

## Women's Experiences in Diocesan Leadership Positions

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In June 1999, "Women in Diocesan Leadership Positions: A Progress Report" detailed the results of a quantitative study done for the NCCB Committee on Women in Society and in the Church. The survey concluded that between the years 1995 and 1998 "women [held] approximately one-quarter of top diocesan positions, 40% to 50% of middle management positions and 60% of non-supervisory professional positions in the 50% of Catholic dioceses that participated in the survey." The proportion of women in all these areas appeared to be growing slightly from year to year.

As a follow-up to this research, the NCCB Committee on Women decided to undertake a qualitative research component to complement the quantitative research. It developed a two-fold project: (1) a March, 2001 consultation with a cross-section of women who hold high-level diocesan positions; and (2) a survey of this same group regarding their experiences as women in church leadership.

In July, 2000, Archbishop John G. Vlazny, chairman of the Committee on Women, invited diocesan bishops to submit the names of women in their dioceses who should be considered for the consultation. This process generated a list of 378 names representing 128 dioceses. Only about one-third of this group could be invited to the consultation; however, it was decided to send a survey to all the names on the list. The survey was mailed in September, 2000. A total of 233 usable surveys were received by October. These surveys were then sent to the Life Cycle Institute at the Catholic University of America for the statistical analysis that appears in the following pages.

A report on the consultation will be issued later this year.

### Demographics of Respondents

Respondents to the current survey come from a wide variety of states of life, as shown in Table One. While 40% are vowed religious sisters, the majority (60%) are not. Married women seem to be somewhat under-represented in proportion to their numbers in the Church as a whole.

TABLE ONE

<b>State of Life</b>	<b>% Respondents (n=233)</b>
Vowed religious	40

Married	36
Single (never married)	17
Divorced or separated	5
Widowed	2
Total	100

The typical respondent is between 50 and 60 years of age, which reflects, at least partially, the experience required to hold these types of leadership positions. As had been expected, vowed religious tend to be older than other respondents, but there is still a large amount of variation within all categories.

TABLE TWO

<b>Age</b>	<b>% of All Women (n=233)</b>	<b>% Vowed Religious (n=92)</b>	<b>% Married Women (n=84)</b>	<b>% Single Women (n=40)</b>
21 to 30 years old	<1	0	0	3
31 to 40 years old	4	0	6	13
41 to 50 years old	19	7	29	20
51 to 60 years old	48	45	50	50
61 to 70 years old	25	42	13	15
71 or more years old	3	7	2	0

Total	100	100	100	100
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Notes

1. Percentages in Tables Two through Eight do not always add up to 100 due to rounding.
2. The total number of respondents for each table varies because not all respondents answered every question.

Over 80% of all respondents are White (see Table Three). Five percent of respondents are African-American and six percent are Hispanic. Among U.S. Catholics, 3-5% are African-American and 13-40% are Hispanic.

TABLE THREE

<b>Race / Ethnicity</b>	<b>% of All Women (n=233)</b>	<b>% Vowed Religious (n=92)</b>	<b>% Married Women (n=84)</b>	<b>% Single Women (n=40)</b>
White American	83	84	83	90
Hispanic American	6	7	6	5
African American	5	3	6	3
Asian American	2	1	1	3
Native American	1	1	1	0
Other, or more than one	3	4	2	0
Total	100	100	100	100

As shown in Table Four, respondents are well-educated, the vast majority having attended graduate school. The proportion of respondents with church-related advanced degrees (e.g.

religious education, religious ministry, theology, etc.) Is somewhat greater than the proportion of respondents with more general advanced degrees (education, business administration, social work or counseling, the sciences, etc.). Vowed religious leaders tend to be more educated than the other women in the sample. The generally high level of education and training suggests that the women in the sample are very well prepared for their leadership roles.

