

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

*The Class of 2014:  
Survey of Ordinands to the Priesthood*

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



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Mary L. Gautier, Ph.D.  
Carolyn Saunders, M.S.

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Survey of Ordinands to the Priesthood***

**Executive Summary**

This report presents findings from a national survey of ordinands to the priesthood in 2014. 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 2013 to request names and contact information for every seminarian who was scheduled to be ordained to the priesthood in 2014. 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 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-up, a total of 365 ordinands responded to the survey by March 31, 2014 (five others were being ordained for a diocese outside of the United States and were removed from the sample). This represents a response rate of approximately 77 percent of the 477 potential ordinands reported to CARA by theologates, houses of formation, arch/dioceses, and religious institutes. These 365 ordinands include 266 ordinands to the diocesan priesthood, from 112 different dioceses and archdioceses, and 96 ordinands to the religious priesthood. Three ordinands did not supply information about where they were to be ordained.

## Major Findings

- The average age of ordinands for the Class of 2014 is 34. The median age (midpoint of the distribution) is 32. Eight in ten responding ordinands are between 25 and 39. This distribution is slightly younger than in 2013, 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 years before entering the seminary. Religious ordinands knew the members of their religious institute an average of seven years before they entered the seminary.

### *Background and Country of Origin*

- Two thirds of responding ordinands (67 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 (11 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.
- Three in ten ordinands (31 percent) were born outside the United States, with the largest numbers coming from Mexico, Vietnam, Colombia, Poland, and the Philippines. On average, responding ordinands who were born in another country have lived in the United States for 13 years. Between 20 and 30 percent of ordinands to diocesan priesthood for each of the last ten years were born outside of the United States, as were 26 percent of this year's diocesan ordinands.
- Most ordinands have been Catholic since birth, although 9 percent became Catholic later in life. Eighty-one percent report that both of their parents are Catholic and more than a third (36 percent) have a relative who is a priest or a religious.
- Almost all ordinands in the Class of 2014 (97 percent) have at least one sibling. Seven in ten (71 percent) have more than two siblings, while one in five (20 percent) have five or more siblings. Ordinands are most likely to be the oldest in their family (37 percent).

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

- Before entering the seminary, more than half of ordinands completed college (54 percent). One in six (16 percent) entered seminary with a graduate degree. Among those who completed college before entering the seminary, seven in ten (72 percent) entered the seminary at the pre-theology level and 18 percent entered at the theology level. Four in ten (42 percent) report entering the seminary while in college.
- The most common fields of study for ordinands before entering the seminary are social sciences (19 percent), liberal arts (16 percent), and theology or philosophy (14 percent).

- Half of responding ordinands (50 percent) attended a Catholic elementary school, which is a rate higher than that of all Catholic adults in the United States. 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 (26 percent) carried educational debt at the time they entered the seminary, averaging a little over \$21,000 in educational debt at entrance to seminary.
- Six in ten ordinands (60 percent) report some type of full-time work experience prior to entering the seminary, most often in education. Four percent of responding ordinands report prior service in the U.S. Armed Forces. About one in six ordinands (15 percent) report that either parent had a military career in the U.S. Armed Forces.
- Ordinands of the Class of 2014 have been active in parish ministries, with eight in ten (80 percent) indicating they served as an altar server and about half (52 percent) report being a lector. One-sixth (16 percent) participated in a World Youth Day before entering the seminary.
- About seven in ten ordinands report regularly praying the rosary (68 percent) and participating in Eucharistic adoration (70 percent) before entering the seminary.

### ***Vocational Discernment***

- On average, responding ordinands report that they were about 17 when they first considered a vocation to the priesthood. They were encouraged to consider a vocation by an average of four people. Seven in ten (71 percent) say they were encouraged by a parish priest. Other frequent encouragers include friends (45 percent), parishioners (43 percent), and mothers (38 percent).
- Almost half of responding ordinands (48 percent) indicated that they were *discouraged* from considering the priesthood by one or more persons. Among those who reported discouragement, on average, one individual is said to have discouraged them. 17 percent indicate that one person discouraged them from considering the priesthood and the same amount indicate that two people discouraged them.

