

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



May 2023

Thu T. Do, LHC, Ph.D.

Mini Joseph, JMJ, M.Sc. (N)

**Women and Men Entering Religious Life:
The Entrance Class of 2022**

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Major Findings	2
Introduction	5
Part I Characteristics of Responding Institutes and Entrants	7
Institutes Reporting New Entrants in 2022	7
Gender	8
Age of the Entrance Class of 2022	8
Region or Country of Birth and Age at Entry to United States	9
Race and Ethnic Background	11
First Languages and Fluency	12
Religious Background.....	14
Family Background.....	16
Discussions about Vocations While Growing Up.....	18
Education Level Before Entering a Religious Institute.....	20
Employment Before Entering	22
Participation in Religious Programs, Activities, or Ministries.....	23
Part II Vocational Discernment	27
Consideration of a Vocation to Religious Life.....	27
Initial Acquaintance with the Religious Institute.....	29
Attraction to Religious Life	32
Attraction to a Religious Institute.....	33
Helpfulness of Discernment Programs and Experiences.....	35
Part III Experience of Religious Life, Attractions, and Challenges	37
Influences on Decisions to Enter Religious Institutes.....	37
Prayer Practices	40
Importance of Aspects of Community Life	42
Wearing of Religious Habit	43
Evaluation of Aspects of the Religious Institute	45
What Most Attracted Entrants to Their Religious Institute.....	48
What Entrants Find Most Challenging about Religious Life	53
Appendix I: Questionnaire with Response Frequencies	57
Appendix II: Responses to Open-ended Comments	66
Q. 144: What most attracted you to your religious institute?	67
Q. 145: What do you find most challenging about religious life?	76

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

**Women and Men Entering Religious Life:
The Entrance Class of 2022**

Executive Summary

This report presents findings from an annual national survey of women and men religious who formally entered a religious congregation, province, or monastery based in the United States during 2022. To obtain the names and contact information for these women and men, the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) contacted all major superiors of all religious institutes that belong to either the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) or the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious (CMSWR), the two leadership conferences of women religious in the United States. CARA also contacted the major superiors of all religious institutes who belong to the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM). Finally, CARA contacted the major superiors of some 100 contemplative communities of women in the United States that were identified by the USCCB Secretariat of Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations. Each major superior was asked to provide contact information for every person who entered the institute (for the first time, as a postulant or novice in institutes that do not have postulancy) in the United States since January 1, 2022.

After repeated follow-ups, CARA received a response from 484 of 737 major superiors, for an overall response rate of 66% among religious institutes. Three religious institutes were not interested in participating in the studies. In all, the major superiors provided contact information for 253 members (124 women and 129 men) who entered religious life in 2022.

In November 2022, CARA emailed or mailed a survey to 253 identified entrants, asking them to complete an online survey or mail their completed paper survey to CARA. A total of 146 responded to the survey by February 1, 2023. This represents a response rate of 60% among 242 new entrants who were invited and eligible to participate in the survey.

Major Findings

Characteristics of Responding Institutes and Entrants

- Four in five (79%) responding religious institutes had no one entering religious life in 2022. Ten percent reported one entrant and 11% reported two or more.
- Three in five entrants (62%) are women and two in five (38%) are men. Among men, five in ten (89%) expect to become priests, while one in ten (11%) plans to become a perpetually professed brother.
- The average age of respondents of the Entrance Class of 2022 is 28. Half of the respondents are age 26 or younger.
- Responding postulants were born in 16 countries. More than eight in ten (86%) were born in the United States. Of those born outside the United States, the most commonly mentioned countries are in Asia (N=5), Latin America (N=3), Africa (N=3), and Europe (N=3). On average, the respondents who were born outside the United States were seven years old when they first came to the United States and lived here for ten years before entering religious life.
- Eight in ten of those who entered a religious institute report their primary race or ethnicity as Caucasian/European American/white (80%). Approximately one in ten of the Entrance Class of 2022 identifies as Asian/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian (7%) and as Hispanic/Latino(a) (7%). Three percent identify as African/African American/black. Three percent identify as mixed or some other race or ethnicity.
- Entrants report speaking 12 different languages, with English (85%) most frequently reported, followed by Spanish (4%), Vietnamese (3%), German (2%), another language spoken were American Sign Language, Dagaare, Kamba, KoHo, Mandarin (Chinese), Portuguese, Shona and Igbo.
- Nine in ten (89%) have been Catholic since birth, with three in four (76%) coming from families in which both parents are Catholic. Almost all (97%) have at least one sibling (97%) and the most common number of siblings is one or two.
- During the most formative part of their childhood, almost all (99%) respondents were raised by a married couple, living together (93%). One in 20 respondents was raised by one parent, who was either separated or divorced (5%).
- Three in five (57%) report that it was easy for them to start a conversation with their family about their vocation. Men (70%) are more likely than women (49%) to say that starting a discussion with their family was easy for them.

- While growing up, three in five respondents (58%) report that outside of family members, while they were growing up, they ever got to know a priest or a religious brother or sister/nun. Three in ten have a relative who is a priest or a religious brother or sister/nun (29%).
- The responding members of the Entrance Class of 2022 were highly educated before entering. Six in ten (59%) report having earned a bachelor's degree. A quarter receives a master's degree, including 4% having a doctoral degree.
- The 2022 entrants are considerably more likely than other U.S. Catholics to have attended a Catholic elementary school (43% compared to 16%), a Catholic high school (35% compared to 8%), and a Catholic college/university (43% compared to 5%).
- Many respondents were active in parish life and/or other religious programs or activities before entering their religious institute. Seven in ten participated in retreats (71%), various types of voluntary work in a parish or other setting (64%), and campus ministry during college (58%).
- Before entering religious life, four in five were employed. Among them, seven in ten were full-time and three in ten were part time.

Vocational Discernment and Choice of a Religious Institute

- On average, respondents were 20 years old when they first considered a vocation to religious life. More than nine in ten received encouragement from members of their institute (95%), a spiritual director (93%), Vocation Director/team (91%), Friends outside the institute (86%) when they first considered entering a religious institute.
- Four in five say they were "very much" attracted to religious life by a desire for prayer and spiritual growth (98%), a sense of call to religious life (97%), and a desire to be part of a community (92%).
- Men and women entering religious life were asked to indicate how they first became acquainted with their religious institute. Three in ten report becoming acquainted through their own search (30%), through the recommendation of a friend or advisor (29%), or in an institution where members served such as a school (27%).
- Asked what attracted them to their religious institute, three-fourths indicate they were "very much" attracted by the spirituality of the institute (75%) and the institute's fidelity to the Church (75%). Three in ten were "very much" attracted by the example of its members (71%), the mission of the institute (69%), the community life of the institute (69%), and the prayer life of the institute (67%).

- Entrants were asked how helpful selected vocation experiences were to them in discerning their call to their institute before they entered. Eight in ten report those deemed “very” helpful by live-in experience (81%), “Come and See” experience (79%), vocation or discernment retreats (78%), contact with institute members (77%), visits to local community (76%), and visits to the Motherhouse (76%).
- Asked to rate how much 13 aspects of their religious institute affected their decision to enter that institute, more than six in ten listed these as having had “very much” of an influence: the Charism of the institute (77%), community life in the institute (72%), prayer life or prayer styles in the institute (70%), Its practice regarding a religious habit (63%), and the lifestyle of members (60%).

Experience of Religious Life, Attractions, and Challenges

- Asked how important five aspects of their community life are to them at present, eight in ten say these are “very” important to them: living with other members (92%), praying with other members (92%), sharing meals together (86%), socializing/sharing leisure time together (82%), and working with other members (75%).
- Regarding the types of prayer that are important to them, more than half say private. Asked how important five aspects of their community life are to them at present, eight in ten say these are “very” important to them: Daily Eucharist (92%), private personal prayer (88%), Eucharistic Adoration (76%), and Liturgy of the Hours (68%).
- New entrants were asked if the members of their institute wear a habit. Eight in ten indicate that members of their institute wear a habit (83%), with women (93%) more likely than men (65%) to say so. Among all of those who indicate that their members wear a habit, more than seven in ten indicate that the habit is required in all or most circumstances (75%) and one in five report that the habit is required only at certain times (21%).
- Respondents seem pleased with the religious institutes they are entering. Asked about 20 aspects of their institute, all receive a “good” or “excellent” evaluation from two-thirds of their members. The ones most likely to be seen as “excellent” are the welcome and support of newer members (81%), opportunities for personal growth (81%), opportunities for spiritual growth (81%), sense of identity as religious (81%), fidelity to the Church and its teachings (79%) and faithfulness to prayer and spiritual growth (78%).
- In written comments at the end of the survey, responding entrants mention aspects of community life as the greatest attraction to their religious institute, but also as the greatest challenge they are encountering as religious.

Introduction

In 2014, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation commissioned the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University to conduct an annual survey of women and men who enter religious life each year in the United States. For this project, CARA was asked to gather information about the characteristics and experiences of these women and men in a fashion similar to the survey of perpetually professed that CARA conducts each year for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Secretariat of Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations, which is released each year for the World Day of Consecrated Life in February. CARA designed a questionnaire based on previous CARA research on religious life and reviewed it with a representative from the Hilton Foundation. This report presents results of this survey of women and men of the Entrance Class of 2022.

To obtain the names and contact information for these women and men, the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) contacted all major superiors of all religious institutes that belong to either the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) or the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious (CMSWR), the two leadership conferences of women religious in the United States. CARA also contacted the major superiors of all religious institutes who belong to the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM). Finally, CARA contacted the major superiors of some 100 contemplative communities of women in the United States that were identified by the USCCB Secretariat of Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations.

Each major superior was asked to provide contact information for every person who entered the institute (for the first time, as a postulant or novice in institutes that do not have postulancy) in the United States since January 1, 2022. After repeated follow-ups, CARA received a response from 484 of 737 major superiors, for an overall response rate of 66% among religious institutes. Three religious institutes were not interested in participating in the studies. In all, the major superiors provided contact information for 253 members (124 women and 129 men) who entered religious life in 2022.

In November 2022, CARA emailed or mailed a survey to 253 identified entrants, asking them to complete an online survey or mail their completed paper survey to CARA. A total of 146 responded to the survey by February 1, 2023. This represents a response rate of 60% among 242 new entrants who were invited and eligible to participate in the survey.

The questionnaire asked these women and men about their demographic and religious background, education and family background, previous ministry or service and other formative experiences, encouragement and discouragement to consider religious life, initial acquaintance with their institutes, and vocation/discernment programs and experiences. This report presents analyses of each question from all responding men and women.

This report is arranged in three parts: Part I describes characteristics of the institutes that responded to the request for names as well as characteristics of the Entrance Class of 2022. Part II describes aspects of the vocational discernment of the Entrance Class of 2022. Part III describes their experience of religious life so far and reports, in their own words, what attracts them to religious life and what they find most challenging about religious life.

Interpreting this Report

Many of the questions on the survey use four-point response scales (for example, “not at all,” “a little,” “somewhat,” and “very much” or “poor,” “fair,” “good,” and “excellent”). These scales allow half of the responses to be interpreted as relatively more “negative” (“poor” and “fair,” for example) and half as relatively more “positive” (“good” and “excellent,” for example). In parts of the analysis in this report, these responses are combined to allow for clearer comparisons. Tables summarizing responses to questions that use these scales usually report the percentage of those who responded to the two most positive categories combined (e.g., “somewhat” and “very much”), followed by a column of the percentage of those who responded in the most positive category (e.g., “very much”), since the most positive response sometimes distinguishes important contrasts in the level of support. This is especially useful here since many respondents tended to give “positive” responses but not always the most positive responses.

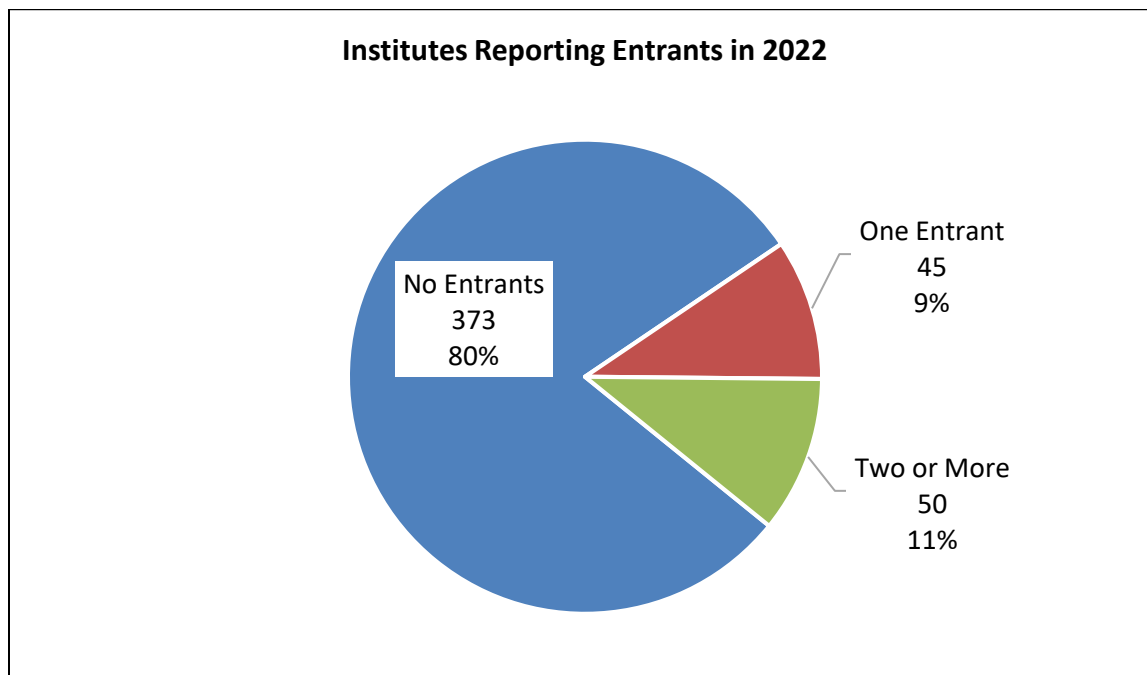
Readers may also wish to compare the difference between the two extreme responses, say “poor” and “excellent,” to compare the level of intensity with which opposing opinions are held. These comparisons and others may be drawn by referring to the actual percentage responses given in Appendix I. That appendix shows the percentage responses for each item, calculated out of 100%, as well as the percentage of all respondents that did not respond to each question, separately calculated out of 100% for clarity of comparison.

In general, in making comparisons between men and women, tables will show the overall percentage who provided a strong response, followed by the percentage of each subgroup (i.e., men and women) who provided a strong response. Whenever the difference in percentages between these groups approaches or exceeds 10%, this difference is considered notable or important.

Part I Characteristics of Responding Institutes and Entrants

Institutes Reporting New Entrants in 2022

CARA asked the 737 religious institutes, provinces, or monasteries in the United States to provide the names of men and women as postulants who entered their religious institute in the United States in 2022. A total of 484 major superiors responded (a 66% response rate) with 253 names of women and men. Three major superiors responded that they would not participate this year. The Entrance Class of 2022 consists of 129 men (reported by CMSM superiors) and 124 women.



A total of 373 major superiors (80% of those responding) reported that they had no one enter the institute in 2022, another 45 major superiors (9%) reported one new entrant, and 50 major superiors (11%) reported two or more new entrants.

Gender

Among the 146 respondents who entered religious life in 2022, three in five (62%) are women and two in five (38%) are men. Among men, nine in ten (89%) expect to become priests and one in ten (11%) plans to become a perpetually professed brother.

Age of the Entrance Class of 2022

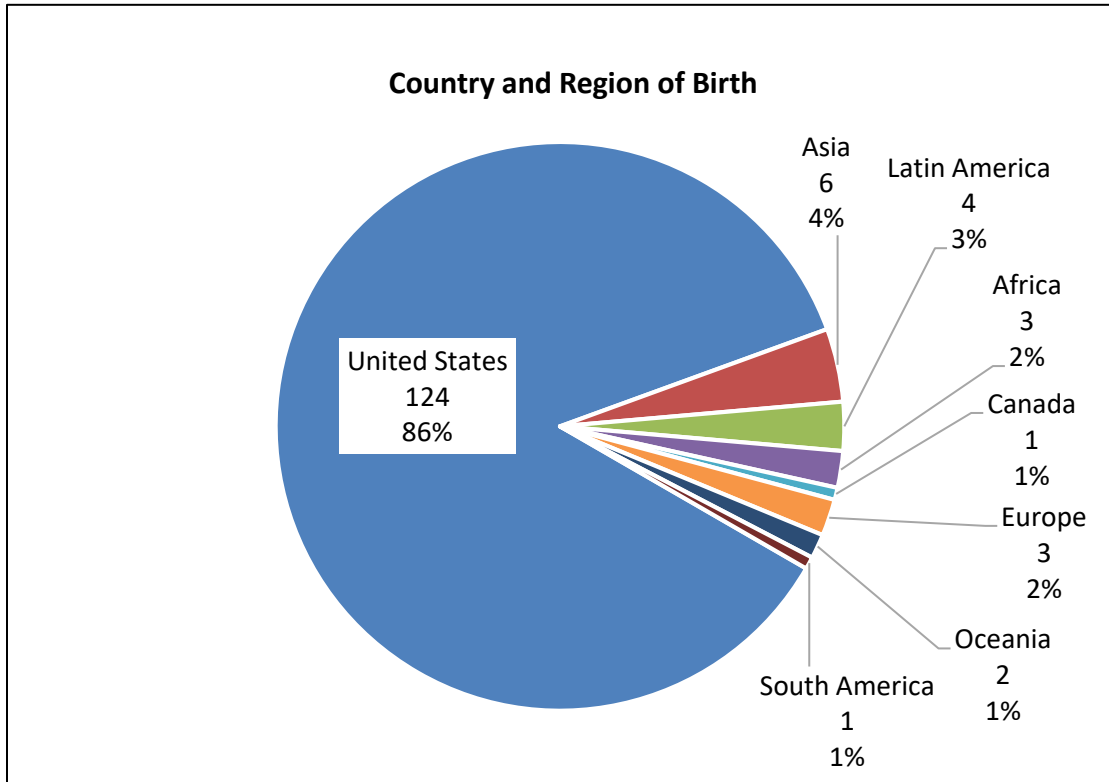
The average age of respondents of the Entrance Class of 2022 is 28. Half of the respondents are age 26 or younger.