**TABLE FOUR**  
**Educational Background of Respondents**

<b>Highest Educational Degree</b>	<b>% of All Women (n=213)</b>	<b>% Vowed Religious (n=92)</b>	<b>% Married Women (n=84)</b>	<b>% Single Women (n=40)</b>
High school	<1	0	0	3
Some college or technical school	8	0	15	3
Bachelor's degree or some graduate school	13	3	22	18
Master's Degree (not specifically church-related)	24	32	19	18
Master's Degree or Licentiate (church-related)	40	48	36	41
Doctorate-level Degree (PhD, JD) (not specifically church-related)	8	9	7	8
Doctorate-level Degree (church-related)	6	8	0	10
Total	100	100	100	100

**Note.** There were also 22 respondents who did not answer or whose answers could not be categorized. Therefore, the total **n** (number of responses) is 213.

## Respondents' Positions Within the Diocese

Table Five shows the positions held by the respondents. Thirty-four percent of respondents work in administrative roles affecting the whole diocese; 20% lead educational ministry, 14% lead some aspect of social justice ministry. The remaining 32% are generally directors or assistant directors of other offices (e.g. office of evangelization, women's issues, family ministry, young adult ministry, pro-life ministry, office of worship, office of consecrated life, office of vocations) or did not provide enough information to be better identified.

TABLE FIVE

<b>Respondent's Title</b>	<b>% of All Women (n=228)</b>	<b>% Vowed Religious (n=92)</b>	<b>% Married Women (n=79)</b>	<b>% Single Women (n=40)</b>
<b>Diocesan Administrator</b>	34	38	30	35
Chancellor, vice-chancellor, or Executive Assistant to the Bishop	17	29	9	5
Newspaper editor, communications director, or public relations director	7	1	10	15
Director of finance, stewardship or business	4	2	9	3
Director of personnel or human resources	3	1	3	8
Tribunal director, tribunal member, or director of canonical affairs	3	4	0	5
<b>Educational Administrator</b>	20	25	15	20
Superintendent of Schools or Director of Education	9	13	6	5
Diocesan director of	3	2	4	5

religious education or catechesis				
Director of formation or education in general	8	10	5	10
<b>Social Service Administrator</b>	14	11	14	13
Director of a social justice or ethnic ministry program	10	10	5	13
Director of social services, CCHD or Catholic Charities, or a branch thereof	4	1	9	0
<b>Other Administrator</b>	32	26	41	33
Director of another diocesan office	25	24	32	23
Other (not a department head)	7	2	9	10
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

A total of thirty women report having the position of chancellor (not including vice-chancellors), which has only recently become available to women. Of these women chancellors, twenty (67%) are vowed religious. An additional five chancellors (18%) are married women. The remaining chancellors are single or divorced.

Further information on the respondents' role within the diocese is available by examining the titles held by their supervisors. Therefore, respondents were asked about the person to whom they report. Results are shown in Table Six. Forty-four percent of all women report directly to the Bishop, indicating that they hold a high-level role in the diocese. Fifty-one percent of women religious report directly to the Bishop.

TABLE SIX  
Respondents' Supervisors)

<b>Respondent's</b>	<b>% of All Women</b>	<b>% Vowed Religious</b>	<b>% Married Women</b>	<b>% Single Women</b>
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<b>Supervisor's Title</b>	(n=231)	(n=92)	(n=83)	(n=39)
Diocesan Bishop or Archbishop	44	51	40	38
Chancellor	5	7	6	0
Vicar General	8	10	5	10
Moderator of the Curia	4	5	4	3
Coordinator of Staff	1	2	0	0
Department head, vicar, secretary, or cabinet member	17	5	24	28
More than one supervisor reported	20	18	20	18
Other	1	1	1	3
Total	100	100	100	100

On average, respondents report having held their position for 6.8 years. More specific information is shown in Table Seven. Very few respondents have held their position for a long time, and many respondents are new on the job. This may be a sign that the representation of women in high diocesan offices has been growing rapidly, although it could indicate high turnover rates within specific positions.

