

REPORT ON SURVEY OF 2005 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 2005. 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 2005, 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 286 completions by the March 31 deadline (251 ordinands to the diocesan priesthood, 35 to the religious priesthood, and 1 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>	
30	6	27	Percent 25-29
20	17	20	Percent 30-34
15	29	17	Percent 35-39
18	31	20	Percent 40-49
6	14	7	Percent 50-59
4	0	3	Percent 60 or older
36.9	41.3	37.3	Mean age

NOTE: A total of 251, 35, and 286 ordinands, respectively, responded. The percentages shown are of these numbers and may not add up to 100% within a column because some respondents did not answer this question.

TABLE 2: RACE

<u>Diocesan</u>	<u>Religious</u>	<u>All</u>	
67	74	67	European American
10	9	10	Hispanic or Latino
12	17	12	Asian or Pacific Islander
3	0	3	African
1	0	1	African-American
*	0	*	Native American

NOTE: A total of 251, 35, and 286 ordinands, respectively, responded. The percentages shown are of these numbers and add up to 100% within a column. Percentages less than one-half percent are shown as asterisks.

Table 2 shows that Asian or Pacific Islanders make up 12 percent of the ordinands, a figure higher than that is the same as last year's figures. Hispanics/Latinos dropped to 10 percent this year. 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 the Asian or Pacific Islanders are more represented than their group in is represented 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>	
73	80	73	U.S.A.
1	0	1	Canada
2	0	1	West Europe
1	0	1	Central America
3	0	2	Nigeria
4	2	4	Poland
5	14	6	Vietnam
4	0	3	Philippines
3	0	2	Poland
3	3	3	Mexico
2	0	2	Colombia
2	0	2	Haiti, Puerto Rico
5	6	3	Other countries

NOTE: A total of 251, 35, and 286 ordinands, respectively, responded. The percentages shown are of these numbers and may not add up to 100% within a column because of rounding.

Table 3 tells us that 73 percent of the ordinands were born in the U.S., and the balance was born outside. When this research began in 1998, the figure was 24 percent. The percentage born outside the U.S. rose this year by 3 percentage points. 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	6	3	Elementary
23	3	21	High School
5	0	4	Trade/Technical School
40	43	41	Undergraduate
30	49	32	Graduate

NOTE: A total of 251, 35, and 286 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	63	53	Percent who attended Catholic elementary school
37	60	40	Percent who attended Catholic high school
41	69	45	Percent who attended Catholic college

NOTE: The percentages were computed on the basis of 251 diocesan and 35 religious ordinands.

The levels of Catholic schooling among the ordinands (Table 5) does not 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. Among the ordinands, 53 percent reported having attended Catholic elementary school. But the ordinands show higher rates of attending Catholic high school than the general U.S. population: 40 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 a Catholic college, compared to 45 percent of the ordinands of 2005. (See D'Antonio, et al., 1996, p. 71.)

What of those who did not attend a Catholic school? Did they attend, nevertheless, a parish Religious Education program? Among the diocesan ordinands, 45% attended such a program; 40% of the religious ordinands did - 45 percent of the combined sample attended a religious education program. (We note that 40 percent of the diocesan ordinands and 49 percent of the religious ordinands - 41 percent of the combined sample - did not provide an answer to this question.) They completed the program at the 10th Grade on the average.

TABLE 6
PRINCIPAL FULL-TIME WORK EXPERIENCE

<u>Diocesan</u>	<u>Religious</u>	<u>All</u>	
15	11	14	Educator: teacher, administrator, coach, guidance
14	14	14	Skilled or unskilled labor, farm worker
5	6	5	Sales, real estate
4	6	4	Church ministry: parish admin., relig. educator
8	14	9	Manager, supervisor, high govt. official
8	3	7	Banking, finance, broker, accountant, auditor
8	6	8	Engineer, computer programmer
5	3	5	Military
*	0	*	Scientific assistant, technician
4	9	4	Nursing, phys. therapist, public health, paramedic
2	3	2	Clerk, bank teller, bookkeeper
2	3	2	Attorney
0	0	0	Government worker
1	0	1	Artist, musician, drama, photographer, designer
1	0	1	Counselor, psychologist
1	3	1	Social worker
1	0	1	Legal assistant, paralegal
1	0	1	Scientist
1	3	1	Reporter, editor, writer
0	0	0	Physician, dentist
2	0	1	Other
2	0	1	"None"

NOTE: Only 187, 30, and 217 ordinands, respectively, mentioned full-time work experiences (out of the 251, 35, 286 corresponding respondents). 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>	
33	46	35	Running
25	29	22	Cycling
27	37	29	Hiking
23	37	25	Camping
51	37	49	Sports
71	77	71	Reading
22	29	23	Writing
65	69	65	Movies
28	29	28	Theater
13	6	12	Opera
28	26	28	Play a musical instrument
10	3	9	Acting
53	63	55	Exercise
22	20	22	Fishing
24	34	25	Cooking
13	9	12	Hunting
7	11	8	Painting
46	49	46	Music
26	37	27	Volunteering
1	3	1	Sailing
8	6	7	Woodworking
29	34	30	Other

NOTE: The percentages for the activity or hobby categories were computed using the number of ordinands: Diocesan, 251; Religious, 35; and, All, 286.

TABLE 8
ACADEMIC RECOGNITIONS

<u>Diocesan</u>	<u>Religious</u>	<u>All</u>	
0	0	0	Summa Cum Laude
18	17	18	Magna Cum Laude
5	6	6	Valedictorian
2	3	2	Salutatorian
41	49	42	Dean's List
4	3	4	Phi Beta Kappa
24	34	26	Other Honor Society

NOTE: The percentages for the recognition categories were computed based on the number of ordinands: Diocesan, 251; Religious, 35; All, 286.