## 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 2014.

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 2013 and requested each site to provide names and contact information for every seminarian who was scheduled to be ordained to the priesthood in 2014. 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 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, a total of 365 ordinands responded to the survey by March 31st, 2014. This represents a response rate of approximately 77 percent of the 477 potential ordinands reported to CARA by theologates, houses of formation, arch/dioceses, and religious institutes. These 365 ordinands include 266 ordinands to the diocesan priesthood, from 112 different dioceses and archdioceses, and 96 ordinands to the religious priesthood. Three ordinands did not supply information about where they were to be ordained.

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 114 dioceses and eparchies and 31 distinct religious congregations.

The largest number of responses from diocesan ordinands were from the Archdiocese of Newark with 11 respondents. Ten of the responding ordinands are from the Archdiocese of Chicago and nine are from the Archdiocese of Boston.

The largest number of responses from ordinands to the religious priesthood were from the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) with 18 respondents. Ten of the responding ordinands are from the Order of Preachers (the Dominicans) and eight are from the Order of Saint Benedict (the Benedictines).<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.*

<i>How long did you live in this diocese or eparchy before entering the seminary?</i>	
	<b>Years</b>
Mean	15
Median	18
Range	0-50

About one in ten diocesan ordinands (11 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 2014.

*On average, ordinands from religious institutes report that they knew the members of their religious institute for seven 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	7
Median	4
Range	0-37

One in eight ordinands from religious institutes (13 percent) report that they knew the members of their religious institute a year or less before they entered the seminary.

### **Age of Ordinands**

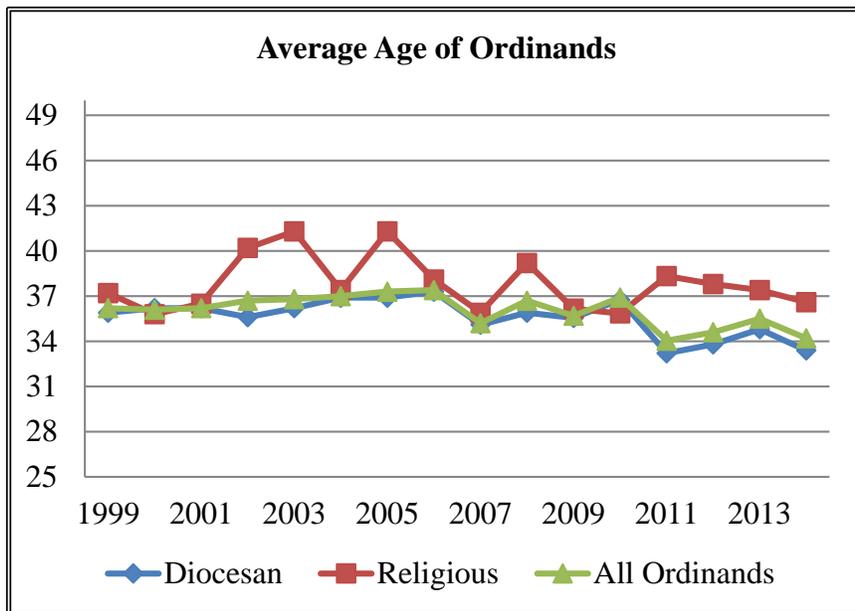
*The average age of responding ordinands of the Class of 2014 is 34. Eight in ten (80 percent) are between 25 and 39.*

<b>Age of Ordinands</b>			
Percentage of all responding ordinands in each age category			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
Less than 25	0%	0%	0%
Age 25-29	35	42	17
Age 30-34	32	31	35
Age 35-39	13	9	25
Age 40-44	9	10	5
Age 45-49	4	3	7
Age 50-54	3	2	5
Age 55-59	2	2	3
Age 60 and older	2	2	2
Average age	34	33	37
Median age	32	31	34
Range in years	25-70	25-70	25-63

The youngest responding ordinand of the Class of 2014 is 25 and the oldest is 70 years of age. Five respondents are being ordained to the priesthood after age 60.

Diocesan ordinands are younger than religious ordinands in the Class of 2014. The median age of diocesan ordinands is 31, which means that half of the diocesan ordinands responding to the survey this year are 31 years old or younger. By contrast, the median age of religious ordinands is 34.

