

April 2026

***The Class of 2026:
Survey of Ordinands to the Priesthood***

Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate
Georgetown University
Washington, D.C.

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Survey of Ordinands to the Priesthood***

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

April 2026



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Executive Summary

This report presents findings from a national survey of seminarians scheduled for ordination to the priesthood in 2026. The report is a part of collaboration between the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee of Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations and the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA). The purpose of this report is to compile information regarding men who are ordained to priesthood in the United States, within a particular year.

The survey was administered between February 12 and March 20, 2026. Out of 428 ordinands invited to participate, 334 ordinands responded to the survey. The response rate is 78%.

Type of Priesthood

- Four in five responding ordinands (81%) are preparing for ordination to a diocese or eparchy. Responding ordinands in religious institutes comprise 19%. The largest group of responding ordinands (35%) is completing studies at one of the seminaries in the Midwest. Relatively few (5%) are completing studies at a seminary abroad.
- On average, responding diocesan ordinands lived in the diocese or eparchy for which they will be ordained for 16 years before they entered the seminary. Responding ordinands in religious institutes knew the members of their religious institute for 5 years, on average, before entering.

Age

- On average, responding ordinands first considered priesthood when they were 16 years old. Responding ordinands were scheduled for ordination, on average, 17 years later (at the age of 33).

Race/Ethnicity and Culture

- Six in ten responding ordinands (62%) are Caucasian. One in six (17%) is Hispanic/Latino. One in ten (11%) is Asian/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian. One in twenty (5%) is African/African American/Black.
- A third (35%) is foreign-born. The three most common countries of birth among the foreign-born are Vietnam (5% of all responding ordinands), Mexico (3%), and Colombia (2%). On average, foreign-born responding ordinands came to live in the United States 14 years ago, at the age of 22.

Education

- One in ten responding ordinands (11%) reported being home schooled. Among those who were home schooled, the average length of home schooling was 9 years.
- At least 65% responding ordinands attended a Catholic school at the K-12 and/or college level. Six in ten responding ordinands (63%) participated in a religious education program in their parish, for 6 years on average.

- Three in five responding ordinands (61%) completed an undergraduate degree or a graduate degree before entering the seminary.
- Among those who attended an undergraduate or graduate college before entering the seminary, the most common fields of study included philosophy/theology, engineering, business, and science or math.
- Two in ten responding ordinands (21%) carried educational debt at the time they entered the seminary (or religious institute), which was \$33,206 on average. Between entering seminary and ordination, the average amount of debt carried by responding ordinands in religious institutes decreased by 79% and the average amount of debt carried by responding diocesan ordinands decreased by 24% since entering the seminary (unadjusted for inflation).

Work

- Two in three responding ordinands (64%) reported having full-time work experience prior to entering the seminary.
- Four percent served in the U.S. Armed Forces.

Family Background

- Nine in ten responding ordinands (93%) reported being baptized Catholic as an infant. Among those who became Catholic later in life, the average age of conversion was 20.
- Nearly nine in ten responding ordinands (86%) reported that both their parents were Catholic when they were children. The vast majority of responding ordinands (97%) were raised during the most formative part of their childhood by their biological parents.
- Three in ten responding ordinands (28%) have or had a relative who is a priest or religious.

Vocational Discernment

- In regard to prayer practices, four in five responding ordinands participated in Eucharistic Adoration (81%) on a regular basis before entering the seminary, as compared to 79% who prayed rosary, 52% who participated in a prayer/Bible group, and 48% who engaged in Lectio Divina.
- In regard to group activities, three-fifths of responding ordinands (64%) participated in a parish youth group before entering the seminary, as compared to 31% who participated in Catholic campus ministry, 31% who participated in Boy Scouts, 29% who participated in Knights of Columbus/ Knights of Peter Claver, and 27% who participated in a parish young adult group.
- In regard to participation in parish ministries, four in five responding ordinands (79%) served as altar servers before entering the seminary, as compared to 49% who

served as lectors, 35% who served as EMHC, 34% who served in Campus/Youth ministry, and 32% who served as catechists.

- Nine in ten responding ordinands (92%) reported being encouraged to consider the priesthood by someone in their life [most frequently by parish priest (70%), friend (49%), mother (46%), or parishioner (44%)].
- Two in five responding ordinands (41%) indicated that they were discouraged from considering the priesthood by one or more persons. Most often, this person was a friend or school classmate, mother, father, or other family member.

Formation

- In regard to participation in formation activities in seminary, seven in ten responding ordinands (68%) reported that pastoral year internship contributed at least “somewhat” to their vocation.
- Half say these formation activities contributed to their vocations: clinical pastoral education (52%), a priestly fraternity group (46%), and pastoral language immersion (45%).

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 responding 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 improve the online survey and to incorporate it into the data collection process for CARA's annual survey of priestly formation programs.

To obtain the names and contact information for participants, CARA contacted and asked all vocation directors of (arch)dioceses and major superiors of men in the United States to provide contact information for every member who was scheduled for ordination to priesthood in 2026. Among the dioceses responding, a total of 36 (arch)dioceses reported that they did not have any men scheduled for priestly ordination this year.

CARA then contacted 428 ordinands to participate in the survey. The survey was distributed between February 12 and March 20, 2026. Follow-up emails were regularly sent to the ordinands who had not responded. Out of 428 ordinands invited, 334 ordinands responded to the survey, representing 78% response rate.

The questionnaire asked responding ordinands about their demographic and religious background, education, previous ministry and work experience, as well as various aspects of vocation discernment (e.g., people encouraging and discouraging them from considering priesthood, experience with vocation programs). This report describes responses to the questions from all responding ordinands combined as well as separately for diocesan ordinands and ordinands in religious institutes. The report also contains selected trend data going as far back as 1999, the first year for which comparable data on both diocesan and responding ordinands in religious institutes are available.

The report is organized into eight parts:

- Part I of the report provides a description of what type of priesthood ordinands are preparing for and where they study.
- Part II focuses on the age of ordinands when they first considered priesthood and their current age (in the year when they are scheduled for ordination).
- Part III describes selected demographics about the responding ordinands, including information about race and ethnicity, and information pertaining to immigration to the United States (for ordinands born abroad).
- Part IV explores the educational experience of responding ordinands. This includes information about the highest level of education completed before entering the seminary, attained Catholic education, and information pertaining to educational debt.
- Part V focuses on the prior work experience, including full-time employment and military experience, of responding ordinands prior to entering the seminary.
- Part VI provides information about ordinands' family background.
- Part VII describes various factors that might have influenced the process of vocational discernment.

- Part VIII provides an assessment of formation activities.

Notes about interpreting the results:

- Tests for difference in proportions are only reported, if significance level is 0.05 or less.
- For the purpose of forecasting, confidence intervals are estimated using a confidence level of 0.95. Forecasts are only included, if a confidence interval is equal to or smaller than 5% of the forecasted amount.

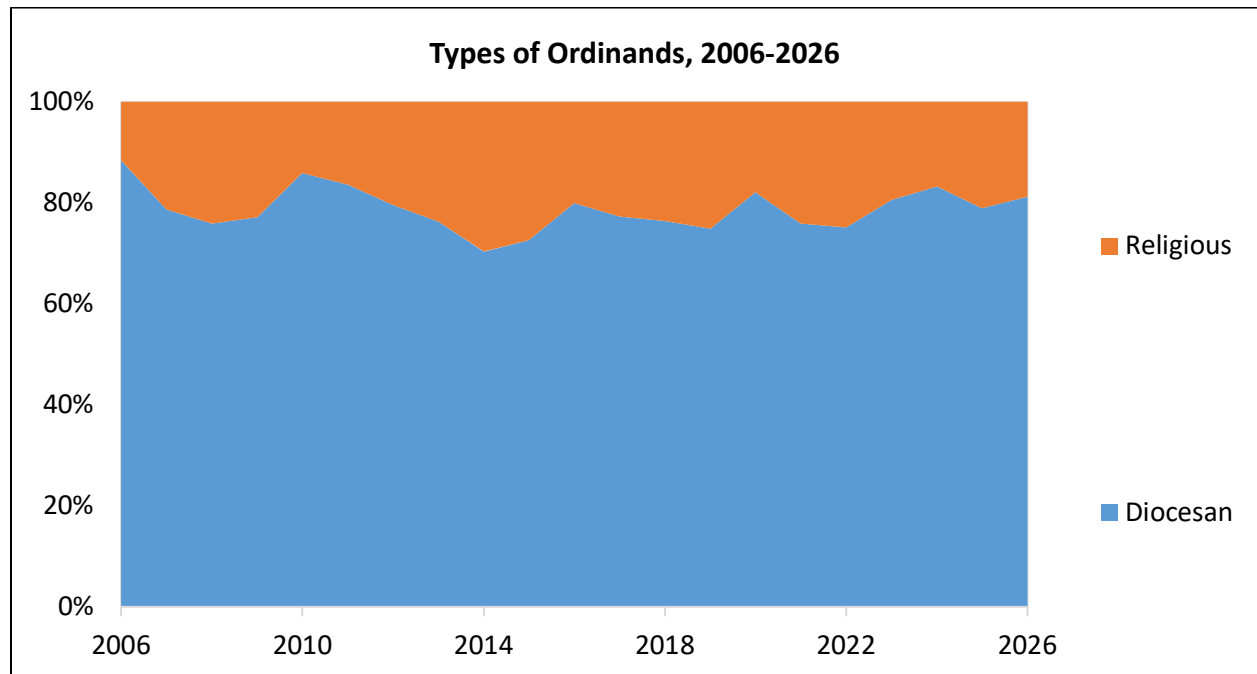
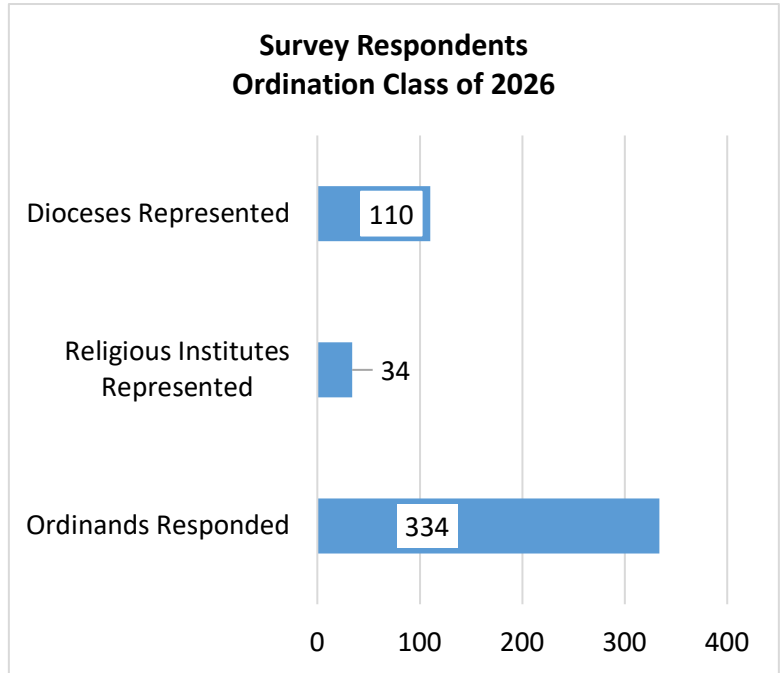
Part I: Type of Priesthood

Type of Priesthood - Part 1

Overall, 334 ordinands completed the Ordination Class of 2026 Survey. These responding ordinands represent 110 U.S. dioceses/eparchies and 34 religious institutes.

Four in five responding ordinands (81%) were diocesan ordinands in 2026 (and 80% a year before). Since 2006, the percentage of those ordinands averaged 79% and ranged between 70% and 88%.

One in five respondents (19%) were religious ordinands in 2026 (and 20% a year before). Since 2006, the percentage of those ordinands has averaged 21% and ranged between 12% and 30%.

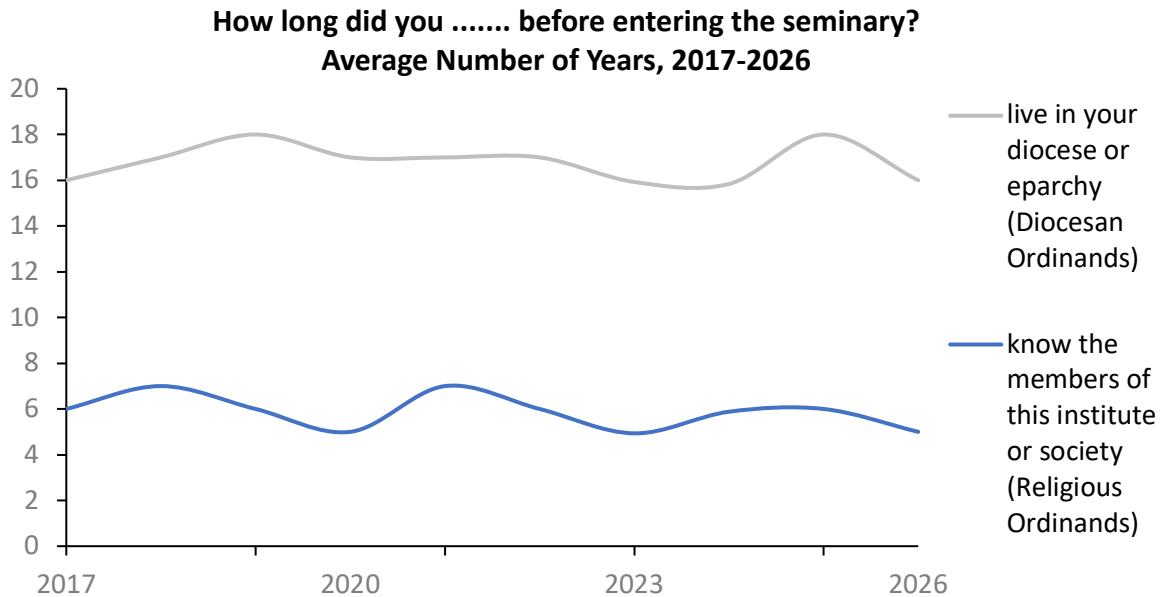


Type of Priesthood - Part 2

On average, 2026 responding diocesan ordinands lived in their dioceses for 16 years before entering seminary (a median of 18 years). Since 2017, this number has averaged 17 years (a range between 16 and 18 years).

On average, 2026 responding religious ordinands knew the members of their religious institute for 5 years before entering seminary (a median of 3 years). Since 2017, this number averaged 6 years (a range between 5 and 7 years).

How long did you before entering the seminary? Ordination Class of 2026		
	know the members of this institute or society (Religious Ordinands) [years]	live in your diocese or eparchy (Diocesan Ordinands) [years]
Average	5	16
Median	3	18
Range	0 - 25	0 - 54



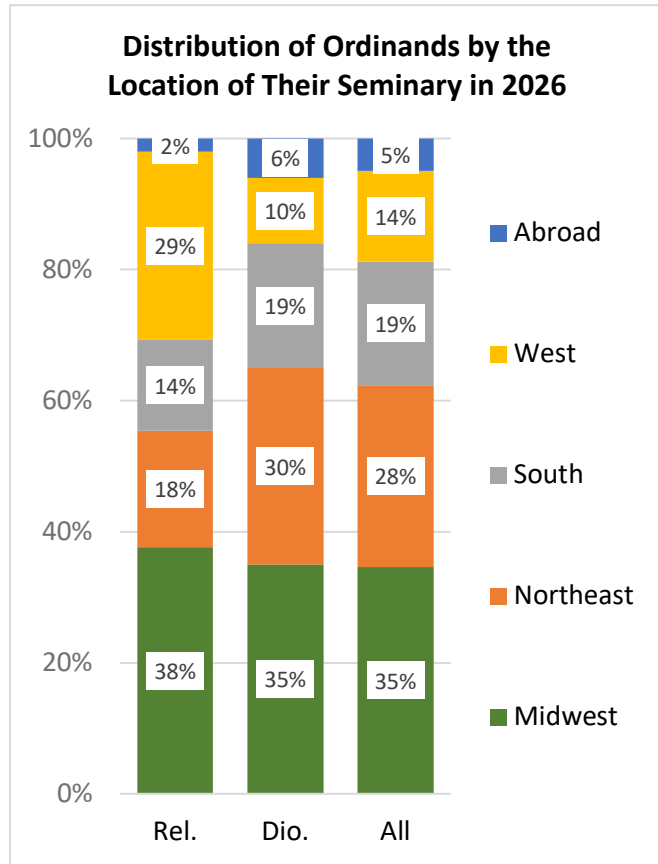
Seminary Location

Ordinands who received formation at a seminary in the Midwest constituted 35% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 38% of ordinands in religious institutes and 35% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2017 and 2026, their share has averaged 34% and ranged between 24% and 38%.

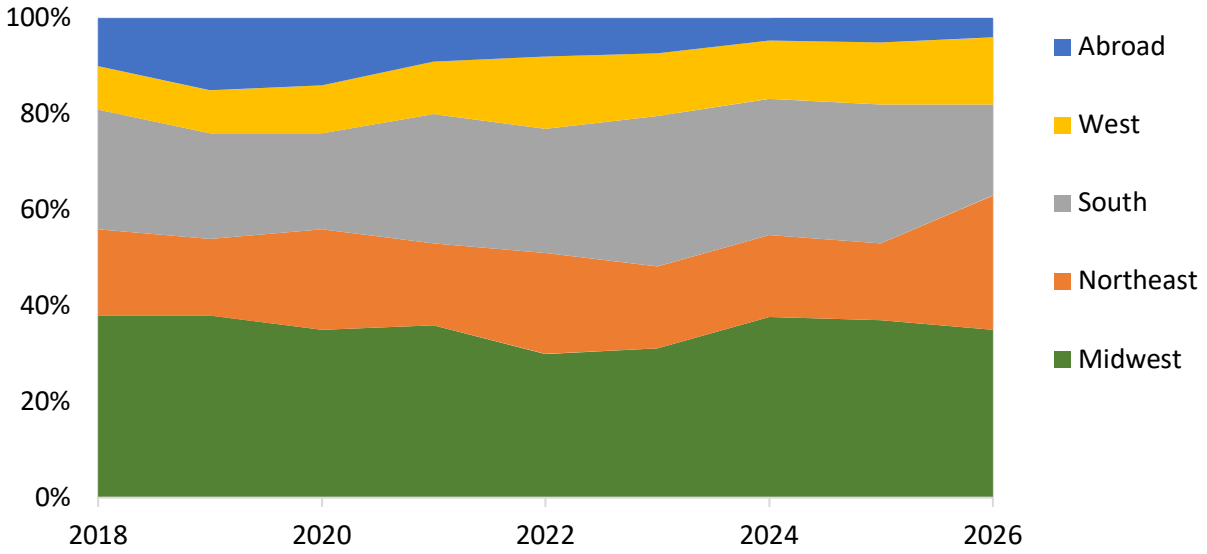
Ordinands who received formation at a seminary in the Northeast constituted 28% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 18% of ordinands in religious institutes and 30% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2017 and 2026, their share has averaged 20% and ranged between 16% and 28%.

Ordinands who received formation at a seminary in the South constituted 19% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 14% of ordinands in religious institutes and 19% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2017 and 2026, their share has averaged 25% and ranged between 18% and 31%.

Ordinands who received formation at a seminary in the West constituted 14% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 29% of ordinands in religious institutes and 10% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2017 and 2026, their share has averaged 13% and ranged between 9% and 22%.



**Distribution of Ordinands by the Location of Their Seminary,
2018-2026**



Part II: Age

Age When First Considered Priesthood - Part 1

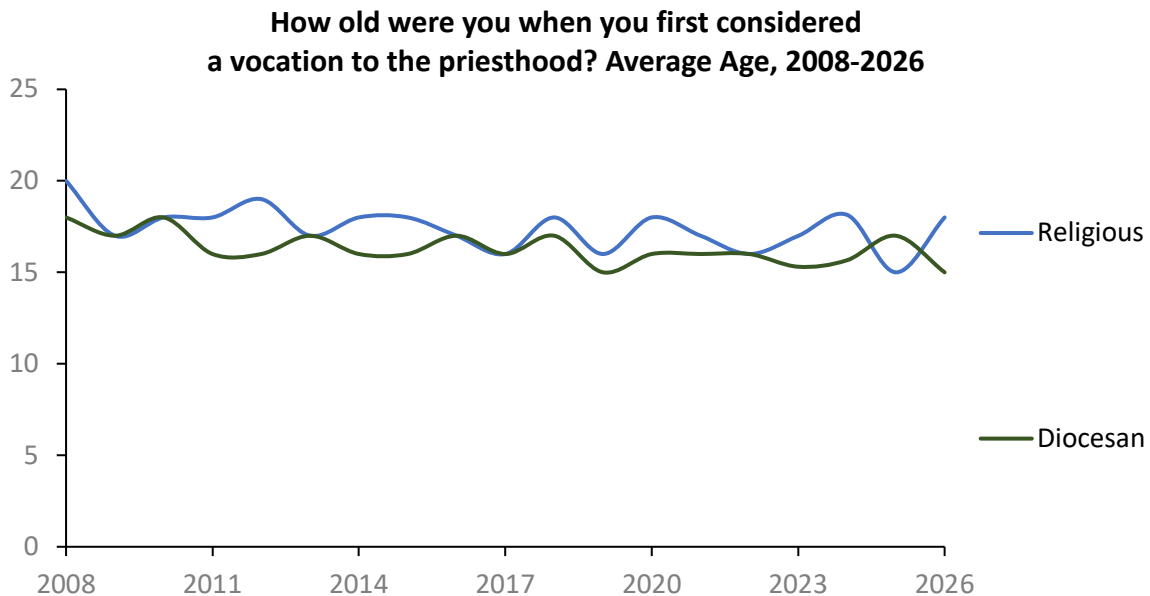
Altogether, responding ordinands in 2026 were, on average, 16 years old when they first considered a vocation to the priesthood (half were between 3 and 16 years old and the other half between 16 and 51 years old). Since 2008, the average age was 17 and ranged between 16 and 18.