**TABLE SEVEN**  
Respondents' Tenure in Office

<b>Time in Present Position</b>	<b>% of All Women</b> (n=233)	<b>% Vowed Religious</b> (n=93)	<b>% Married Women</b> (n=83)	<b>% Single Women</b> (n=40)
0 to 2 Years	24	22	28	28

2.5 to 5 Years	28	28	24	35
5.5 to 10 Years	25	25	28	20
10.5 to 15 Years	15	17	14	10
15.5 to 20 Years	6	5	6	5
20.5 to 25 Years	1	2	0	3
25.5 to 30 Years	<1	1	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100

The dioceses in which the respondents serve vary greatly in size as shown in Table Eight. The respondents report coming from small, medium, and large dioceses in about equal proportions. The slightly larger number from large dioceses does not necessarily mean that a given woman would be more likely to attain an administrative position in a larger dioceses than in smaller one. It may be that larger dioceses simply have more administrative positions available than smaller dioceses do, or that the sample happened to include more larger than smaller dioceses.

TABLE EIGHT  
Size of Respondents' Diocese

<b>Size of Respondent's Diocese</b>	<b>% of All Women (n=229)</b>	<b>% Vowed Religious (n=90)</b>	<b>% Married Women (n=83)</b>	<b>% Single Women (n=39)</b>
Small (fewer than 150,000 Catholics)	32	38	28	26
Medium (150,000 to 350,000 Catholics)	30	31	28	31
Large (more than 350,000 Catholics)	38	31	45	44
Total	100	100	100	100



A major purpose of the survey was to examine how women's voices are heard in church decision-making. Using several open-ended questions, the survey looked at the nature of women's participation in Church leadership and their experiences of collaboration and mentoring.

Respondents were asked what characteristics, in general, promoted or hindered women's participation in decision-making. Results are shown in Tables Nine and Ten, respectively. The survey did not specify whether these characteristics should be characteristics of the woman (e.g. integrity, intelligence) or of the diocese (e.g. a collaborative culture, a professional facilitator, an excellent bishop). Respondents gave both kinds of answers, which are shown separately in the tables.

**TABLE NINE**

**Survey Question:** *"Based on your own experiences, what helps women's voices to be heard in the decision-making process?"*

<b>Characteristics of the woman herself</b>	<b>% Respondents</b>
The woman has earned trust by loyalty and respectfulness, or by years of service	37
The woman is competent and has excellent skills, knowledge or credentials	34
The woman has good social skills, communicates and collaborates well	24
The woman is assertive but not aggressive	8
<b>Characteristics of the diocese</b>	
The Bishop and other diocesan leaders are open-minded towards women	30
The woman is invited to and speaks up at meetings or other public forums	24
The diocese's leadership structures are open to women and lay participation	15
Other women in leadership support the woman	3
<b>Other</b>	<b>8</b>

**Note.** The percentages add up to more than 100 because each respondent was allowed to give more than one answer. Up to three answers per respondent were recorded.

### *Comments from the Surveys*

*"For a woman's voice to be heard, it is necessary to establish relationships that are trusting, respectful, credible, open and honest. It takes a little time for this to happen."*

*"Focus on fidelity to the Church, rather than promoting a strictly women's agenda...work with the existing structure rather than constantly challenging it."*

*"Expertise, proven record, clear thinking, professionalism, nondefensive attitude, a love for the Church and willingness to deal with the institutional sins"*

*"The person herself has credibility, gained through being a person of integrity, developing a pattern of both service and speaking the truth in love, putting oneself in positions to exercise gifts, and accepting responsibility."*

*"Competence and scholarly preparation of women for the positions they seek as well as ongoing research and development of professional skills"*

*"[Women are heard] if they are well-prepared, self-assured, respectful and respectable, have an appropriate sense of humor, and continue to familiarize themselves with the 'territory'."*

*"A bishop who is open to a variety of people, including clergy, religious and lay people, is very helpful."*

*"The example of the Bishop, who appoints women to committees based on their education, experience, and professional expertise"*

*"When all leadership is committed to principles of collegiality, subsidiarity and collaboration, with a clear understanding of roles, all voices can be heard. The exercise of church authority takes into account gathering up wisdom."*

### TABLE TEN

**Survey Question:** *"What hinders women's voices from being heard?"*

<b>Characteristics of the woman herself</b>	<b>% Respondents</b>
The woman is overly militant, combative, single-minded or insubordinate	27

The woman shows strong emotion or is too sensitive or defensive	12
The woman is afraid, discouraged or pessimistic	11
The woman is inexperienced, incompetent or unprepared	7
<b>Characteristics of the diocese</b>	
The diocese's leadership structures do not allow women's voices to be heard	31
The diocesan leaders or priests have sexist attitudes or don't understand women	30
The diocesan leaders do not make decisions in a collaborative way	18
<b>Other</b>	12

**Note.** The percentages add up to more than 100 because each respondent was allowed to give more than one answer. Up to three answers per respondent were recorded.