Age of Women and Men Entering Religious Life			
Percentage in each age category			
	Overall	Men	Women
	%	%	%
25 and younger	50	44	53
Age 26-35	35	36	34
Age 36-45	10	16	6
Age 46-55	2	2	2
Age 56 and older	3	2	4
Average age	28	30	28
Median age	26	27	25
Range in ages	18-73	21-73	18-57

The youngest responding sister or nun of the Entrance Class of 2022 is 18 and the oldest is 73. Among men, the youngest is 21 and the oldest is 73. Regardless of gender, more than eight in ten respondents (85%) are 35 or younger.

Region or Country of Birth and Age at Entry to United States

Responding postulants were born in 16 countries. Nine in ten (86%) respondents were born in the United States. More than one in ten was born outside the United States (14%).



Respondents who were born outside the United States have lived in the United States for an average of 7 years. Half first came to live in the United States in 2018 or earlier.

Entrance to the United States				
	Year	<i>Age at Entry</i>		
	Overall	Overall	Men	Women
Mean	2014	25	25	24
Median	2015	24	27	22
Range	2001-2022	1-56	17-32	1-56

On average, responding foreign-born religious came to live in the United States at the age of 26. Half were age 26 or younger when they came to live in the United States. The oldest woman was 56 while the oldest man was 32 at the time they entered the United States.

Race and Ethnic Background

Eight in ten of those who entered a religious institute report their primary race or ethnicity as Caucasian/European American/white (80%).

<i>What best describes your racial or ethnic background?</i>			
Percentage in each category			
	Overall	Men	Women
	%	%	%
Caucasian/European American/white	80	82	79
Asian/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian	7	9	4
Hispanic/Latino(a)	7	6	8
African/African American/black	3	2	4
Mixed race	1	2	1
Other	1	0	2

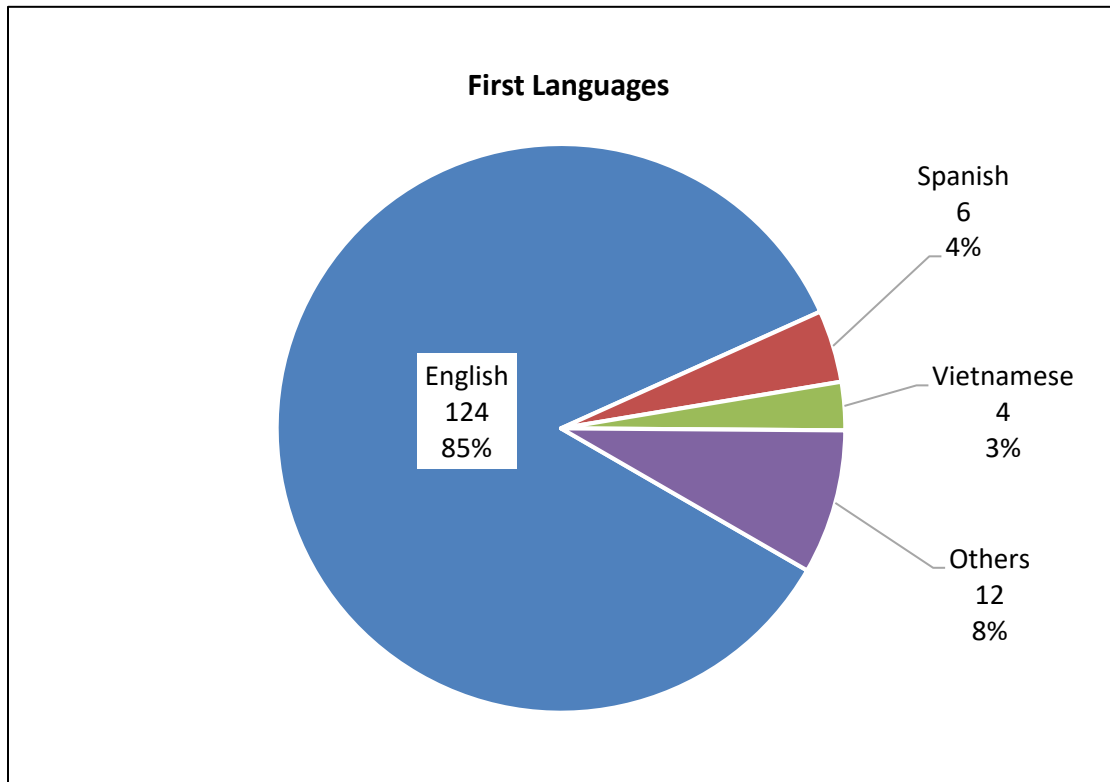
Seven percent of the Entrance Class of 2022 identifies as Asian/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian. Another seven percent identify as Hispanic/Latino (a); 3% identify as African/African American/black; and 2% identify as mixed race or another race/ethnicity.

Differences by Country of Birth

- Among those who were born in the United States, nine in ten (87%) report being Caucasian/European American/white.
- Among those who were born outside the United States, a third were Caucasian/European American/white (38%). A quarter of respondents identify as Asian/Pacific/Native Hawaiian (24%). Two in ten identifies as African/African American/black (19%), or Hispanic or Latino/a (19%).

First Languages and Fluency

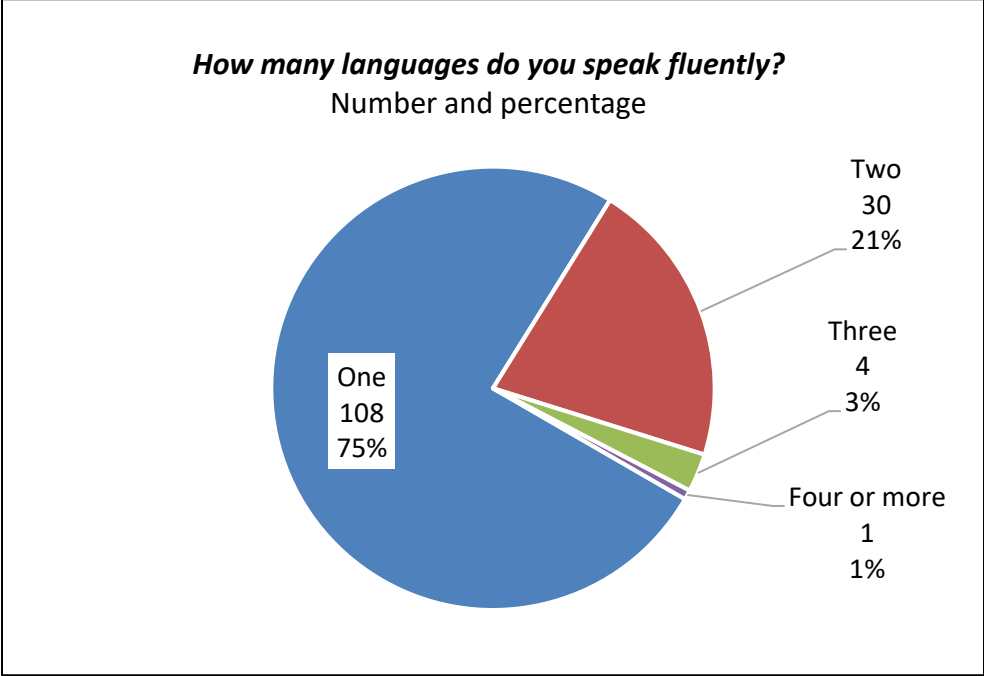
Responding entrants report speaking 12 different languages, with English (85%) most frequently reported, followed by Spanish (4%) and Vietnamese (3%).



Five percent wrote "other" as their first language. Among these languages, one each wrote in:

- American Sign Language
- Dagaare
- German
- Kamba
- KoHo
- Mandarin (Chinese)
- Portuguese
- Shona
- Vernacular (Igbo)

Three quarters of respondents speak fluently one language (75%), with an additional 21% speaking two. Three percent speaks three languages. Just one person speaks four or more languages.



Religious Background

Nine in ten respondents (89%) have been Catholic since birth.

Catholic Background			
<i>Percentage responding</i>			
	Overall	Men	Women
	%	%	%
Catholic since birth	89	82	94
Became Catholic later in life	11	18	6

Among those who became Catholic later in life, nine in ten (87%) participated in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. These entrants came from a variety of faiths: Apostolic Pentecostal, Atheist, Atheist- tendency for Buddhism/Taoism- non-denominational/Protests, Christian (Non-denominational), Church of the Nazarene/Anglican, Episcopalian, Episcopalian and Charismatic, Lutheran Church- Missouri Synod, Non-denominational, then Episcopalian, Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Presbyterian, Southern Baptist, and United Methodist Church.

Three in four (76%) report that both of their parents were Catholic when they were growing up.

Religious Background of Respondents' Parents			
<i>Percentage responding</i>			
	Overall	Men	Women
	%	%	%
Both parents Catholic	76	70	80
Mother Catholic, father not	10	9	10
Father Catholic, mother not	4	4	4
Neither parent was Catholic	10	17	6

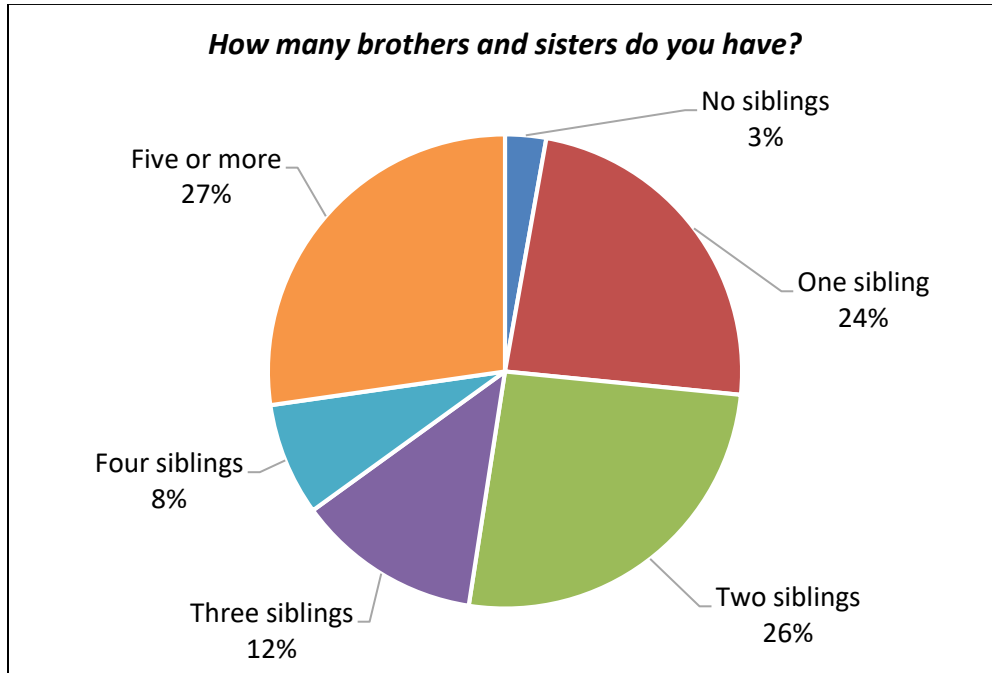
Respondents who had non-Catholic parents report that their parents were either Lutheran, Non-denominational Christian, Evangelical Protestant, Pentecostal, Church of the Nazarene, United Methodist Church, Non-Denominational Christian, Evangelical Presbyterian/Agnostic, Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Non-denominational, Gnostic, Anglican Methodist, Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod, New age, Mormon when I was a child Atheist, Baptist, Non-denominational, Protestant, Evangelical Protestant, Baptized Catholic, then Methodist and Church of the Nazarene, United Methodist Church, Church of Christ,

Reformed and Evangelical, Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Ukrainian Orthodoxy, Jewish Christian, Baptist Presbyterian

Regardless of the religious tradition of their parents, six in ten (63%) respondents report that religion was “very important” to their mothers and half (51%) report that religion was “very important” to their fathers.

Family Background

On average, members of the Entrance Class of 2022 have three siblings. The most common response to this question, among women and men, is one or two siblings (50%), Three percent say he or she is an only child, one-quarter have one sibling (23%), another quarter has two siblings (26%), meanwhile less than half have three or more siblings (43%).



Three in ten report being the eldest (32%). Four in ten report being a middle child (39%). Less than three in ten report being the youngest (27%). Three percent report being an only child.

What is your birth order?
Percentage in each category

	Overall	Men	Women
	%	%	%
Eldest	32	41	27
Middle	39	28	46
Youngest	27	30	24
Only child	3	2	3

Women (46%) are more likely than men (28%) to report being the middle child. Meanwhile, men (41%) are more likely than women (27%) to report being eldest.

Entrants were asked to identify who raised them during the most formative part of their childhood. They could select one or more of the options presented in the table below. Almost all respondents were raised by their biological parents (99%) during that time, with one in ten raised by their grandparents (10%). Five percent were raised by step parents.

Who raised you during the most formative part of your childhood?
 Respondents were invited to select all that apply

	Both	Men	Women
	%	%	%
Biological parents	99	98	100
Grandparents	10	15	8
Step parents	5	7	3
Someone else	2	2	1
Other relative(s)	2	0	2
I prefer not to answer	0	2	1

They were also asked to identify the marital status of those that raised them during the most formative part of their childhood. More than nine in ten were raised by a married couple, living together (93%). Five percent was raised by one parent who was either separated or divorced.

During the most formative part of your childhood, were you raised by:
 Percentage responding

	Both	Men	Women
	%	%	%
Married couple, living together	93	91	94
One parent, separated/divorced	5	6	5
Married couple, living separately	1	2	0
Unmarried couple, living separately	1	2	0
I prefer not to answer	1	0	1

Discussions about Vocations While Growing Up

Less than six in ten (57%) report that it was easy for them to start a conversation with their family about their vocation. Men are more likely than women to say that starting a discussion with their family was easy for them.

Discussions about Vocations While Growing Up			
Percentage responding “Yes” to each question*			
	Overall	Men	Women
	%	%	%
Overall, was starting a discussion with your family about your vocation easy for you?	57	70	49
Did your mother ever speak to you about a vocation to priesthood or religious life?	25	19	29
Did another family member ever speak to you about a vocation to priesthood or religious life?	24	24	25
Did your father ever speak to you about a vocation to priesthood or religious life?	22	17	26
*Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one category.			

- A quarter indicate that their mother ever spoke to them about a vocation to priesthood or religious life (25%) and that another family member did the same to them (24%).
- Two in ten reports that their father ever spoke to them about vocations to priesthood or religious life (22%).

Three fifths of the respondents (58%) report that outside of family members, while they were growing up, they ever got to know a priest or a religious brother or sister/nun. Three in ten have a relative who is a priest or a religious brother or sister/nun (29%).

Familiarity with Priests and/or Religious Brothers and Sisters/Nuns while Growing Up			
<i>Percentage responding "Yes" to each question</i>			
	Overall	Men	Women
	%	%	%
Outside of family members, while you were growing up did you ever get to know a priest or a religious brother or sister/nun?	58	63	56
Do you have a relative who is a priest or a religious brother or sister/nun?	29	19	36
*Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one category.			

Education Level Before Entering a Religious Institute

The responding members of the Entrance Class of 2022 were highly educated before entering. Six in ten (59%) report having earned a bachelor’s degree. Less than one in four receives a master’s degree (19% with a master’s and 4% with a doctoral degree).

<i>What was your highest level of education you completed before you entered your religious institute?</i>			
Percentage responding			
	Overall	Men	Women
	%	%	%
High school or less	6	7	4
Some college	11	4	16
Bachelor’s degree	59	56	60
Master’s degree	19	26	14
Doctoral degree	4	4	4
Other	5	4	1

More than one in five responding entrants (22%) report being home schooled at some time in their educational background.

<i>Were you ever home-schooled?</i>			
Percentage responding “Yes” or “No”			
	Overall	Men	Women
	%	%	%
Yes	22	19	24
No	78	81	76
 Average number of years home-schooled	 9	 9	 9

Among those who were home schooled, the average length of time they were home schooled was nine years.

Catholic Education Before Entering a Religious Institute

Half of respondents attended a parish-based religious education program (50%). Four in ten (43%) attended a Catholic elementary or middle school. Another four in ten attended Catholic college/university (43%). A third attended a Catholic high school (35%) before entering their religious institute, with a quarter attending a Catholic ministry formation program before entering (27%).

