

REPORT ON SURVEY OF 2004 PRIESTLY ORDINATIONS

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In February Father Edward J. Burns of the U.S. Bishops' Office on Vocations asked if the Life Cycle Institute could assist the Committee on Vocations on a survey of men ordained to the priesthood in 2004. In February Father Burns sent a short questionnaire to each diocese and religious community asking if one of its staff could list the names of the men ordained in 2004, and either complete an online questionnaire on each or ask the men themselves to do so.

After some days of phoning and reminding, Father Burns achieved 336 completions by the March 31 deadline (283 ordinands to the diocesan priesthood, 46 to the religious priesthood, and 7 of undetermined category). A graduate student, Florencio R. Riguera, and I summarized the data provided by Father Burns and Jamie Blosser.

The questionnaire asked eighteen questions about the ordinand's age, background, education, work experience, activities, hobbies, recognitions, and experience with vocation efforts. We continued using the codes we constructed in 2002 and 2003, for the sake of continuity.

One question asked for "principal full-time work

experience," and since many questionnaires listed more than one, we coded up to two per person. Below is a summary of the questionnaires. All numbers are percentages unless noted.

TABLE 1: AGE

| <u>Diocesan</u> | <u>Religious</u> | <u>All</u> | |
|-----------------|------------------|------------|---------------------|
| 24 | 14 | 22 | Percent 25-29 |
| 28 | 25 | 27 | Percent 30-34 |
| 16 | 34 | 18 | Percent 35-39 |
| 22 | 23 | 22 | Percent 40-49 |
| 8 | 5 | 8 | Percent 50-59 |
| 3 | 0 | 3 | Percent 60 or older |
| 36.9 | 37.4 | 37.0 | Mean age |

NOTE: A total of 317, 44, and 361 ordinands, respectively, responded. The percentages shown are of these numbers and add up to 100% within a column.

TABLE 2: RACE

| <u>Diocesan</u> | <u>Religious</u> | <u>All</u> | |
|-----------------|------------------|------------|---------------------------|
| 68 | 52 | 66 | European American |
| 12 | 13 | 12 | Hispanic or Latino |
| 9 | 28 | 12 | Asian or Pacific Islander |
| 2 | 2 | 1 | African-American |
| 9 | 4 | 9 | Other |

NOTE: A total of 278, 46, and 324 ordinands, respectively, responded. The percentages shown are of these numbers and add up to 100% within a column.

Table 2 shows that Hispanics (Latinos) and Asian or Pacific Islanders each make up 12 percent of the ordinands, a figure higher than in recent years. For example, a 1984 nationwide survey of Catholic seminarians (Hemrick and Hoge, 1987) found that 7 percent were Hispanic. Still the figure is lower than the percent Hispanic in the total U.S. Catholic population today

(estimated at 25 to 30 percent).

Table 2 also shows that 12 percent are Asian or Pacific Islanders, a figure higher than the percent in the total U.S. Catholic population (an estimated 2 to 3 percent; see Davidson, et al., 1997, p. 161). Also, only one percent is African-American, which is lower than the percentage of African-Americans in the U.S. Catholic population (estimated at 3 to 4 percent; see Davidson, et al., p. 159).

TABLE 3: COUNTRY OF BIRTH

| <u>Diocesan</u> | <u>Religious</u> | <u>All</u> | |
|-----------------|------------------|------------|------------------------|
| 70 | 64 | 69 | U.S.A. |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | Canada |
| 2 | 2 | 2 | West Europe |
| 1 | 0 | 1 | Central America |
| 2 | 0 | 2 | Africa |
| 4 | 2 | 4 | Poland |
| 1 | 0 | 1 | Ireland |
| 4 | 7 | 5 | Vietnam |
| 2 | 12 | 4 | Philippines |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | Korea |
| 4 | 2 | 4 | Mexico |
| 2 | 0 | 2 | Colombia |
| 1 | 0 | 1 | Caribbean, Puerto Rico |
| * | 0 | * | Peru |
| 4 | 10 | 5 | Other countries |

NOTE: A total of 289, 42, and 331 ordinands, respectively, responded. The percentages shown are of these numbers and add up to 100% within a column.

* Less than ½ percent.

Table 3 tells us that only 69 percent of the ordinands were born in the U.S., and 31 percent were born outside. When this research began in 1998, the figure was 24 percent. The percentage born outside the U.S. has risen. The four principal countries of birth are Vietnam, Mexico, Philippines, and Poland.