In 2026, on average, responding ordinands in religious institutes were 3 years older than responding diocesan ordinands when they first considered a vocation to the priesthood:

How old were you when you first considered a vocation to the priesthood? Ordination Class of 2026			
	Religious [years]	Diocesan [years]	All [years]
Average	18	15	16
Median	19	15	16
Range	4 - 39	3 - 51	3 - 51

Responding ordinands in religious institutes in 2026 were, on average, 18 years old when they first considered a vocation to the priesthood (half were between 3 and 19 years old and the other half between 19 and 39 years old). Since 2008, the average age was 17 and ranged between 16 and 20.

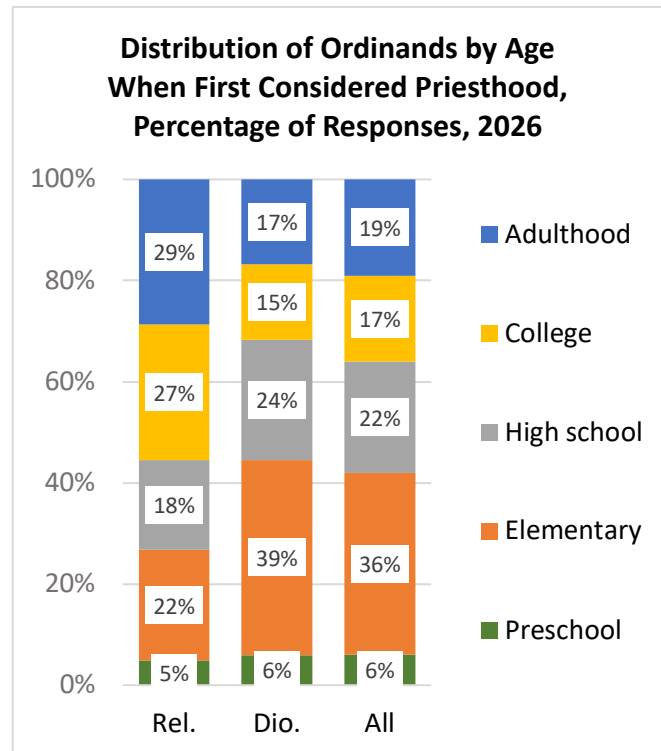
Responding ordinands to diocesan priesthood in 2026 were, on average, 15 years old when they first considered a vocation to the priesthood (half were between 3 and 15 years old and the other half between 15 and 51 years old). Since 2008, the average age was 16 and ranged between 15 and 18.



Age When First Considered Priesthood - Part 2

Ordinands who first considered priesthood in elementary school (ages 6 through 13) constituted 36% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 22% of ordinands in religious institutes and 39% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2014 and 2026, their share has averaged 31% and ranged between 19% and 38%.

Ordinands who first considered priesthood in high school (ages 14 through 17) constituted 22% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 18% of ordinands in religious institutes and 24% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2014 and 2026, their share has averaged 23% and ranged between 18% and 34%.

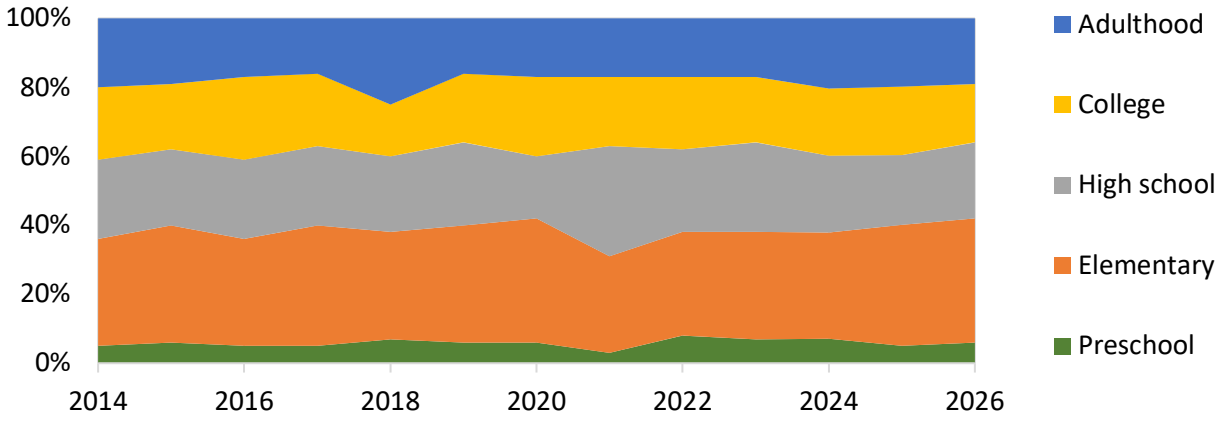


Ordinands who first considered priesthood in college (ages 18 through 21) constituted 17% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 27% of ordinands in religious institutes and 15% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2014 and 2026, their share has averaged 20% and ranged between 18% and 34%.

Ordinands who first considered priesthood in adulthood (ages 22 or older) constituted 20% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 29% of ordinands in religious institutes and 17% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2014 and 2026, their share has averaged 20% and ranged between 16% and 25%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 20% ± 5 pp (percentage points) of ordinands, in 2031. ¹

¹CARA was asked to use historical data collected since the first study to forecast trends for the next five years. The projection notes that "if the trend continues, ordinands who first considered priesthood in adulthood (ages 22 or older) will constitute 20% ± 5 percentage points (pp) of the class in 2031." Practically, this suggests that the share of adult-considered vocations will remain consistent with the 12-year average of roughly 20%. The 5-point margin of error accounts for normal historical fluctuations, establishing a realistic expected range between 15% and 25%.

**Distribution of All Ordinands by Age When First Considered Priesthood,
Percentage of Responses, 2014-2026**



Age When Scheduled for Ordination - Part 1

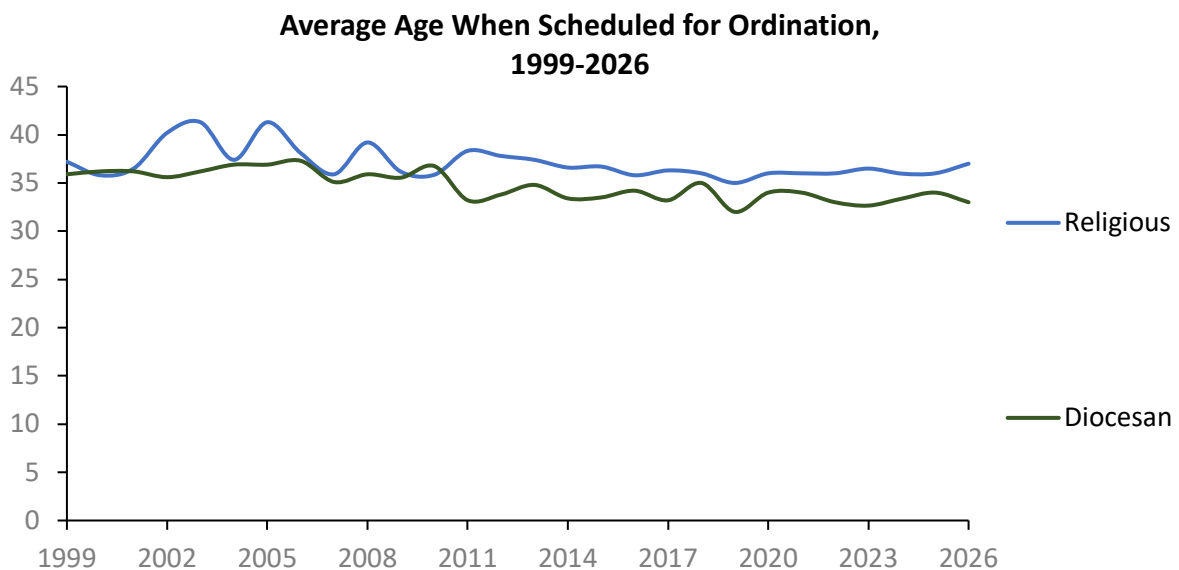
Altogether, responding ordinands in 2026 were, on average, 33 years old at the time of ordination (half were between 26 and 31 years old and the other half between 31 and 75 years old). Since 1999, the average age was 35 and ranged between 33 and 37.

In 2026, on average, responding ordinands in religious institutes were 4 years older than responding diocesan ordinands at the time of ordination.

Age When Scheduled for Ordination			
Ordination Class of 2026			
	Religious [years]	Diocesan [years]	All [years]
Average	37	33	33
Median	36	30	31
Range	28-58	26-75	26-75

Responding ordinands in religious institutes in 2026 were, on average, 37 years old when they were scheduled for ordination to the priesthood (half were between 28 and 36 years old and the other half between 36 and 58 years old). Since 1999, the average age was 37 and ranged between 35 and 41.

Responding ordinands to diocesan priesthood in 2026 were, on average, 33 years old when they were scheduled for ordination to the priesthood (half were between 26 and 30 years old and the other half between 30 and 75 years old). Since 1999, the average age was 35 and ranged between 32 and 37.



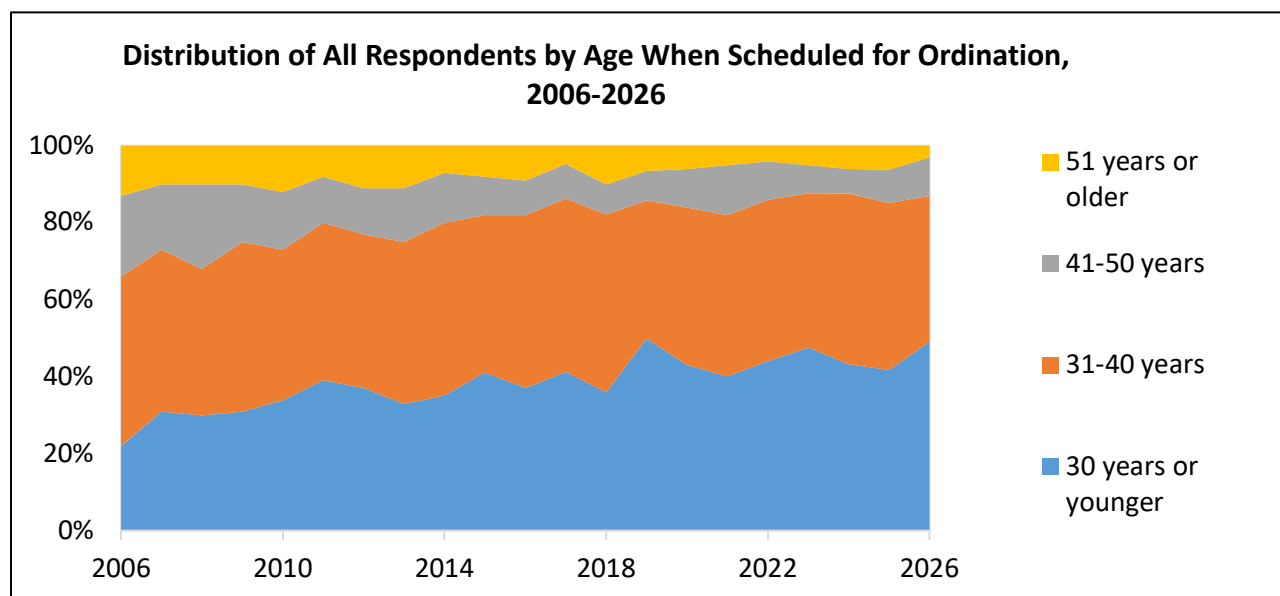
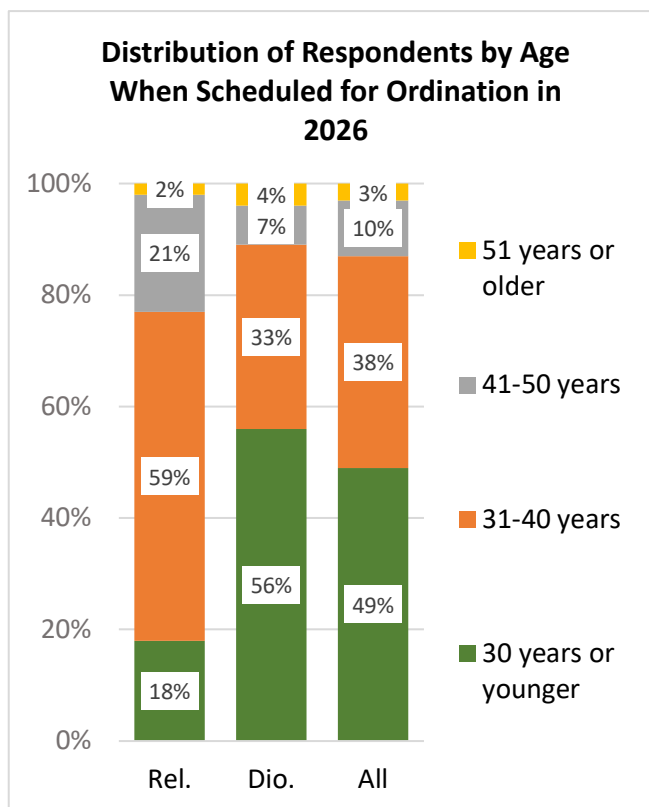
Age When Scheduled for Ordination - Part 2

Ordinands 30 years or younger constituted 49% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 18% of ordinands in religious institutes and 56% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood (a statistically significant difference). Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 38% and ranged between 22% and 50%.

Ordinands 31-40 years old constituted 38% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 59% of ordinands in religious institutes and 33% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood (a statistically significant difference). Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 42% and ranged between 36% and 46%.

Ordinands 41-50 years old constituted 10% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 21% of ordinands in religious institutes and 7% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 12% and ranged between 6% and 22%.

Ordinands 51 years or older constituted 3% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 2% of ordinands in religious institutes and 4% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 8% and ranged between 4% and 13%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 1% ±2 pp of ordinands, in 2031.



Part III: Race/Ethnicity and Cultural Background

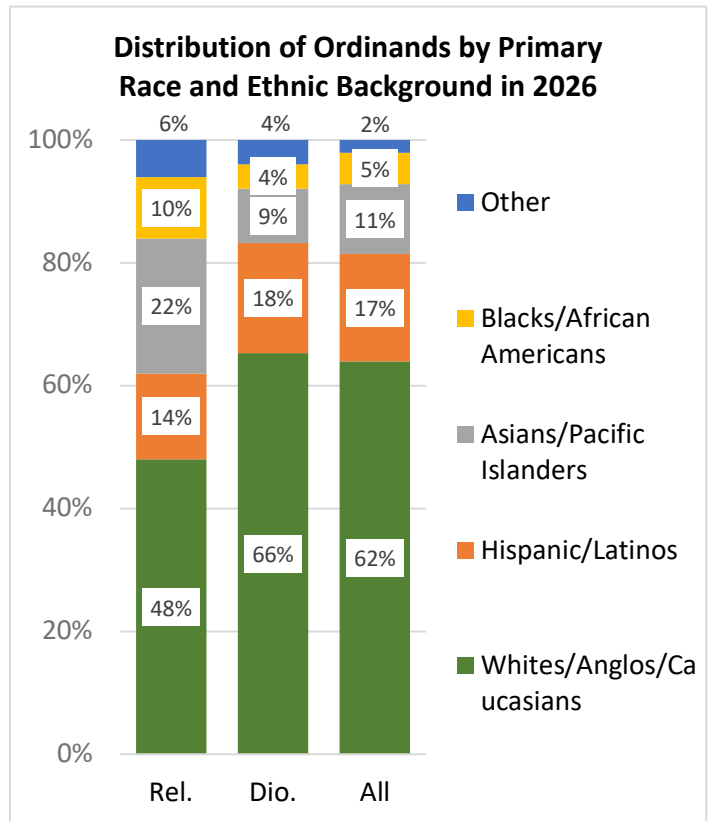
Race and Ethnicity

Caucasians constituted 62% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 48% of ordinands in religious institutes and 66% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood (a statistically significant difference). Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 67% and ranged between 60% and 72%.

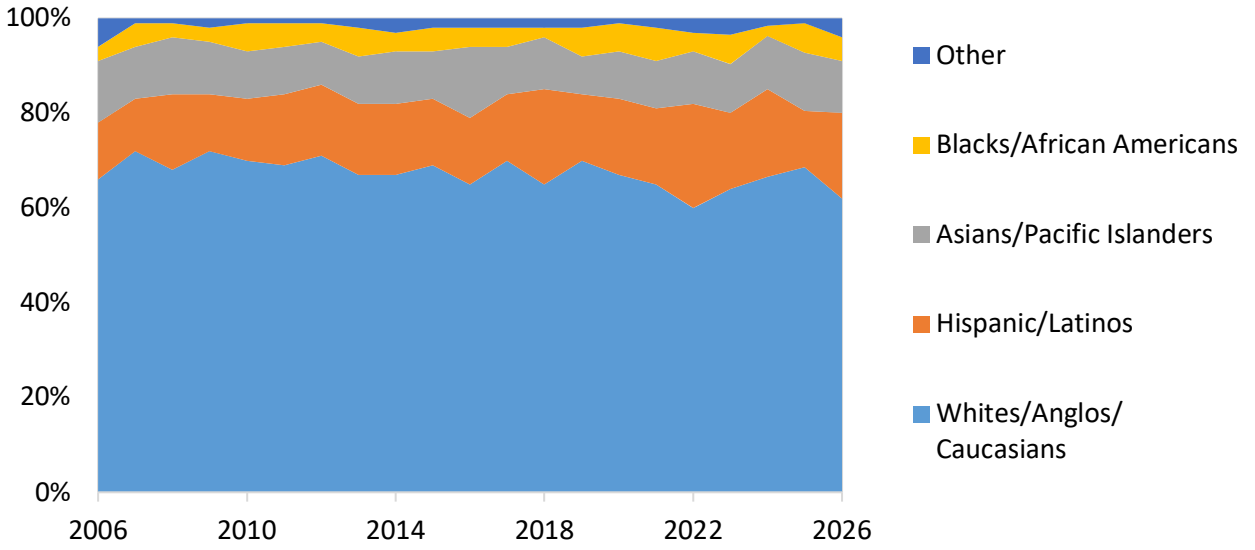
Hispanics/Latinos constituted 17% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 14% of ordinands in religious institutes and 18% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 15% and ranged between 11% and 22%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 18% \pm 5 pp of ordinands, in 2031.

Asians/Pacific Islanders constituted 11% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 22% of ordinands in religious institutes and 9% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood (a statistically significant difference). Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 11% and ranged between 8% and 15%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 11% \pm 4 pp of ordinands, in 2031

Blacks/African Americans constituted 5% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 10% of ordinands in religious institutes and 4% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 5% and ranged between 2% and 6%.



**Distribution of Ordinands by Primary Race and Ethnic Background,
2006-2026**



Country of Birth

Responding ordinands who were born abroad constituted 26% of all respondents, in 2026. They represented 35% of ordinands in religious institutes and 24% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 1999 and 2026, their share has averaged 28% and ranged between 22% and 38%.

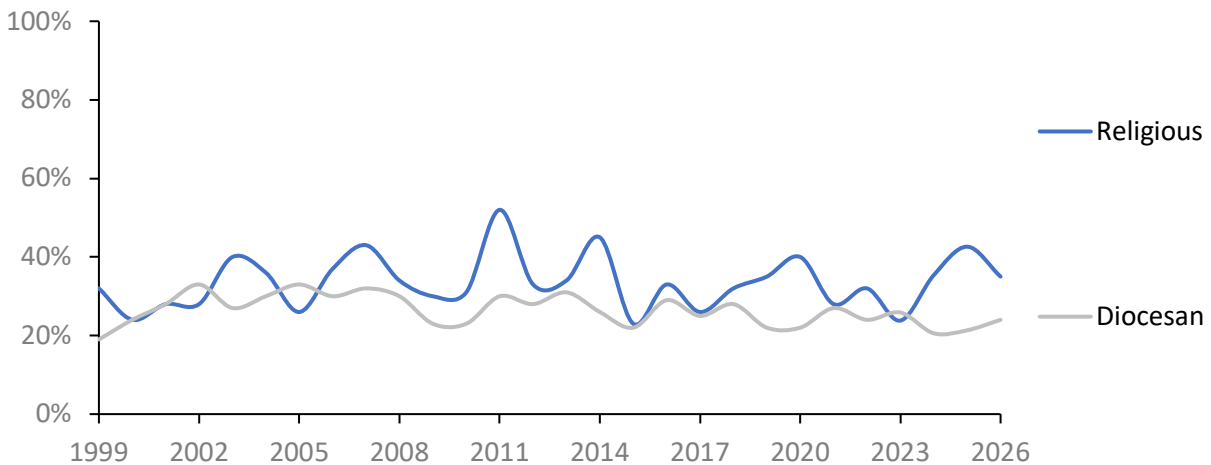
After United States, the most common countries of birth included: Vietnam (5% of all responding ordinands), Mexico (3%), and Colombia (2%).

**Top Countries of Birth
Ordination Class of 2026**

	Religious [%]	Diocesan [%]	All [%]
United States	65	76	74
Vietnam	11	4	5
Mexico	3	3	3
Colombia	0	3	2
Other countries	21	15	16

Overall, ordinands in 2026 came from 30 different countries.

**Percentage of Foreign-born Responding Ordinands,
1999-2026**



Age When Entered United States - Part 1

Responding ordinands who were born abroad came to live in the United States, on average, 16 years ago (half came between 1 and 15 years ago and the other half between 15 and 54 years ago). Since 2007, the average number of years was 13 and ranged between 11 and 15.