TABLE 9
STATE/NATIONAL AWARDS OR RECOGNITIONS

Diocesan Religious All

Academic Honor Roll/Dean's List
National Honor Society
National Merit Scholar
Other

NOTE: ---- No data are available.

This year, we looked into home schooling in the educational background of the ordinands. In the diocesan group, 2 percent said they were home-schooled; in the religious group, 6 percent did. For the whole group, this is 3 percent.

We also began asking if the ordinands were converts to the Catholic faith - as distinguished from so-called "cradle Catholics". In the diocesan group, 6 percent converted to Catholicism; in the religious group, 6 percent also converted to Catholicism. Thus, for the whole group of ordinands, 6 percent converted to Catholicism. The range of the ages at conversion for the diocesan group - and also for the whole sample -- is from 11 through 35. The range of ages at conversion for the religious group is 18 through 28. On the average, the ordinands converted to Catholicism at 22.2 years of age.

TABLE 10
ORGANIZED SPORTS TEAMS IN HIGH SCHOOL OR COLLEGE

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

Diocesan Religious All

49	43	48	High School
22	14	21	College

NOTE: Based on: Diocesan, 251; Religious, 35; All, 286.

SPECIFIC SPORTS TEAMS:

0	0	0	Baseball
4	13	5	Golf
27	40	28	Football
31	27	31	Basketball
33	13	31	Soccer
10	20	11	Wrestling
27	33	28	Track and Field
0	0	0	Lacrosse
15	7	14	Tennis
14	13	14	Swimming

Note: These are percentages based on the 122 diocesan ordinands who said "yes" (participated in organized sports) in High School; the 15 religious ordinands who said "yes"; and the combined 137 who said "yes".

TABLE 11
SERVICE IN THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES

Diocesan Religious All

ORDINANDS

11	11	11	Percent of ordinands who served.
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Percentage of those who served (i.e., not based on the 251 diocesan and the 35 religious ordinands):

36	25	34	Army
14	25	16	Reserves
14	25	16	Navy
4	0	3	National Guard
32	0	28	Air Force
11	25	13	Marines

FATHERS OF ORDINANDS:

11	11	11	Percent of ordinands' fathers who served.
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Of them:

56	75	58	Army
4	0	3	Reserves
11	0	10	Navy
0	0	0	National Guard
22	75	29	Air Force
7	0	6	Marines

NOTE: 28 diocesan ordinands and 4 religious ordinands (total of 32 ordinands, reported their own military service; and a total of 27, 4, and 31 ordinands, reported their fathers' military service, respectively. Ordinands may have selected more than one military branch. Three diocesan ordinands said that both parents served in the military. The percentages in each military branch

in the table are those who reported military service.

TABLE 12
VOCATION EFFORTS YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED

Diocesan Religious All

VOCATION PROGRAMS:

3	0	2	Traveling Cup/Cross Program
13	17	13	Grade school or CCD vocation programs
10	3	9	Operation Andrew
12	14	12	High school vocations programs
38	49	39	Come and See Weekends
22	11	20	Parish vocation programs

PARISH PROGRAMS:

59	63	59	Eucharistic minister
31	29	30	Youth minister
78	66	76	Altar server
67	71	68	Lector
18	11	17	Parish council
51	20	47	Knights of Columbus
8	3	8	Men's Club
20	23	20	Boy Scouts
6	6	6	Serra Club
6	0	5	Eagle Scouts
8	6	8	Rosary Society
10	6	9	St. Vincent de Paul Society
20	6	18	Right to Life
47	51	47	Devotions
52	60	53	Retreats

NOTE: The percentages were computed on the basis of: Diocesan = 251; Religious = 35; All = 286.

What about the World Youth Day that John Paul II instituted in his papacy - how many of the ordinands had attended it? Our survey shows that 27 percent of the diocesan, 17 percent of the religious, ordinands (26 percent of the combined sample) had participated in World Youth Day.

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

<u>Diocesan</u>	<u>Religious</u>	<u>All</u>	
67	54	66	Priest
5	11	6	Religious brother
9	26	11	Religious sister
4	3	3	Youth minister
26	37	27	Friend
14	17	14	Parishioner
6	20	8	Teacher
9	3	8	Seminarian
2	0	2	Deacon
2	3	2	Military chaplain
16	23	17	Mother
10	14	11	Father
3	3	3	Grandfather
7	14	8	Grandmother

NOTE: The percentages were computed on the basis of: Diocesan = 251;
Religious = 35; All = 286.

TABLE 14
ADVERTISING TECHNIQUES WHICH WERE INSTRUMENTAL FOR YOU

<u>Diocesan</u>	<u>Religious</u>	<u>All</u>	
10	9	10	Advertisements
4	6	4	Billboards
24	9	22	Posters
14	17	14	Web sites
21	29	22	Pamphlets
3	0	2	Radio ads
3	0	2	TV ads
18	29	20	Magazines
11	20	12	Newsletters
8	14	8	E-mails
8	3	7	Videos
0	0	0	Interactive CD-ROM

NOTE: The percentages were computed on the basis of the number of ordinands:
Diocesan = 251; Religious = 3546; All = 286.

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 2005 sample only 28 percent had less than a B.A. or B.S. degree. Correspondingly, the percentage who had received a Masters Degree or professional degree beyond the B.A. rose from 13 to 32. This is a notable change in only seven years. Third, the percentage born outside the U.S. rose from 24 to 27 percent. The four principal countries of birth today are Vietnam, Mexico, Philippines, and Poland.

The 2005 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).

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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).