TABLE 4
HIGHEST EDUCATION BEFORE ENTERING SEMINARY

| <u>Diocesan</u> | <u>Religious</u> | <u>All</u> | |
|-----------------|------------------|------------|------------------------|
| 2 | 0 | 2 | Elementary |
| 16 | 20 | 17 | High School |
| 3 | 2 | 3 | Trade/Technical School |
| 52 | 39 | 50 | Undergraduate |
| 27 | 39 | 28 | Graduate |

NOTE: A total of 280, 46, and 326 ordinands, respectively, responded. The percentages shown are of these numbers and add up to 100% within a column.

TABLE 5
ANY CATHOLIC EDUCATION?

| <u>Diocesan</u> | <u>Religious</u> | <u>All</u> | |
|-----------------|------------------|------------|---|
| 52 | 50 | 51 | Percent who attended Catholic elementary school |
| 43 | 35 | 42 | Percent who attended Catholic high school |
| 45 | 57 | 46 | Percent who attended Catholic college |

NOTE: The percentages were computed on the basis of 283 diocesan and 46 religious ordinands.

The levels of Catholic schooling among the ordinands (Table 5) differ from that in the total U.S. Catholic population. For example, in a 1993 nationwide Gallup survey, 54 percent of Catholics 54 or younger reported that they had attended Catholic elementary school. Only 51 percent of the ordinands report having attended Catholic elementary school. But the ordinands show higher rates of attending Catholic high school than the general U.S. population: 42 percent compared to only 26 percent in the general U.S. population. In the cohort of 35 to 54 years old in the general U.S. population, only 10 percent attended

Catholic college, compared to 46 percent of the ordinands of 2004. (See D'Antonio, et al., 1996, p. 71.)

TABLE 6
PRINCIPAL FULL-TIME WORK EXPERIENCE

| <u>Diocesan</u> | <u>Religious</u> | <u>All</u> | |
|-----------------|------------------|------------|--|
| 17 | 35 | 20 | Educator: teacher, administrator, coach, guidance |
| 14 | 9 | 13 | Skilled or unskilled labor, farm worker |
| 17 | 6 | 9 | Sales, real estate |
| 8 | 3 | 7 | Church ministry: parish admin., relig. educator |
| 17 | 12 | 16 | Manager, supervisor, high govt. official |
| 6 | 9 | 7 | Banking, finance, broker, accountant, auditor |
| 9 | 9 | 9 | Engineer, computer programmer |
| 6 | 9 | 7 | Military |
| 1 | 3 | 2 | Scientific assistant, technician |
| 1 | 0 | 1 | Nursing, phys. therapist, public health, paramedic |
| 6 | 3 | 5 | Clerk, bank teller, bookkeeper |
| 3 | 6 | 4 | Attorney |
| 5 | 6 | 5 | Government worker |
| 2 | 3 | 2 | Artist, musician, drama, photographer, designer |
| 3 | 3 | 3 | Counselor, psychologist |
| 1 | 0 | 1 | Social worker |
| 1 | 0 | 1 | Legal assistant, paralegal |
| 2 | 6 | 2 | Scientist |
| 4 | 6 | 5 | Reporter, editor, writer |
| * | 0 | * | Physician, dentist |
| 8 | 3 | 7 | Other |

NOTE: Only 209, 34, and 243 ordinands, respectively, mentioned full-time work experiences. Some mentioned more than one, so we coded up to two experiences.

TABLE 7
HOBBIES AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

| <u>Diocesan</u> | <u>Religious</u> | <u>All</u> | |
|-----------------|------------------|------------|---------------------------|
| 29 | 39 | 31 | Running |
| 23 | 30 | 24 | Cycling |
| 32 | 35 | 33 | Hiking |
| 26 | 33 | 27 | Camping |
| 49 | 46 | 49 | Sports |
| 74 | 80 | 76 | Reading |
| 26 | 46 | 29 | Writing |
| 62 | 67 | 63 | Movies |
| 35 | 41 | 36 | Theater |
| 14 | 13 | 14 | Opera |
| 27 | 39 | 29 | Play a musical instrument |
| 4 | 2 | 3 | Acting |
| 50 | 65 | 52 | Exercise |
| 23 | 17 | 23 | Fishing |
| 29 | 37 | 30 | Cooking |
| 9 | 4 | 8 | Hunting |
| 5 | 11 | 6 | Painting |
| 51 | 59 | 52 | Music |
| 26 | 41 | 28 | Volunteering |
| 6 | 4 | 6 | Sailing |
| 9 | 9 | 9 | Woodworking |
| 27 | 20 | 26 | Other |

NOTE: The percentages for the activity or hobby categories were computed using the number of ordinands: Diocesan, 278; Religious, 46; and, All, 324.