Ordinands of last year's Class of 2013 averaged 36 years of age, two years older than the average age of 34 years among ordinands of the Class of 2014. On average, ordinands from religious institutes are somewhat older than diocesan ordinands.<sup>2</sup>



The Class of 2014 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.

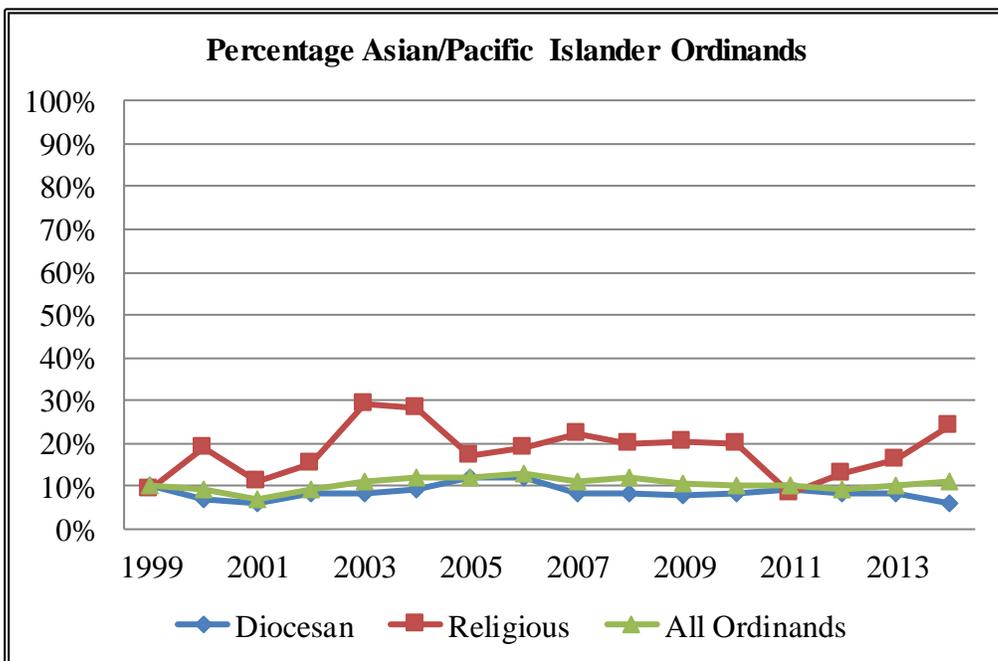
## Race and Ethnic Background

*Two-thirds of responding ordinands (67 percent) report their primary race or ethnicity as Caucasian, European American, or white.*

<b>Race and Ethnic Background of Ordinands and Adult Catholics</b>				
Percentage of all responding ordinands in each category				
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>	<b>Adult Catholics Nationally</b>
Caucasian/European American/white	67%	71%	53%	58%
Hispanic/Latino	15	14	17	34
Asian/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian	11	6	24	4
African/African American/black	4	5	2	3
Native American	<1	<1	0	1
Other	3	3	3	----*

\* Data unavailable.

Compared to data from a recent CARA telephone poll, Caucasian/European American/white 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. Caucasian/European American/white constitute 58 percent of U.S. Catholics overall but are 67 percent of responding ordinands. By contrast, Hispanics/Latinos constitute approximately 34 percent of U.S. adult Catholics but make up 15 percent of responding ordinands.



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

*Seven in ten responding ordinands (69 percent) were born in the United States.*

<b>Country of Birth of Ordinands</b>			
Percentage responding			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
United States	69%	74%	55%
Mexico	6	5	7
Vietnam	4	1	15
Colombia	2	3	1
Poland	2	3	0
Philippines	2	3	2
Brazil	1	0	1
Canada	1	<1	3
Haiti	1	1	1
Kenya	1	2	0
Argentina	1	1	0
India	1	<1	2
Korea	1	<1	1
Nigeria	1	1	0
Puerto Rico	1	<1	1
South Korea	1	1	0
Other countries	5	5	11

Ordinands from religious institutes are slightly more likely than diocesan ordinands to have been born outside the United States. About three-quarters of diocesan ordinands (74 percent) were born in the United States, compared to just over half of ordinands from religious institutes (55 percent).