<i>Did you attend any of the following before you entered? *</i>			
Percentage responding "Yes" to each question			
	Overall	Men	Women
	%	%	%
Parish-based religious education/CCD/PSR	50	54	49
Catholic elementary or middle school	43	41	43
Catholic high school	35	37	34
Catholic college/university	43	46	41
Catholic ministry formation program	27	19	32

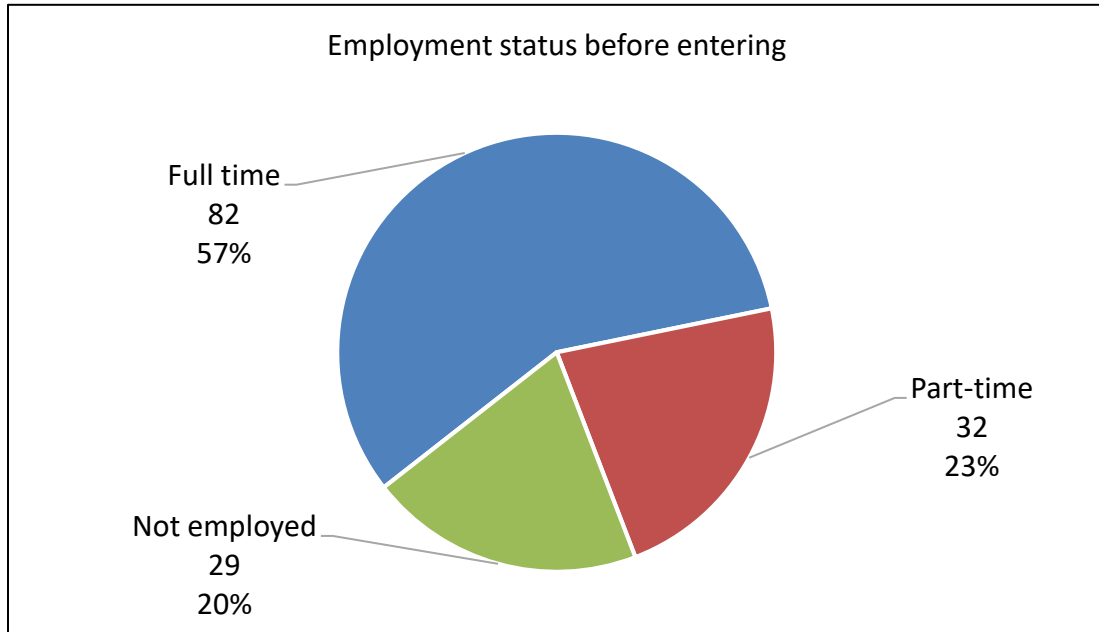
Members of the Entrance Class of 2022 are almost three times more likely than other U.S. Catholics to have attended a Catholic elementary school. In a 2016 national poll conducted by CARA,¹ 16% of U.S. adult Catholics report having attended a Catholic elementary school, compared to 43% among entrants. Responding entrants of 2022 are more than four times more likely than other U.S. adult Catholics to have attended a Catholic high school (35% of respondents, compared to 8% of U.S. adult Catholics) and eight times more likely to have attended a Catholic college/university (43% of respondents, compared to just 5% of U.S. adult Catholics).

Whether or not they ever attended a Catholic elementary or high school, half of respondents (50%) participated in a religious education program at some time in their parish. Among respondents who said they participated in a religious education program in their parish, 73% did not report attending a Catholic elementary school and 77% did not attend a Catholic high school.

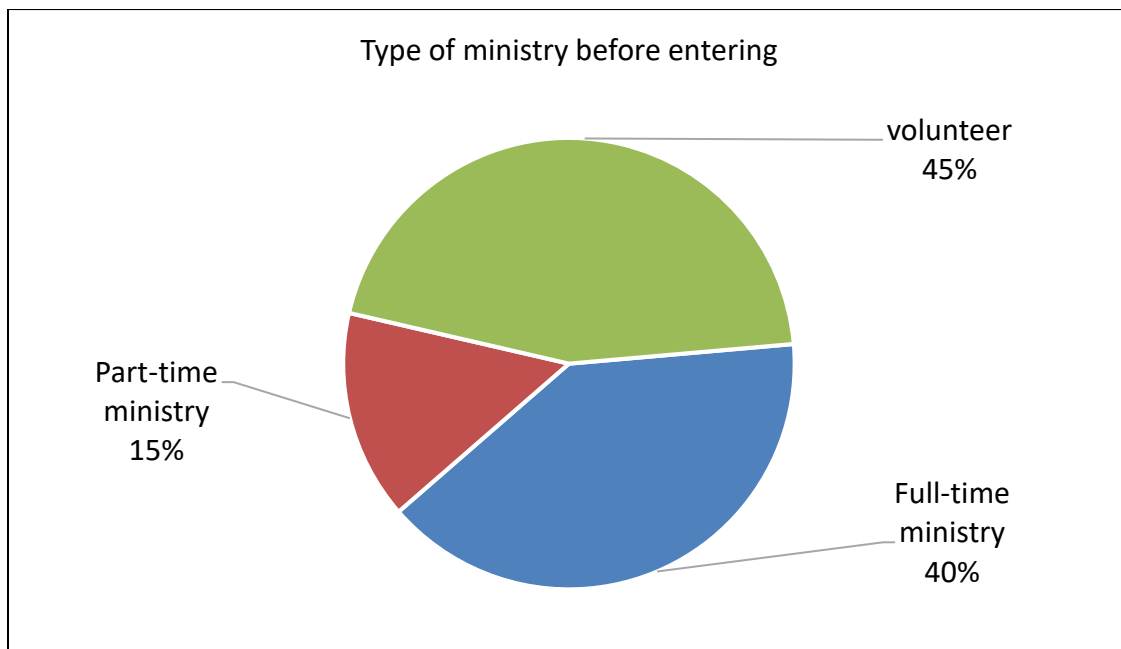
¹CARA Catholic Poll, 2016. Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate.

Employment Before Entering

Respondents were asked if they were employed before entering religious life. One in five respondents were not employed (20%). Nearly three in five were employed full time (57%) and about one in five was employed part time (23%).



Before entering religious life, six in ten were engaged in ministry (59%). Four in ten were engaged in full-time ministry (41%). One in ten (15%) were engaged in part-time ministry and four in ten (45%) were engaged in voluntary ministry.



Participation in Religious Programs, Activities, or Ministries

Many respondents were active in parish life and/or other religious programs or activities before entering their religious institute. Almost all respondents (98%) participated in at least one of the programs or activities listed in the table below before entering.

<i>Aside from parish-based religious education, did you ever participate in any of the these before you entered?</i>			
Percentage checking each response*			
	Overall	Men	Women
	%	%	%
Retreats	71	65	77
Other volunteer work in a parish/other setting	64	54	70
Campus ministry during college	58	54	60
Right to Life March in Washington	47	37	54
Parish young adult group	39	32	44
Parish youth group or Life Teen during elementary or middle school years	39	28	47
Campus ministry during high school years	32	32	33
World Youth Day	10	9	11
Religious institute volunteer program (e.g. Mercy Corps or Jesuit Volunteer Corps)	9	7	10
National Catholic Youth Conference	7	2	10

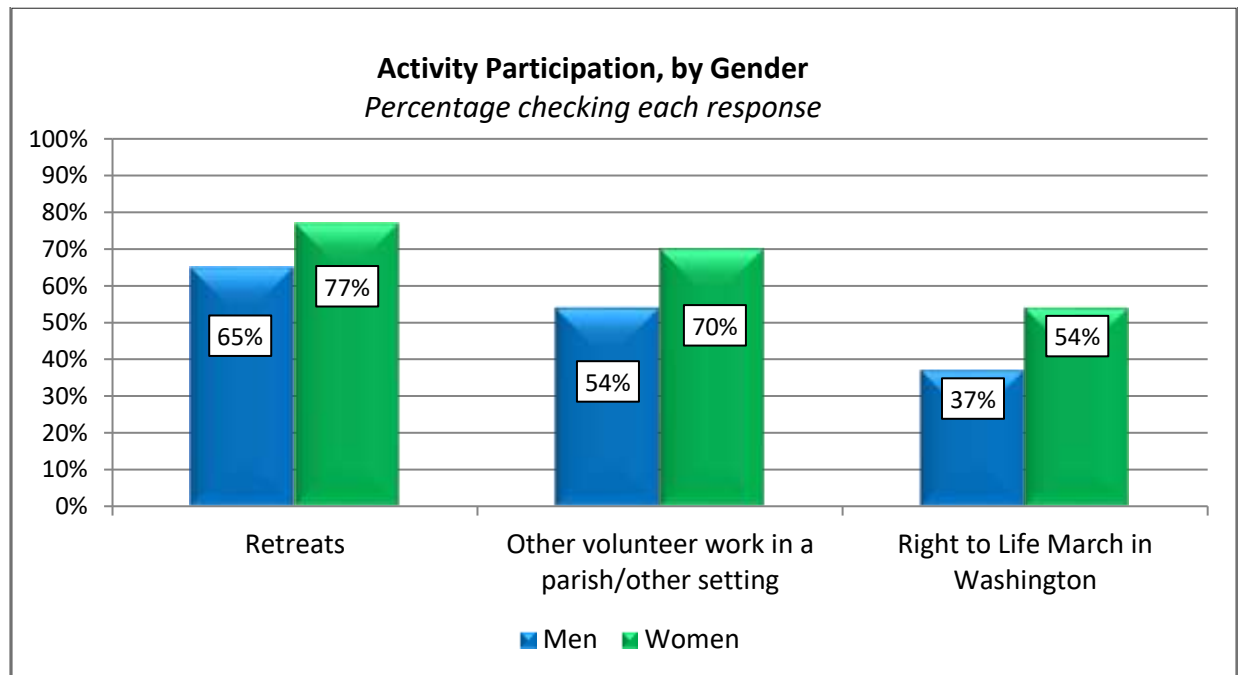
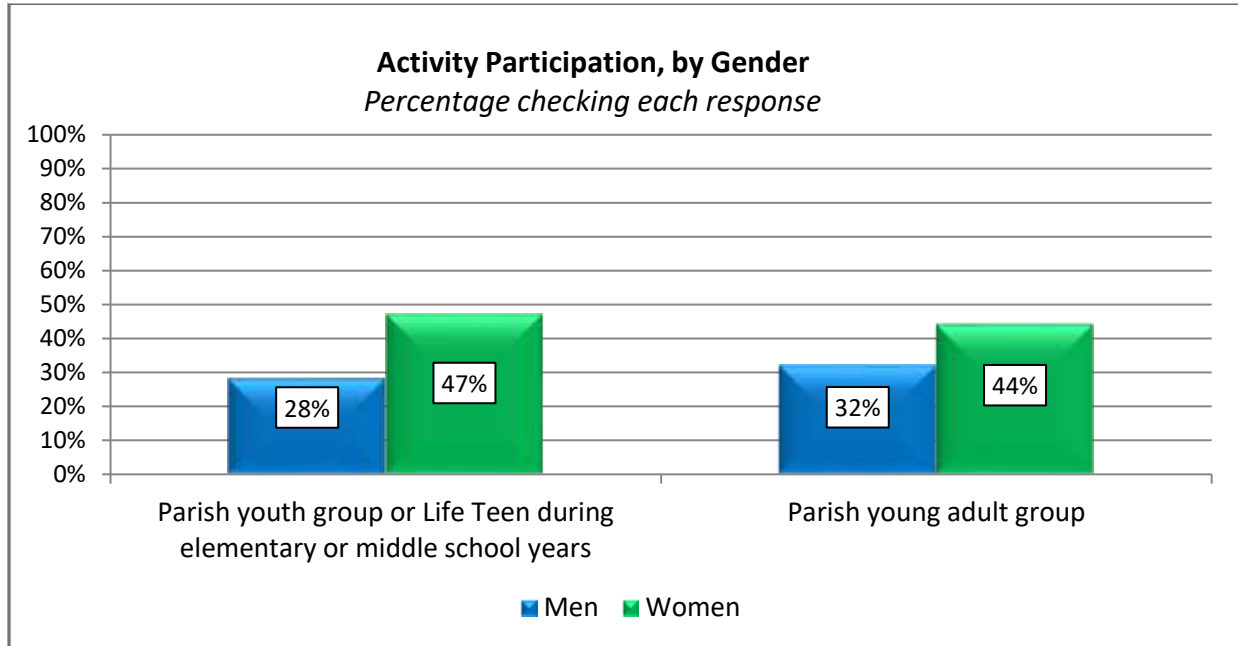
*Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one category.

- Seven in ten respondents participated in retreats (71%).
- Six in ten participated in other volunteer work in parish /other setting (64%) and campus ministry during college (58%).
- Nearly half (47%) of the respondents participated in right to life march in Washington.
- Four in ten participated in parish young adult group (39%) and in parish youth group or Life Teen during elementary or middle school years (39%).

- One-third participated in campus ministry during high school years (32%).
- One in ten participated in World Youth Day (10%), religious institute volunteer program (e.g. Mercy Corps or Jesuit Volunteer Corps) (9%), and National Catholic Youth Conference (7%).

Differences by Gender

Responding women religious are more likely than men to have participated in the activities shown in the two figures below before entering their religious institute.²



² As was noted in the Introduction, only differences of 10 percentage points or more will be treated as meaningful.

It is instructive to examine how many participated in parish programs as adults before they entered religious life. Nine in ten (90%) served in one or more specified parish ministries before entering their religious institute, either in a paid ministry position or as a volunteer.

Aside from parish-based religious education, did you ever participate in any of these before you entered?
Percentage checking each response

	Overall	Men	Women
	%	%	%
Liturgical ministry (e.g., lector, extraordinary minister)	66	70	63
Other volunteer work in a parish/other setting	64	54	70
Faith formation, catechetical ministry, RCIA team	43	35	48
Music ministry, cantor, choir	41	37	44

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

- Roughly two in three entrants report that they served in liturgical ministry roles, such as being a lector or extraordinary minister of Communion (66%) or in some other volunteer work in a parish/other setting (64%) before they entered their religious institute.
- About two in five respondents report having participated in faith formation, catechetical ministry or RCIA (43%) and in music ministry, cantor, or choir (41%)

Part II Vocational Discernment

Consideration of a Vocation to Religious Life

On average, respondents were 20 years old when they first considered a vocation to religious life. Half were 19 or younger when they first considered a vocation.

Age When First Considered a Vocation to Religious Life			
	Overall	Men	Women
Mean age	20	20	19
Median age	19	20	18
Range of ages	3-41	3-36	6-41

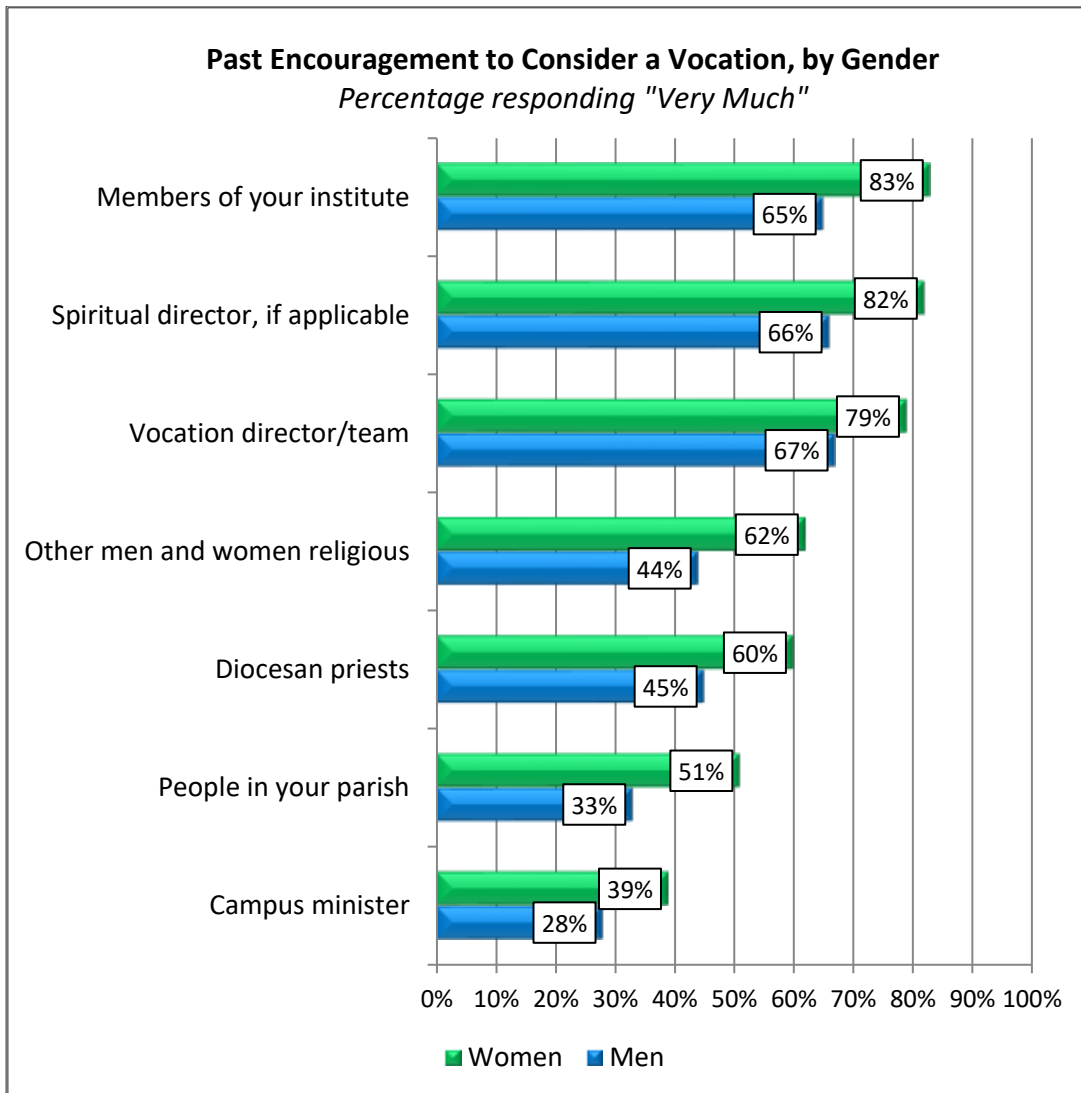
Entrants to religious life were asked how much encouragement they received from various people when they first considered entering a religious institute. Nine in ten received encouragement from a member of the institute (95%), or a spiritual director (93%), or Vocation Director/team (91%), and friends outside the institute (86%) when they first considered entering a religious institute.