TABLE 8
ACADEMIC RECOGNITIONS

| <u>Diocesan</u> | <u>Religious</u> | <u>All</u> | |
|-----------------|------------------|------------|---------------------|
| 10 | 13 | 11 | Summa Cum Laude |
| 16 | 17 | 16 | Magna Cum Laude |
| 6 | 6 | 6 | Valedictorian |
| 3 | 9 | 4 | Salutatorian |
| 42 | 52 | 44 | Dean's List |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | Phi Beta Kappa |
| 21 | 26 | 21 | Other Honor Society |

NOTE: The percentages for the recognition categories were computed based on the number of ordinands: Diocesan, 278; Religious, 46; All, 324.

TABLE 9
STATE/NATIONAL AWARDS OR RECOGNITIONS

| <u>Diocesan</u> | <u>Religious</u> | <u>All</u> | |
|-----------------|------------------|------------|---------------------------------|
| 29 | 55 | 36 | Academic Honor Roll/Dean's List |
| 15 | 18 | 16 | National Honor Society |
| 9 | 9 | 9 | National Merit Scholar |
| 47 | 18 | 40 | Other |

NOTE: A total of 34, 11, and 45 ordinands, respectively, mentioned state/national awards or recognitions. The percentages shown are of these numbers and add up to 100% within a column. They do not incorporate those ordinands who did not mention any awards or recognitions. The percentages of all ordinands (324) are: 5 for Academic Honor Roll/Dean's List; 2 for National Honor Society; 1 for National Merit Scholar; and 5 for "Other".

TABLE 10
ORGANIZED SPORTS TEAMS IN HIGH SCHOOL OR COLLEGE

PERCENT OF THOSE WHO SAID "YES" TO ORGANIZED SPORTS:

| <u>Diocesan</u> | <u>Religious</u> | <u>All</u> | |
|-----------------|------------------|------------|-------------|
| 56 | 54 | 56 | High School |
| 23 | 22 | 23 | College |

SPECIFIC SPORTS TEAMS:

| | | | |
|----|----|----|-----------------|
| 9 | 15 | 10 | Baseball |
| 6 | 6 | 6 | Golf |
| 13 | 11 | 13 | Football |
| 16 | 26 | 17 | Basketball |
| 20 | 20 | 20 | Soccer |
| 5 | 4 | 5 | Wrestling |
| 14 | 13 | 14 | Track and Field |
| 1 | 0 | 1 | Lacrosse |
| 9 | 17 | 10 | Tennis |
| 8 | 11 | 9 | Swimming |

NOTE: Based on: Diocesan, 278; Religious, 46; All, 324.

TABLE 11
SERVICE IN THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES

Diocesan Religious All

ORDINANDS

| | | | |
|----|---|----|----------------------------------|
| 12 | 9 | 11 | Percent of ordinands who served. |
|----|---|----|----------------------------------|

Of them:

| | | | |
|----|----|----|----------------|
| 44 | 25 | 42 | Army |
| 19 | 0 | 17 | Reserves |
| 22 | 50 | 25 | Navy |
| 6 | 0 | 6 | National Guard |
| 22 | 25 | 22 | Air Force |
| 3 | 0 | 3 | Marines |

FATHERS OF ORDINANDS:

| | | | |
|---|----|---|---|
| 3 | 24 | 6 | Percent of ordinands' fathers who served. |
|---|----|---|---|

Of them:

| | | | |
|----|----|----|----------------|
| 88 | 45 | 63 | Army |
| 13 | 9 | 11 | Reserves |
| 13 | 27 | 21 | Navy |
| 25 | 0 | 11 | National Guard |
| 88 | 9 | 42 | Air Force |
| 13 | 9 | 11 | Marines |

NOTE: A total of 32, 4, and 36 ordinands, reported their own military service, and a total of 8, 11, and 19 ordinands, reported their fathers' military service, respectively. Ordinands may have selected more than one military branch. Two religious ordinands said that both parents served in the military. The percentages in each military branch in the table are those who reported military service. If we consider the entire sample, the percentages who served in each of the six branches were 5, 2, 3, 1, 3, and less than one percent for the ordinands themselves and 4, 1, 1, 1, 2, and 1 for their fathers.