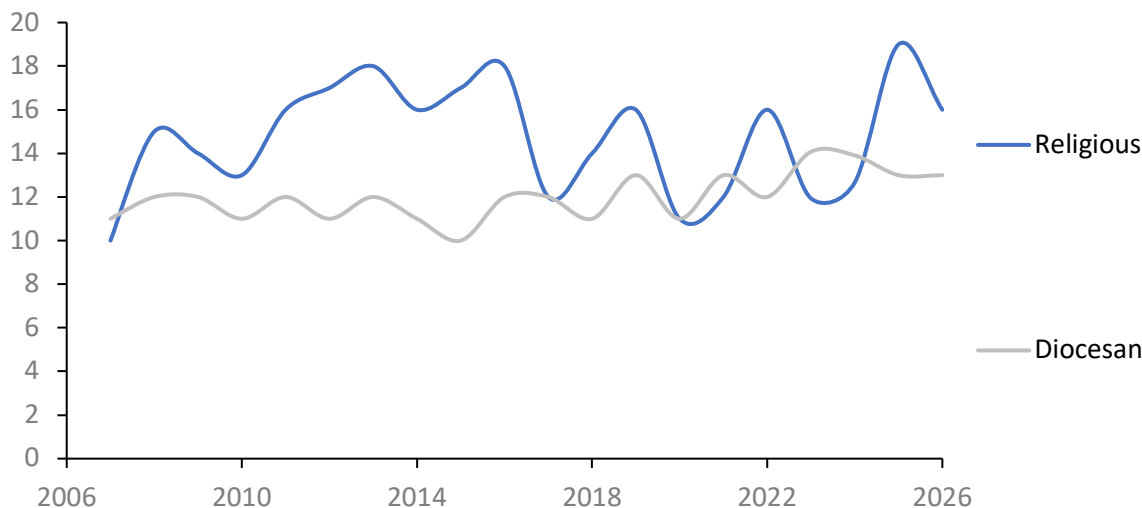
In 2026, on average, responding ordinands in dioceses came to live in the United States 3 years later than responding religious ordinands.

If born abroad, how many years ago did you come to live in the United States? Ordination Class of 2026			
	Religious [years]	Diocesan [years]	All [years]
Average	16	13	14
Median	15	10	11
Range	1 - 44	2 - 54	1 - 54

Responding ordinands in religious institutes in 2026 came to live in the United States, on average, 16 years ago (half came between 1 and 15 years ago and the other half between 15 and 44 years ago). Since 2007, the average number of years was 15 and ranged between 10 and 19.

Responding ordinands to diocesan priesthood in 2026 came to live in the United States, on average, 13 years ago (half came between 2 and 10 years ago and the other half between 10 and 54 years ago). Since 2007, the average number of years was 12 and ranged between 9 and 14.

If born abroad, how many years ago did you come to live in the United States? Average Number of Years, 2007-2026



Age When Entered United States - Part 2

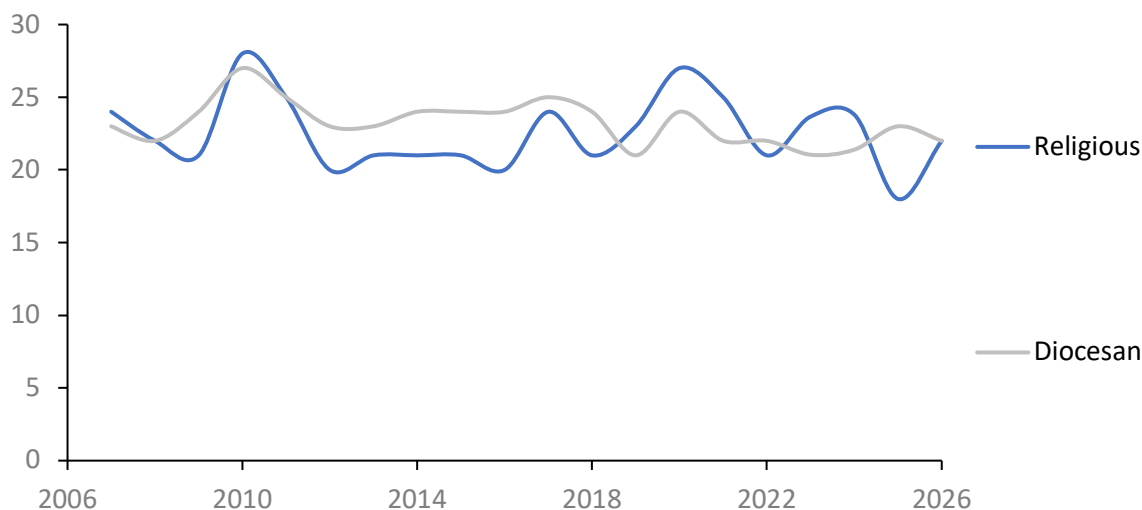
Responding ordinands who were born abroad were, on average, 22 years old when they came to live in the United States (half were between 1 and 22 years old and the other half between 22 and 40 years old). Since 2007, the average age was 23 and ranged between 22 and 27.

<i>If born abroad, how old were you when you came to live in the United States?</i>			
Ordination Class of 2026			
	Religious	Diocesan	All
	[years]	[years]	[years]
Average	22	22	22
Median	22	22	22
Range	1 - 38	2 - 40	1 - 40

Responding ordinands in religious institutes in 2026 were, on average, 22 years old when they came to live in the United States (half were between 1 and 22 years old and the other half between 22 and 38 years old). Since 2007, the average age was 23 and ranged between 20 and 28.

Responding ordinands to diocesan priesthood in 2026 were, on average, 22 years old when they came to live in the United States (half were between 1 and 22 years old and the other half between 22 and 40 years old). Since 2007, the average age was 23 and ranged between 21 and 27.

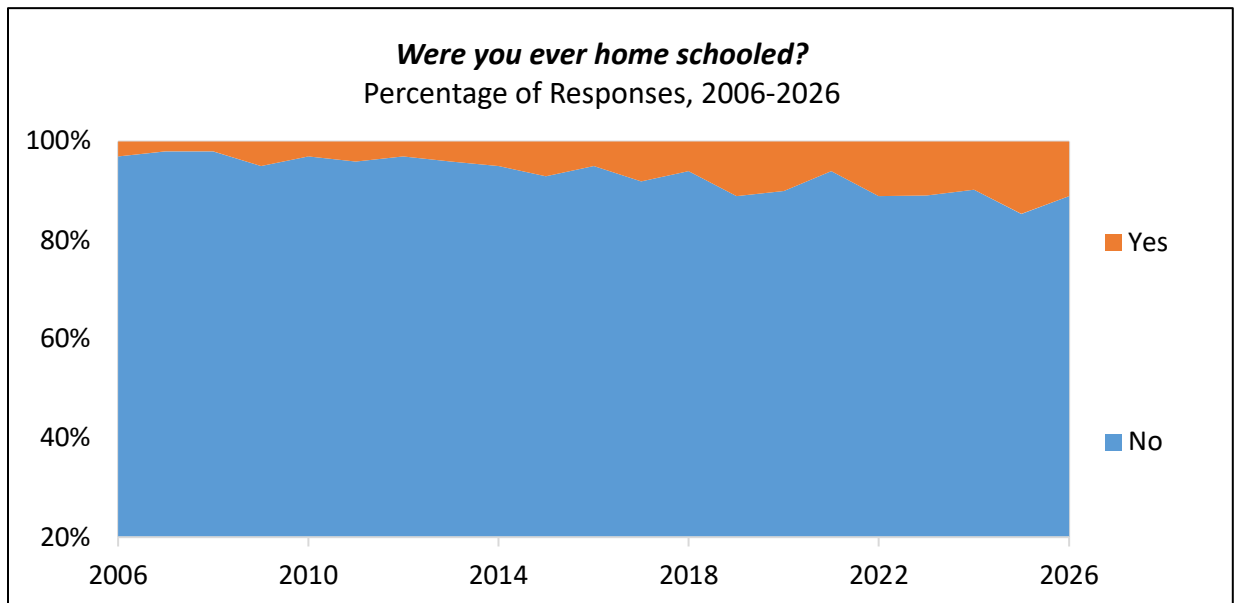
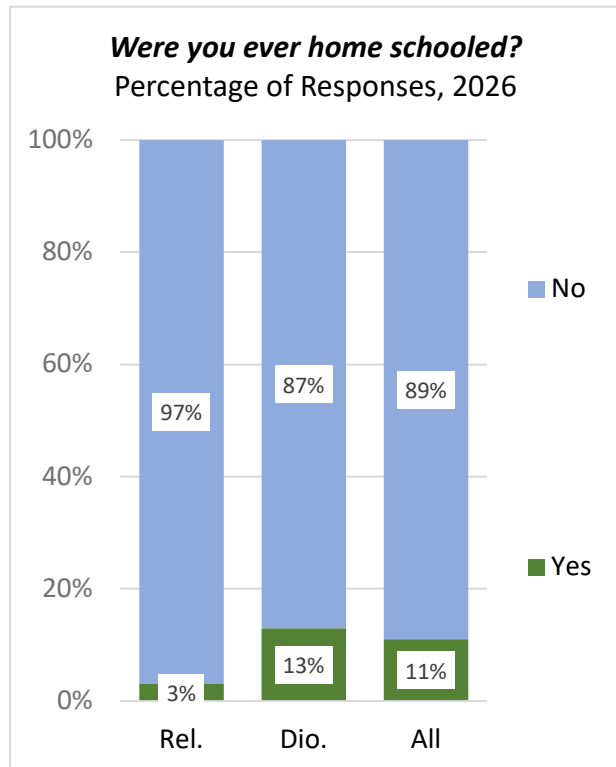
Average Age When Came to Live in the United States, 2007-2026



Part IV: Education

Home Schooling - Part 1

Responding ordinands who were home schooled constituted 11% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 3% of ordinands in religious institutes and 13% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 7% and ranged between 6% and 15%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 13% \pm 5 pp of ordinands, in 2031.



Home Schooling - Part 2

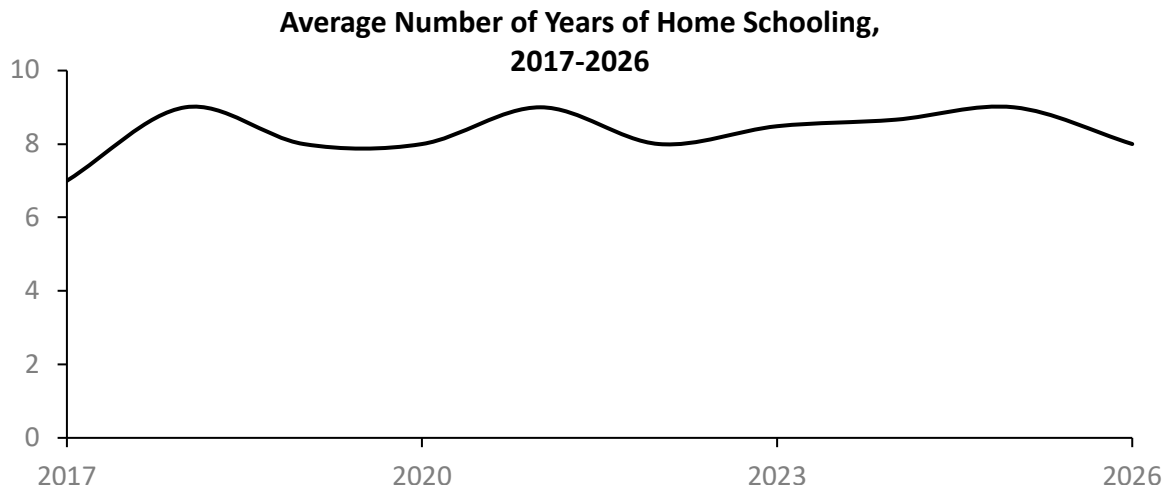
Altogether, responding ordinands were home schooled, on average, for 8 years (half were home schooled between 1 and 9 years and the other half between 9 and 12 years). Since 2017, the average number of years was 8 and ranged between 7 and 9.

<i>If you were home schooled, how many years of this education did you receive?</i>			
Ordination Class of 2026			
	Religious	Diocesan	All
	[years]	[years]	[years]
Average	12	7	8
Median	12	8	9
Range	12 - 12	1 - 12	1 - 12

In 2026, on average, responding ordinands in religious institutes spent 5 years more than responding diocesan ordinands in home school.

Responding ordinands to diocesan priesthood in 2026 were home schooled, on average, for 7 years (half were home schooled between 1 and 8 years and the other half were between 8 and 13 years). Since 2017, the average number of years was 9 and ranged between 8 and 10.

Responding ordinands in religious institutes in 2026 were home schooled, on average, for 12 years (half were home schooled for 12 years). Since 2017, the average number of years was 8 and ranged between 6 and 12.



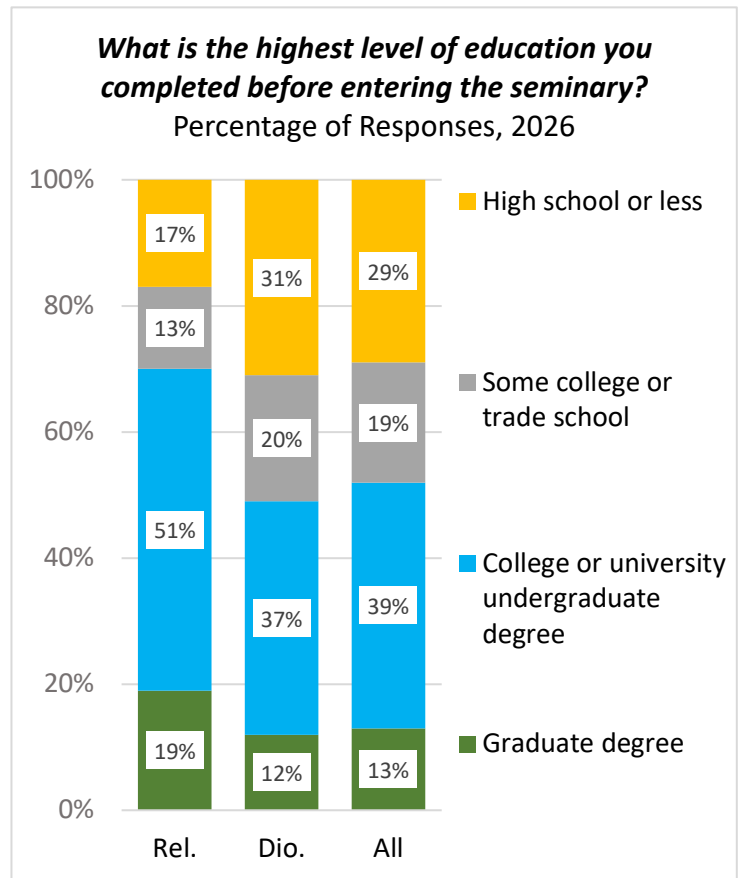
Highest Level of Education before Seminary - Part 1

Ordinands who earned graduate degrees constituted 13% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 19% of ordinands in religious institutes and 12% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 18% and ranged between 14% and 31%.

Ordinands who earned college or university undergraduate degrees constituted 39% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 51% of ordinands in religious institutes and 37% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood (a statistically significant difference). Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 42% and ranged between 38% and 47%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 42% ±5 pp of ordinands, in 2031.

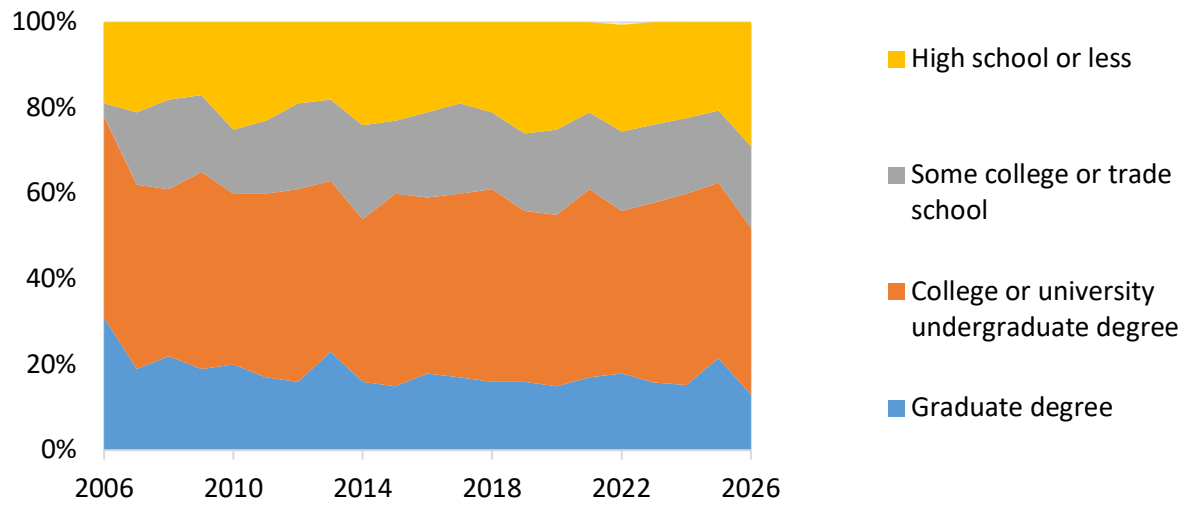
Ordinands who finished some college or trade school constituted 19% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 13% of ordinands in religious institutes and 20% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood (a statistically significant difference). Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 18% and ranged between 3% and 22%.

Ordinands who completed high school or less constituted 29% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 17% of ordinands in religious institutes and 31% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood (a statistically significant difference). Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 21% and ranged between 17% and 26%.



What is the highest level of education you completed before entering the seminary?

Percentage of Responses, 2006-2026



Highest Level of Education before Seminary - Part 2

Ordinands who studied theology or philosophy constituted 22% of ordinands who attended undergraduate or graduate school before entering the seminary. They represented 28% of ordinands in religious institutes and 20% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2026, their share has averaged 19% and ranged between 14% and 26%.

Ordinands who studied business constituted 18% of ordinands. They represented 13% of ordinands in religious institutes and 10% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2026, their share has averaged 13% and ranged between 6% and 20%.

If you attended undergraduate or graduate school before entering the seminary, what was your field of study?

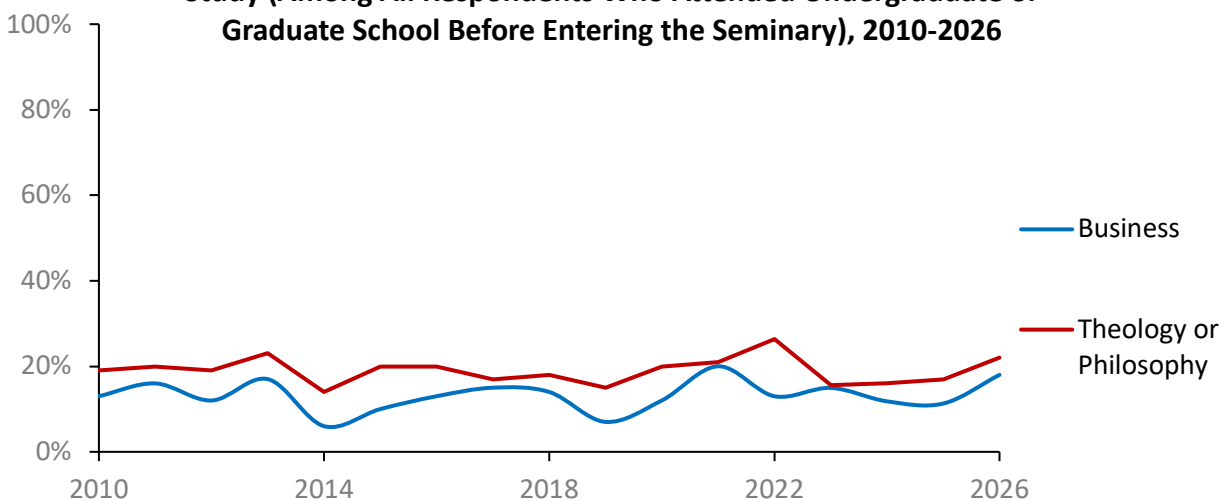
Ordination Class of 2026

	Religious [%]	Diocesan [%]	All ↓ [%]
Theology/ Philosophy	28	20	22
Business	13	20	18
Engineering	9	19	17
Science or Math	19	8	11
Education	4	10	8
Computer Science	9	8	8
Liberal Arts	13	5	7
Fine Arts	11	6	7
Social Science	15	4	6
Medicine	9	5	6
Law	0	3	2
Others	9	23	20

Ordinands who studied engineering constituted 17% of ordinands. They represented 9% of ordinands in religious institutes and 19% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2026, their share has averaged 10% and ranged between 7% and 13%.

Ordinands who studied science or math constituted 11% of ordinands. They represented 19% of ordinands in religious institutes and 8% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2026, their share has averaged 10% and ranged between 7% and 15%.