<i>How much encouragement did you receive from these when you first considered entering a religious institute?</i>		
Percentage responding		
	“Somewhat” or “Very Much” Encouragement	“Very Much” Encouragement Only
	%	%
Members of your institute	95	76
Spiritual director, if applicable	93	75
Vocation Director/team	91	74
Friends outside the institute	86	55
Other men and women religious	81	54
Diocesan priests	80	53
People in your parish	78	44
People in your school or workplace	72	40
Your parents	71	43
Your siblings	69	30
Other family members	61	22
Campus minister, if applicable	56	31

- Eight in ten received at least “somewhat” encouragement from other men and women religious (81%), diocesan priests (80%), and people in your parish (78%).
- Regarding their other acquaintances as well as their family members, seven in ten received encouragement people in their school or workplace (72%), their parents (71%), and their siblings (69%).
- Six in ten received encouragement from their family members (61%) and from campus ministers (56%)

Comparisons by Gender

Women are more likely than men to receive “very much” encouragement to consider a vocation from the people mentioned in the chart below.



Initial Acquaintance with the Religious Institute

Men and women entering religious life were asked to indicate how they first became acquainted with their religious institute.

How did you first become acquainted with your religious institute?

Percentage checking each response*

	Overall	Men	Women
	%	%	%
Through your own search	30	33	28
Through the recommendation of a friend or advisor	29	22	33
In an institution where members served e.g. school	27	47	16
Through web or social media promotional materials	23	19	26
Through the reputation or history of the institute	21	33	14
Through a relative or a friend in the institute	19	13	22
Through working with a member of the institute	12	20	7
Through an event sponsored by the institute	12	9	14
Through a media story about the institute or member	8	6	9
Through a vocation fair	6	6	7
Through print promotional materials	4	6	3
Through a vocation match or placement service	3	4	2
Other	16	7	21

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

- Three in ten report first being acquainted with their religious institute through the following:
 - Through your own search (30%)
 - Through the recommendation of a friend or advisor (29%)
 - In an institution where members served e.g. school (27%). More men than women say they were acquainted to their institute by this. (47% compared with 16% of women)
- About two in ten report first being acquainted with their religious institute through the following:
 - Through web or social media promotional materials (23%)
 - Through the reputation or history of the institute (21%)
 - Through a relative or a friend in the institute (19%)

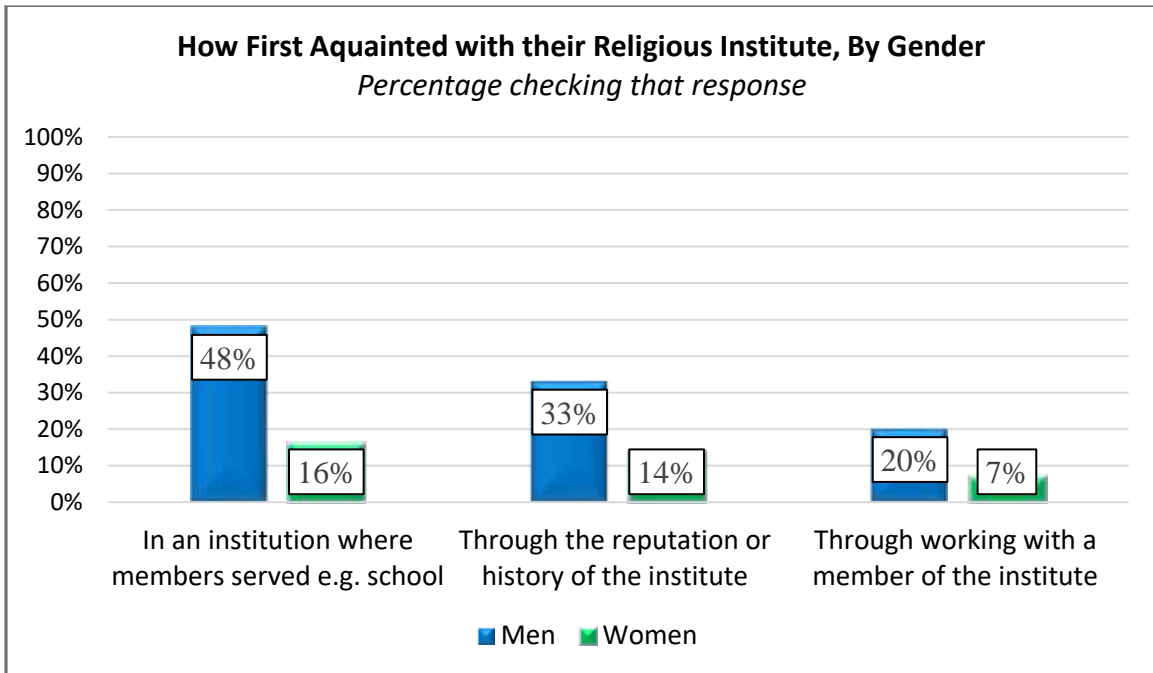
- Less than one in ten became acquainted with their institution through the following:
 - Through working with a member of the institute (12%)
 - Through an event sponsored by the institute (12%)
 - Through a media story about the institute or member (8%)

- One in twenty became acquainted with their institution through a vocation fair (6%), print promotional materials (4%), and through a vocation match or placement service (3%).

- One in six (16%) first became acquainted with their religious institute through some “other” means (often during their college years). The “other” responses are listed below, lightly edited:
 - Through their own ministry to my family.
 - Mission trip.
 - Podcasts and you tube videos.
 - Retreat ministry.
 - Through a vocation talk at my local parish.
 - Soup Kitchen.
 - Through attending the 'Institute on Religious Life" conference as a graduate student in 2018.
 - A sister visited my college campus ministry.
 - I met one of our sisters at a diocesan event.
 - Locally hosting events for families at a motherhouse.
 - My parish priests.
 - CSMWR directory.
 - A retreat they led.
 - Spiritual director.
 - Mission.
 - Young adult catholic communities.
 - Through a Catholic Youth Event (Focus).
 - Focus seek conference.
 - Through a retreat they were present at.
 - Internet.
 - As an employee of the community.
 - FOCUS-SEEK Conference.

Comparisons by Gender

Men are more likely than women to have become acquainted with their religious institute as shown in the chart below.



Attraction to Religious Life

Entrants in 2022 were asked how much various elements attracted them to religious life. Nearly all respondents were “somewhat” or “very much” attracted to religious life by a desire for prayer and spiritual growth (98%) and a sense of call to religious life (97%). Four in five were “very much” attracted by these aspects.

<i>How much did the following attract you to religious life?</i>		
Percentage responding “Somewhat” or “Very Much”		
	“Somewhat” or “Very Much” Attracted	“Very Much” Attracted Only
	%	%
A desire for prayer and spiritual growth	98	87
A sense of call to religious life	97	83
A desire to be part of a community	92	59
A desire to be of service	89	56
A desire to be more committed to the Church	79	48

- Nine in ten respondents were at least “somewhat” attracted to religious life by a desire to be part of a community (92%) and a desire to be of service (89%). More than half say each of these attracted them “very much.”
- Eight in ten had a desire to be more committed to the Church (79%). Men are more likely than women who were attracted to religious life by this aspect.

Attraction to a Religious Institute

Entrants were asked how much each of ten aspects of religious life attracted them to their particular religious institute. Nine in ten report that they were at least “somewhat” attracted by the example of members of the institute (95%), the community life of the institute (95%), and the prayer life of the institute (95%). At least two-thirds report they were “very much” attracted by these aspects.

<i>How much did these attract you to your religious institute?</i>		
Percentage responding		
	“Somewhat” or “Very Much”	“Very Much” Only
	%	%
The example of members of the institute	95	71
The community life of the institute	95	69
The prayer life of the institute	95	67
The spirituality of the institute	94	75
The institute’s fidelity to the Church	93	75
The mission of the institute	93	69
The ministries of the institute	89	59
Welcome and encouragement by members	83	60
The life and works of your founder/ress	68	41
A personal invitation by a member	49	27

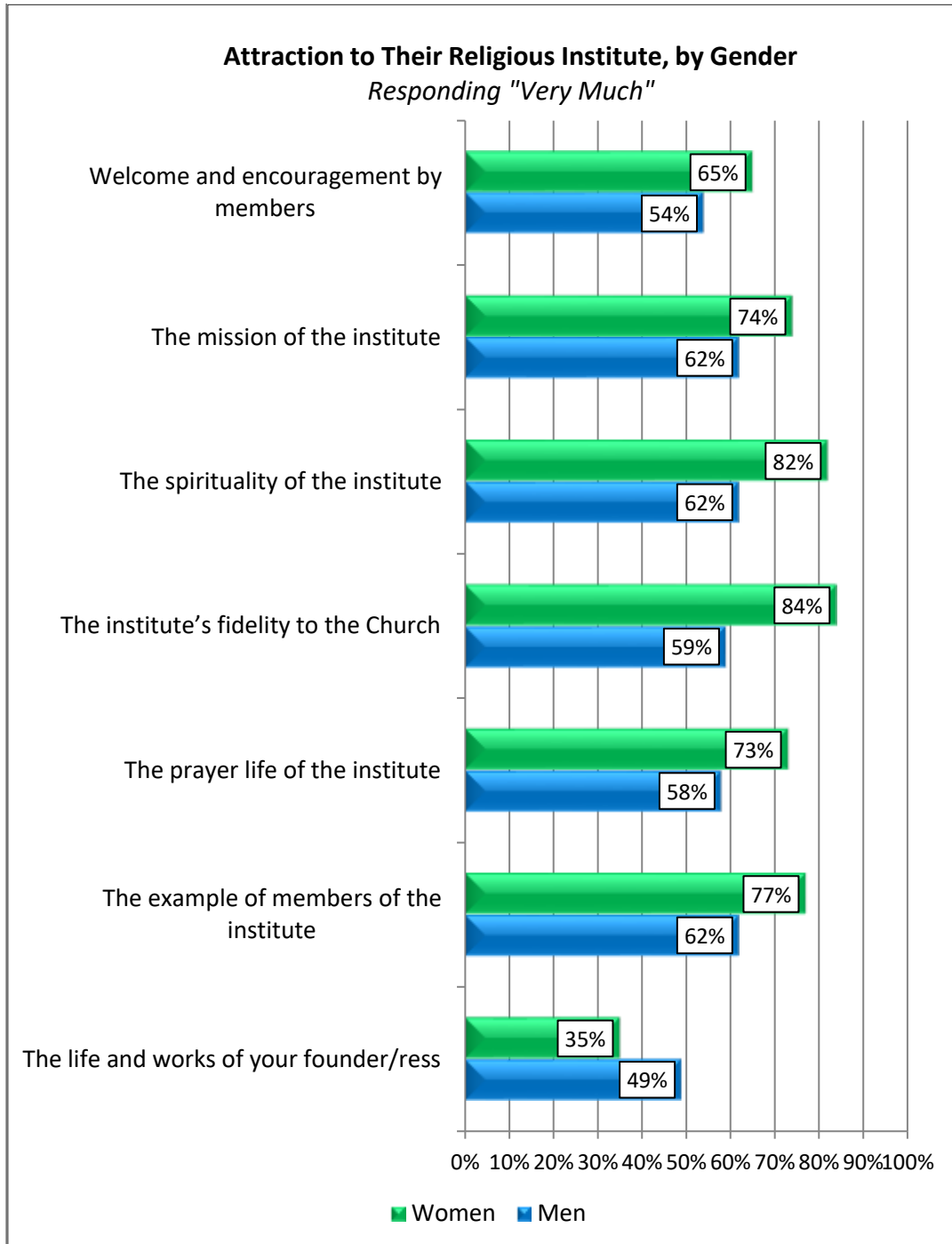
- Nine in ten were “somewhat” attracted by the following aspects:
 - The spirituality of the institute (94%)
 - The mission of the institute (93%)
 - The institute’s fidelity to the Church (93%)
 - The ministries of the institute (89%)

- Eight in ten were “somewhat” attracted by the welcome and encouragement they experienced from the members (83%). Six in ten (60%) report they are “very much” attracted by this aspect.

- Seven in ten were “somewhat” attracted to their institute by life and works of the founder/ress (68%) and half were attracted by a personal invitation by a member (49%).

Comparisons by Gender

Men are more likely than women to get attracted to their religious institute by the life and works of your founder/ress. In contrast, women are more likely than men to report that the aspects in the chart below “very much” attracted them to their religious institute.



Helpfulness of Discernment Programs and Experiences

Entrants were asked how helpful selected vocation experiences were to them in discerning their call to their institute before they entered. This section only reports those who participated in these activities.

Among those who participated in these activities, almost all entrants report that they had contact with institute members (97%) and “Come and See” experience (96%) were at least “somewhat” helpful in their discernment to join religious institute. Eight in ten say these same aspects were “very helpful” to them.

If you participated in any of the following with your religious institute before you entered, how helpful were these to you in discerning your call to your institute?

Percentage responding

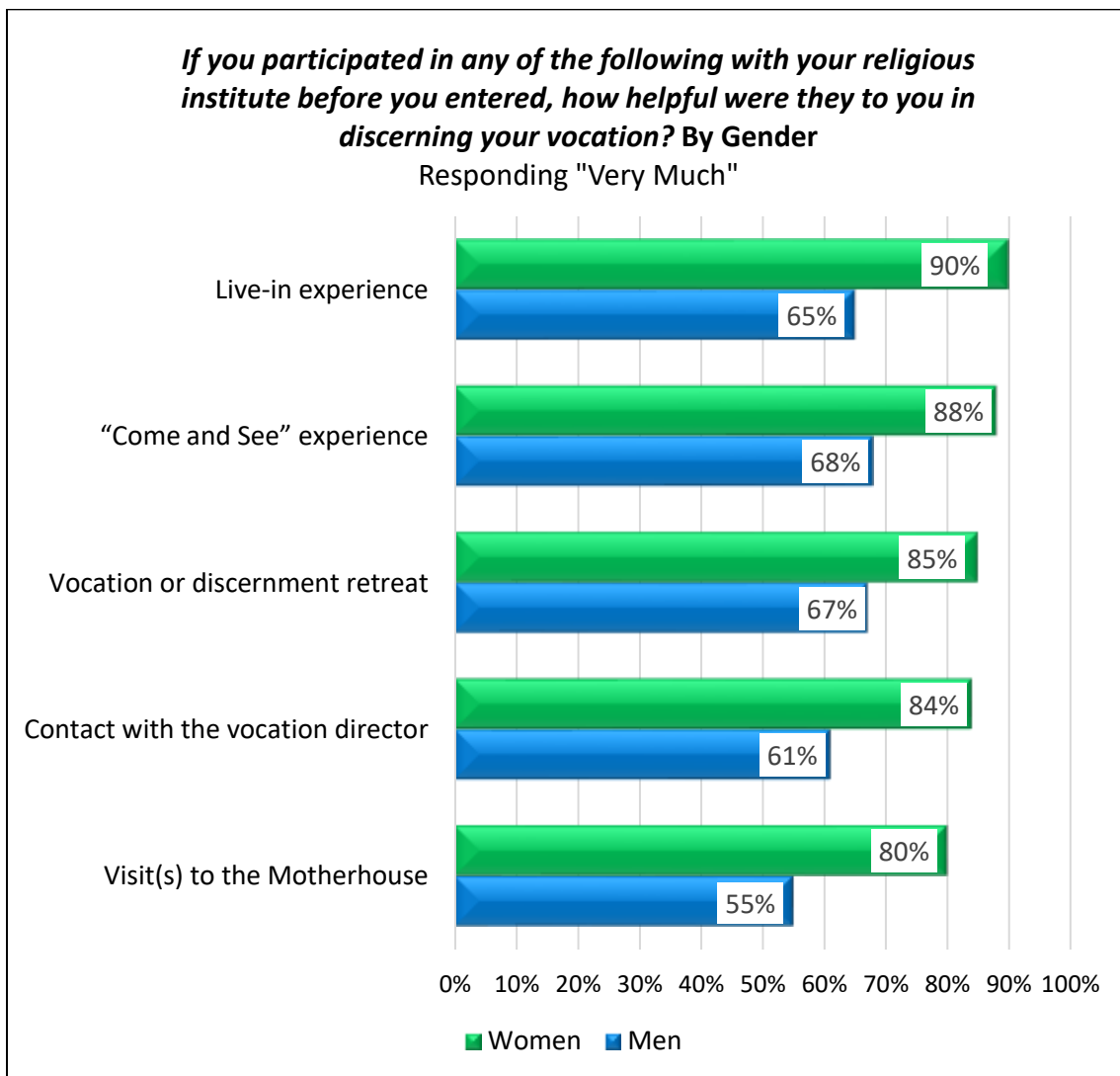
	“Somewhat” or “Very” Helpful	“Very” Helpful Only
	%	%
Contact with institute members	97	77
“Come and See” experience	96	79
Visit(s) to local community/ies	94	76
Vocation or discernment retreat	93	78
Contact with the vocation director	93	75
Spiritual direction	93	74
Live-in experience	91	81
Ministry with institute members	91	63
Visit(s) to the Motherhouse	88	76
Mission experience	86	63
Meeting with a discernment group	81	46
Social media (e.g., Facebook)	53	33
“Andrew Dinner” or “Nun Run”	28	7

- Nine in ten or more report the following experiences were at least “somewhat” helpful in their discernment to join their religious institute:
 - Visit(s) to local community/ies (94%)
 - Spiritual direction (93%)
 - Contact with the vocation director (93%)
 - Vocation or discernment retreat (93%)
 - Live-in experience (91%)
 - Ministry with institute members (91%)

- Visit(s) to the Motherhouse (88%)
- Eight in ten indicate mission experience (86%) and meeting with a discernment group (81%) were at least “somewhat” helpful to them.
- More than half indicate that social media (53%) were at least “somewhat” helpful to them and three in ten (28%) report that an “Andrew Dinner” or a “Nun Run” were “somewhat” helpful to them.

