



Secretariat for Vocations and Priestly Formation

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My dear friends,

Welcome to the USCCB website and the information regarding the priesthood class of 2007. As Chair of the Bishops' Committee on Vocations, I am pleased to present to you this information about the men who are to be ordained to the priesthood this year. This report is designed to introduce this year's ordinands to the public by providing detailed information about their education, ethnicity, age, previous professions, hobbies, and personal discernment.

We anticipate that 475 men will be ordained to the priesthood this year for service in the United States. Their average age is 35, and approximately thirty percent of them are foreign-born. My own experience as a seminary rector leads me to believe that these new priests will be a credit to the Church, having been prepared in a rigorous program of priestly formation.

You will also read with interest that eighty percent of the men ordained this year reported that they were invited by a priest. This statistic is consistent with earlier studies and it serves as a basis of our *Priestly Life and Vocation Summit: Fishers of Men Program*. The *Summit* aims at giving priests a fuller appreciation of their unique contribution and responsibility as "fishers of men" to call others to priesthood.

The surveys on the ordination classes, which we conduct each year, could not be possible without the cooperation of the newly ordained. I thank them and all who worked hard to make this report possible. I genuinely hope that this survey will inspire other young men, realizing that these new priests are typical of the faithful Catholic men in our country and yet they have answered the noble calling of giving their lives to serve the People of God. While some were called from a very young age, others have been responded later in life, coming from the workplace and various paths of life. Yet, we should not be surprised by this, for that is how it has been since the days Jesus walked the shores of Galilee, calling his first disciples.

Let us continue to ask the Master of the harvest to send a new generation into the fields, trusting that He will grace other young men to answer the call: "Come follow Me."

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Blase J. Cupich
Bishop of Rapid City
Chairman,
Bishops' Committee on Vocations