to the vocation programs listed above, more than seven in ten responding ordinands (73 percent) have seen the vocational promotion DVD “Fishers of Men,” published by the USCCB. Diocesan ordinands are more likely than religious ordinands to have seen the DVD (76 percent compared to 61 percent).