### *Comments from the Surveys*

*"The very fact that a woman must prove her credibility is a hindrance. But a woman will not be heard if she is defensive, aggressive, and refuses to respect the authority and structure of the organization."*

*"...a person who does not respect the clergy--not all clergy are problems, many are kind and caring"*

*"Personal agenda that fails to address the agenda of the group...over-competitiveness"*

*"Strident and angry voices are not heard. Dialogue and relationship occur in environments of mutual trust."*

*"Persons who are very aggressive about women's issues and who constantly criticize the church because of these issues and their personal agendas"*

*"...a clericalism that is so much a way of life that clergy (especially clergy in chancery positions) are often not aware that it inherently excludes not only women, but lay men as well. Frankly, my*

*experience is that lay men are hurt by this far more than women."*

*"The structures that are in place are masculine and clerical. The position I have has always been filled by a priest and old patterns are hard to change. Although I am in a very good situation with a wonderful Bishop, there are still times when one feels invisible."*

*"A major factor which hinders women's voices from being heard is a general lack of accessibility to the bishop, pastor, department heads, or other church leaders. If church leadership wants information from the 'rank and file' then some availability for input is required."*

*"Unnecessary requirements for positions to be held by priests and an unwillingness to listen to women"*

*"Assuming that all women have the same point of view or perspective...Assuming that there are certain areas of church life about which women have no interest or concern"*

*"It is my experience that many of the clergy are afraid of women, don't know how to relate to women or don't like women."*

*"I think the formation that priests receive does not facilitate their ability to collaborate with women or to be open to their participation in decision-making. It is rare that there is a priest who is inclusive of women and this is even more evident among the newer clergy."*

## Personal Experiences in Church Ministry

Respondents were asked to describe their positive and negative experiences as a Church leader. Respondents commented on different aspects of their careers. Some of these related to gender issues but others related to the satisfactions and frustrations of being a manager in a hierarchical organization, or of being a minister in the Catholic Church. There did not seem to be a clear distinction between gender and other issues. These personal positive and negative experiences are summarized in Tables Eleven and Twelve respectively.

### TABLE ELEVEN

**Survey Question:** *"Please identify one or two positive or affirming experiences that you have had as a woman in church leadership."*

	<b>% Respondents</b>
Being trusted, respected, or supported by the bishop or other leader	32
Being trusted, respected, or supported by clergy or laypersons	31

Attaining a particular prestigious position	31
Doing a worthy, challenging, or charitable task	24
Successful collaboration with co-workers and other ministers	8
Influencing a decision by a bishop or other leader	7
Other	5

**Note.** The percentages add up to more than 100 because each respondent was allowed to give more than one answer. Up to two answers per respondent were recorded.

### *Comments from the Surveys*

*"I have been involved with difficult management decisions and received support from the bishops. This was significant because other leaders in the management/administrative structure were not as supportive."*

*"I had an archbishop who really wanted to hear from women and promote precisely because he knew women's experience would be different from his own."*

*"I was personally invited to this diocese by a phone call from [the bishop]. He overrode the decision of the search committee to have a priest in the position."*

*"Recently Bishop told me that I had enough 'moxie' to make a difference. I took it as a compliment."*

*"Acceptance by our priests. The bishop told me soon after I began, 'I don't hear any complaining from priests, even from the ones who always complain about the chancellor.'"*

*"I was the first woman chancellor in our diocese's history, and the response from both men and women, lay, religious, and clergy, has been most encouraging."*

*"In my last two assignments I have enjoyed responsibilities that recognize my abilities and background. My present position pays me a just salary that recognizes my experience and education."*