Comparisons by Gender

Woman entrants are more likely than men entrants to report that the five experiences in the figure below were “very” helpful to them in discerning their call to their religious institute.



Part III Experience of Religious Life, Attractions, and Challenges

Influences on Decisions to Enter Religious Institutes

Entrants were asked how much influence various aspects of their religious institute had on their decision to enter their institute. Almost all respondents report that the community life in the institute has at least somewhat influence on their decision to enter their religious institute (96%), with seven in ten reporting this aspect “very much” influenced them.

How much did these influence your decision to enter your religious institute?

Percentage responding

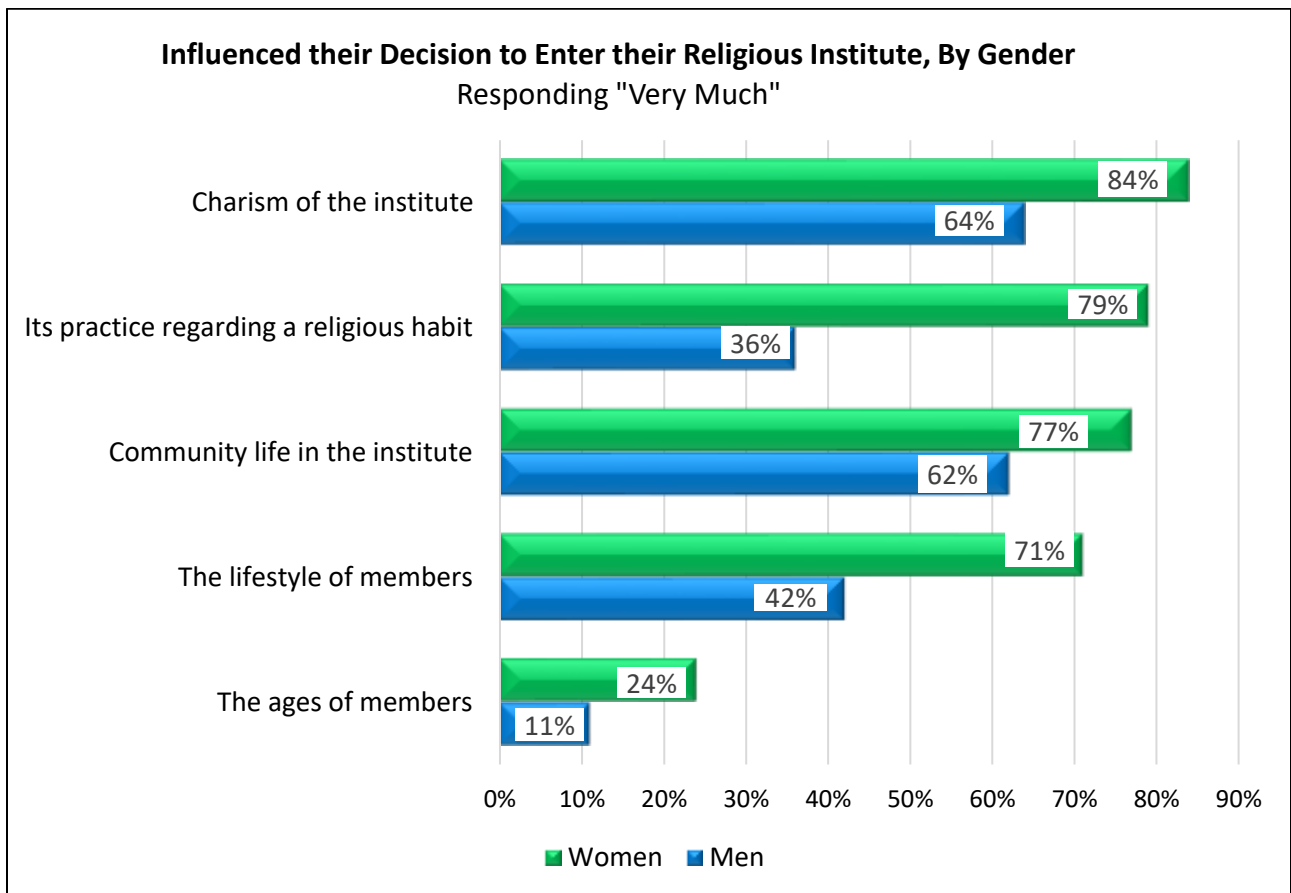
	“Somewhat” or “Very Much” Influenced	“Very Much” Influenced Only
	%	%
Community life in the institute	96	72
Prayer life or prayer styles in the institute	92	70
The lifestyle of members	91	60
The charism of the institute	89	77
The types of ministry of its members	81	52
Its practice regarding a religious habit	80	63
The focus on the possibilities for the future of the institute	58	28
The ages of members	53	19
The size of the institute	48	14
Its geographic location(s)	38	17
Its internationality, if applicable	35	14
The cultural diversity of the members	27	15
The racial/ethnic background of members	18	7

- Nine in ten report prayer life or prayer styles in the institute (92%), the life style of members (91%), and the charism of the institute (89%) in the institute at least “somewhat” influenced their decision to enter their religious institute.
- Eight in ten entrants report having been at least “somewhat” influenced in their decision to enter their religious institute by the types of ministry of its members (81%) and its practice regarding a religious habit (80%).

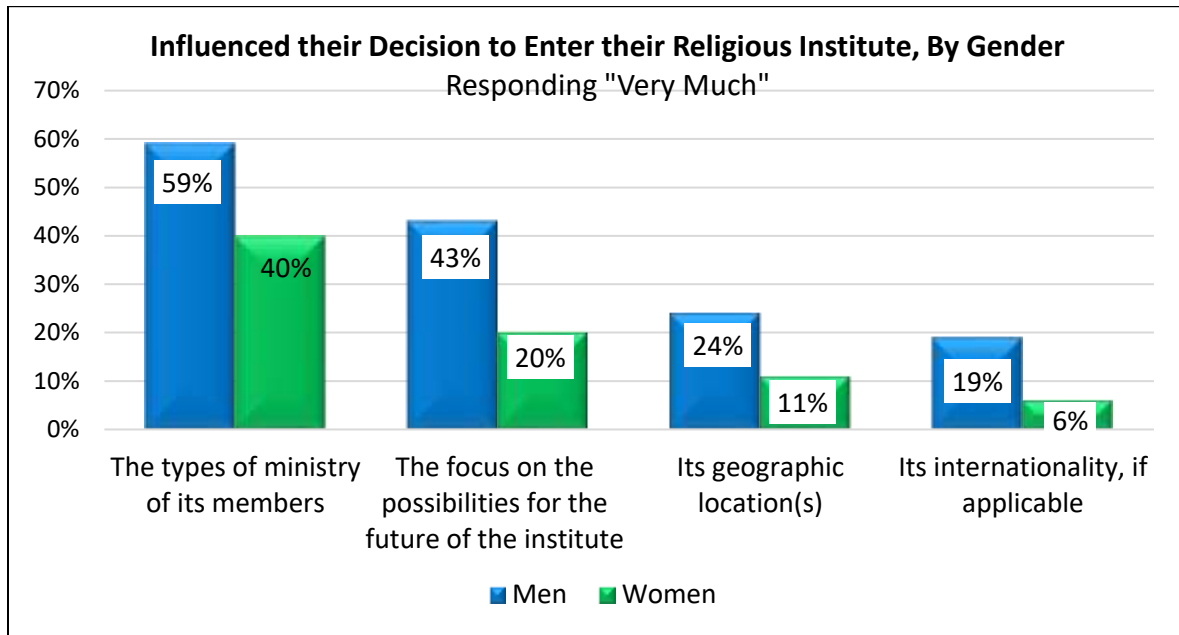
- Six in ten entrants report having been at least “somewhat” influenced in their decision to enter their religious institute by the focus on the possibilities for the future of the institute (58%).
- Half indicate that the ages of members (53%) and the size of the institute (48%) “somewhat” or “very much” influenced their decision to enter their religious institute.
- Four in ten say its geographic location(s) (38%) and three in ten say its internationality (35%) at least “somewhat” influenced their decisions.
- One in four say they were at least “somewhat” influenced in their decision to enter their religious institute by the cultural diversity of the members (27%).
- One in six indicates the racial/ethnic backgrounds of members (18%) at least “somewhat” influenced in their decision to enter their religious institute.

Comparisons by Gender

Women are most likely to report that the factors mentioned the chart below “very much” influenced their decision to enter their religious institute.



In contrast, men are most likely to be “very much” influenced in their decision to enter the religious institute by the aspects mentioned in the chart below.



Prayer Practices

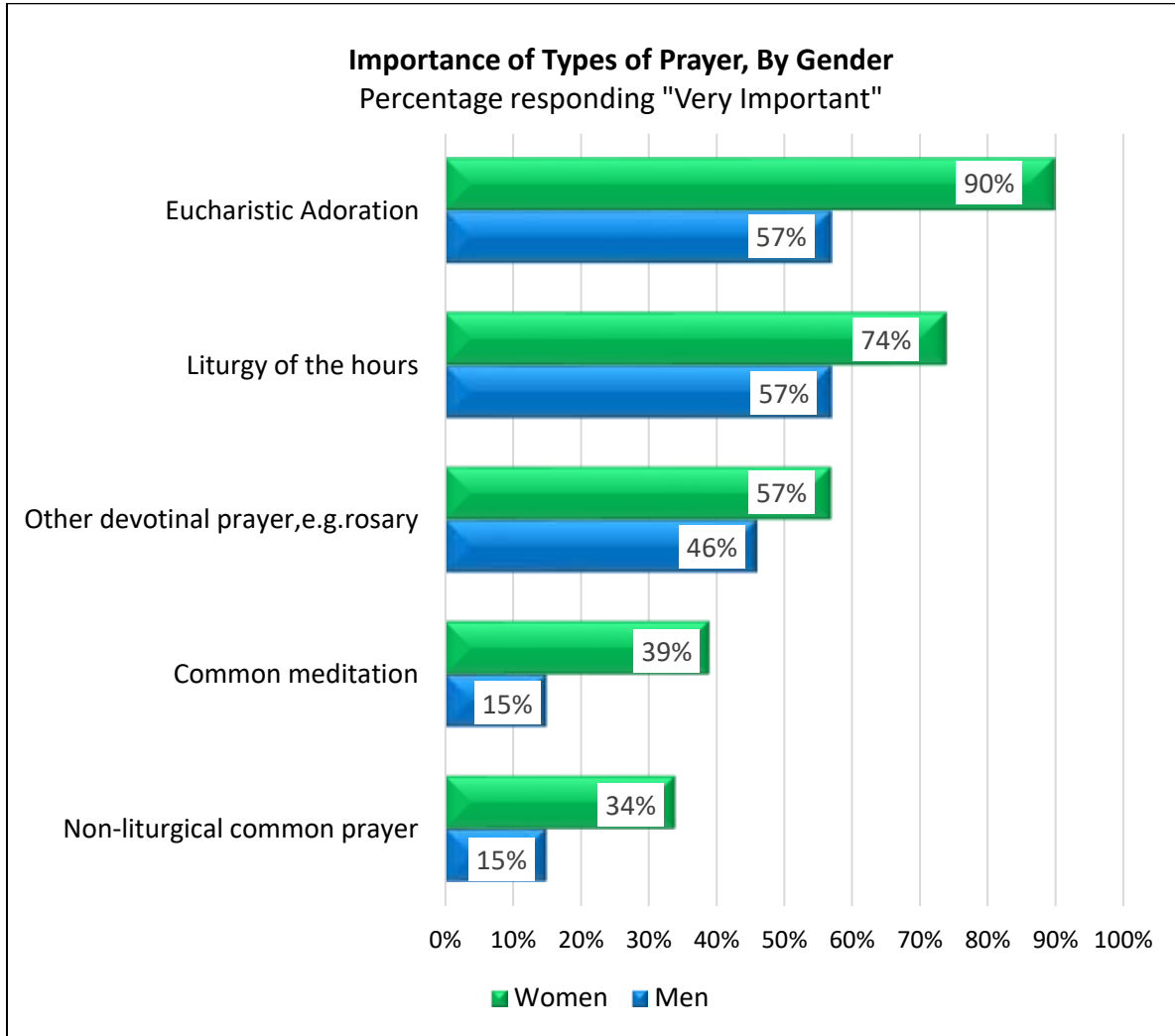
Respondents were asked to evaluate how important each of eight different types of prayer are to them. Almost all respondents say private personal prayer (99%) and daily Eucharist (98%) are at least “somewhat” important to them. Nine in ten report that these types of prayers are “very” important to them.

<i>How important to you are these types of prayer?</i>		
Percentage responding		
	“Somewhat” or “Very” Important	“Very” Important Only
	%	%
Private personal prayer	99	88
Daily Eucharist	98	92
Liturgy of the Hours	94	68
Eucharistic Adoration	92	76
Other devotional prayer, e.g., rosary	83	53
Faith sharing	67	34
Common meditation	62	30
Non-liturgical common prayer	57	27

- Nine in ten respondents report that Liturgy of the Hours (94%) and Eucharistic Adoration (92%) are at least “somewhat” important to them.
- Four in five report other devotional prayers such as the rosary (83%) are at least “somewhat” important to them, and half reporting these types of prayers are “very” important to them.
- Two-thirds report that faith sharing (67%) are at least “somewhat” important to them.
- Three in five say common meditation (62%) and non-liturgical common prayer (57%) are at least “somewhat” important to them, with 27% reporting that it is “very” important to them.

Comparisons by Gender

Women are more likely than men to say that the types of prayer mentioned in the chart below are “very” important to them.



Importance of Aspects of Community Life

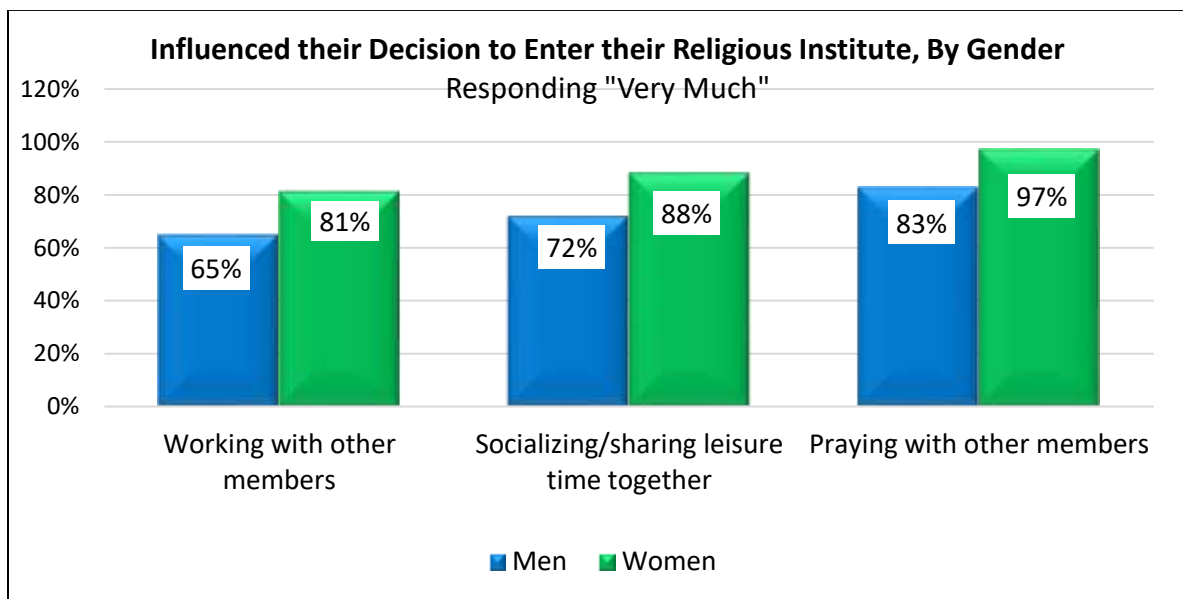
Entrants to religious life were asked to indicate the importance to them of various aspects of community life. All report that praying with other members (100%). All most all report that living with other members (99%), sharing meals together (98%), and socializing/sharing leisure time together (97%), are at least “somewhat” important to them.

How important to you are these aspects of community life?		
Percentage responding		
	“Somewhat” or “Very”	“Very” Only
	%	%
Praying with other members	100	92
Living with other members	99	92
Sharing meals together	98	86
Socializing/sharing leisure time together	97	82
Working with other members	92	75

Nine in ten indicate that working with other members (92%) is at least “somewhat” important to them.