Mexico and Vietnam are the most frequently mentioned countries of birth among responding ordinands who were born outside the United States. The responding ordinands identified a total of 33 different countries of origin.

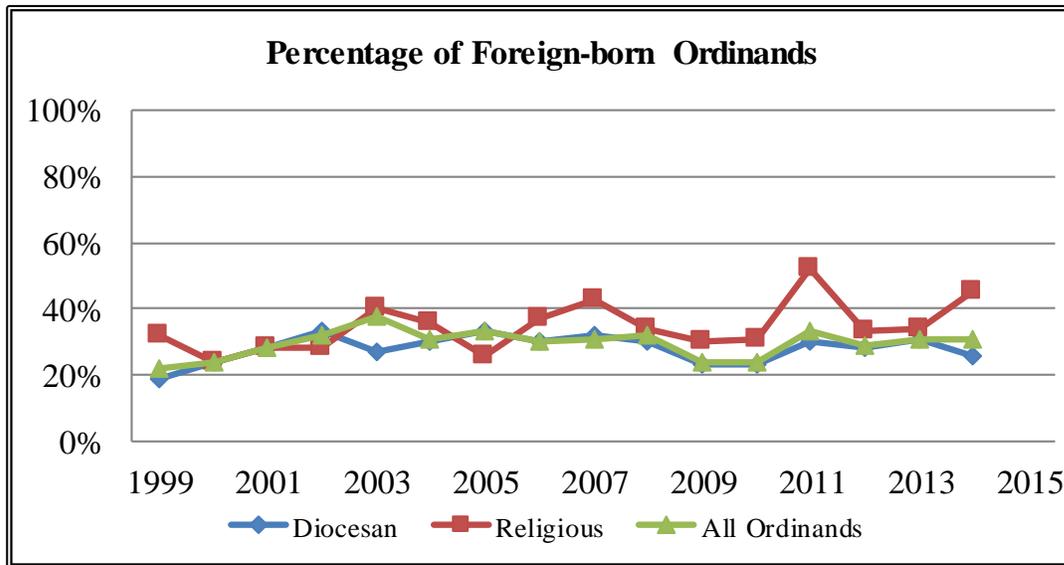
*On average, responding ordinands who were born outside the United States have lived in the United States for 13 years. Half first came to live in the United States in 2005 or earlier.*

<b>Year of Entry to the U.S. of Foreign-born Ordinands</b>			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
Mean	2001	2003	1998
Median	2005	2007	2002
Range	1963-2012	1963-2012	1975-2012

*On average, responding foreign-born ordinands came to live in the United States at age 23. Religious ordinands were, on average, slightly younger than diocesan ordinands when they came to live in the United States.*

<b>Age at Entry to the United States of Foreign-born Ordinands</b>			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
Mean	23	24	21
Median	23	25	22
Range	0-40	0-40	0-37

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 31 percent in 2014.



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

*Nine in ten responding ordinands (91 percent) have been Catholic since birth. Among those who became Catholic later in life, their average age of conversion was about 19.*

<b>Catholic Background</b>			
Percentage responding			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
Catholic since birth	91%	92%	87%
Became Catholic later	9	8	13
Average age at conversion	19	20	16

Most ordinands who converted from another denomination or faith tradition are from a Protestant tradition (e.g., Episcopalian, Methodist, Baptist, or Anglican). One ordinand was formerly Coptic Orthodox, one converted from Judaism, and another came from a family with both Jewish and Protestant religious affiliation. Eight responding ordinands were raised without a faith tradition.