*"I have been trusted as project director with a staff including lay men and clerics...I have been the first woman to serve as Archdiocesan Director of Education."*

TABLE TWELVE

*Survey Question: "Please identify one or two negative experiences."*

	<b>% Respondents</b>
Experiencing or witnessing sexist decisions, attitudes, or comments by pastors, Church leaders, or laypersons	24
Having a conflict (of authority or personality) with a priest	18
Not being included in decision-making groups, or not being given adequate information on decisions or events	15
Experiencing or witnessing of economic injustices within institutional Church (e.g. denial of due process, unequal pay, gender discrimination in hiring or promotion)	12
Not being given the respect that a priest in the position would be given, or being considered inadequate because of lay status	6
Not receiving adequate support for worthy projects	2
Being criticized about ideological controversies	2
Experiencing competition or a lack of support from a woman colleague	2
Other	23
Never had a negative experience worth reporting	4

**Note.** The percentages add up to more than 100 because each respondent was allowed to give more than one answer. Up to two answers per respondent were recorded.

*Comments from the Surveys*

*"Sometimes I feel like the 'token woman,' especially if the committee is all clergy. I often feel the decision is made before I come to the meeting. It is difficult to penetrate the clergy circle."*

*"Not being treated as a professional. Being referred to in sexist terms. Not being included in decisions because decisions were made at events to which women were not invited."*

*"When I first came I experienced being treated by the priests with suspicion. I visited each one in his parish to see how I could help. This was a new experience for them."*

*"Inability of priests to deal with conflict constructively"*

*"Dealing with younger priests who assume that priests alone can speak to priest issues"*

*"The negative experiences usually revolve around communication issues--a matter of not having information, or being deprived of the necessary information and feeling used in the process."*

*"A negative experience is having been excluded from areas of dialogue and decision-making that impact the areas of diocesan administration for which I am responsible.".*

### Sources of Support

Respondents were also asked to list their most important sources of support and encouragement in their Church ministry. Their answers are shown in Table Thirteen.

#### TABLE THIRTEEN

**Survey Question:** *"From what or whom do you seek support to help carry out your responsibilities (e.g., spiritual practices, professional or women's groups, mentors, etc.)?"*

	<b>% Respondents</b>
Co-workers, colleagues within the diocese	46
Professional peers (people in similar positions)	44
Prayer, God, Sacraments	42
Spiritual director	19
Religious community (sisters)	17
Friends	17
Mentor or mentors	16
Family (including husband for married respondents)	12
Supervisor, chancellor or bishop	10
Women's groups	5

**Note.** The percentages add up to more than 100 because each respondent was allowed to give more than one answer. Up to three answers per respondent were recorded.

### Experiences in Mentoring

Mentoring can be an important part of leadership, especially for women in traditionally male environments. Two questions related to mentoring. The first asked whether respondents had ever mentored a colleague, and the second asked whether they themselves had been mentored. Respondents were also asked to describe the experience as well as their mentor or the person they had mentored. Responses are shown in Tables Fourteen and Fifteen, respectively. Note that the wording of the question allowed the respondents to decide for themselves what the word "mentor" should mean. Some respondents seemed to describe mentoring as a long-term, personal relationship, similar to psychological counseling or spiritual direction. Others considered occasional, informal advice-giving to be a form of mentoring. Other responses fell in the middle.

#### TABLE FOURTEEN

*Survey Question: "Do you now, or have you in the past, mentored a colleague in church ministry? Briefly describe the experience."*

	<b>% Respondents</b>
Yes, I mentored or counseled one or more people about their ministry and related issues.	29
Yes, I mentored or trained my subordinate staff or the people under my authority.	14
Yes, I mentored or trained lay persons in Church ministries.	13
Yes, I have given informal advice to people in positions similar to my own.	11
Yes, I mentored or trained my successor in a Church leadership position	5
Yes (unspecified or other)	18
No, I have not been a mentor	15



**Note.** The percentages add up to more than 100 because each respondent was allowed to give more than one answer. Up to two answers per respondent were recorded.