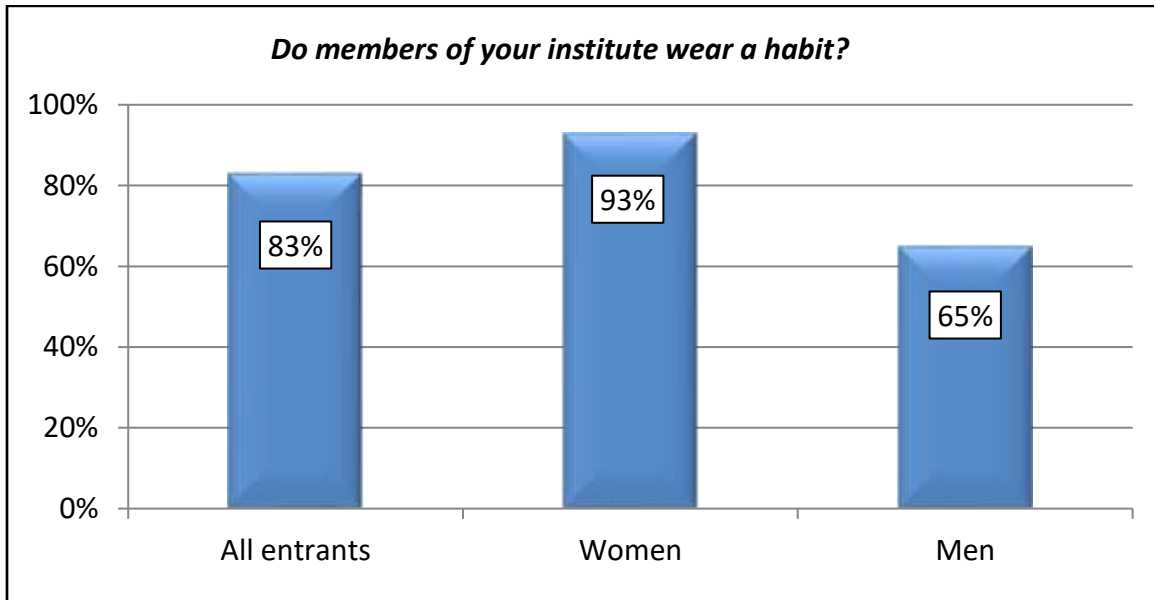
Comparisons by Gender

Women are more likely than men to say that all these aspects mentioned in the chart below are very important to them.

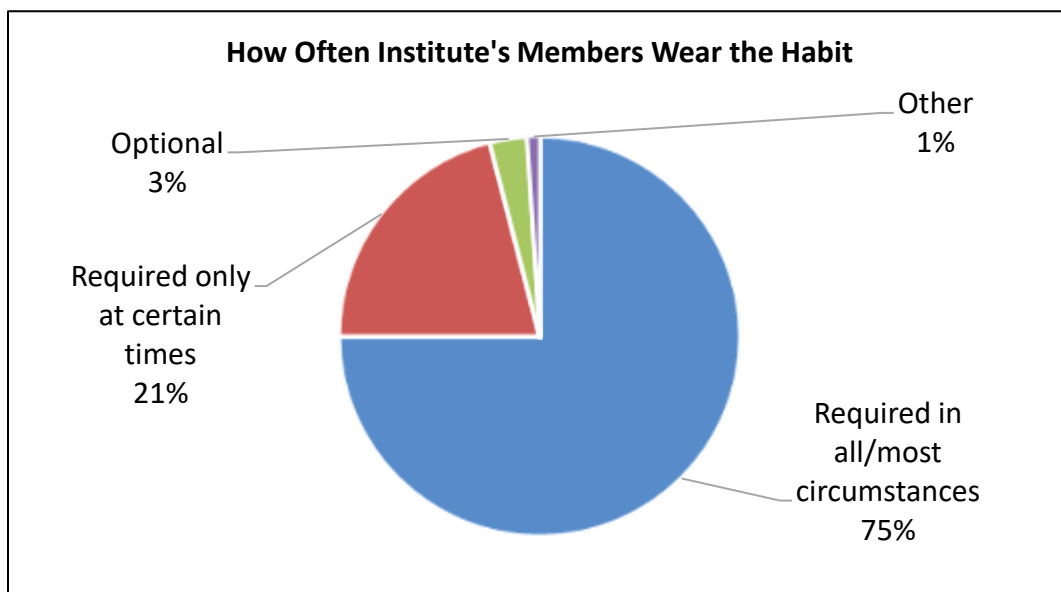


Wearing of Religious Habit

New entrants were asked if the members of their institute wear a habit. Eight in ten (83%) indicate that members of their institute wear a habit. Women are more likely than men to say that members of their institute wear a habit.



Among those who indicate that members wear a habit, three quarters indicate that the habit is required in all or most circumstances (75%). One in five report that the habit is required only at certain times (21%), and just 3% report that wearing habit is optional in their institute.



Comparisons by Gender

Women are more likely than men to say that wearing the habit is required in all or most all circumstances. Men, on the other hand, are more likely than women to say wearing the habit is required only at certain times.

<i>If yes, is wearing the habit:</i>			
Percentage responding			
	Overall	Men	Women
	%	%	%
Required in all or most circumstances	75	34	93
Required only at certain times	21	60	4
Optional	3	3	4
Other	1	3	0

Evaluation of Aspects of the Religious Institute

Besides assessing what attracted them to their religious institutes, entrants were also asked to evaluate their experiences while in their institute. With one exception, more than eight in ten (80% to 99%) rate their religious institute as “good” or “excellent” in each of the aspects shown in the table below.

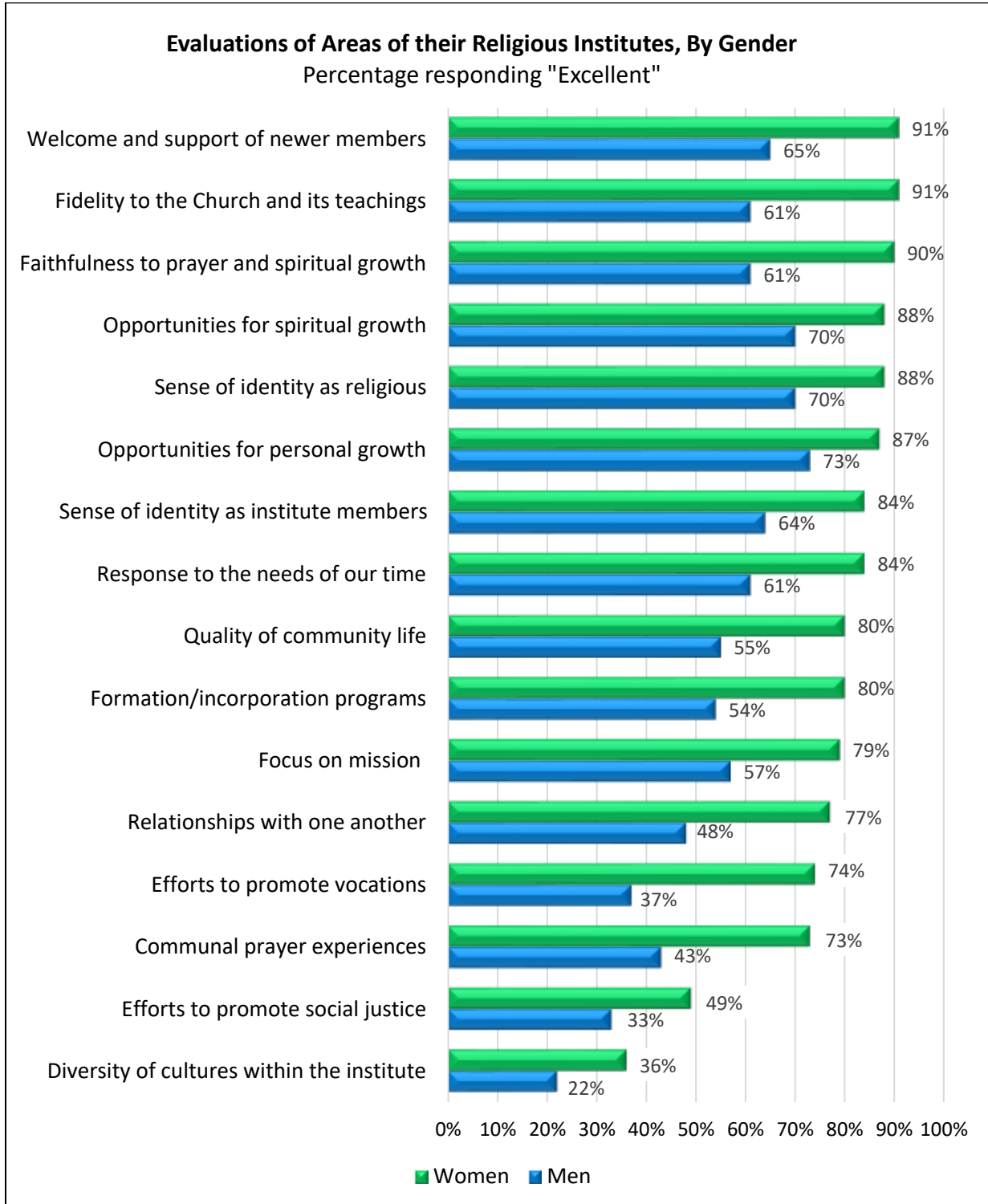
<i>How would you rate these in your religious institute?</i>		
Percentage responding		
	“Good” or “Excellent”	“Excellent” Only
	%	%
Welcome and support of newer members	99	81
Opportunities for personal growth	97	81
Opportunities for spiritual growth	96	81
Sense of identity as religious	94	81
Fidelity to the Church and its teachings	93	79
Faithfulness to prayer and spiritual growth	97	78
Commitment to ministry	97	77
Sense of identity as institute members	97	76
Educational opportunities	97	74
Response to the needs of our time	92	74
Quality of community life	97	70
Focus on mission	95	70
Formation/incorporation programs	96	69
Relationships with one another	97	66
Preparation for ministry	93	66
Opportunities for ongoing formation	99	64
Communal prayer experiences	94	61
Efforts to promote vocations	89	60
Efforts to promote social justice	80	43
Diversity of cultures within the institute	69	31

- Examining only those rating an aspect as “excellent” shows the areas where entrants are particularly satisfied. About eight in ten the followings are “excellent”:
 - Welcome and support of newer members (81%)
 - Opportunities for personal growth (81%)
 - Opportunities for spiritual growth (81%)
 - Sense of identity as religious (81%)
 - Fidelity to the Church and its teachings (79%)

- Faithfulness to prayer and spiritual growth (78%)
- More than three-quarters rate their religious institute as excellent regarding the commitment to ministry (77%) and sense of identity as institute members (76%).
- About seven in ten rate these areas of their religious institutes as “excellent”:
 - Educational opportunities (74%)
 - Response to the needs of our time (74%)
 - Quality of community life (70%)
 - Focus on mission (70%)
 - Formation/incorporation programs (69%)
- Two-thirds rate the relationships with one another (66%), and preparation for ministry (66%) in the religious institutes as *excellent*.
- About six in ten rate opportunities for ongoing formation (64%) and communal prayer experiences (61%) and promote vocations (60%) in their religious institutes as *excellent*.
- Four in ten rate efforts to promote social justice (43%) in their religious institutes as *excellent*.
- Finally, three tenths rate diversity of cultures within the institute (31%) is the area of their religious institutes as *excellent*.

Comparisons by Gender

Women are more likely than men to rate their religious institute as “excellent” on almost all aspects mentioned in the chart below.



What Most Attracted Entrants to Their Religious Institute

New entrants were also invited to respond in their own words to an open-ended question: *“What most attracted you to your religious institute?”*

Respondents shared many aspects of this attraction, including mission and ministries, the founder/ess, spirituality and charism of the institute, prayer life and communal prayer, community life, joy of the members, fidelity to the Church, its practice regarding religious habit, religious formation/lifestyle of the institute members and sense of social justice. A few of their comments relative to each of these aspects are listed below. A full transcript of all open-ended responses is included in an appendix at the end of this report.

Founder/Foundress, Spirituality, and Charism of the Institute

The founder/foundress, the spirituality, and the charism of the institute were other common factors that attracted respondents to their religious institute. They report how much the spirituality of their institute’s founder or foundress inspired them and led to their decision to enter their religious institute. At least 70 respondents mentioned this aspect. Some of their responses include:

- *The "pillars" of our life are all things that have always been important to me, and the charism matches what I would be doing with my life either way. By entering religious life, I can do what I've always wanted to while also giving my whole life to God; the compartmentalization that would be required otherwise is not needed in this context.*
- *The Carmelites' spirituality of contemplation and action attracts me powerfully. Its most prominent figures are Elijah and Mary. Together, they form the foundation of the Carmelites' life of prayer and solitude.*
- *The charism caught and held my attention. The vibrancy of the sisters and their desire to love those they come in contact with.*
- *The charism of preaching for the salvation of souls. Community life was also a big appeal, particularly the way community life is lived out in the institute I belong to.*
- *The charisms of community and prayer life ordered to the preaching of truth attracted me very much. Sound teaching, healthy relationships in the community, and observance of the rule all went towards a feeling of trust and surety within this order.*

Community Life

Another dominant element of attraction that the responding new entrants report is the community life of the institute. At least 58 respondents report that community life and

community activities very much attracted them to their religious institute. In addition, some of their responses included:

- *Community life, dedication to serving the marginalized, openness to different kinds of ministries, strong presence in my home state.*
- *Community, internationality, dynamism, kindness of members, down-to-Earth nature of the members, high intelligence of the members, deep care members held for those around them*
- *I was attracted to the joy of this community. Above all I am attracted to the way of life of this community and how it is all spent for Jesus!*
- *I was drawn to the community life. I was already in seminary formation but decided that diocesan priesthood wasn't for me. I wanted to live in a community of believers. I also was drawn by the opportunities for diverse ministry offered by my institute.*
- *I was very attracted to my community's zeal for the truth and their eager fidelity and love for catholic teaching. I especially loved their devotion to the Eucharist, their radicality of life, the joy and authenticity of the sisters.*
- *Our work in tertiary education, our community life, our dedication to liturgy, the wearing of a habit, and personal role models and examples of holiness in the community itself.*
- *Strong communal life, intellectual tradition and formation, visible holiness of its members, fidelity to the church, union of action and contemplation, lack of ideology, long tradition of sanctity, doctrinal orthodoxy, traditional liturgical sensibility, vitality with many young members, entrusted missions.*

Prayer Life and Communal Prayer

At least 53 respondents also recognize prayer as other attractive aspects that drew them to their religious institute. They were attracted by the communal prayers and various types of prayers, including daily Mass, Liturgy of the Hours, Eucharistic Adoration, daily rosary, and the Stations of the Cross. Some of their responses about prayer included:

- *Orthodox stability (fiscal and governance), the potential for intellectual development, and the potential to develop a deeply contemplative life.*
- *Prior to entering, I was most attracted to the prayer and community life of the institute. The Sisters I encountered during a Come and See were filled with joy while working on the simplest tasks. The opportunity for silent prayer helped me experience the love and selflessness of Christ Crucified, the institute's charism.*

- *I was attracted by the love the members have for each other. They enjoy their life together and the way they seek God as a community was attractive to me.*
- *The genuine joy, warmth, and love I experienced among them as they live a life of service to the underprivileged, based in a deep prayer life.*
- *The straightforward living of the Gospel. The life is concretely rooted in prayer, and community life is deeply intentional, and we live poor with the poor.*
- *What attracted me most to this institute was the joy and peace I saw in each sister. I knew that is what loving God's will most look like.*
- *The daily Mass, eucharistic Adoration, confession, Liturgy of the Hours and Rosary. these are the most important in growth of a relationship with Christ I was also attracted to giving myself as Christ's bride and the vows allow us to do this. i was also attracted to the joy of the sisters here.*
- *Joy in the members of the institute, depth of community life, beauty + reverence in prayer/liturgy, the necessity of charism in today's culture*

Sense of Mission and Ministries of the Institutes

One of the common aspects that most attracted respondents to their religious institute is the sense of mission and ministries of the institute. At least 30 respondents indicated this aspect. Some other responses include:

- *I was most attracted to the life led in a community, and its mission. As well as the habit.*
- *The mission of the service of faith and promotion of justice. Being available to the world, the culture, while bringing the hope and love of Jesus Christ.*
- *History of bold missionary work; reputation for intellectual cultivation of members; emphasis on intentional community; found the spirituality immediately accessible, practical, and helpful. Also, mine did not seem to be losing vitality or youthfulness like so many other orders; rather, it was full of relatively young priests and brothers who were engaged in highly varied and culturally relevant ministries.*
- *A call to give myself completely to God growing through the vows of stability, conversion of life, and obedience, and to chant His praises daily in the choir.*
- *It was the joy that I saw radiating from the faces of the sisters in this community. the mission to live out the Dominican lifestyle through their beautiful love of God and neighbor sparked that desire for Him in my own heart.*

- *A strong commitment to the common life and apostolates in education*

Joy of the Institute's Members

In addition, at least 23 respondents were attracted to their religious institute by the joy of the members and their encounter with them. Some of their responses include:

- *I was attracted to many things about my community - joy, inclusion, generosity, beauty, the habit, simplicity, poverty, the feel of family, laughter, down-to-earth, authenticity, faithfulness, and holiness.*
- *The clear joy of the sisters and their bold faithfulness to the church and the universal call to holiness. it was clear that they were committed to living entire and aiming for total union with Christ and they knew this way where happiness come from.*
- *The joy of the sisters their love and fidelity to their calling and the call of Jesus in Adoration*
- *what most attracted me to the religious institute SSVM was the joy of the sisters and the love they had for each other. John:13: 35- this is how all will know you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.*

Fidelity to the Church

Fidelity to the Church is another important aspect that at least 14 respondents report attracted them to their religious institute. Some of their responses include:

- *It's the dedication to the teaching of the Church, particularly those teachings that are often questioned today. Also, the intellectual formation there in the Order and her great saints.*
- *Their love of the truth.*
- *It's fidelity to the Church. It's prayer life, apostolate, and Charism. It's community members- I felt more at home with them than I did with my family though I have a lovely family.*
- *Prayer life, community life, fidelity to Catholic Church teachings.*

Religious Habit

In addition to the above-mentioned elements, some respondents, 9 of them, were attracted by the religious habit worn in their religious institutes. Some of their responses are:

- *Prayer life, community life, fidelity to catholic church teachings, habit*
- *I was most attracted to the life led in a community, and its mission. As well as the habit.*
- *The wearing of the habit and the charism and faithfulness to the charism*

What Entrants Find Most Challenging about Religious Life

A second open-ended question invited new entrants to respond in their own words to “What do you find most challenging about religious life?” Respondents shared a variety of challenges that face them in religious life, including community life, maturing into religious life, adaptation to religious life, decreasing access to family and friends, and other challenges. A few of their comments relative to each of these aspects are listed below. A full transcript of all open-ended responses is included in an appendix at the end of this report.