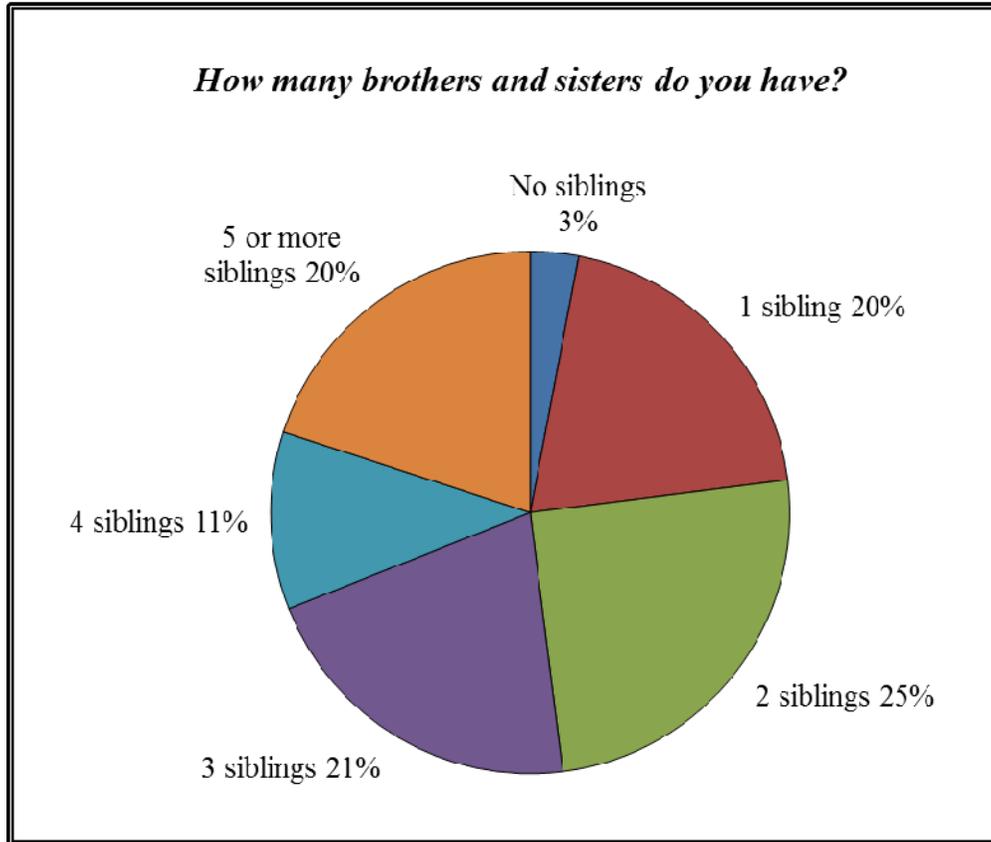
*Nearly all ordinands report that when they were children they had at least one parent who was Catholic; eight in ten (81 percent) report that both parents were Catholic.*

<b>What was the religious background of your parents when you were a child?</b>			
Percentage responding			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
Both parents Catholic	81%	80%	83%
Mother Catholic, father not	6	5	9
Father Catholic, mother not	3	3	1
Neither parent was Catholic	10	12	6

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 2014, 36 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 (44 percent compared to 33 percent).

## Siblings

*Almost all ordinands in the Class of 2014 (97 percent) have at least one sibling. About half (52 percent) have more than two siblings, while one in five (20 percent) have five or more siblings.*



On average, ordinands have three to four siblings (overall average is three siblings). Ordinands from religious orders have, on average, slightly more siblings (mean=3.8) than diocesan ordinands (average of four siblings for religious ordinands compared to an average of three siblings for diocesan). No responding ordinands from religious orders are only children, compared to 2 percent of diocesan ordinands who are only children.

<i>What is your birth order?</i>			
Percentage responding			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
Middle	30%	30%	32%
Oldest	37	36	38
Youngest	31	32	30
Only child	1	2	0
Twin	1	1	0

Overall, ordinands are slightly more likely to be the oldest child in their family.

## Education

*The responding ordinands are highly educated. More than half (54 percent) completed college before entering the seminary.<sup>3</sup>*

<b>Highest Education Completed Before the Seminary</b>			
Percentage responding			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
Elementary	2%	2%	1%
High school	22	24	18
Trade or technical school	2	1	3
Some college, no degree	20	23	14
Undergraduate degree	38	36	42
Graduate degree	16	14	22

A small number of ordinands (2 percent) report that they completed elementary school only before entering the seminary. All of these men then entered the seminary in high school. Twenty-two percent of ordinands of the Class of 2014 completed only high school before entering the seminary. A quarter (23 percent) attended some college or a technical school before entering the seminary. Most responding ordinands (54 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).