*Comments from the Surveys*

*"Over the years I have mentored DRE's in parish and diocesan positions, then worked to help them value their gifts and how to use them in a system."*

*"I continue to try to give what was given to me."*

*"I try to mentor the younger women on our staff. These women are gifted and committed to their ministry. As women we often fail to mentor other women, especially those who serve in ministry with us. I think this is a result of turf protecting."*

*"I have been blessed with the presence of many young impressionable employees. It has been my pleasure to encourage them to grow spiritually and professionally."*

*"I try to teach and support those whom I supervise."*

*"I have mentored at least two other women by providing relevant information about their ministry, being available to talk and share experiences, problems, ideas, even when they did not directly relate to their ministry. Prayer was an important part of the experience."*

*"I have mentored several, particularly from the ethnic communities I work with. Having known the struggles that I had to overcome as a woman and as an immigrant, I had plenty of experiences to share with them. This sharing has given many the courage and determination to go on, even when the sailing seemed rough."*

**TABLE FIFTEEN**

**Survey Question:** *"Have you been mentored and, if so, by whom (lay or religious woman, pastor, etc.)?"*

	<b>% Respondents</b>
Yes, I was mentored by a religious sister	31
Yes, I was mentored by a priest (including my pastor)	26
Yes, I was mentored by a lay woman (or woman of unspecified status)	17
Yes, I was mentored informally by my colleagues or co-workers	10

Yes, I was mentored by a bishop	6
Yes, I was mentored by a lay man	7
Yes, I was mentored by my spiritual director	3
Yes (other or unspecified)	14
No	14

**Note.** The percentages add up to more than 100 because each respondent was allowed to give more than one answer. Up to two answers per respondent were recorded.

### *Comments from the Surveys*

*"I was mentored by a woman religious, as well as by a priest. It not only sharpens my thinking but gives me the strength and support I need in my position."*

*"In each position I have had a mentor, most of the time a religious woman since they have had more experience in the church structure."*

*"Many women religious have shared their lives with me and supported me personally and professionally."*

*"At times in my life I have been mentored by lay and religious women and a priest. Race was not the most important consideration; however, it was important that they were open and sensitive to my life and experience as an African-American woman."*

*"My supervisor, a diocesan priest, helped me to get into the church culture when I first began to work at the diocesan level."*

*"Two priests mentored me and had a very deep impact on my ministry today. One introduced me to ministry with ethnic groups, and the other to the practice of daily one-hour prayer to sustain my ministry."*

*"As a young person, I was mentored by my pastor."*

*"I work in a collaborative environment in which I am both the mentor and the one being mentored. The roles change as the day goes on."*

*"I have been mentored by many people over the years. I feel that I have learned from the best. They have nurtured me spiritually, taught me the art of collaboration, showed me the wisdom of delegating, encouraged me in my fears and failures, and they were there...to lead the way with me and for me...They are all people whom I will always cherish because they helped make me*

*who I am."*

## Experiences of Collaboration

Women were asked to rate the quality of collaboration between clergy, religious, and lay people within the diocese. Note that this question referred not only to gender issues but also to ordained-lay relations and, in a sense, to the overall quality of functioning of the diocesan administration. As shown in Table Sixteen, most respondents rated collaboration as "good" or "excellent." Vowed religious, married, and single women did not notably differ in their ratings of quality of collaboration.

TABLE SIXTEEN

### Respondents' Ratings of the Quality of Collaboration within the Diocese

	<b>% of All Women (n=188)</b>	<b>% Vowed Religious (n=72)</b>	<b>% Married Women (n=65)</b>	<b>% Single Women (n=35)</b>
Excellent	24	25	23	29
Good	63	60	63	63
Fair	12	11	14	9
Poor	2	4	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100

**Note.** Forty-seven respondents declined to rate collaboration or gave it more than one rating (e.g. "good to excellent"); thus the total number of respondents included in the above table is 188.