Percentage of Ordinands who Received Education in Selected Fields of Study (Among All Respondents Who Attended Undergraduate or Graduate School Before Entering the Seminary), 2010-2026



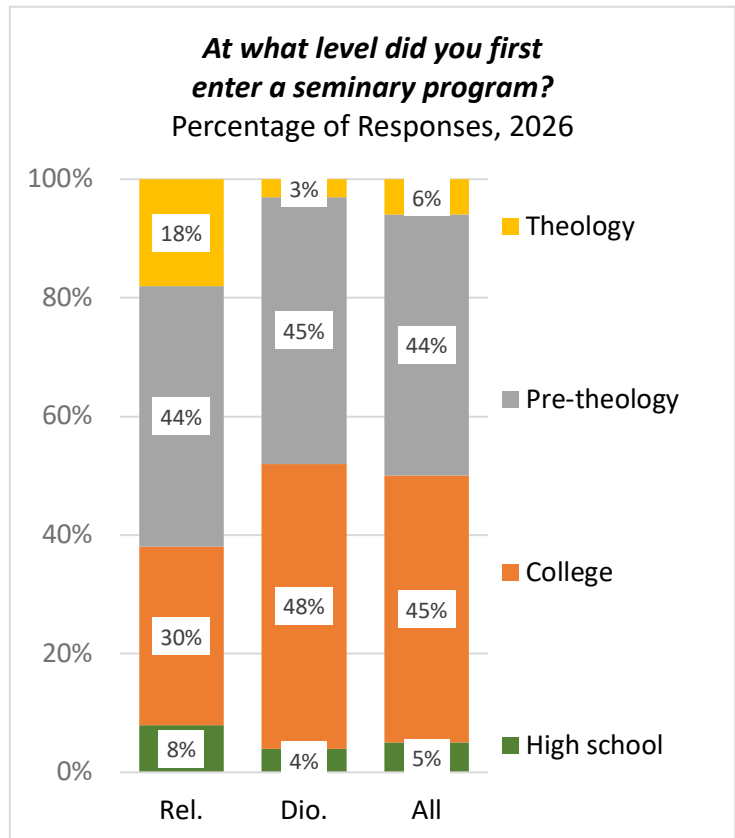
Level of Seminary Program When First Entered

Ordinands who first entered a seminary program at the pre-theology level constituted 44% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 44% of ordinands in religious institutes and 45% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2026, their share has averaged 46% and ranged between 42% and 52%.

Ordinands who first entered a seminary program at the college level constituted 45% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 30% of ordinands in religious institutes and 48% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood (a statistically significant difference). Between 2010 and 2026, their share has averaged 37% and ranged between 29% and 42%.

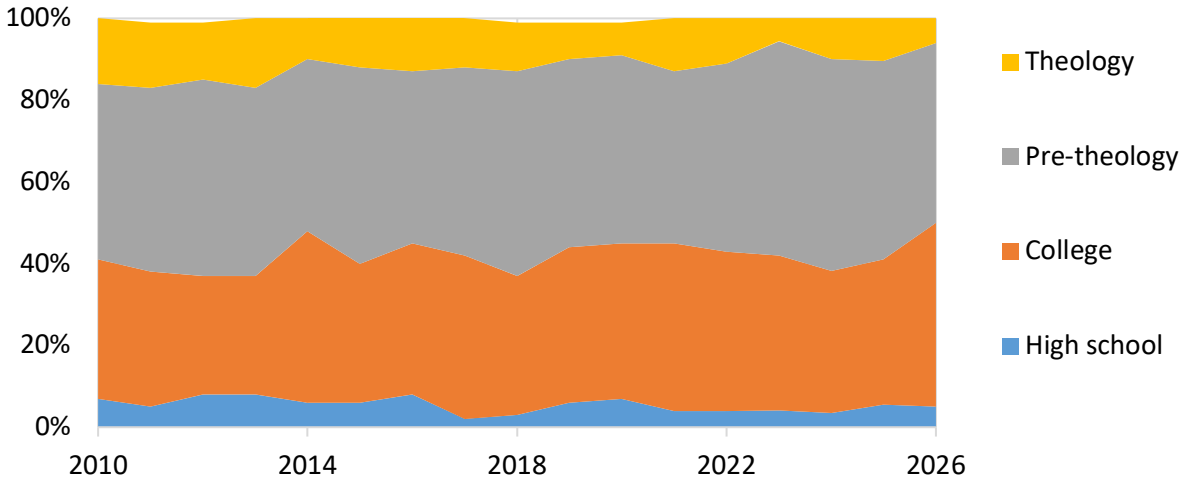
Ordinands who first entered a seminary program at the theology level constituted 6% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 18% of ordinands in religious institutes and 3% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood (a statistically significant difference). Between 2010 and 2026, their share has averaged 12% and ranged between 6% and 17%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 9% ±6 pp of ordinands, in 2031.

Ordinands who first entered a seminary program at the high school level constituted 5% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 8% of ordinands in religious institutes and 4% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2026, their share has averaged 5% and ranged between 2% and 8%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 5% ±3 pp of ordinands, in 2031.



At what level did you first enter a seminary program?

Percentage of Responses, 2010-2026



Catholic Education

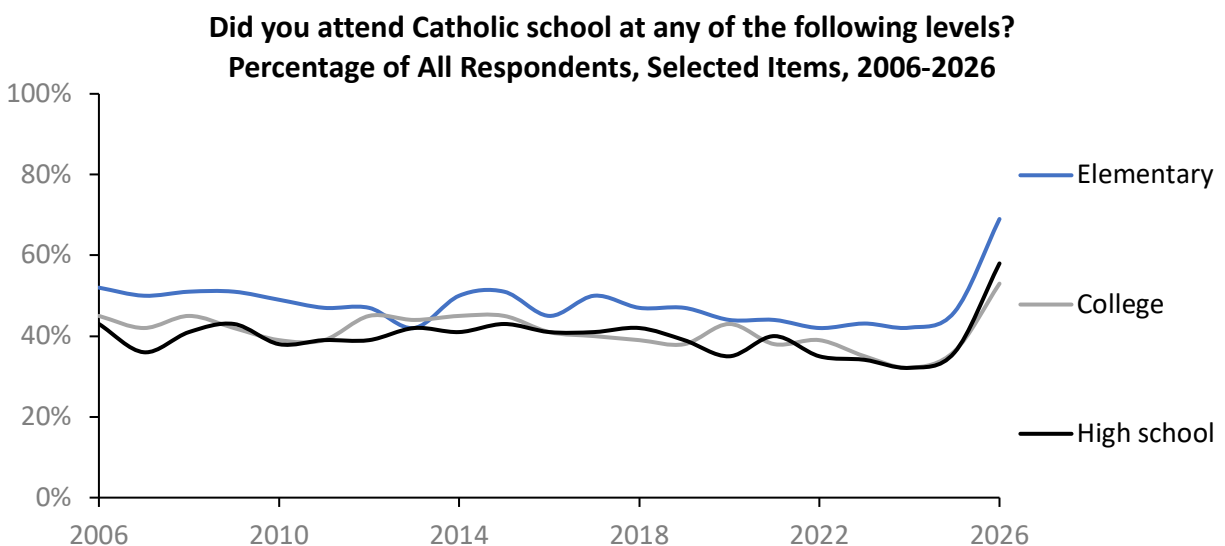
Ordinands who attended a Catholic elementary school (K-8) constituted 45% of all respondents who report attending at least a Catholic school. They represented 52% of ordinands in religious institutes and 44% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 47% and ranged between 42% and 52%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 44% ±4 pp of ordinands, in 2031.

Did you attend Catholic school at any of the following levels?			
Percentage of All Respondents, 2026			
	Religious	Diocesan	All ↓
	[%]	[%]	[%]
Elementary	52	44	45
High school	43	37	38
College	40	33	34

Ordinands who attended a Catholic high school constituted 38% of all respondents. They represented 43% of ordinands in religious institutes and 37% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 39% and ranged between 32% and 43%.

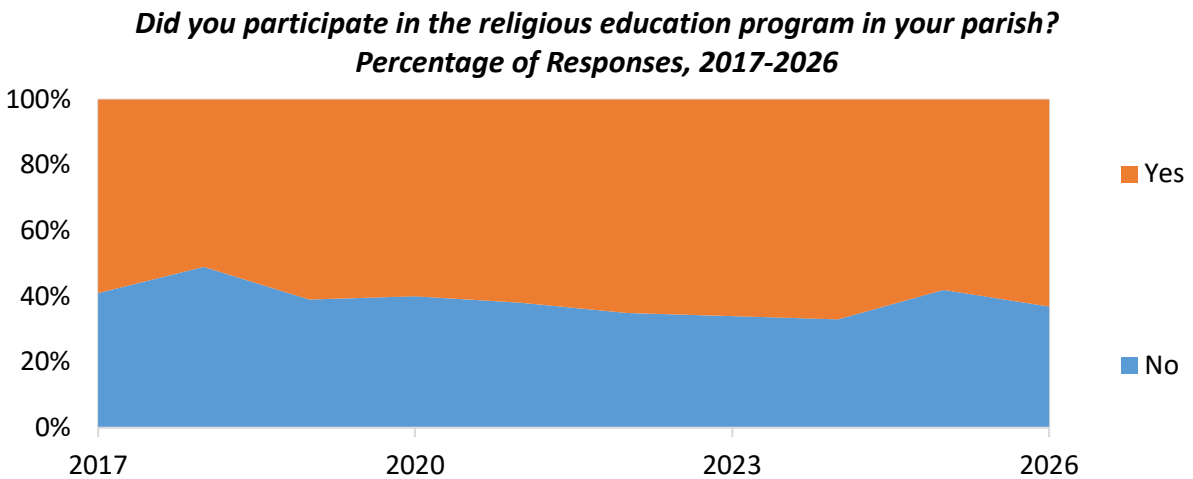
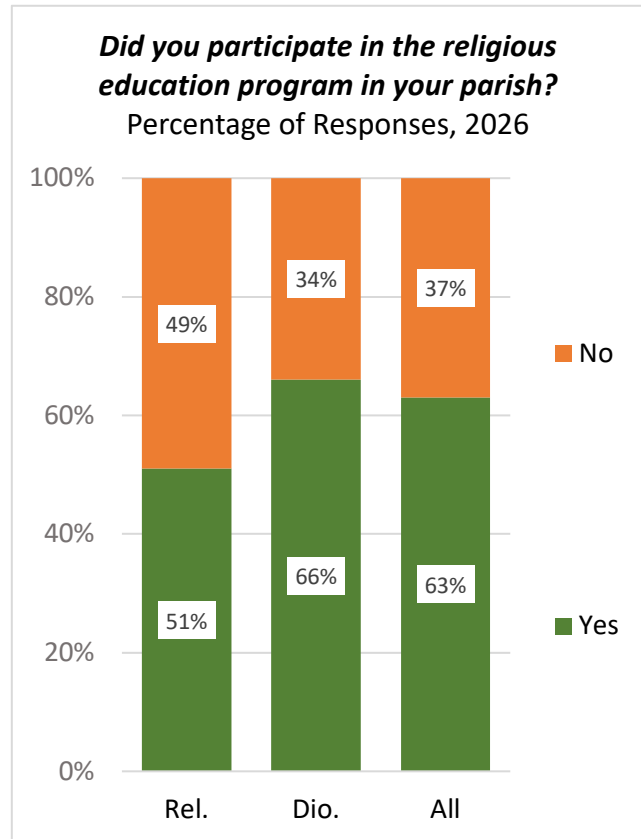
Ordinands who attended a Catholic college constituted 34% of all respondents. They represented 40% of ordinands in religious institutes and 33% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 40% and ranged between 32% and 45%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 31% ±5 pp of all ordinands, in 2031.

Colleges attended by at least more than one ordinand included: University of Notre Dame, Franciscan University of Steubenville, University of Dallas, Ave Maria University, Belmont Abbey College, Marian University, Providence College, Seton Hall University, University of Mary, Benedictine College, Divine Word College Seminary, Newman University, The Catholic University of America, and University of St. Thomas.



Catholic Religious Education - Part 1

Responding ordinands who participated in religious education in their parish constituted 63% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 51% of ordinands in religious institutes and 66% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2017 and 2026, their share has averaged 61% and ranged between 51% and 67%.



Catholic Religious Education - Part 2

Responding ordinands who participated in religious education programs in their parishes spent, on average, 6 years in religious education programs in their parishes (half spent between 1 and 6 years and the other half between 6 and 12 years). Since 2017, the average number of years was 6 and ranged between 6 and 7.

If you participated in the religious education program in your parish, how many years of this education did you receive?

Ordination Class of 2026

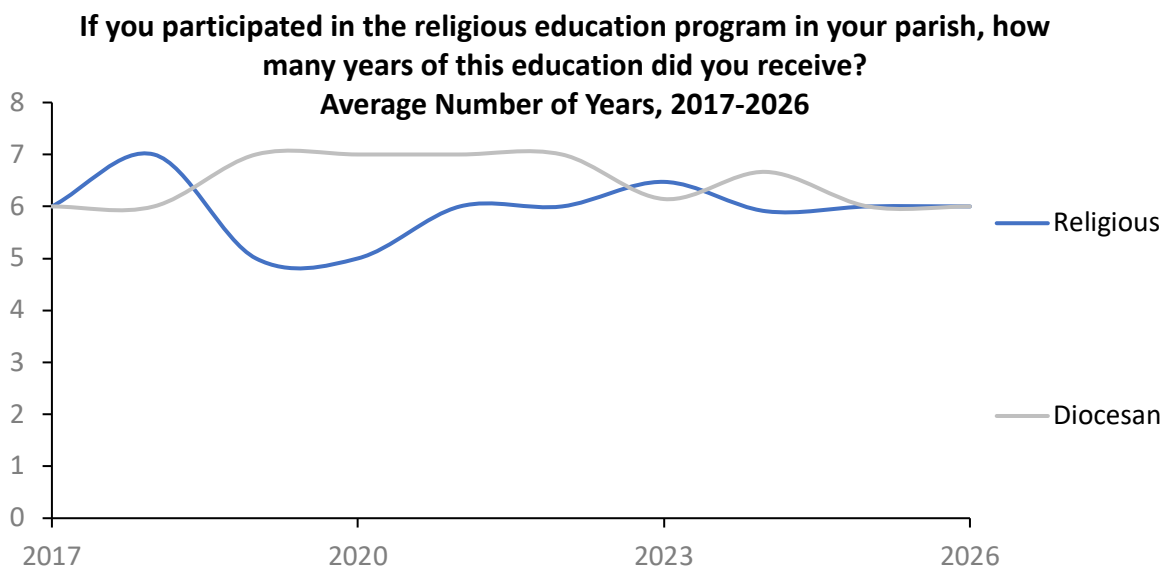
	Religious [years]	Diocesan [years]	All [years]
Average	6	6	6
Median	6	6	6
Range	1-12	1-12	1-12

In 2026, on average, responding ordinands in religious institutes spent about the same number of years as responding diocesan ordinands in religious education programs in their parishes.

Responding ordinands to diocesan priesthood in 2026 spent, on average, 6 years in religious education programs in their parishes (half spent between 1 and 6 years and the other half between 6 and 12 years). Since 2017, the average number of years was 6 and ranged between 6 and 7.

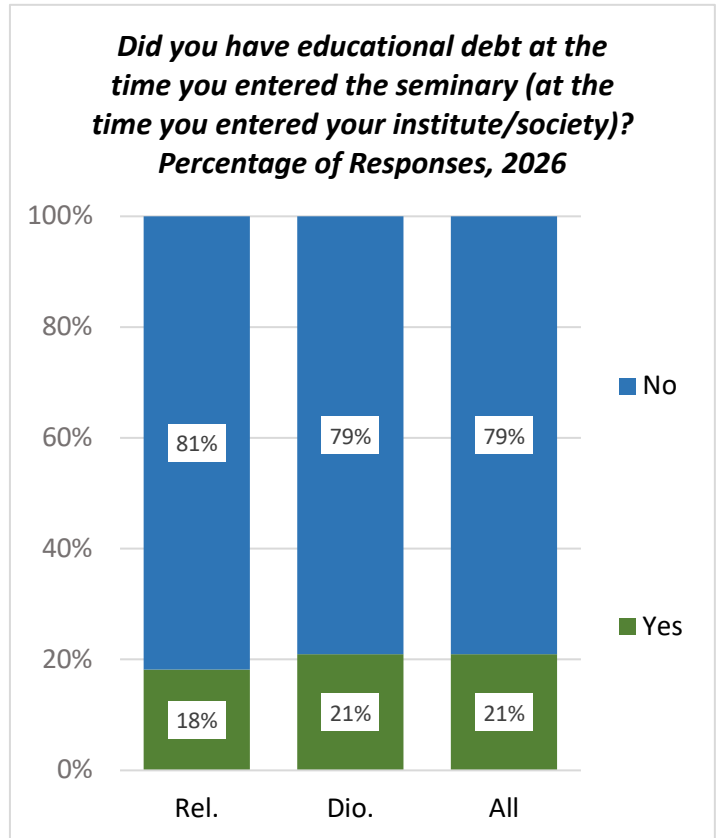
Responding ordinands in religious institutes in 2026 spent, on average, 6 years in religious education programs in their parishes (half spent between 1 and 6 years and the other half between 6 and 12 years). Since 2017, the average number of years was 6 and ranged between 5 and 7.

Notably, responses over 12 years were recoded to 12.

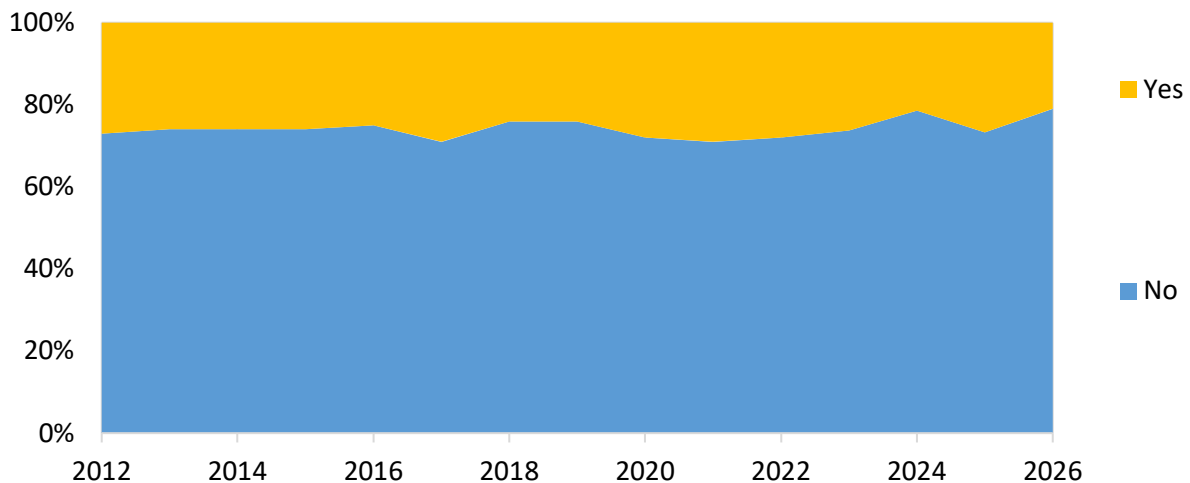


Educational Debt - Part 1

Responding ordinands who had educational debt at the time they entered the seminary constituted 21% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 18% of ordinands in religious institutes and 21% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2012 and 2026, their share has averaged 26% and ranged between 21% and 29%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 17% ±4 pp of ordinands, in 2031.



Did you have educational debt at the time you entered the seminary
(If religious: at the time you entered your institute/society)?
Percentage of Responses, 2012-2026



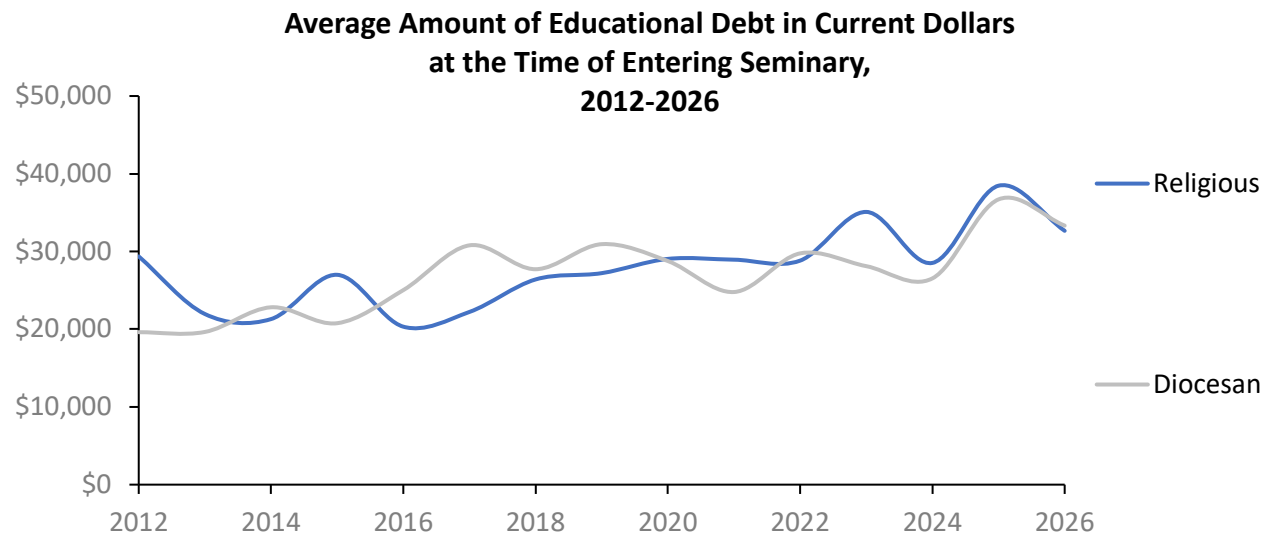
Educational Debt - Part 2

Those responding ordinands who had educational debt had, on average, \$33,206 of educational debt at the time of entering seminary (half had between \$2,000 and \$25,000 and the other half between \$25,000 and \$150,000). Since 2012, the average amount of debt was \$26,721 and ranged between \$20,250 and \$37,092.

What was the amount of your educational debt at the time you entered seminary (if any)?			
Ordination Class of 2026			
	Religious [\$]	Diocesan [\$]	All [\$]
Average	32,659	33,326	33,206
Median	28,000	25,000	25,000
Range	8,000-90,000	2,000-150,000	2,000-150,000

Those responding ordinands in religious institutes in 2026 had, on average, \$32,659 of educational debt at the time of entering seminary (half had between \$8,000 and \$28,000 and the other half between \$28,000 and \$90,000). Since 2012, the average amount of debt was \$27,821 and ranged between \$20,325 and \$35,088.