<b><i>At what level did you first enter the seminary?</i></b>			
Percentage responding			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
High school	6%	5%	10%
College	42	44	36
Pre-theology	42	45	36
Theology	10	7	18

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<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.

Almost nine in ten ordinands (89 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), about seven in ten (72 percent) entered the seminary at the pre-theology level and 18 percent entered at the theology level.

One in five ordinands (19 percent) studied in the area of social sciences before entering the seminary. Liberal arts and theology or philosophy are the second and third most common areas of study.

<b>Field of Study before the Seminary</b>			
Percentage responding			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
Social Sciences	19%	19%	20%
Liberal Arts	16	15	16
Theology or Philosophy	14	13	15
Engineering	10	11	8
Science	8	8	8
Education	7	8	5
Computers or Information Technology	7	5	12
Business	6	6	5
Law	3	3	3
Fine Arts	3	4	1
Other	6	7	4

## Catholic Education

*Half of responding ordinands (50 percent) attended a Catholic elementary school. About four in ten attended a Catholic high school (41 percent) and a similar proportion (45 percent) attended a Catholic college.*

<b>Attendance at Catholic School*</b>			
Percentage responding			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
Elementary	50%	48%	54%
High School	41	37	52
College	45	42	50

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

Ordinands in 2014 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 50 percent of ordinands who have done so. Ordinands are also more likely than other U.S. Catholics to have attended a Catholic high school (41 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, 60 percent of responding ordinands (62 percent of diocesan ordinands and 54 percent of religious ordinands) participated in a religious education program in their parish. On average, they completed seven years of parish religious education.

Only 5 percent of ordinands report being home schooled at some time in their educational background, with diocesan ordinands and religious ordinands equally likely to have been home schooled (5 percent for both). 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

*A little over quarter of responding ordinands (26 percent) of the Class of 2014 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	26%	27%	22%
Amount of debt at entrance			
Mean	\$22,473	\$22,818	\$21,300
Median	\$17,000	\$17,000	\$16,000
Range	\$1,500- \$100,000	\$1,500- \$100,000	\$3,000- \$60,000
Current educational debt			
Mean	\$21,032	\$24,084	\$11,443
Median	\$15,000	\$19,500	\$10,000
Range	0-\$100,000	0-\$100,000	0-\$50,000

Religious ordinands are less likely than men being ordained from diocesan institutes to have educational debt, and the amount of such debt is higher on average among men being ordained from diocesan institutes.

- Diocesan ordinands who have educational debt average \$22,818 in educational debt at the time they entered the seminary. Several report that their educational debt is currently paid off, with the average current educational debt of those who entered seminary with educational debt being \$24,084.
- Among those who still have educational debt at the time of taking this survey, the average amount of that debt is \$21,032 but the median amount is \$15,000. This means that half the ordinands who entered their religious institute with educational debt have paid down that debt to \$15,000 or less by the time they are ordained.

## Work Experience

*Six in ten ordinands (60 percent) report some type of full-time work experience prior to entering the seminary. Diocesan ordinands are more likely than religious ordinands to have work experience (72 percent of diocesan ordinands compared to 27 percent of religious ordinands).*

<b>Prior Full-time Work Experience</b>			
Percentage responding			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
Education	21%	20%	23%
Construction, labor, farming	10	12	3
Student	9	8	10
Business	8	6	10
Computers, IT	7	6	10
Engineer, architect	6	5	8
Restaurant/food services	6	6	5
Church ministry, parish life	6	6	5
Management	5	6	2
Government, law enforcement	5	5	5
Accounting, finance, insurance	4	5	2
Medical, scientist	4	4	3
Sales, customer service	2	3	0
Military	1	1	2

Ordinands that mentioned prior work experience were most likely to report that they were educators. Only 6 percent of ordinands worked in church ministry or parish life prior to entering the seminary.