Community Life

Respondents most commonly report that they find community life the most challenging aspect of their religious life experience. They have learned that living in community may involve loss of privacy, as well as struggles in living with the members who have different cultural backgrounds, opinions, ages, temperaments, personalities, and preferences. Some of their responses include:

- *Taming my pride and some aspects of community -- especially working on my tendency to compare (and despair) my myself with other members of the community and then take my eyes off of Jesus as a result*
- *Growing in humility; setting aside my personal wants and desires in deference to those of my superiors and the community at large; being away from family and friends.*
- *I wish that, in my community, we had a stronger identity and willingness to witness visibly that we are religious. I often feel like we're trying to live a normal middle-class life with a handful of abnormal "restrictions"--there isn't necessarily the kind of single-minded integrity that I would prefer.*
- *Entering at an older age as well as relating to younger members. Time away from family and friends who are outside religious life.*
- *I have been a diocesan priest for a number of years and have just turned 50; so, this requires a lot of personal adjustments by me at middle age, but also of the institute, since a diocesan priest as a novice is unusual for it! So, this year requires adjustments; but I suspect that ministry on the other side of it will be pretty smooth. living in community is one of the greatest joys and one of the greatest challenges of religious life*
- *Community life is both an immense gift and a persistent call/challenge. It requires the constant exercise of grace, forgiveness, and humility before my brothers.*

Living their Vows

Respondents most commonly report that they find religious vows the most challenging aspect of their religious life experience. They have learned that living the three vows requires relinquishing the luxurious life they were used to lead. Some of their responses include:

- *Submitting my free will in obedience has been great, but things being so early is still something I am getting used to. Also, the fast pace of this life can be challenging too, but so far, it's been very rewarding. The reality of sacrificing family life for the higher state of religious life is also difficult, but again things are new, so this is something I am still getting used to.*
- *Learning to live in obedience and community after living as an independent adult for the last 12 years - is something I desire to grow in, but it is a challenge.*
- *Obedience and self-denial are the most challenging but I know that this is the way to holiness.*
- *Obedience and sacrifice are the most challenging aspects of religious life for me. Surrendering my will daily is very difficult but possible and fulfilling with the grace of God. The many sacrifices that I made to enter religious life are very difficult, especially leaving family and friends.*
- *Living out the vows perfectly especially Franciscan poverty, as well as the lack of sleep and overcoming selfishness.*

Maturing in Religious Life

Respondents also report the challenge of recognizing and addressing limitations in themselves and others, while desiring to grow in religious life. They regularly mentioned their difficulty in overcoming "myself," "temptations," "weakness," and "sins." Some of their responses include:

- *Living out a genuine spirit according to the founder in modern times.*
- *Trying not to overthink things and discernment of spirits is really helping with that which is a big part of our formation stages.*
- *What I find challenging is also the biggest grace. There are no distractions so I see my weaknesses and my wounds more easily!*
- *The biggest challenge so far has been recognizing the areas of my life that I need to grow in and die to self and trying to really overcome these with God's Grace. our*

formation is a huge blessing, so although that has been my biggest challenge thus far, it is also probably the biggest gift.

Adaptation to Religious Life

Respondents found challenges in adapting to the new life style in their religious communities. This adjustment includes daily schedule, new life pace, food, prayer life, community life, among other things. Some of their responses include:

- *I think the most challenging thing is seeing the good and bad of the life and assimilating the good and rejecting the bad parts.*
- *Navigating all the different personalities in the monastery and the balance of prayer life, community life, and individual time.*
- *Leaving my old life behind. I was a parish priest before entering and loved the ministry.*
- *Being willing. I have to accept that I do not know where this path will lead, but only in Jesus, who guided me to it.*
- *Loneliness., not connecting well with other postulants, the lavish lifestyle lived by some members, the distance between the Order and the poor.*

Decreasing Communication with Family and Friends

Another challenge that respondents shared was their decreased communication with their family members and friends. The schedule and lifestyle in religious life lead religious to reduce their connections with families and friends. They live far away from their family and friends and that sometimes leads them to homesickness. Some of them also felt that their family and friends did not understand religious life and their decision to enter the religious life. They also missed some other relationships and felt that religious life somehow reduces their opportunity for communication. Some of their responses include:

- *leaving friends, a small group that became closer than family, who loved me and supported me during this journey. Receiving letters from them, especially their kids, is a joy and sacrifice.*
- *Long formation process ahead, distance from family on holidays, and learning to live well with brothers of various temperaments and backgrounds.*
- *Separation from family, friends. Adjusting to living by vows of chastity, obedience, and poverty after living alone, single but dating, and with full-time income.*

- *Often my own worldly habits and feelings produce difficulties most recently with personal charity toward brothers I disagree with. Other difficulties exist with my family situation, as both of my parents are opposed to a vocation.*
- *I have found that my friendships with those outside the order are changing because I don't have the same access to communication with many of them. At the same time, I obviously haven't had time to build the same sort of bonds inside the order. The result has been a feeling of loneliness/isolation that I know is only temporary but has been challenging nonetheless.*

Appendix I: Questionnaire with Response Frequencies



**Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate
Entrance Class of 2022**

*This survey is designed to help us understand the characteristics and experiences of those entering religious life in the United States today and the religious institutes they are entering. "Religious institute" refers to the congregation, province, or abbey/monastery to which you belong. Your responses are very important. Please respond by marking an "X" in the appropriate box for each question below. If any question does not apply to you, please leave it blank. **If you prefer completing this survey online**, please visit this link, using the login code above: <https://bit.ly/3sTOcmL>*

Please use the responses below for questions 1-15.
1=Not at All **3=Somewhat**
2=Only a Little **4=Very Much**

Please much did the following attract you to religious life?

1	2	3	4	NR	
0	4	15	82	1	1. A sense of call to religious life
1	1	13	85	1	2. A desire for prayer and spiritual growth
1	7	33	59	1	3. A desire to be part of a community
3	8	30	59	1	4. A desire to be of service
8	13	27	52	1	5. A desire to be more committed to the Church

How much did these attract you to your religious institute?

1	2	3	4	RN	
11	21	27	41	3	6. The life and works of your founder/ress
1	6	24	69	2	7. The mission of the institute
0	6	19	75	1	8. The spirituality of the institute
1	5	28	67	3	9. The prayer life of the institute
0	4	26	69	1	10. The community life of the institute
3	9	30	59	3	11. The ministries of the institute
1	6	18	75	1	12. The institute's fidelity to the Church
1	5	24	71	1	13. The example of members of the institute
32	19	22	27	8	14. A personal invitation by a member
4	13	23	60	3	15. Welcome and encouragement by members

How did you first become acquainted with your religious institute? Check all that apply.

- 27 16. In an institution where members served, e.g., school
- 12 17. Through working with a member of the institute
- 19 18. Through a relative or a friend in the institute
- 29 19. Through the recommendation of a friend or advisor
- 21 20. Through the reputation or history of the institute
- 6 21. Through a vocation fair
- 3 22. Through a vocation match or placement service
- 12 23. Through an event sponsored by the institute

- 8 24. Through a media story about the institute or member
- 30 25. Through your own search
- 4 26. Through print promotional materials
- 23 27. Through web or social media promotional materials
- 16 28. Other: _____

Please use the responses below for questions 29-41.

1=Not at All Helpful 3=Somewhat Helpful
2=Only a Little Helpful 4=Very Helpful
5=Not Applicable/Did not participate

*Please choose "5" if you did not participate. If you participated in any of the following **with your religious institute** before you entered, how helpful were these to you in discerning your call to your institute?*

- | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|----|----|----|----|--|
| 2 | 4 | 17 | 71 | 9 | 29. Contact with the vocation director |
| 1 | 2 | 18 | 69 | 12 | 30. Contact with institute members |
| 5 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 93 | 31. "Andrew Dinner" or "Nun Run" |
| 1 | 2 | 13 | 59 | 28 | 32. "Come and See" experience |
| 2 | 3 | 11 | 55 | 31 | 33. Vocation or discernment retreat |
| 1 | 3 | 4 | 34 | 61 | 34. Live-in experience |
| 1 | 2 | 11 | 24 | 65 | 35. Ministry with institute members |
| 3 | 1 | 6 | 16 | 78 | 36. Mission experience |
| 2 | 5 | 13 | 17 | 69 | 37. Meeting with a discernment group |
| 2 | 2 | 11 | 48 | 39 | 38. Visit(s) to local community/ies |
| 4 | 3 | 6 | 41 | 49 | 39. Visit(s) to the Motherhouse |
| 8 | 18 | 18 | 11 | 47 | 40. Social media (e.g., Facebook) |
| 1 | 4 | 14 | 51 | 34 | 41. Spiritual direction |

Please use the responses below for questions 42-54.

1=Not at All 3=Somewhat
2=Only a Little 4=Very Much

How much did these influence your decision to enter your religious institute?

- | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NR | |
|----|----|----|----|----|---|
| 25 | 27 | 34 | 14 | 1 | 42. The size of the institute |
| 29 | 33 | 21 | 17 | 1 | 43. Its geographic location(s) |
| 46 | 20 | 21 | 14 | 10 | 44. Its internationality, if applicable |
| 0 | 8 | 22 | 70 | 1 | 45. Prayer life or prayer styles in the institute |
| 0 | 5 | 24 | 72 | 1 | 46. Community life in the institute |
| 5 | 4 | 31 | 60 | 2 | 47. The lifestyle of members |
| 68 | 14 | 11 | 7 | 3 | 48. The racial/ethnic background of members |
| 22 | 26 | 34 | 19 | 2 | 49. The ages of members |

6	13	29	52	2	50.	The types of ministry of its members
12	8	17	63	1	51.	Its practice regarding a religious habit
1	10	12	77	2	52.	The Charism of the institute
54	19	12	15	4	53.	The cultural diversity of the members
20	23	30	28	3	54.	The focus on the possibilities for the future of the institute

Please use the responses below for questions 55-67.

1=Not at All **3=Somewhat Important**
2=Only a Little **4=Very Important**

How important to you are these types of prayer?

1	2	3	4	NR		
0	1	11	88	1	55.	Private personal prayer
1	2	6	92	1	56.	Daily Eucharist
1	6	26	68	2	57.	Liturgy of the Hours
11	32	30	27	2	58.	Non-liturgical common prayer
16	23	32	30	3	59.	Common meditation
3	5	16	76	1	60.	Eucharistic Adoration
4	14	30	53	1	61.	Other devotional prayer, e.g., rosary
9	25	33	34	2	62.	Faith sharing

How important to you are these aspects of community life?

1	2	3	4	NR		
0	1	7	92	1	63.	Living with other members
0	1	8	92	1	64.	Praying with other members
1	7	17	75	1	65.	Working with other members
0	3	12	86	1	66.	Sharing meals together
0	3	15	82	1	67.	Socializing/sharing leisure time together

Please use the responses below for questions 68-87.

1=Poor **3=Good**
2=Fair **4=Excellent**

How would you rate these in your religious institute?

1	2	3	4	NR		
2	10	29	60	1	68.	Efforts to promote vocations
0	1	18	81	1	69.	Welcome and support of newer members
1	4	26	69	2	70.	Formation/incorporation programs
1	1	35	64	4	71.	Opportunities for ongoing formation
1	3	23	74	3	72.	Educational opportunities
0	8	27	66	5	73.	Preparation for ministry
0	4	15	81	1	74.	Opportunities for spiritual growth
0	4	16	81	1	75.	Opportunities for personal growth

1	6	13	81	1	76.	Sense of identity as religious
1	2	21	76	2	77.	Sense of identity as institute members
3	4	14	79	1	78.	Fidelity to the Church and its teachings
0	3	19	78	2	79.	Faithfulness to prayer and spiritual growth
1	4	25	70	1	80.	Focus on mission
1	2	20	77	3	81.	Commitment to ministry
2	6	18	74	4	82.	Response to the needs of our time
2	18	37	43	7	83.	Efforts to promote social justice
1	2	27	70	2	84.	Quality of community life
2	4	33	61	3	85.	Communal prayer experiences
1	3	31	66	1	86.	Relationships with one another
5	27	38	31	3	87.	Diversity of cultures within the institute

Yes No NR

83 17 1 88. Do members of your institute wear a habit?

88a. *If yes to #88, is wearing the habit NR=18*

- 75 Required in all or most circumstances
- 21 Required only at certain times, e.g., ministry, prayer
- 3 Optional
- 1 Other: _____

88b. *If yes to #88, and wearing the habit is optional, how many members wear it all or most of the time?*

- 0 None
- 50 A few (less than 25%)
- 50 Some (25-49%)
- 0 Many (50-74%)
- 0 Most (75% or more)

88c. *If yes to #88, and wearing the habit is optional, how frequently do you wear it?*

- 50 Never
- 50 Once in a while
- 0 Only at certain times (e.g., ministry, prayer)
- 0 In all or most circumstances

About You

89. _____ Year you were born

90. _____ Age you first considered religious life

91. _____ How many brothers and sisters do you have?

92. What is your birth order? NR=2

- 3 Only child 27 Youngest
- 32 Eldest 39 Somewhere in the middle

93. Are you: 38 Male 62 Female NR=1

93a. *If male, do you expect become a* NR=64

11 Perpetually professed brother
89 Priest

94. What is your first language? _____

95. How many languages do you speak fluently? NR=2

76 One 21 Two 3 Three 1 Four or more

96. Were you employed before you entered? 81 Yes 19 No NR=1

96a. *If yes to #96, were you employed?* NR=22

72 Full-time 28 Part-time

97. Were you in ministry before you entered? 59 Yes 41 No NR=4

97a. *If yes to #97, were you engaged in ministry?* NR=44

40 Full-time 15 Part-time 45 Volunteer

98. What best describes your racial or ethnic background?

3 African/African American/black

7 Asian/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian

80 Caucasian/European American/white

7 Hispanic/Latino(a)

0 Native American/American Indian

1 Mixed race

1 Other: _____

Yes No NR

85 15 1 99. Were you born in the United States?

99a. *If no to #99, country of birth:*

99b. *If no, year you first moved to United States*

89 11 1 100. Were you raised Catholic?

87 13 100a. *If no to #100, did you become Catholic through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)?*

100b. *If no to #100, what was your prior religious affiliation:*

22 78 7 101. Were you ever home-schooled?

101a. *If yes to #101, number of years home-schooled*

Did you attend any of the following before you entered? Check all that apply.

50 102. Parish-based religious education/CCD/PSR

43 103. Catholic elementary or middle school

35 104. Catholic high school

43 105. Catholic college or university

27 106. Catholic ministry formation program

Aside from parish-based religious education, did you ever participate in any of these before you entered? Check all that apply.

- 39 107. Parish youth group or Life Teen during elementary or middle school years
- 32 108. Campus ministry during high school years
- 39 109. Parish young adult group
- 58 110. Campus ministry during college
- 9 111. Religious institute volunteer program (e.g., Mercy Corps or Jesuit Volunteer Corps)
- 66 112. Liturgical ministry (e.g., lector, extraordinary minister)
- 41 113. Music ministry, cantor, choir
- 43 114. Faith formation, catechetical ministry, RCIA team
- 64 115. Other volunteer work in a parish or other setting
- 71 116. Retreats
- 10 117. World Youth Day
- 7 118. National Catholic Youth Conference
- 47 119. Right to Life March in Washington, DC

120. What was the highest level of education you completed before you entered your religious institute?

- 6 High school or less
- 11 Some college
- 59 Bachelor's degree
- 19 Master's degree
- 4 Doctoral degree
- 1 Other: _____

Family Background While You Were Growing Up

- | Yes | No | NR | | |
|-----|----|----|-------|--|
| 86 | 14 | 1 | 121. | Was your mother Catholic? |
| | | | 121a. | <i>If no</i> , what was her religious preference? |
| | | | | _____ |
| | | | 122. | How important was religion to your mother while you were growing up? |
| | | | 3 | Not at all |
| | | | 25 | Somewhat important |
| | | | 9 | Only a little |
| | | | 63 | Very important |
| 80 | 20 | 1 | 123. | Was your father Catholic? |
| | | | 123a. | <i>If no</i> , what was his religious preference? |
| | | | 124. | How important was religion to your father while you were growing up? |
| | | | 9 | Not at all |
| | | | 28 | Somewhat important |
| | | | 12 | Only a little |
| | | | 51 | Very important |
| 29 | 71 | 1 | 125. | Do (did) you have a relative who is a priest or a religious brother or sister/nun? |
| 58 | 42 | 1 | 126. | Outside of family members, while you were growing up did you ever get to know a priest or a religious brother or sister/nun? |
| 25 | 75 | 1 | 127. | Did your mother ever speak to you about a vocation to priesthood or religious life? |
| 22 | 78 | 1 | 128. | Did your father ever speak to you about a vocation to priesthood or religious life? |
| 24 | 76 | 1 | 129. | Did another family member ever speak to you about a vocation to priesthood or religious life? |

57 43 1 130. Overall, was starting a discussion with your family about your vocation easy for you?

131. Who raised you during the most formative part of your childhood? *Please select all that apply.*

- 99 Biological parent(s)
- 5 Step parent
- 0 Adoptive parent(s)
- 10 Grandparent(s)
- 1 Other relative(s)
- 1 Someone else
- 0 I prefer not to answer

131a. [If selected biological/step/adoptive parent(s)] During the most formative part of your childhood, were you raised by: (Please select one)

Please use these responses for questions 132-143.