### *Comments from the Surveys*

*"In some cases collaboration is seen as 'What can you do for me?' In other cases, collaboration has been 'We'll help you with your projects; you help us with ours.' Sometimes it has been a real journey through visioning and action that is mutually enriching."*

*"Generally speaking, women are less driven by ego and therefore more open to collaboration."*

*"It is good to work with individuals who communicate well (using letters, memos, agendas, etc.) to ensure the success of the team effort."*

*"I am usually asked to be on more consultative bodies and task forces than I can possibly handle."*

*Some of this overload of requests is due to being one of the few women in the church with name recognition, so I am asked to do everything...The Archbishop consults with us on many issues in confidence and expects us to maintain that confidentiality while we explore various approaches for further consultation or decision-making. I feel included and valued at that level."*

*"The bishop, using his leadership, has given an example to priests and pastors that women must be recognized for their contributions."*

*"So much depends upon the leadership style of the bishop."*

*"I have had experiences ranging from excellent to poor, depending on the issue, the person(s) involved, and the era (i.e., 15 years ago was tougher than today)."*

*"At the diocesan level I work with people committed to the ministry of the church, respectful of others, courteous and collaborative. Raising the hard questions is encouraged. The staff prays together daily and supports one another both at work and in our personal lives."*

*"Collaboration among staff at the diocesan level seems to be a priority in most cases and there is a genuine effort to make it work. Any lack of collaboration generally occurs with parish priests who are uncooperative with anything that comes from the diocese."*

*"My greatest frustration is the lack of consistency in experiences of collaboration. Some (but not enough) issues are addressed in a very collaborative manner. Some issues are addressed in an informative manner under the guise of collaboration. Other issues are simply decided and decisions are announced in the form of a memo."*

*"This collaboration did not happen at the very beginning. It took time and patience for clergy, religious, and laity to accept a female doing major diocesan finance business."*

*"Excellent with middle age and older clergy and religious; good with laity; poor with young clergy."*

*"It seems that each person feels too busy in his/her own area and doesn't want to spend time working on joint projects."*

*"My experience of collaboration with the clergy has been fair. There are many who have been very cooperative, but there are also many who do not embrace the theology of the Second Vatican Council and who do not see the need to empower the laity. The many different ecclesiologies and leadership styles that are operative are a formidable challenge. Many of our clergy are using strategies and skills that worked in the 60's but do not work today."*

*"We have a very collaborative bishop who models cooperation and accountability."*

*"Most clergy that I have worked with have had little or no experience with collaboration. Most parish priests appear to have little or no interest in working with others (community-wide, other parishes). It seems that their energy is focused solely on their individual parishes and little else."*

*My experience of collaboration with religious sisters and laity is extremely positive. There are a great deal of 'turf' issues about who does the 'best' work and whose ministry is more important. All ministry is important and should be valued."*

"What we see as collaboration is really cooperation at the surface. There exists a tension between being consulted vs. being part of a decision.". If there is any difference between small, medium and large dioceses in terms of collaboration, this difference is at most very slight, as shown in Table Seventeen.

**TABLE SEVENTEEN**  
 Respondents' Ratings of Quality of Collaboration within the Diocese,  
 According to Size of Diocese

	<b>% of All Women</b> (n=188)	<b>% in Small Dioceses</b> (n=62)	<b>% in Medium Dioceses</b> (n=52)	<b>% in Large Dioceses</b> (n=68)
Excellent	24	25	23	29
Good	63	60	63	63
Fair	12	11	14	9
Poor	2	4	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100

**Note.** In addition to the 47 respondents who declined to rate collaboration or gave it more than one rating, an additional six respondents did not indicate the size of their diocese.

For unknown and probably complex reasons, older women tend to report better collaboration than younger women, as shown in Table Eighteen.

**TABLE EIGHTEEN**  
 Respondents' Ratings of Quality of Collaboration within the Diocese,  
 According to Age of Respondent

	<b>% of All Women</b> (n=188)	<b>% between ages 41 and 50</b> (n=39)	<b>% between ages 51 and 60</b> (n=48)	<b>% between ages 61 and 70</b> (n=46)
Excellent	24	3	23	41

Good	63	72	64	52
Fair	12	23	14	2
Poor	2	3	0	4
Total	100	100	100	100

**Note.** In addition to the 47 who declined to rate collaboration, an additional six respondents did not give their age. Women outside the age range of 41 to 70 are not shown because there are too few of them for an adequate comparison.