Those responding ordinands to diocesan priesthood in 2026 had, on average, \$33,326 of educational debt at the time of entering seminary (half had between \$2,000 and \$25,000 and the other half between \$25,000 and \$150,000). Since 2012, the average amount of debt was \$26,569 and ranged between \$19,614 and \$36,701.



Educational Debt - Part 3

Responding ordinands who had education debt had, on average, \$22,065 of educational debt at the time of ordination (half had between \$800 and \$11,500 and the other half between \$11,500 and \$150,000). Since 2012, the average amount of this debt was \$22,696 and ranged between \$16,031 and \$31,411.

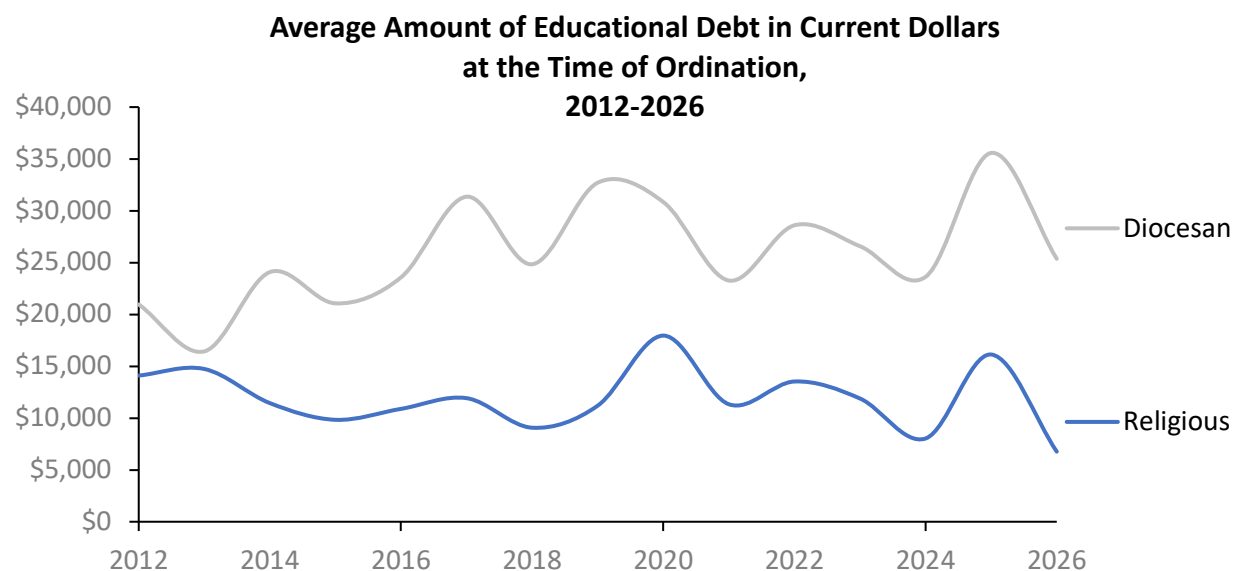
What was the amount of your educational debt at the time of ordination?			
Ordination Class of 2026			
	Religious [\$]	Diocesan [\$]	All [\$]
Average	6,763	25,366	22,065
Median	0	13,000	11,500
Range	15,000-40,000	800-150,000	800-150,000

In 2026, on average, responding ordinands in religious institutes who had educational debt had \$18,603 less debt than responding diocesan ordinands at the time of ordination:

Those responding ordinands to diocesan priesthood had, on average, \$25,366 of educational debt at the time of ordination (half had between \$800 and \$13,000 and the other half between \$13,000 and \$150,000), a 24% reduction in debt from the \$33,326 of debt they entered the seminary with. Since 2012, the average amount of this debt \$25,926 and ranged between \$16,434 and \$35,577.

Those responding ordinands in religious institutes had, on average, \$6,763 of educational debt at the time of ordination, a 79% reduction in debt from the \$32,659 of debt they entered the seminary with. Since 2012, the average amount of this debt \$11,922 and ranged between \$8,034 and \$17,957.

Four responding ordinands having educational debt in 2026 report being delayed entrance, on average, by less than 1 year.



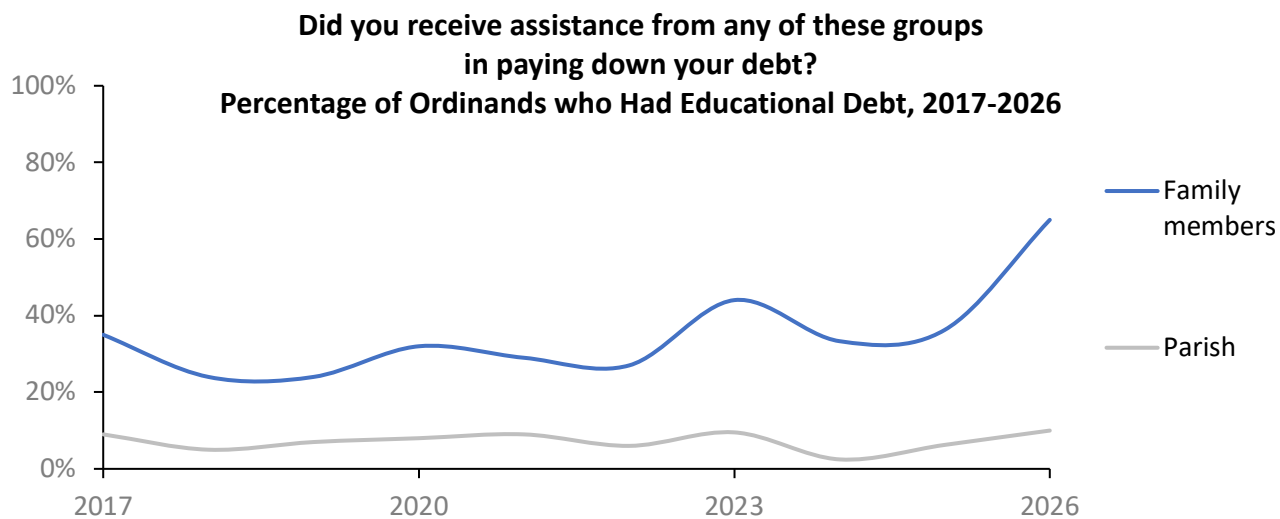
Educational Debt - Part 4

Did you receive assistance from any of these groups in paying down your debt?			
Percentage of Ordinands who Had Educational Debt, 2026			
	Religious	Diocesan	All
	%	%	%
Family members	13	83	65
Religious community	100	4	29
The Labouré Society	0	22	19
Knights of Columbus FV	0	26	16
Parish	0	13	10
Friends/co-workers	0	13	10
Serra FV	0	0	0
Mater Ecclesiae FV	0	0	0

Ordinands who received financial assistance from their family members constituted 65% of ordinands who had educational debt at the time of entering seminary. They represented 13% of ordinands in religious institutes and 83% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood (a statistically significant difference). Between 2017 and 2026, their share has averaged 35% and ranged between 24% and 65%.

Ordinands who received assistance from a religious community constituted 29% of ordinands. They represented 100% of ordinands in religious institutes and 4% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood (a statistically significant difference). Between 2017 and 2026, their share has averaged 17% and ranged between 7% and 29%.

Ordinands who received assistance from a parish constituted 10% of ordinands. They represented 0% of ordinands in religious institutes and 13% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2017 and 2026, their share has averaged 7% and ranged between 2% and 10%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 13% ±4 pp of ordinands, in 2031.



Part V: Work

Employment Background

<i>What was your main full-time work experience prior to entering the seminary, if any?</i>			
Percentage of Ordinands Who Had Any Kind of Full-Time Work Experience, 2026			
	Religious	Diocesan	All
	%	%	%
Church ministry, parish life	16	19	18
Education	33	13	17
Business	16	15	15
Sales, customer service	4	14	12
Restaurant/food services	4	10	9
Construction, labor, farming	9	10	9
Engineering, architecture	9	8	9
Computers, IT	11	7	8
Medical/health care	2	7	6
Management/administration	0	5	4
Legal professions	0	4	3
Law enforcement/military	2	3	3
Research/science	0	1	1
Journalism	2	1	1
Others	24	24	24

Overall, 64% of ordinands had some kind of full-time work experience prior to entering seminary.

Ordinands who worked in church ministry, parish life constituted 18% of ordinands who had any kind of full-time work experience prior to entering seminary. They represented 16% of ordinands in religious institutes and 19% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 8 and ranged between 2% and 18%.

Ordinands who worked in education constituted 17% of ordinands. They represented 33% of ordinands in religious institutes and 13% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 15 and ranged between 7% and 21%.

Ordinands who worked in business constituted 15% of ordinands who had any kind of full-time work experience prior to entering seminary. They represented 16% of ordinands in religious institutes and 15% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 10 and ranged between 2% and 21%.

Ordinands who worked in Sales, customer service constituted 12% of ordinands who had any kind of full-time work experience prior to entering seminary. They represented 4% of ordinands in

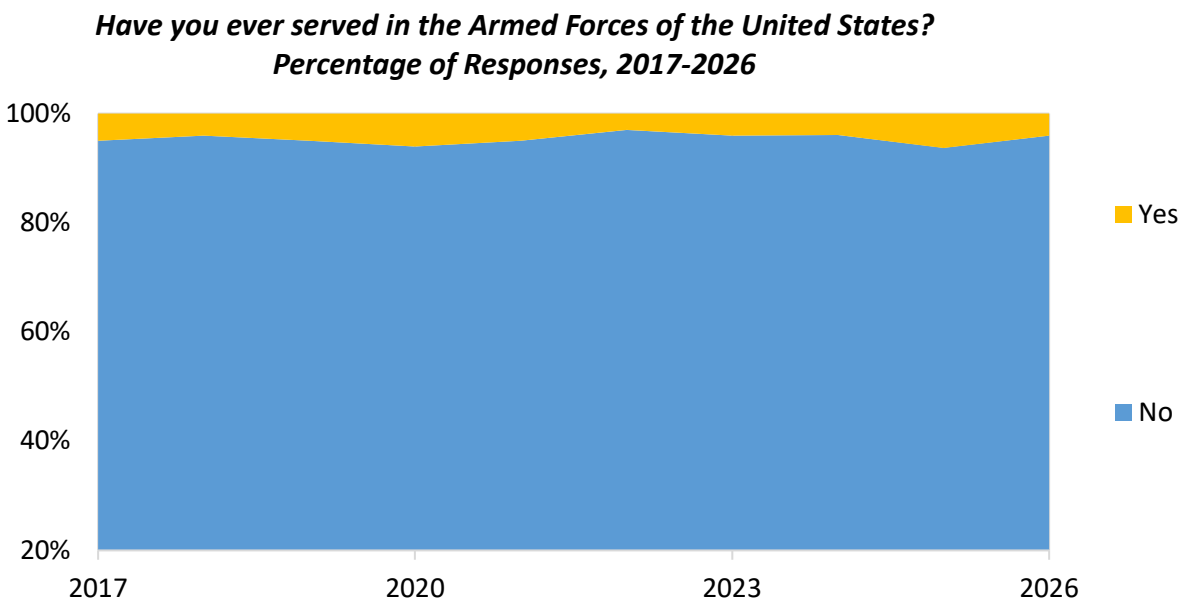
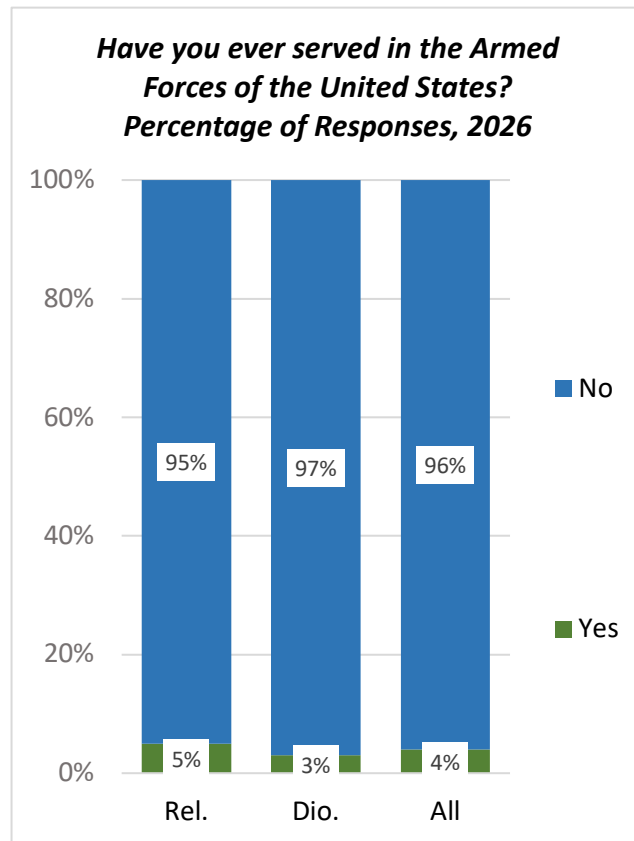
religious institutes and 14% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 9 and ranged between 2% and 14%.

Ordinands who worked in engineering, architecture constituted 9% of ordinands. They represented 8% of ordinands in religious institutes and 9% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share averaged 5% and ranged between 2% and 10%. If the trend continues, they will constitute $11\% \pm 4$ pp of ordinands, in 2031.

Military Background - Part 1

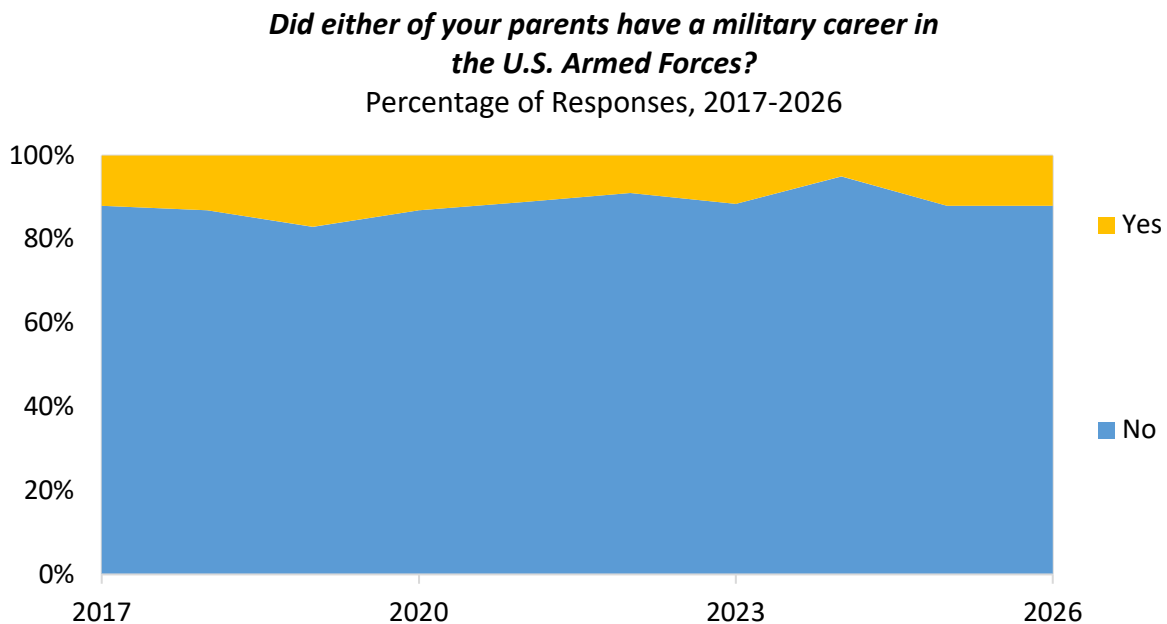
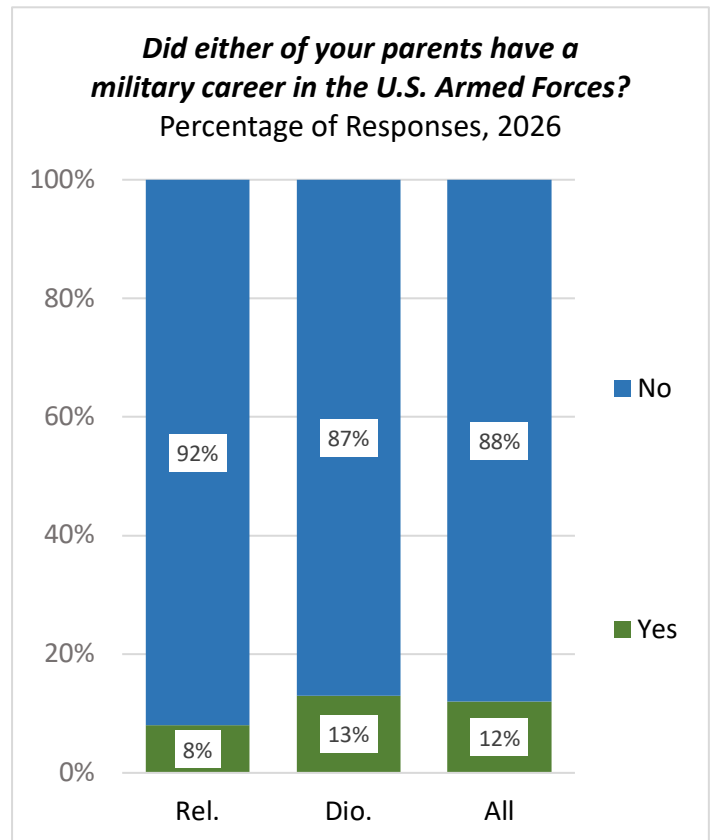
Responding ordinands who served in the U.S. Armed Forces constituted 4% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 5% of ordinands in religious institutes and 3% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2017 and 2026, their share has averaged 5% and ranged between 3% and 6%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 3% ±3 pp of ordinands, in 2031.

Among ordinands who served in the U.S. Armed Forces: 5 served in the Navy (as compared to 8 a year before), 4 served in the Army (as compared to 3 a year before), 1 served in the Marines (as compared to 3 a year before), 3 served in the Air Force (as compared to 2 a year before), and 1 served in the National Guard (as compared to 1 a year before).



Military Background - Part 2

Responding ordinands whose parents served in the U.S. Armed Forces constituted 12% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 8% of ordinands in religious institutes and 13% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2017 and 2026, their share has averaged 12% and ranged between 5% and 17%.

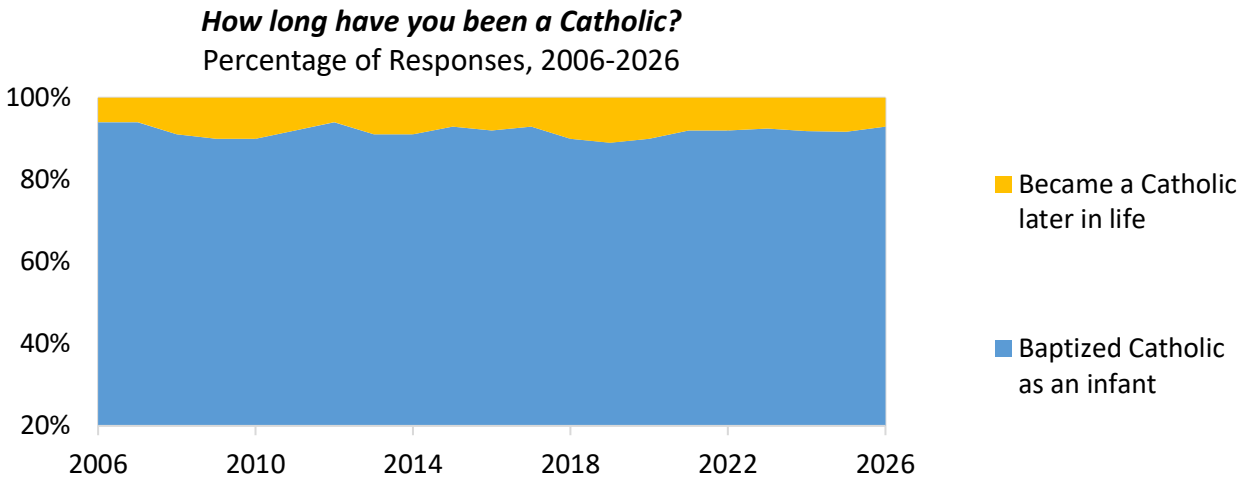
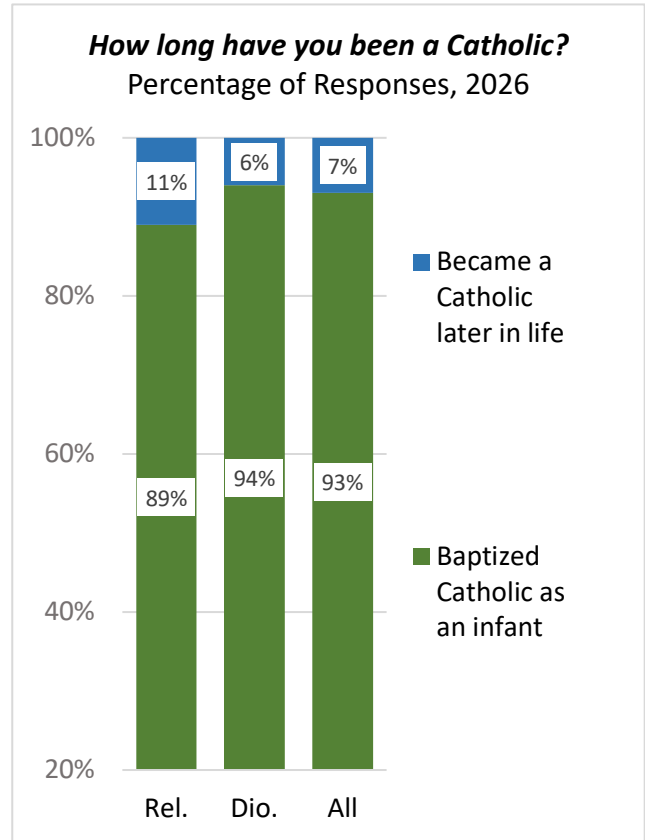


Part VI: Family Background

Family Religious Background - Part 1

Responding ordinands who became Catholic later in life constituted 7% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 11% of ordinands in religious institutes and 6% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 8% and ranged between 6% and 11%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 7% ±3 pp of ordinands, in 2031.