TABLE 12
 VOCATION EFFORTS YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED

Diocesan Religious All

VOCATION PROGRAMS:

| | | | |
|----|----|----|---------------------------------------|
| 2 | 0 | 2 | Traveling Cup/Cross Program |
| 16 | 17 | 16 | Grade school or CCD vocation programs |
| 5 | 2 | 5 | Operation Andrew |
| 11 | 4 | 10 | High school vocations programs |
| 41 | 57 | 43 | Come and See Weekends |
| 22 | 17 | 22 | Parish vocation programs |

PARISH PROGRAMS:

| | | | |
|----|----|----|-----------------------------|
| 65 | 67 | 65 | Eucharistic minister |
| 33 | 41 | 34 | Youth minister |
| 75 | 70 | 74 | Altar server |
| 69 | 67 | 69 | Lector |
| 22 | 11 | 20 | Parish council |
| 47 | 24 | 44 | Knights of Columbus |
| 10 | 4 | 9 | Men's Club |
| 20 | 26 | 21 | Boy Scouts |
| 9 | 2 | 8 | Serra Club |
| 5 | 7 | 5 | Eagle Scouts |
| 8 | 2 | 7 | Rosary Society |
| 10 | 4 | 9 | St. Vincent de Paul Society |
| 26 | 15 | 24 | Right to Life |
| 41 | 39 | 41 | Devotions |
| 58 | 74 | 60 | Retreats |

NOTE: The percentages were computed on the basis of: Diocesan = 278; Religious = 46; All = 324.

TABLE 13
WHO INITIATED A CONVERSATION WITH YOU
ABOUT CONSIDERING THE PRIESTHOOD?

| <u>Diocesan</u> | <u>Religious</u> | <u>All</u> | |
|-----------------|------------------|------------|-------------------|
| 69 | 80 | 71 | Priest |
| 3 | 9 | 4 | Religious brother |
| 9 | 26 | 12 | Religious sister |
| 2 | 4 | 2 | Youth minister |
| 27 | 26 | 27 | Friend |
| 12 | 4 | 11 | Parishioner |
| 7 | 13 | 8 | Teacher |
| 6 | 4 | 6 | Seminarian |
| 1 | 0 | 1 | Deacon |
| 1 | 4 | 2 | Military chaplain |
| 19 | 13 | 18 | Mother |
| 11 | 4 | 10 | Father |
| 2 | 0 | 2 | Grandfather |
| 6 | 7 | 6 | Grandmother |

NOTE: The percentages were computed on the basis of: Diocesan = 278; Religious = 46; All = 324.

TABLE 14
ADVERTISING TECHNIQUES WHICH WERE INSTRUMENTAL FOR YOU

| <u>Diocesan</u> | <u>Religious</u> | <u>All</u> | |
|-----------------|------------------|------------|----------------|
| 11 | 11 | 11 | Advertisements |
| 3 | 2 | 3 | Billboards |
| 15 | 11 | 15 | Posters |
| 13 | 7 | 12 | Web sites |
| 19 | 39 | 22 | Pamphlets |
| 3 | 0 | 3 | Radio ads |
| 3 | 0 | 3 | TV ads |
| 16 | 26 | 17 | Magazines |
| 12 | 15 | 13 | Newsletters |
| 5 | 11 | 6 | E-mails |
| 8 | 7 | 7 | Videos |

NOTE: The percentages were computed on the basis of the number of ordinands: Diocesan = 278; Religious = 46; All = 324.

We found three changes in the ordinands since the research began in 1998. First, the average age at ordination rose from 34.8 to 37.0 years. Second, the level of education prior to entering seminary rose. Whereas in 1998, 30 percent had less than a B.A. or B.S. degree, in the 2004 sample it was only 22

percent. Correspondingly, the percentage who had received a Masters Degree or professional degree beyond the B.A. rose from 13 to 28. This is a notable change in only six years. Third, the percentage born outside the U.S. rose from 24 to 31 percent. The four principal countries of birth today are Vietnam, Mexico, Philippines, and Poland.

The 2004 questionnaire included a series of questions asking the ordinands about their own experiences with vocation programs. (See Tables 12, 13 and 14.) The vocation encouragement most often remembered was personal contact, especially by a priest, friend, or one's mother. Second most common were the Come and See Weekends. Most of the ordinands have a history of activity in parishes (see Table 12), and their form of activity was usually as altar servers, lectors, and Eucharistic ministers. Of various methods in use to encourage vocations, the most effective are pamphlets and magazines (Table 14).

REFERENCES

- D'Antonio, William V., James D. Davidson, Dean R. Hoge, and Ruth A. Wallace. Laity American and Catholic (Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1996).
- Davidson, James D., et al. The Search for Common Ground: What Unites and Divides Catholic Americans (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1997).
- Hemrick, Eugene F., and Dean R. Hoge. Seminary Life and Visions of the Priesthood: A National Survey of Seminarians (Washington, DC: National Catholic Educational Association, 1987).