## Military Experience

*Four percent of responding ordinands reports having served in the U.S. Armed Forces (five percent of diocesan ordinands and three percent of religious ordinands). Among those with military experience, over four in ten (39 percent) served in the Army.*

<b>Service in the U.S. Armed Forces*</b>			
(among respondents who indicated prior military service)			
Percentage responding			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
Army	39%	38%	40%
Navy	31	25	40
Marines	23	25	20
National Guard	15	13	20
Air Force	15	13	20
Reserve	8	13	0
Coast Guard	0	0	0

\*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 five religious ordinands reported service, compared to eight diocesan ordinands. Religious ordinands are most likely to indicate service in the Army or the Navy (40 percent).

Ordinands were also asked whether either of their parents was a career military person. About one in six ordinands (15 percent) report that one or both parents had a military career in the U.S. Armed Forces. Diocesan ordinands are slightly more likely than religious ordinands to report having a parent with a military career (15 percent compared to 11 percent).

## Consideration of Priesthood

*On average, ordinands report that they were about 17 years old when they first considered a vocation to the priesthood, with little variation between diocesan and religious ordinands.*

<b>Age When Ordinands First Considered Priesthood</b>			
Percentage responding			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
Preschool (5 or younger)	5%	5%	5%
Elementary (6 through 13)	32	33	27
High school (14 through 17)	23	23	20
College (18 through 21)	21	19	25
Adulthood (22 or older)	20	19	22
Mean	17	16	18
Median	16	16	17
Range	2-66	2-66	3-50

- A third of ordinands first considered a vocation to priesthood when they were in elementary school (ages six through 13). Diocesan ordinands are a little more likely than religious ordinands to consider a vocation in elementary school.
- About a quarter first considered a vocation in high school (ages 14 through 17). One in five first considered this in college. Diocesan ordinands are more likely to have considered priesthood in high school, while religious ordinands are slightly more likely to have first considered this during their college years.
- One in five first considered a vocation to priesthood as adults, ages 22 or older.

### ***Encouragement to Consider Priesthood***

Nine in ten ordinands (93 percent) report being encouraged to consider the priesthood by someone in their life. Ordinands indicated that, on average, four individuals encouraged their vocation. Seven in ten (71 percent) say they were encouraged by a parish priest. Other frequent encouragers include friends (45 percent), parishioners (43 percent), and mothers (38 percent).

<b>Encouragement to Consider Priesthood*</b>			
(Percentage checking each response)			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
Parish priest	71%	74%	64%
Friend	45	42	52
Parishioner	43	45	37
Mother	38	37	38
Father	28	28	27
Teacher/Catechist	26	26	25
Grandparent	26	29	16
Other relative	24	23	25
Religious Sister	19	19	21
Campus minister/School chaplain	17	14	23
Bishop	15	18	7
Youth minister	15	16	15
Religious Brother	15	10	28
Deacon	9	9	8
Military chaplain	1	2	0

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

- Diocesan ordinands are more likely than religious ordinands to have been encouraged by a parish priest (74 percent compared to 64 percent), a grandparent (29 percent compared to 16 percent), or a bishop (18 percent compared to 7 percent).
- Religious ordinands are more likely than diocesan ordinands to report encouragement from friends (52 percent compared to 42 percent).

### ***Discouragement from Considering Priesthood***

Almost half of responding ordinands (48 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, two individuals are said to have discouraged them. Seventeen percent indicate that one person discouraged them from considering the priesthood and the same amount indicate that two people discouraged them.

<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	30%	30%	29%
Other family member	22	22	21
Father	12	10	17
Mother	11	8	16
Colleague or co-worker	11	11	12
Teacher	6	6	7
Priest or other clergy	5	5	5
Religious sister or brother	1	1	3
Youth minister	0	0	0
Someone else	5	6	3

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

Among those who report being *discouraged* from considering a vocation to the priesthood, three in ten ordinands report that they were discouraged by friends or classmates.

- One in five responding ordinands (22 percent) were discouraged from considering a priestly vocation by some other family member (but not a parent). About one in ten were discouraged from considering a vocation by their mother (11 percent) or father (12 percent).
- Another one in ten (11 percent) were discouraged from considering a vocation by a colleague or co-worker.
- Fewer than one in ten responding ordinands report being discouraged from considering a priestly vocation by a teacher (6 percent), clergy (5 percent), or a religious sister or brother (1 percent).
- Five percent of responding ordinands report being discouraged by someone else.