Previous religious affiliations included, for example: Buddhist, Church of Christ, Mennonite, Episcopalian, Evangelical Protestant, Assemblies of God, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Quaker, Southern Baptist, and United Methodist.



Family Religious Background - Part 2

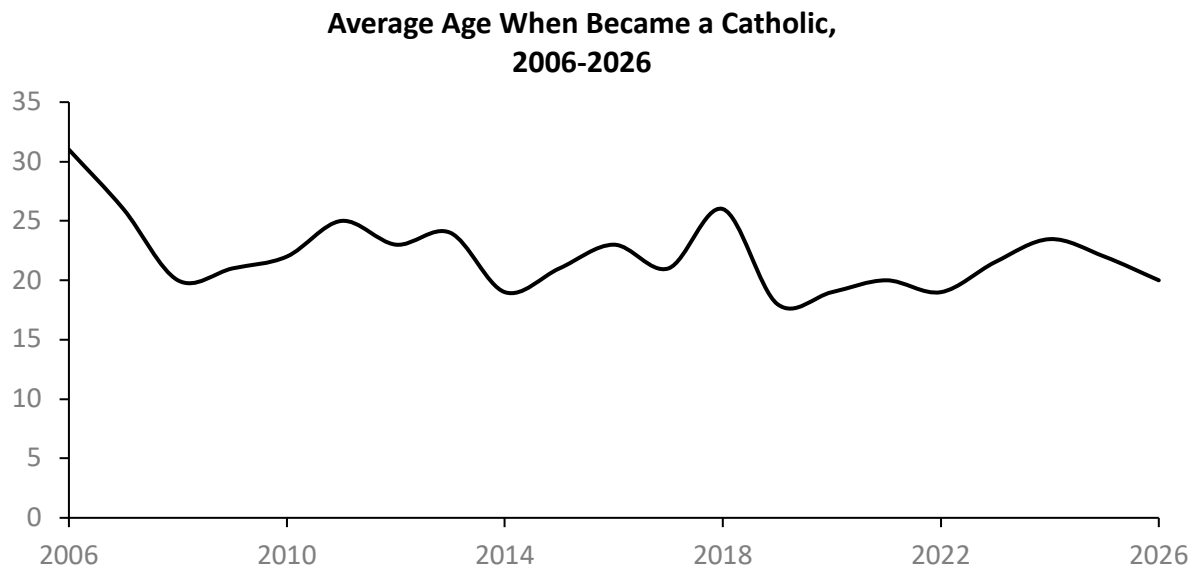
Responding ordinands who converted to Catholicism later in life were, on average, 20 years old when they become Catholic (half were between 5 and 21 years old and the other half between 21 and 50 years old). Since 2006, the average age of conversion was 22 and ranged between 18 and 31.

In 2026, on average, responding ordinands in religious institutes were eight years younger than responding diocesan ordinands when they become Catholic.

How old were you when you became a Catholic?			
Ordination Class of 2026			
	Religious [years]	Diocesan [years]	All [years]
Average	15	23	20
Median	16	23	21
Range	5- 26	9 - 50	5 - 50

Convert ordinands in religious institutes in 2026 were, on average, 15 years old when they become Catholic (half were between 5 and 16 years old and the other half between 16 and 26 years old). Since 2006, the average age of conversion was 21 and ranged between 15 and 31.

Convert ordinands to diocesan priesthood in 2026 were, on average, 23 years old when they become Catholic (half were between 9 and 23 years old and the other half between 23 and 50 years old). Since 2006, the average age of conversion was 23 and ranged between 17 and 50.



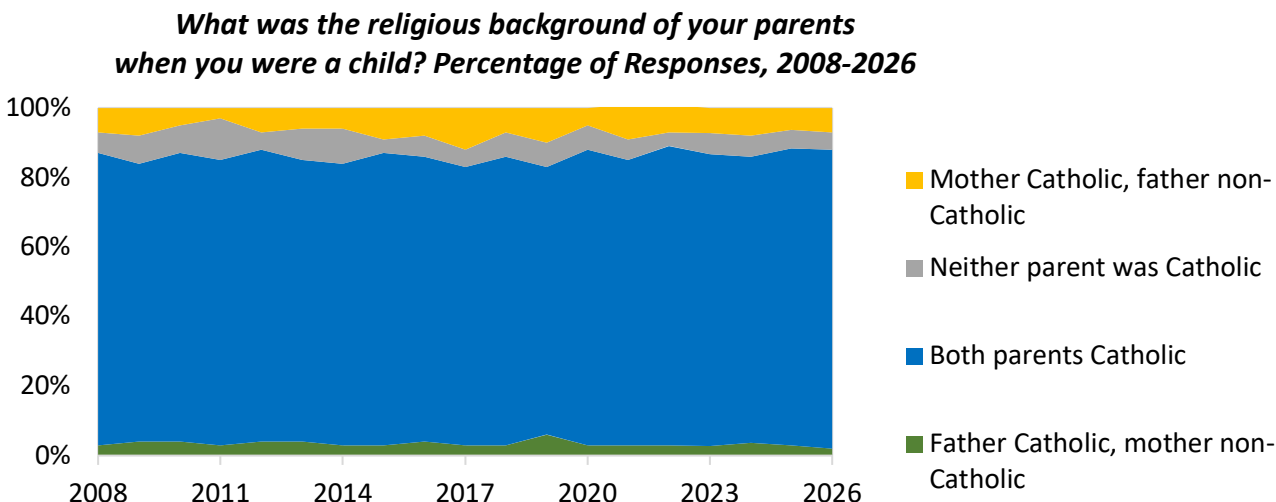
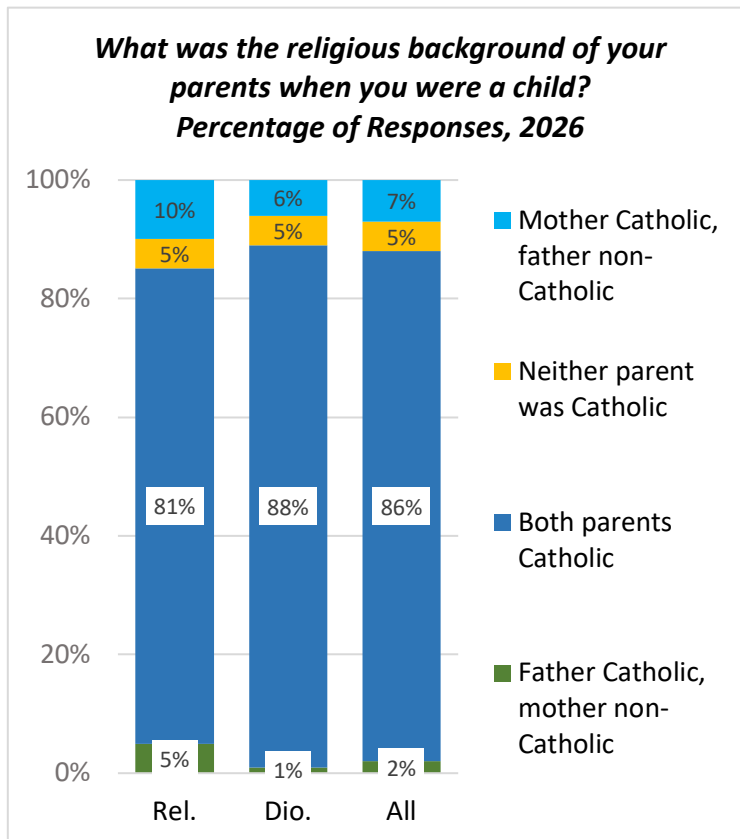
Family Religious Background - Part 3

Ordinands whose parents were both Catholic constituted 86% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 81% of ordinands in religious institutes and 88% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2008 and 2026, their share has averaged 83% and ranged between 77% and 86%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 88% \pm 4 pp of ordinands, in 2031.

Ordinands whose mother was Catholic and father was not constituted 7% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 10% of ordinands in religious institutes and 6% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2008 and 2026, their share has averaged 7% and ranged between 3% and 12%.

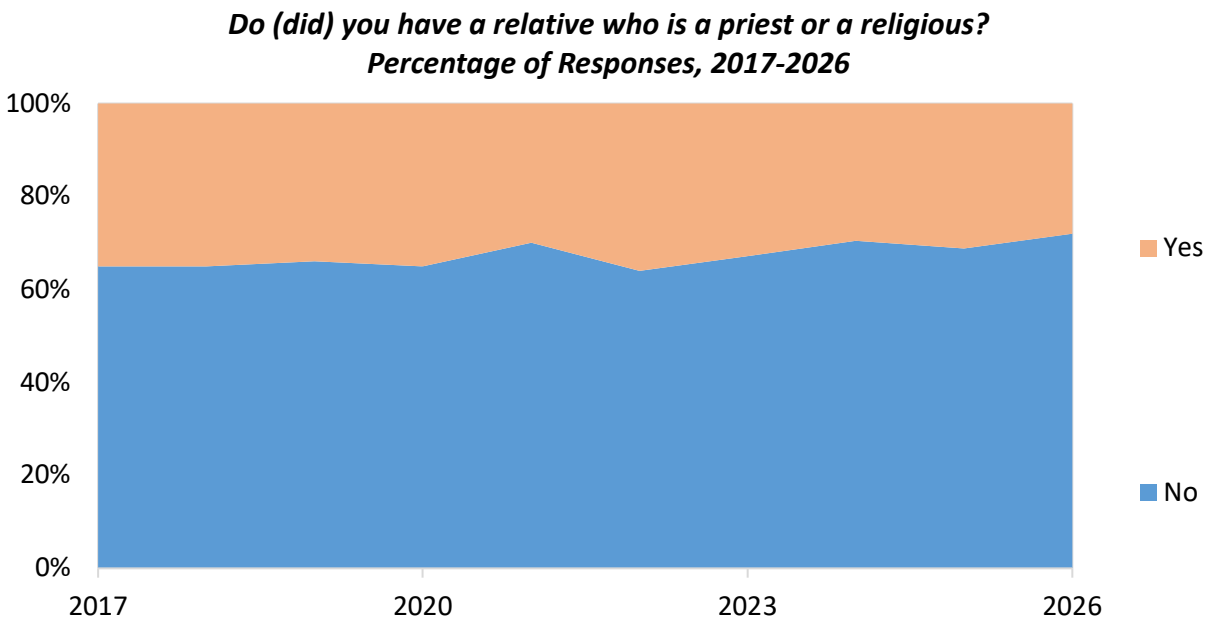
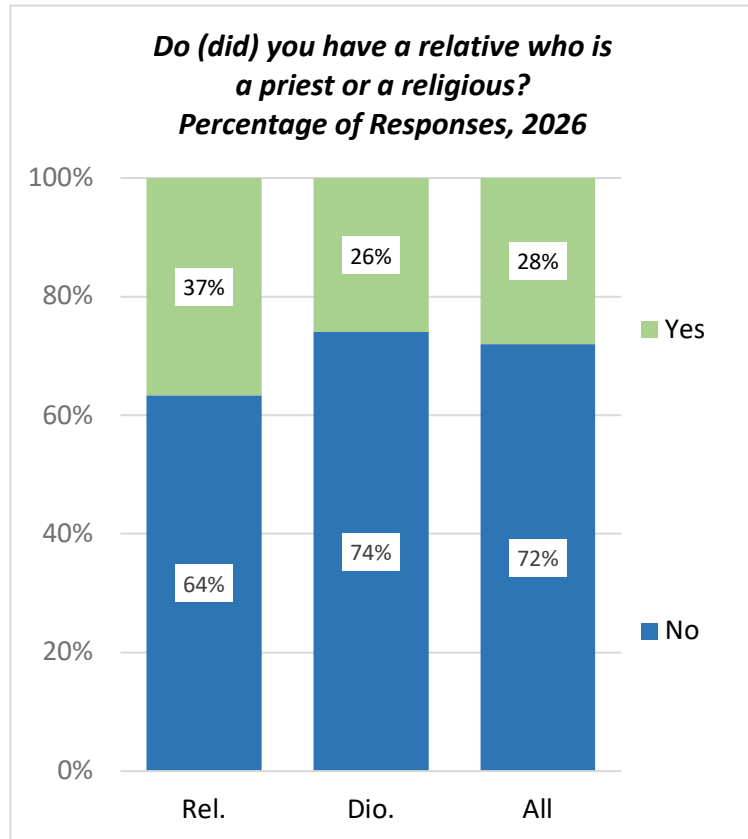
Ordinands whose parents were both not Catholics constituted 5% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 5% of ordinands in religious institutes and 5% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2008 and 2026, their share has averaged 7% and ranged between 4% and 12%.

Ordinands whose father was Catholic and mother was not constituted 2% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 5% of ordinands in religious institutes and 1% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2008 and 2026, their share has averaged 3% and ranged between 3% and 6%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 1% \pm 2 pp of ordinands, in 2031.



Family Religious Background - Part 4

Responding ordinands who have/had a relative who is a priest or a religious constituted 28% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 37% of ordinands in religious institutes and 26% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2017 and 2026, their share has averaged 33% and ranged between 29% and 36%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 22% ±5 pp of ordinands, in 2031.



Parents - Part 1

<i>Who raised you during the most formative part of your childhood?</i>			
Percentage of All Respondents, 2026			
	Religious	Diocesan	All
	%	%	%
Biological parent(s)	95	98	97
Grandparent (s)	13	11	11
Other relative(s)	5	2	3
Stepparent	0	3	2
Someone else	2	<1	1
Adoptive parent(s)	0	1	1
I prefer not to answer	2	0	<1

Ordinands who were raised by biological parent(s) constituted 97% of all respondents in 2026 (as compared to 95% in 2025). They represented 95% of ordinands in religious institutes and 98% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood.

Ordinands who were raised by grandparent(s) constituted 11% of all respondents in 2026 (as compared to 10% in 2025). They represented 13% of ordinands in religious institutes and 11% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood.

Ordinands who were raised by other relative(s) constituted 3% of all respondents in 2026 (as compared to 3% in 2025). They represented 5% of ordinands in religious institutes and 2% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood.

Ordinands who were raised by stepparents constituted 2% of all respondents in 2026 (as compared to 1% in 2025). They represented 0% of ordinands in religious institutes and 3% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood.

Ordinands who were raised by someone else constituted 1% of all respondents in 2026 (as compared to 1% in 2025). They represented 2% of ordinands in religious institutes and less than 1% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood.

Parents - Part 2

<i>During the most formative part of your childhood, were you raised by:</i>			
Percentage of Responses, 2026			
	Religious	Diocesan	All
	%	%	%
Married couple, living together	85	88	88
One parent, separated/divorced	5	5	5
One parent, widowed	3	1	2
Unmarried couple, living together	3	1	2
Unmarried couple, separately	0	1	1
Married couple, living separately	0	2	1
One parent, single/unmarried	0	<1	<1
Someone else	0	1	1
I prefer not to answer	3	1	1

Ordinands who were raised by a married couple, living together constituted 88% of all respondents in 2026 (as compared to 89% in 2025). They represented 85% of ordinands in religious institutes and 88% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood.

Ordinands who were raised by one parent, separated/divorced constituted 5% of all respondents in 2026 (as compared to 3% in 2025). They represented 5% of ordinands in religious institutes and 5% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood.

Ordinands who were raised by one parent, widowed constituted 2% of all respondents in 2026 (as compared to 3% in 2025). They represented 3% of ordinands in religious institutes and 1% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood.

Ordinands who were raised by one unmarried couple, living together constituted 2% of all respondents in 2026 (as compared to less than 1% in 2025). They represented 3% of ordinands in religious institutes and 1% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood.

Ordinands who were raised by a married couple, living separately constituted 1% of all respondents in 2026 (as compared to 1% in 2025). They represented 0% of ordinands in religious institutes and 1% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood.

Ordinands who were raised by someone else constituted less than 1% of all respondents in 2026 (as compared to less than 1% in 2025). They represented 0% of ordinands in religious institutes and less than 1% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood.

Siblings and Birth Order - Part 1

Altogether, responding ordinands had, on average, 3 brothers and sisters (half had between 0 and 2 siblings and the other half between 2 and 20 siblings). Since 2018, the average number of siblings was 3 and ranged between 3 and 3. If the trend continues, responding ordinands will have an average of 3 ± 0.5 siblings in 2031

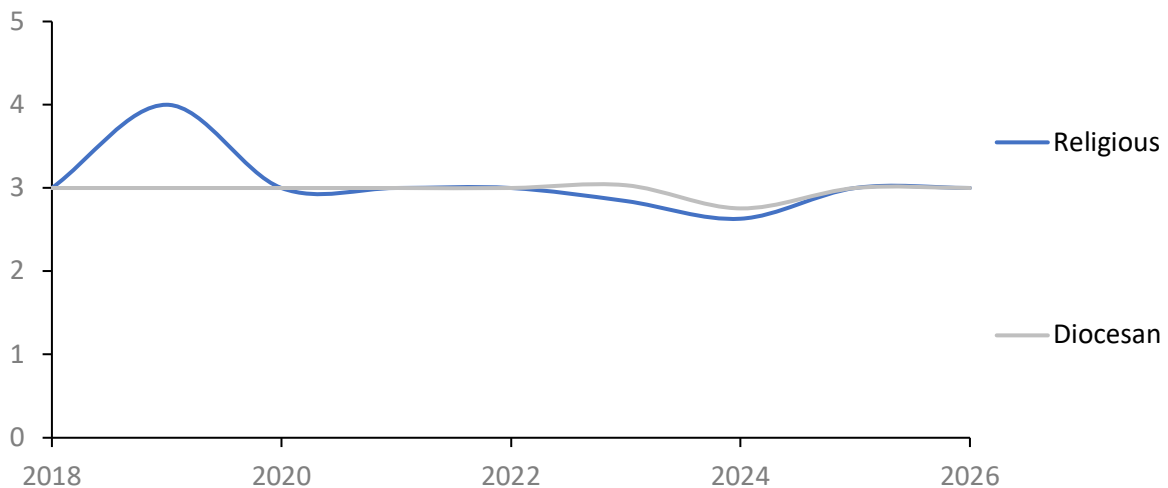
<i>How many brothers and sisters do you have?</i>			
Ordination Class of 2026			
	Religious	Diocesan	All
	[years]	[years]	[years]
Average	3	3	3
Median	2	3	3
Range	0 - 9	0 - 20	0 - 20

In 2026, on average, responding ordinands in religious institutes had about the same number of siblings as responding diocesan ordinands.

Responding ordinands in religious institutes in 2026 had, on average, 3 brothers and sisters (half had between 0 and 2 siblings and the other half between 2 and 9 siblings). Since 2018, the average number of siblings was 3 and ranged between 3 and 4. If the trend continues, the Ordination Class of 2028 ordinands will report having 3 ± 0.5 siblings.

Responding ordinands to diocesan priesthood in 2026 had, on average, 3 brothers and sisters (half had between 0 and 3 siblings and the other half between 3 and 20 siblings). Since 2018, the average number of siblings was 3 and ranged between 3 and 3.

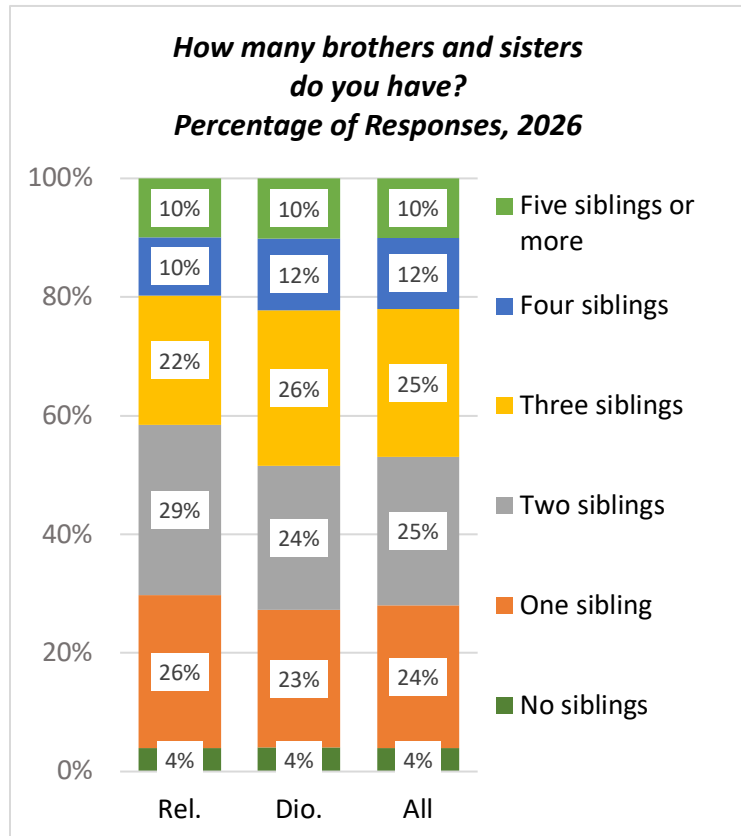
Average Number of Siblings, 2018-2026



Siblings and Birth Order - Part 2

Ordinands who have five siblings or more constituted 10 % of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 10% of ordinands in religious institutes and 10% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2026, their share has averaged 21% and ranged between 16% and 28%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 3% ±5 pp of ordinands, in 2031.

Ordinands who have four siblings constituted 12% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 10% of ordinands in religious institutes and 12% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2026, their share has averaged 10% and ranged between 8% and 13%.

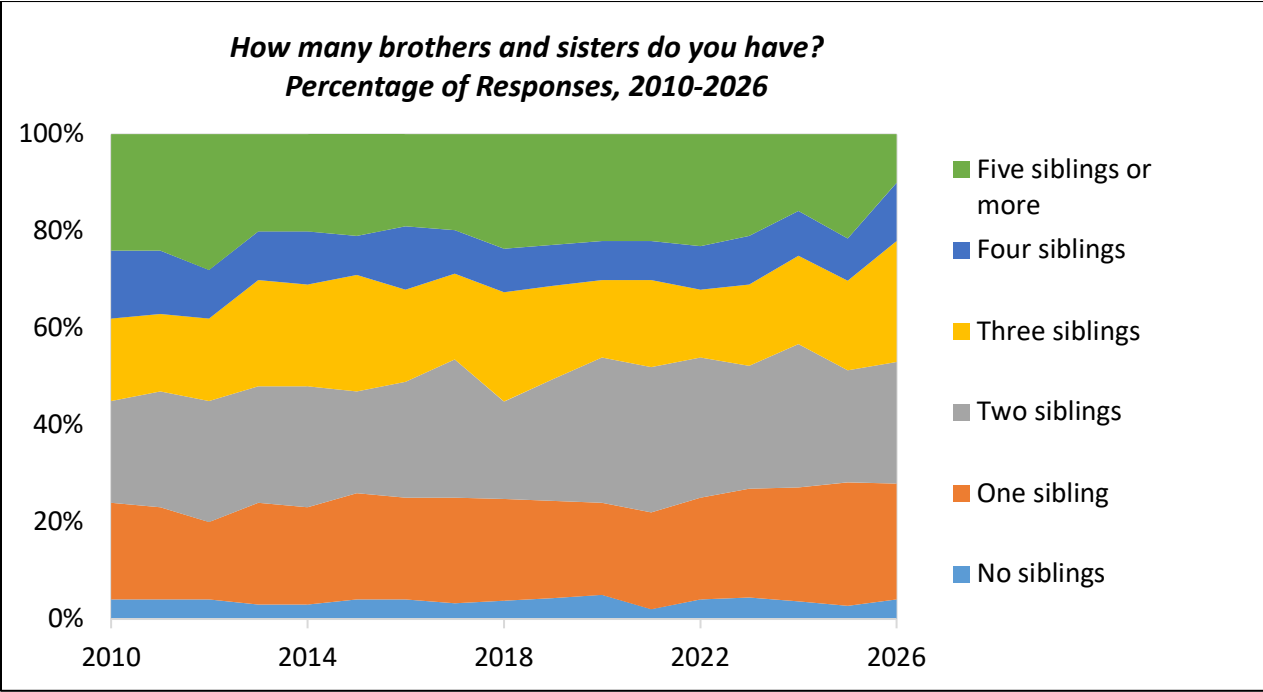


Ordinands who have three siblings constituted 25% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 22% of ordinands in religious institutes and 26% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2026, their share has averaged 19% and ranged between 14% and 24%.

Ordinands who have two siblings constituted 25% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 29% of ordinands in religious institutes and 24% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2026, their share has averaged 25% and ranged between 20% and 30%.

Ordinands who have one sibling constituted 24% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 26% of ordinands in religious institutes and 23% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2026, their share has averaged 21% and ranged between 16% and 23%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 27% ±4 pp of ordinands, in 2031.

Ordinands who are an only child constituted 4% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 4% of ordinands in religious institutes and 4% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2026, their share has averaged 4% and ranged between 2% and 5%.

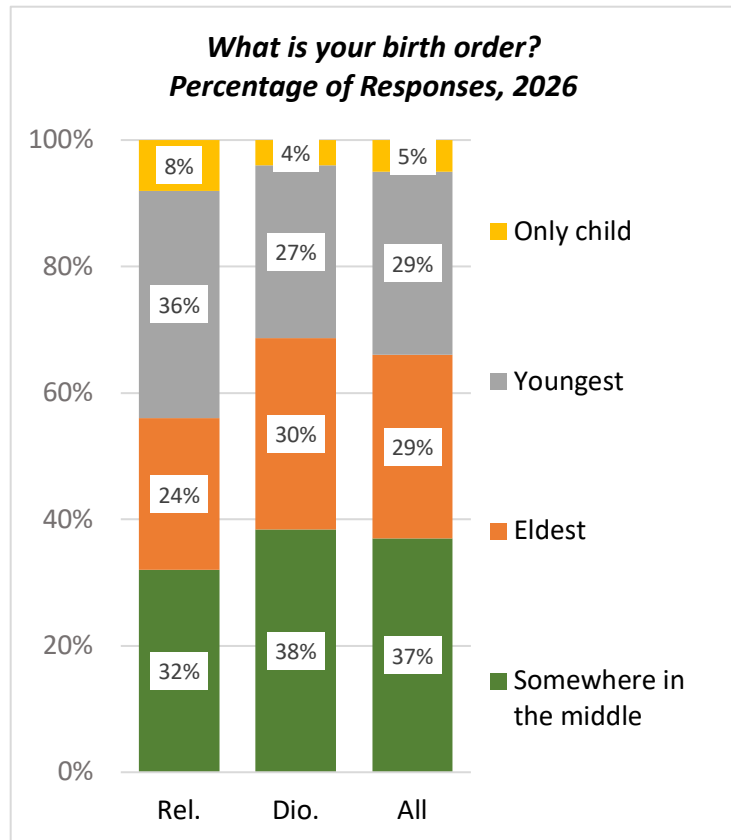


* Data for Ordination Class of 2019 is interpolated.

Siblings and Birth Order - Part 3

Ordinands who were born somewhere in the middle constituted 37% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 32% of ordinands in religious institutes and 38% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2026, their share has averaged 35% and ranged between 30% and 40%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 38% ±4 pp of ordinands, in 2031.

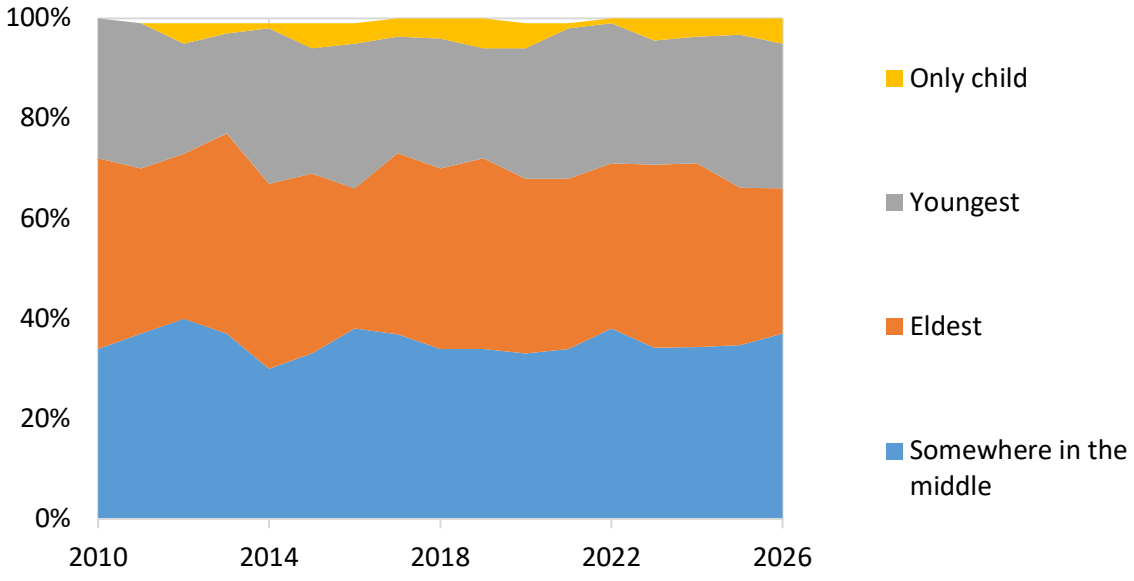
Ordinands who were the oldest among siblings constituted 29% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 24% of ordinands in religious institutes and 30% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2026, their share has averaged 35% and ranged between 28% and 40%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 25% ±4 pp of ordinands, in 2031.



Ordinands who were the youngest among siblings constituted 29% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 36% of ordinands in religious institutes and 27% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2026, their share has averaged 26% and ranged between 20% and 31%.

Ordinands who were the only child constituted 5% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 8% of ordinands in religious institutes and 4% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2026, their share has averaged 3% and ranged between 0% and 6%.

What is your birth order?
Percentage of Responses, 2010-2026



Part VII: Vocational Discernment

Prayer Practices

<i>Did you participate in any of these prayer practices or groups on a regular basis before entering the seminary?</i>			
Percentage of All Respondents, 2026			
	Religious	Diocesan	All
	%	%	%
Eucharistic Adoration	75	83	81
Rosary	70	81	79
Prayer/Bible group	59	50	52
Lectio Divina	46	48	48
High School Retreats	43	44	44
College Retreats	36	27	29

Overall, 91% of responding ordinands participated in at least a prayer practice before entering the seminary.

Ordinands who participated in Eucharistic Adoration constituted 81% of all respondents. They represented 75% of ordinands in religious institutes and 83% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2026, their share has averaged 72% and ranged between 62% and 86%.

Ordinands who regularly prayed the Rosary constituted 79% of all respondents. They represented 70% of ordinands in religious institutes and 81% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2026, their share has averaged 71% and ranged between 66% and 79%.

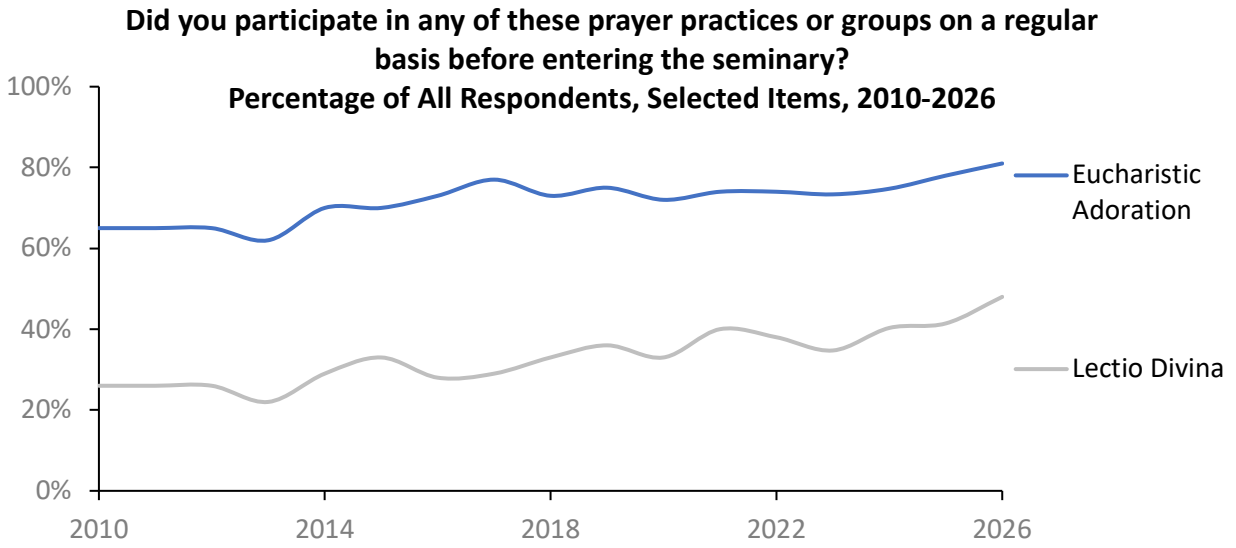
Ordinands who participated in prayer group/Bible study constituted 52% of all respondents. They represented 59% of ordinands in religious institutes and 50% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2026, their share has averaged 47% and ranged between 41% and 53%.

Ordinands who participated in Lectio Divina constituted 48% of all respondents. They represented 46% of ordinands in religious institutes and 48% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2026, their share has averaged 33% and ranged between 22% and 43%.

Ordinands who participated in a high school retreat constituted 44% of all respondents. They represented 43% of ordinands in religious institutes and 44% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2026, their share has averaged 38% and ranged between 29% and 44%.

Ordinands who participated in a college retreat constituted 29% of all respondents. They represented 36% of ordinands in religious institutes and 27% of ordinands to diocesan

priesthood. Between 2010 and 2026, their share has averaged 30% and ranged between 27% and 38%.



Programs and Activities

<i>Did you participate in any of these programs or activities before entering the seminary?</i>			
Percentage of All Respondents, 2026			
	Religious	Diocesan	All
	%	%	%
Parish youth group	44	69	64
Catholic campus ministry	34	30	31
Boy Scouts	34	32	31
Knights of Columbus/ KPC	32	28	29
Parish young adult group	30	26	27
Right to Life	24	13	15
Charismatic Renewal	6	9	9
St. Vincent de Paul Society	4	9	8
Cursillo	6	4	5
Volunteer program (CVN)	8	4	4
Serra Club	2	1	1

Overall, 82% of responding ordinands participated in at least a program or activity before entering the seminary.

Ordinands who belonged to parish youth group constituted 64% of all respondents. They represented 44% of ordinands in religious institutes and 69% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood (a statistically significant difference). Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 27% and ranged between 18% and 35%.

Ordinands who participated in Catholic campus ministry constituted 31% of all respondents. They represented 34% of ordinands in religious institutes and 30% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 43% and ranged between 22% and 42%.

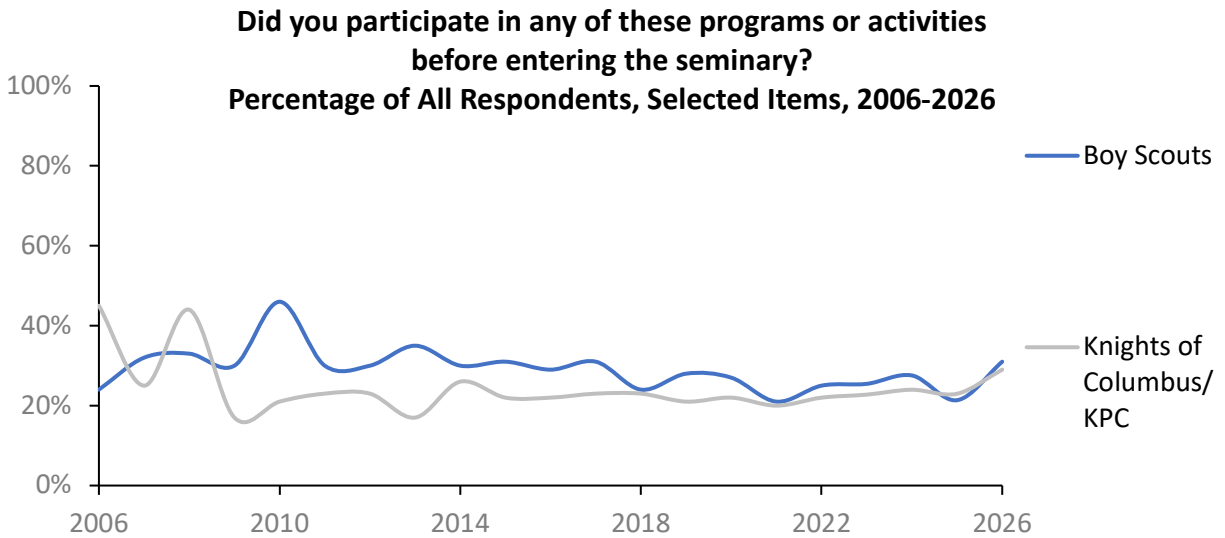
Ordinands who belonged to the Boy Scouts constituted 31% of all respondents. They represented 34% of ordinands in religious institutes and 32% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 29% and ranged between 21% and 46%.

Ordinands who belonged to the Knights of Columbus/ Knights of Peter Claver constituted 29% of all respondents. They represented 32% of ordinands in religious institutes and 28% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 25% and ranged between 17% and 45%.

Ordinands who belonged to a parish young adult group constituted 27% of all respondents. They represented 30% of ordinands in religious institutes and 26% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 43% and ranged between 23% and 54%.

Ordinands who were involved with Right to Life constituted 15% of all respondents. They represented 24% of ordinands in religious institutes and 13% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 16% and ranged between 13% and 22%.

Ordinands who belonged to Charismatic renewal constituted 9% of all respondents. They represented 6% of ordinands in religious institutes and 9% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 12% and ranged between 9% and 15%.



Events

<i>Did you participate in any of these events before entering the seminary?</i>			
Percentage of All Respondents, 2026			
	Religious	Diocesan	All
	%	%	%
Franciscan University Conference	13	19	18
FOCUS SEEK Conference	11	16	15
World Youth Day	13	11	11
National Catholic Youth Conference	8	10	9
Marian Days	8	4	5

Overall, 45% of responding ordinands participated in at least one event before entering the seminary.

Ordinands who participated in Franciscan University of Steubenville High School Youth Conference constituted 18% of all respondents. They represented 13% of ordinands in religious institutes and 19% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2026, their share has averaged 13% and ranged between 8% and 16%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 21% ± 5 pp of ordinands, in 2031.

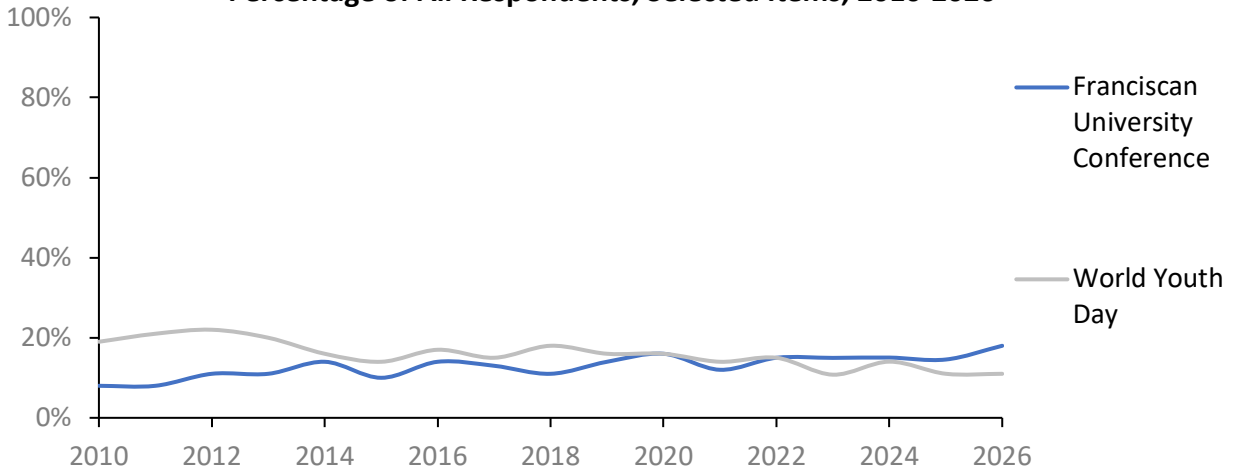
Ordinands who participated in the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS) SEEK Conference constituted 15% of all respondents. They represented 11% of ordinands in religious institutes and 16% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2026, their share has averaged 10% and ranged between 6% and 16%.

Ordinands who participated in World Youth Day constituted 11% of all respondents. They represented 13% of ordinands in religious institutes and 11% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2026, their share has averaged 16% and ranged between 6% and 15%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 8% ± 5 pp of ordinands, in 2031.

Ordinands who participated in the National Catholic Youth Conference constituted 9% of all respondents. They represented 8% of ordinands in religious institutes and 10% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2026, their share has averaged 7% and ranged between 4% and 10%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 11% ± 3 pp of ordinands, in 2031.

Ordinands who participated in the Marian Days constituted 5% of all respondents. They represented 8% of ordinands in religious institutes and 4% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2026, their share has averaged 5% and ranged between 4% and 9%.

**Did you participate in any of these events before entering the seminary?
Percentage of All Respondents, Selected Items, 2010-2026**



Parish Ministries

<i>Did you serve in any of these parish ministries before entering the seminary?</i>			
Percentage of All Respondents, 2026			
	Religious	Diocesan	All
	%	%	%
Altar server	72	81	79
Lector	52	49	49
EMHC	35	36	35
Campus/Youth ministry	40	33	34
Catechist	42	30	32
Cantor or music ministry	32	27	28
Confirmation sponsor	18	27	25
Usher/minister of hospitality	10	10	10
RCIA team member/sponsor	10	8	9
Parish pastoral council member	12	7	8
Liturgy committee member	7	6	6
Full-time parish/diocesan emp.	3	5	6

Overall, 93% of responding ordinands participated in at least one of the parish ministries in the table above before entering the seminary.

Ordinands who served as an altar server constituted 79% of all respondents. They represented 72% of ordinands in religious institutes and 81% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 74% and ranged between 67% and 80%.