## 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 Knights of Columbus 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	49%	50%	46%
Boy Scouts	30	29	31
Knights of Columbus	26	30	13
Catholic campus ministry/Newman Center	25	25	25
Parish young adult group	23	24	22
Right to Life	19	20	17
Charismatic Renewal	15	15	15
Cursillo	7	5	14
St. Vincent de Paul Society	6	7	3
Religious institute volunteer	4	3	5
Serra Club	1	1	0

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

- About half of responding ordinands participated in parish youth groups (49 percent).
- One in three participated in the Boy Scouts (30 percent).
- About a quarter participated in the Knights of Columbus (26 percent), in Catholic campus ministry (25 percent) or in parish young adult groups (23 percent).
- About one in five (19 percent) have been active in Right to Life groups, and slightly fewer participated in Charismatic Renewal (15 percent).
- Among the activities or programs about which they were asked, ordinands were *least* likely to have been involved in Cursillo, St. Vincent de Paul Society, as a volunteer in a religious institute or in the Serra Club.

### Participation in Other Youth Ministry Programs

Percentage responding

	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
World Youth Day	16%	16%	9%
Franciscan University of Steubenville High School Youth Conference	14	15	12
National Catholic Youth Conference	7	7	7
Marian Days	7	5	13

- One in six ordinands (16 percent) reports having attended World Youth Day before entering the seminary. Diocesan ordinands are more likely than religious ordinands to have attended World Youth Day (16 percent compared to 9 percent) and the Franciscan University of Steubenville High School Youth Conference (15 percent compared to 12 percent).
- Seven percent of ordinands overall have attended the National Catholic Youth Conference.
- Religious ordinands are more likely than diocesan ordinands to have attended Marian Days (13 percent compared to 5 percent).

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

<b>Participation in Parish Ministries*</b>			
(Percentage checking each response)			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Diocesan</b>	<b>Religious</b>
Altar server	80%	82%	75%
Lector	52	51	53
Extraordinary minister of Holy Communion	42	43	42
Catechist	38	38	39
Confirmation sponsor/godfather	30	31	24
Campus ministry/Youth ministry	30	27	37
Cantor or music minister	25	25	23
Usher/minister of hospitality	15	17	9
RCIA team member/sponsor	15	13	20
Liturgy committee member	14	16	9
Parish pastoral council member	12	12	10
Full-time parish/diocesan employee	7	7	7

\*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 extraordinary minister of Holy Communion before entering the seminary. Some served in educational roles within the Church, with about four in ten serving as catechist and three in ten serving as confirmation sponsor/godfather, or in campus ministry or youth ministry.

## Prayer Practices

*Seven in ten responding ordinands (70 percent) regularly participated in Eucharistic Adoration before entering the seminary. Another seven in ten (68 percent) regularly prayed the rosary 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%	70%	62%
Eucharistic Adoration	70	73	61
Prayer group/Bible study	45	46	41
High School Retreats	39	42	33
College Retreats	29	30	27
Lectio Divina	29	29	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 (61 percent compared to 73 percent) before entering the seminary.
- Two in five responding ordinands (45 percent) regularly participated in a prayer group or Bible study before entering the seminary and about four in ten regularly (39 percent) 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. Almost two thirds (64 percent) participated in at least one 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	44%	39%	55%
High school vocation programs	13	14	10
Elementary school/CCD vocation programs	11	12	10
Quo Vadis retreat/Discernment retreat	10	11	7
College vocation program	9	9	14
Other parish vocation programs	9	10	8
Operation Andrew	5	5	5
Traveling Chalice/Cup/Cross/Statue programs	2	2	1
* Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one category.			

- About one in ten responding ordinands participated in high school (13 percent) or elementary school (11 percent) vocation programs, or a Quo Vadis or discernment retreat (10 percent) before entering the seminary.
- Religious ordinands were more likely than diocesan ordinands to report having attended a “Come and See” weekend. More than half religious ordinands (55 percent) attended such a program, compared to four in ten diocesan ordinands (39 percent).

In addition to the vocation programs listed above, more than two-thirds of responding ordinands (68 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 (77 percent compared to 47 percent).