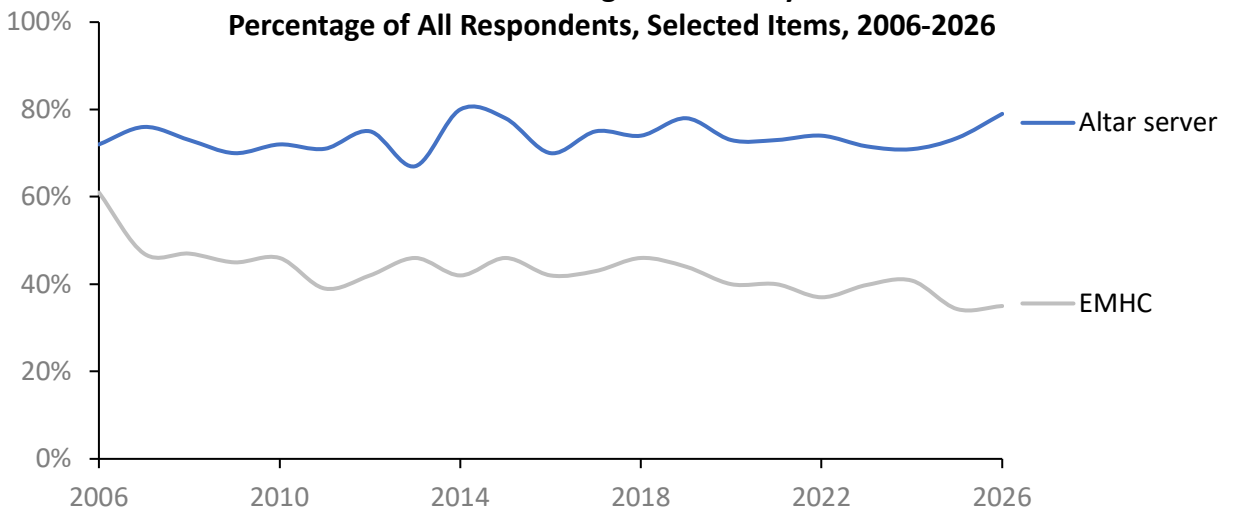
Ordinands who served as a lector constituted 49% of all respondents. They represented 52% of ordinands in religious institutes and 49% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 54% and ranged between 48% and 65%.

Ordinands who served as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion constituted 35% of all respondents. They represented 35% of ordinands in religious institutes and 36% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 43% and ranged between 37% and 61%.

Ordinands who served in Campus/Youth ministry constituted 34% of all respondents. They represented 40% of ordinands in religious institutes and 33% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 28% and ranged between 6% and 35%.

Ordinands who served as a catechist constituted 32% of all respondents. They represented 42% of ordinands in religious institutes and 30% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 36% and ranged between 32% and 46%.

**Did you serve in any of these parish ministries
before entering the seminary?
Percentage of All Respondents, Selected Items, 2006-2026**



Encouraging Influences

<i>Were you encouraged to consider the priesthood by any of these people?</i>			
Percentage of All Respondents, 2026			
	Religious	Diocesan	All
	%	%	%
Parish Priest	49	75	70
Friend	42	51	49
Mother	47	46	46
Parishioner	36	46	44
Father	42	37	37
Teacher/Catechist	32	30	30
Grandparent(s)	23	30	29
Other relative	26	22	23
Religious Brother/Priest	43	13	19
Campus Minister/School Chap.	25	18	19
Youth Minister	9	19	17
Religious Sister	13	16	15
Deacon	13	14	14
Bishop	9	11	11
Military Chaplain	0	1	1

Overall, 92% of ordinands were encouraged by at least one person listed in the table to consider the priesthood.

Ordinands encouraged by their parish priest constituted 70% of all respondents. They represented 49% of ordinands in religious institutes and 75% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood (a statistically significant difference). Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 70% and ranged between 63% and 85%.

Ordinands encouraged by their friend constituted 49% of all respondents. They represented 42% of ordinands in religious institutes and 51% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 46% and ranged between 24% and 53%.

Ordinands encouraged by their mother constituted 46% of all respondents. They represented 47% of ordinands in religious institutes and 46% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 38% and ranged between 15% and 42%.

Ordinands encouraged by a parishioner constituted 44% of all respondents. They represented 36% of ordinands in religious institutes and 46% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 41% and ranged between 9% and 47%.

Ordinands encouraged by their father constituted 37% of all respondents. They represented 42% of ordinands in religious institutes and 37% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 29% and ranged between 12% and 37%.

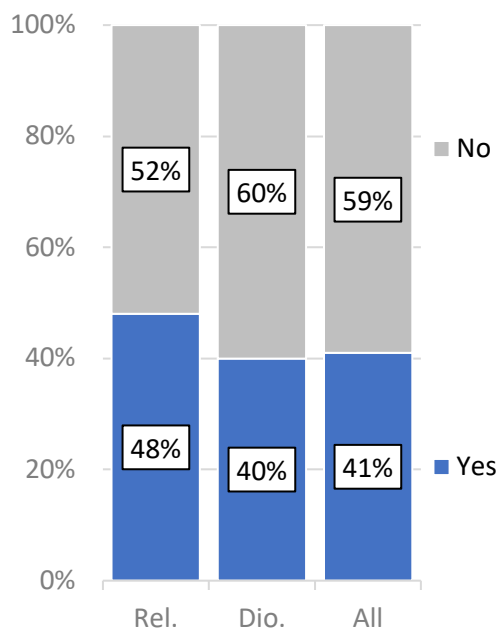
Ordinands encouraged by their teacher/catechist constituted 30% of all respondents. They represented 32% of ordinands in religious institutes and 30% of ordinands to diocesan

priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 25% and ranged between 8% and 31%.

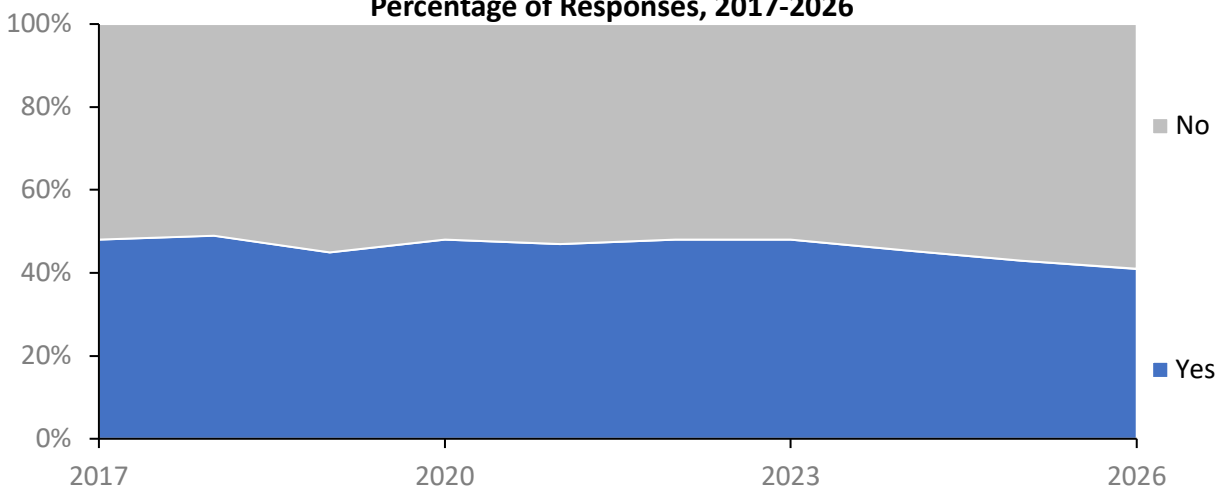
Discouraging Influences - Part 1

Responding ordinands who were discouraged from considering priesthood as a vocation constituted 41% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 48% of ordinands in religious institutes and 40% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2017 and 2026, their share has averaged 46% and ranged between 45% and 49%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 33% ±4 pp of ordinands, in 2031.

**Did anyone discourage you from considering priesthood as a vocation?
Percentage of Responses, 2026**



**Did anyone discourage you from considering priesthood as a vocation?
Percentage of Responses, 2017-2026**



Discouraging Influences - Part 2

Who discouraged you?			
Percentage of All Respondents, 2026			
	Religious	Diocesan	All
	%	%	%
Other family member	22	21	22
Friend or school classmate	21	16	17
Mother	21	10	12
Father	19	10	12
Colleague or coworker	8	5	6
Teacher	5	4	4
Priest or other clergy	2	3	3
Someone else	3	3	3
Religious sister or brother	0	1	1
Youth/campus minister	0	1	1

Ordinands discouraged by a family member other than their mother and father constituted 22% of all respondents. They represented 22% of ordinands in religious institutes and 21% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2017 and 2026, their share has averaged 22% and ranged between 20% and 25%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 22% \pm 3 pp of ordinands, in 2031.

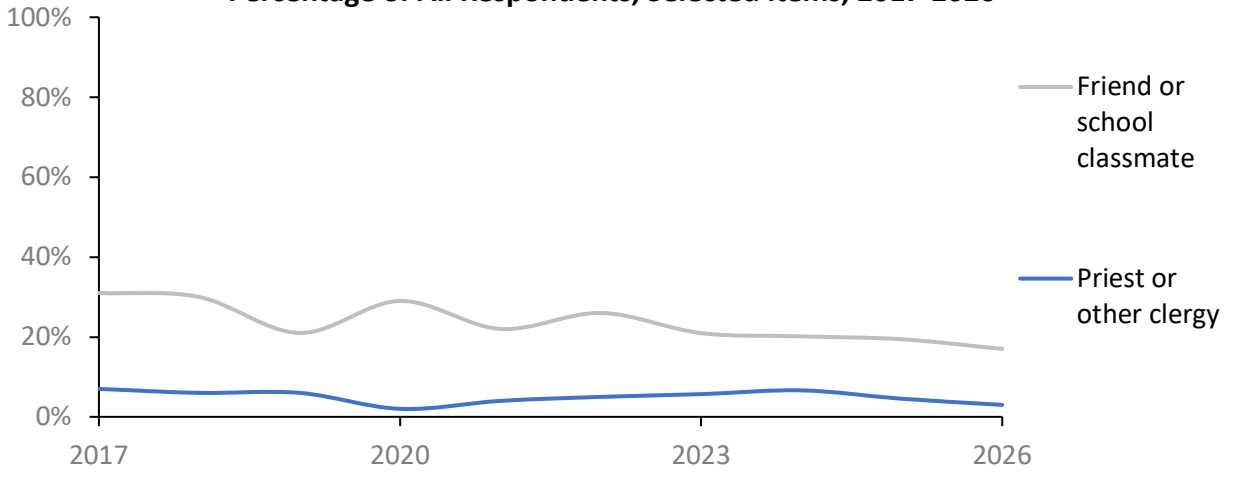
Ordinands discouraged by a friend or school classmate constituted 17% of all respondents. They represented 21% of ordinands in religious institutes and 16% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2017 and 2026, their share has averaged 24% and ranged between 20% and 31%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 10% \pm 5 pp of ordinands, in 2031.

Ordinands discouraged by their mother constituted 12% of all respondents. They represented 21% of ordinands in religious institutes and 10% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood (a statistically significant difference). Between 2017 and 2026, their share has averaged 12% and ranged between 10% and 16%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 12% \pm 3 pp of ordinands, in 2031.

Ordinands discouraged by their father constituted 12% of all respondents. They represented 19% of ordinands in religious institutes and 10% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2017 and 2026, their share has averaged 12% and ranged between 10% and 15%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 12% \pm 3 pp of ordinands, in 2031.

Ordinands discouraged by a colleague or coworker constituted 6% of all respondents. They represented 8% of ordinands in religious institutes and 5% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2017 and 2026, their share has averaged 9% and ranged between 6% and 13%.

**Who discouraged you?
Percentage of All Respondents, Selected Items, 2017-2026**



Vocation Programs

<i>Did you participate in any of these vocation programs before entering the seminary?</i>			
Percentage of All Respondents, 2026			
	Religious	Diocesan	All
	%	%	%
Come and See weekend	75	48	53
Quo Vadis retreat	8	23	20
High school vocation program	10	14	14
College vocation program	16	10	11
Other parish vocation program	5	11	10
Operation Andrew	0	9	7
Elementary school or CCD	10	6	6
Traveling chalice, cross, etc.	0	4	4

Overall, 74% of responding ordinands participated in at least a vocation program before entering the seminary.

Ordinands who participated in a Come and See weekend at the seminary or the religious institute/society constituted 53% of all respondents. They represented 75% of ordinands in religious institutes and 48% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood (a statistically significant difference). Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 46% and ranged between 37% and 52%.

Ordinands who participated in a Quo Vadis retreat constituted 20% of all respondents. They represented 8% of ordinands in religious institutes and 23% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood (a statistically significant difference). Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 14% and ranged between 7% and 20%.

Ordinands who participated in a high school vocation program constituted 14% of all respondents. They represented 10% of ordinands in religious institutes and 14% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 12% and ranged between 10% and 15%.

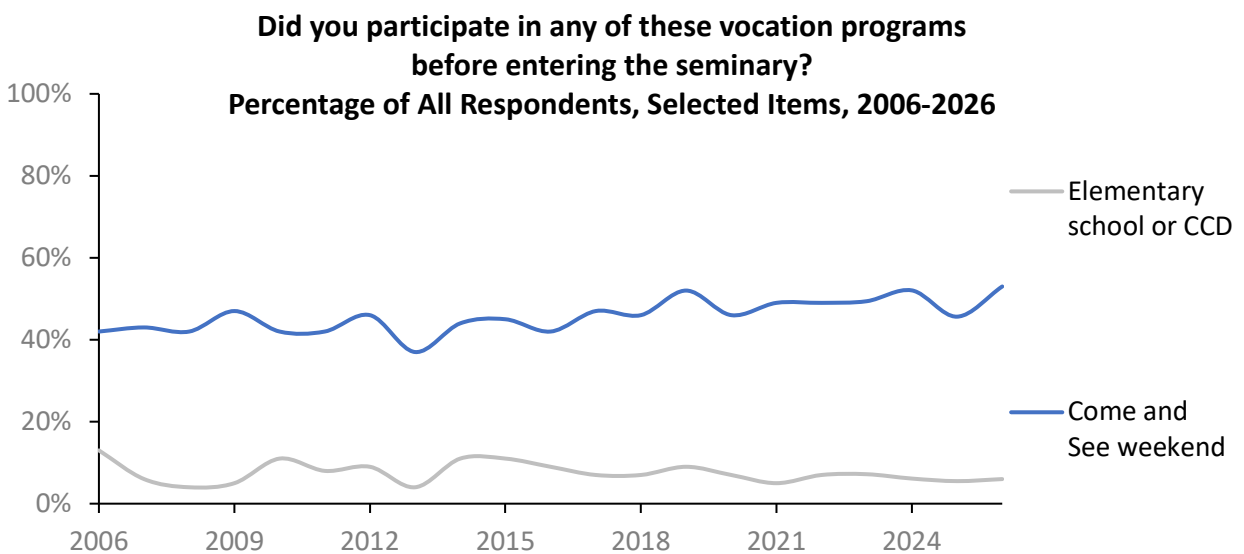
Ordinands who participated in a college vocation program constituted 11% of all respondents. They represented 16% of ordinands in religious institutes and 10% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 11% and ranged between 9% and 14%.

Ordinands who participated in some other parish vocation program constituted 10% of all respondents. They represented 5% of ordinands in religious institutes and 11% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 9% and ranged between 7% and 14%.

Ordinands who participated in Operation Andrew constituted 7% of all respondents. They represented 0% of ordinands in religious institutes and 9% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 6% and ranged between 2% and 9%.

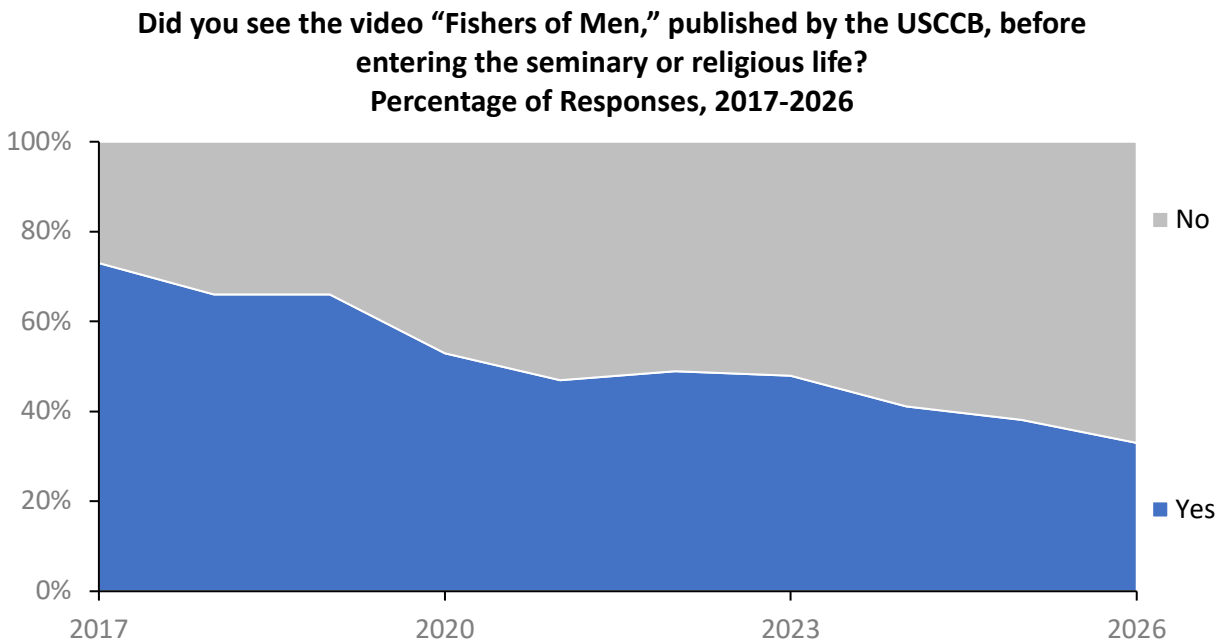
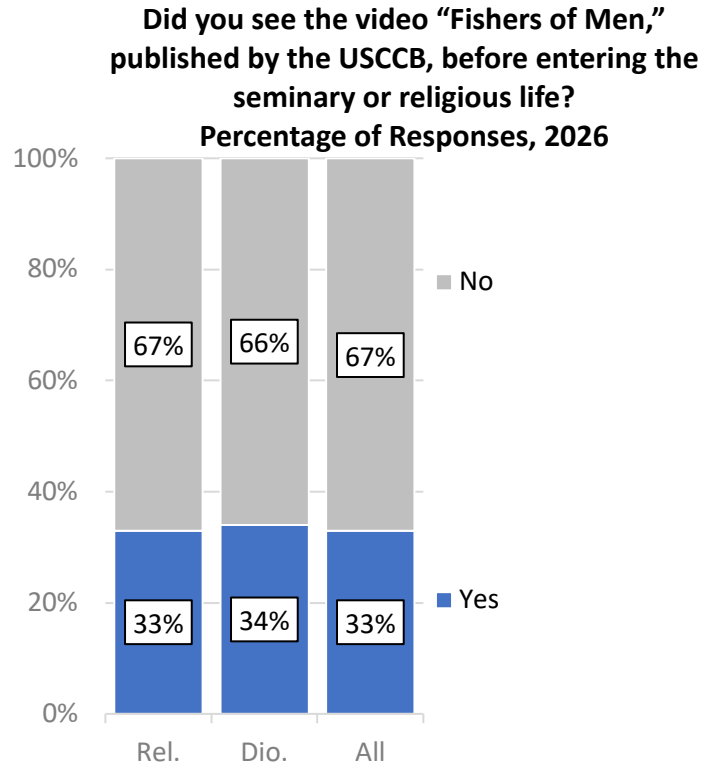
Ordinands who participated in an elementary school or CCD vocation program constituted 6% of all respondents. They represented 10% of ordinands in religious institutes and 6% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 8% and ranged between 4% and 13%.

Ordinands who visited a traveling chalice/cross/statue for vocations constituted 4% of all respondents. They represented 0% of ordinands in religious institutes and 4% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2026, their share has averaged 3% and ranged between 1% and 5%.



Video “Fishers of Men”

Responding ordinands who saw the video “Fishers of Men” before entering the seminary or religious life constituted 33% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2026. They represented 33% of ordinands in religious institutes and 34% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2017 and 2026, their share has averaged 51% and ranged between 41% and 73%.



Part VIII: Formation

Formation Activities

<i>Please indicate how much each of these formation activities contributed to your vocation as you prepare for priesthood.</i>			
Percentage who Responded "somewhat" or "very much" in 2026			
	Religious	Diocesan	All
	%	%	%
Pastoral Year internship	76	67	68
Clinical Pastoral Education	59	51	52
Priestly fraternity group	26	49	46
Pastoral Language Immersion	49	44	45
Institute for Priestly Formation	27	47	44
Thirty Day Retreat	60	41	44
Spirituality Year	71	35	42
English as a Second Language	29	27	28

Ordinands who indicated that a pastoral year internship contributed at least “somewhat” to their vocation constituted 68% of ordinands who responded to this question. They represented 76% of ordinands in religious institutes and 67% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2019 and 2026, their share has averaged 81% and ranged between 74% and 90%.

Ordinands who indicated that Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) contributed at least “somewhat” to their vocation constituted 52% of ordinands. They represented 59% of ordinands in religious institutes and 51% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2019 and 2026, their share has averaged 64% and ranged between 57% and 78%.

Ordinands who indicated that a priestly fraternity group (e.g., Jesus Caritas) contributed at least “somewhat” to their vocation constituted 46% of ordinands. They represented 26% of ordinands in religious institutes and 49% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2019 and 2026, their share has averaged 60% and ranged between 49% and 73%.

Ordinands who indicated that a Pastoral Language Immersion contributed at least “somewhat” to their vocation constituted 45% of ordinands. They represented 49% of ordinands in religious institutes and 44% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2019 and 2026, their share has averaged 55% and ranged between 45% and 64%.

Ordinands who indicated that an Institute for Priestly Formation contributed at least “somewhat” to their vocation constituted 44% of ordinands. They represented 27% of ordinands in religious institutes and 47% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2019 and 2026, their share has averaged 58% and ranged between 44% and 70%.

Ordinands who indicated that a thirty-day retreat contributed at least “somewhat” to their vocation constituted 44% of ordinands. They represented 60% of ordinands in religious institutes

and 41% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood (a statistically significant difference). Between 2019 and 2026, their share has averaged 64% and ranged between 49% and 81%.

Ordinands who indicated that a spirituality year contributed at least “somewhat” to their vocation constituted 42% of ordinands. They represented 71% of ordinands in religious institutes and 35% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood (a statistically significant difference). Between 2019 and 2026, their share has averaged 65% and ranged between 46% and 83%.