1=Not at All **3=Somewhat**
2=Only a Little **4=Very Much**
BLANK=Not applicable

- 93 Married couple, living together
- 1 Married couple, living separately
- 1 Unmarried couple, living separately
- 0 Unmarried couple, living together
- 0 One parent, widowed
- 5 One parent, separated/divorced

- 0 One parent, single/unmarried
- 0 Something else
- 1 I prefer not to answer

How much encouragement did you receive from these when you first considered entering a religious institute?

1	2	3	4	NR	
2	4	19	76	8	132. Members of your institute
2	7	17	74	7	133. Vocation director/team
2	6	18	75	15	134. Spiritual director, if applicable
11	8	27	54	13	135. Other men and women religious
9	11	27	53	14	136. Diocesan priests
16	14	28	43	3	137. Your parents, if applicable
20	11	38	30	9	138. Your siblings, if applicable
19	21	39	22	11	139. Other family members
12	10	34	44	10	140. People in your parish
11	17	32	40	11	141. People in your school or workplace
35	10	22	34	49	142. Campus minister, if applicable
6	8	31	55	3	143. Friends outside the institute

144. What most attracted you to your religious institute?

145. What do you find most challenging about religious life?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!

Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University (CARA)

2300 Wisconsin Ave., NW, Suite 400A, Washington, DC 20007

Phone: 202-687-8086 Fax: 202-687-8083

©2022, All Rights Reserved

Appendix II: Responses to Open-ended Comments

Q. 144: What most attracted you to your religious institute?

Presented here are the responses of the new entrants, slightly edited.

A call to give myself completely to God growing through the vows of stability, conversion of life, and obedience, and to chant His praises daily in the choir.

A desire to give my whole self to the Lord of life and build a culture of life.

A strong commitment to the common life and apostolates in education

Active/Contemplative mix

As an employee of the institute, seeing how the institute treated its employees, especially during Covid. Th community prayer life was also an attraction for me.

Charism

Charism and missionary spirit

Community life, dedication to serving the marginalized, openness to different kinds of ministries, strong presence in my home state.

Community life, prayer, holiness, contemplation, peace.

Community life.

Community, internationality, dynamism, kindness of members, down-to-Earth nature of the members, high intelligence of the members, deep care members held for those around them

Community, purpose, and sense of God's calling

Compassion to the poor and the suffering of our society.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart and reparation for suffering Christ. Missionary at heart.

Eucharistic and Marian spirituality; Mercedarian spirituality of redemption of captives; fidelity to the Church, the Magisterium, and the evangelical counsels; strong fraternal life of the community; the wearing of a habit

Everything about the Dominican tradition its form of life its saints its vision of the human person the world and our ultimate end. the kind of people I knew the friars to be as the images of St. Dominic and sister's commitment to living this tradition faithfully.

Everything! I love their prayer, their sense of community, their apostolate, and all of the members. The first visit I made to a local community, I knew as soon as I walked through the door this was where God was calling me to be.

Familial spirit, charism, and Missionary /Marian

Fidelity to religious vocation, especially the habit, liturgy and monastic observances.
Faithfulness to the Dominican charism. Healthy community life with much Joy and fraternal.

First and foremost, the guidance of my spiritual director. Secondly, the various external signal graces of Divine Providence. My conviction grew with the convergence of convincing coincidences. The Breton were friendly but seemed reasonably disciplined and dedicated to the charism- particularly the office, silence or let's say careful speech, and the place is beautiful, humble, strong.

Fraternity In the community and helping the poor

God calling me here

Growing closer to God through the Spiritual Exercises, discernment of spirits, serving God and His Church through the apostolic counsels.

History of bold missionary work; reputation for intellectual cultivation of members; emphasis on intentional community; found the spirituality immediately accessible, practical, and helpful. Also, mine did not seem to be losing vitality or youthfulness like so many other orders; rather, it was full of relatively young priests and brothers who were engaged in highly varied and culturally relevant ministries.

I have always known that I belong to this religious order. Given my nature and temperament there weren't really a lot of options I would choose from. It was suggested by my pastor and as I was trying it out, God kept giving me convictions to move forward and that was the only factor that mattered really. But in hindsight, I should be attracted by our community's emphasis on study, the studious atmosphere, and fraternal charity among members who are very different from each other despite the lack of diversity in ethnicity or nationality. The moderation of everything and the right amount of freedom for individual development, respect for individual differences, friendship with the friars, hospitality, and beauty of each sister - some of these I found during live-in as piracy. Some after I entered.

I think for me it was mostly that I had figured out that I didn't know how to make myself happy but learned that God could. As I pursued Him, I felt the pull to my order, and so I am here and doing this trying to follow Him so that I can be happy.

I wanted to be like the men in my institute.

I wanted to give my life to Jesus while also sharing it with others in community.

I was attracted by the love the members have for each other. They enjoy their life together and the way they seek God as a community was attractive to me.

I was attracted to many things about my community - joy, inclusion, generosity, beauty, the habit, simplicity, poverty, the feel of family, laughter, down-to-earth, authenticity, faithfulness, and holiness.

I was attracted to the charism of my institute. I love that we are diocesan. I love the involvement in the local church and the ways that we can care for diocesan priests in their ministry. Our community life as sisters is also beautiful.

I was attracted to the joy of this community. Above all I am attracted to the way of life of this community and how it is all spent for Jesus!

I was drawn to the community life. I was already in seminary formation but decided that diocesan priesthood wasn't for me. I wanted to live in a community of believers. I also was drawn by the opportunities for diverse ministry offered by my institute.

I was most attached to the life of prayer and how your day is really shaped around periods of prayer here. Since arriving I've come to understand this more and more and see how prayer really flows into the apostolate into prayer. we contemplate and give to others the fruits of our contemplation which I think is really beautiful.

I was most attracted by the charism of life and seeing how it animates all aspects of community life - prayer, apostolate, leisure, everything. The joy of Christ lived and manifest so uniquely in each sister and their unmistakable authenticity + freedom to love, also attracted me. The reverence the sisters in this community have for every human person and for Christ, resounded deeply in my heart.

I was most attracted by the joy and authentic love for Jesus I saw in the sisters.

I was most attracted by their joy and life in the parish family.

I was most attracted to the life led in a community, and its mission. As well as the habit.

I was very attracted by my institute's way of prioritizing prayer life, the common life, and the apostolate (in that order). Our apostolates were also very attractive to me, and I felt like I connected very much with the personalities and dispositions of my sisters. The fidelity to the Church which we espouse is also very important to me.

I was very attracted to my community's zeal for the truth and their eager fidelity and love for catholic teaching. I especially loved their devotion to the Eucharist, their radicality of life, the joy and authenticity of the sisters.

Initially, the members of my religious institute supported me by nourishing my spiritual life and eventually becoming my mentors, friends, and sisters in Christ. They were there for me and brought Christ to me and me to Christ - simply by being themselves in their apostolate, I grew curious about their lives and religious life in general. They also provided a witness of their charism and spirituality, which was similar to that of the college campus ministry where they ministered and where I went, so it was familiar and attractive. But in summary, the members of the institute provided a valuable witness, and eventually when I discerned a call to follow Jesus through religious life, I naturally discerned with them and in that pre-existing relationship, entered my religious institute.

It was the joy I saw in the Sisters and the strong sense that I was being called to this institute. As I have been here, my love for our charism and spirituality has grown too.

It was the joy that I saw radiating from the faces of the sisters in this community. the mission to live out the Dominican lifestyle through their beautiful love of God and neighbor sparkled that desire for Him in my own heart.

-It's fidelity to the Church - It's prayer life + Apostolate + Charism - It's community members- I felt more at home with them than I did with my family though I have a lovely family.

It's the best one! LOL! I was attracted to the founder and its mission and identity moving forward.

It's the dedication to the teaching of the Church, particularly those teachings that are often questioned today. Also, the intellectual formation there in the Order and her great saints.

I've visited there a lot of time when discerning the priesthood and when I first visited I felt at home but I like the fact that we are a contemplative group. Growing up I was around my religious institute a bit during my life as well as one of my parish priests was part of the religious institute so between those and the come and see trips as well as visiting other orders to compare and contrast I became attracted to my religious institute.

Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, calling me out of Love.

Joy in the members of the institute, depth of community life, beauty + reverence in prayer/liturgy, the necessity of charism in today's culture.

Life of prayer, cloistered

Men attempting to live an apostolic life.

Mission and spirituality

My attention was initially drawn by a friend who was discerning with the community and I found myself increasingly attracted to the life of the community as I got to know individual sisters better and witnessed how uniquely individual each one of us, yet how full of joy each of them was. I am also attracted to the Dominican emphasis on think and felt called to the preaching apostolate.

My attraction to my religious institute was very much combination of various aspects of the sisters' life as well as their history of and joy in living it. having an order founded 800 years ago and a congregation founded 150 years ago gave a certainty to me of the truth of our life and each aspect of that life - the monastic traditions, prayer schedule, teaching apostolate, habit - seemed exceptionally well suited my desires.

Orthodox stability (fiscal and governance), the potential for intellectual development, and the potential to develop a deeply contemplative life.

Our charism and our contemplative active way of life centered on the Eucharist.

Our work in tertiary education, our community life, our dedication to liturgy, the wearing of a habit, and personal role models and examples of holiness in the community itself.

Prayer life

Prayer life and community life.

Prayer life and the redeeming love of Jesus.

Prayer life, community life, fidelity to catholic church teachings, habit

Preaching for the salvation of souls.

Prior to entering, I was most attracted to the prayer and community life of the institute. The Sisters I encountered during a Come and See were filled with joy while working on the simplest tasks. The opportunity for silent prayer helped me experience the love and selflessness of Christ Crucified, the institute's charism.

Service of God

Simple life of poverty and helping out the needy.

Spirituality and community life.

spirituality, witness of religious at school, mission

Strong communal life, intellectual tradition and formation, visible holiness of its members, fidelity to the church, union of action and contemplation, lack of ideology, long tradition of sanctity, doctrinal orthodoxy, traditional liturgical sensibility, vitality with many young members, entrusted missions

The "pillars" of our life are all things that have always been important to me, and the charism matches what I would be doing with my life either way. By entering religious life, I can do what I've always wanted to while also giving my whole life to God; the compartmentalization that would be required otherwise is not needed in this context.

The two main charisms of upholding the dignity of every human person from the moment of conception until natural death and praying for priests

The ability to read the signs of the times and address present needs.

The authentic joy and genuine praise that the Sisters have for Jesus and in community with each other, which reflects our Eucharistic charism.

The balance of daily life.

The beauty of the community. Their unity in the same mission. Well-founded with years of experience. Sisters of all different ages. Their joy, how they lived as a spiritual mother to all they encountered.

The Carmelite spirituality and history of the Order.

The Carmelites' spirituality of contemplation and action attracts me powerfully. Its most prominent figures are Elijah and Mary. Together, they form the foundation of the Carmelites' life of prayer and solitude.

The charism

The charism caught and held my attention. The vibrancy of the sisters and their desire to love those they come in contact with.

The charism of life and drawing every heart to the Sacred Heart as we share the gift of God's plan for life and love.

The charism of Life, the prayer life, a call.

The charism of mercy and common life.

The charism of preaching for the salvation of souls. Community life was also a big appeal, particularly the way community life is lived out in the institute I belong to.

The charism reflected back to me the language/love of my heart a filled what I know to be such a pressing need in our culture. Then visits as an inquirer deepened my appreciation and attraction to the way of life filled with joy grounded totally in Jesus.

The charism, common life, fidelity to the church, and quality of formation.

The charisms of community and prayer life ordered to the preaching of truth attracted me very much. Sound teaching, healthy relationships in the community, and observance of the rule all went towards a feeling of trust and surety within this order.

The clear joy of the sisters and their bold faithfulness to the church and the universal call to holiness. it was clear that they were committed to living entire and aiming for total union with Christ and they knew this way where happiness come from.

The community life, communal prayer, our academy, and our retreat / spiritual direction ministry.

The daily Mass, eucharistic Adoration, confession, Liturgy of the Hours and Rosary. these are the most important in growth of a relationship with Christ I was also attracted to giving myself as Christ's bride and the vows allow us to do this. i was also attracted to the joy of the sisters here.

The Divine Office; community life; the seminary apostolate

The family aspect of the religious community, they seemed deeply devoted to Jesus and Mary loving one another and helping each other grow in the faith

The founders and their works

The genuine joy, warmth, and love I experienced among them as they live a life of service to the underprivileged, based in a deep prayer life.

The initiation from Jesus to know his great love for me and to correspond with that love is what attracted me most.

The internationality and the cultural diversity

The joy and charism

The joy I see on the Sisters' faces, their hospitality, and the opportunity to continue working as a nurse as the extended hands to the suffered Christ (relating to our charism)

The joy of the sisters in following Christ

The joy of the sisters interacting with one another. Their focus and love for the Eucharist, the blessed mother and their apostolic response to the new evangelization in our culture. Their habit is beautiful.

The joy of the sisters their love and fidelity to their calling and the call of Jesus in Adoration

The joy of the sisters whenever I visited.

The joy, and faithfulness the sisters all live out in the charism.

The life of prayer, the work with the poor and the community life.

The members joy and freedom and authentic care to families.

The ministry and community

The mission of the service of faith and promotion of justice. Being available to the world, the culture, while bringing the hope and love of Jesus Christ.

The most attractive part of the Handmaids is their authenticity. They live religious life faithfully in their identity as Brides of Christ. I was also attracted to their contemplative-active way of life. The other communities I visited didn't pray nearly as much. Fidelity to the teachings of the church and a vibrant community life were extremely attractive and necessary for me as well.

The most unique characteristic of my religious institute that I couldn't find anywhere else, was that they celebrated both the Traditional Latin Mass and the Novus Ordo. In this way, I thought they were a beautiful and much-needed bridge in a church that can sometimes seem divided in this way. I also was pleased to find that, though they do teach as part of their charism, they only partake in their active apostolic part-time which allows for there to be a balance with the contemplative life as well.

The motto 'To Contemplate and Share the Fruits of Contemplation' really resonated with my prayer.

The power of serving the needs of others as a communal group. Prayer and the pillar of study, individual and communal study.

The Prayer life, work, and abbot.

The priests live out priesthood. It's not a job, or simply what they do. They do it stop at 5. They give themselves constantly for their people in the mission. If your gonna give up everything then you better live out that vacation out to the fullest, otherwise what are you doing?

The rich heritage, being founded in 1860. the community wears the full habit is very traditional and orthodox. It has a flourishing novitiate - 40 total, 17 postulants. it is focused on a life of prayer and study.

The sisters and their joy and gracious hospitality. The way they incorporate their charism in all they do. Their balanced view of the world, ministry, community life.

The straightforward living of the Gospel. The life is concretely rooted in prayer, and community life is deeply intentional, and we live poor with the poor.

The way of life and their prayer life really drew me in

The wearing of the habit and the charism and faithfulness to the charism

The wholistic living out of the sister's commitment to peace in all its forms.

The women religious that I encountered. Seeing them as joyful as they were.

Their charism. Their joy in serving, their down to earth nature, their willingness to meet people where they are spiritually

Their commitment to the charism of mercy through professional means -- well-educated women, committed to fidelity to the Church and the institute, using all their abilities to serve.

Their history and fidelity to Dominican spirituality and charism. it is old and solid clear that life here works and brings people to heaven. the sister' joy and love of their life and the diversity in age very old to very young. it was clear they were in love with Jesus and had found a beautiful means of sharing his love with others.

Their joy! They were so happy and it was obvious that their jot came from their charism of Perpetual Adoration. Adoration has been a big part of my faith life. My parish growing up had a Perpetual Adoration and I was able to feel God's deep love for me there. As I got older, I learned more about what Franciscanism was and developed a deep love of the Franciscan spirit.

Their love for Christ, prayer life, spirit of joy and sacrifice way of radically living the Gospel.

Their love of the truth

Their motto, mission and fidelity to the church.

Their spirituality/ charism and how well they lived it.

Time for contemplative prayer; poverty

Ultimately, the conviction that this is where God was calling me. I also love our spirituality and charism. It's all about evangelization, sharing our spirituality, and co-laboring with Christ for the salvation of souls.

Watching an online video and reading its charism statement: I saw the family/team character, of the many vocations (including priests, sisters, and families), and sensed the drive to reach out energetically and compassionately in ministry.

What attracted me most to this institute was the joy and peace I saw in each sister. I knew that is what loving God's will most look like.

What attracted me most was what is important to me in my life, I found was also important to my community. These include daily Mass, Adoration, regular confession, the divine office, a relationship with Mary, a balanced life and intimacy with the lord: The Dominican (balance) sisters (intimacy with God) of mother of (relationship with Mary) the eucharist (mass, Adoration and where our life flows from.

What most attracted me to my religious institute was the charism. the Dominican charism can be summed up by the following-"to contemplate and to share with others the fruits of your contemplation" not only had I seen this truly lived out in the sisters who taught me prior to entrance, but I wanted to be able to live a life that combined both the contemplative and active lives. nowhere else did I see a balance like this that first gave God everything so as to be able to give to others of course the fact that this mission and calling was lived out with such joy and love by all of the sisters I had met only captures my heart even more.

what most attracted me to the religious institute SSVM was the joy of the sisters and the love they had for each other. John:13: 35- this is how all will know you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

What was most attracted to me about my religious community was its charisms, ministries, communal life, and the community as a whole.

When I first entered our college program, the only thing that strongly attracted me was the community life, but I grew into a love for the charism of hermitical prayer, poverty/austerity, and ministry to the poor.

Which really attracted to the religious institute was the family environment in which the priests and sisters live in but especially amongst each other. I also really liked the daily schedule because it reflects the aware of us being the sister's body and soul. moments to nourish our soul through communion with Christ in the Holy mass and the Blessed sacrament, but also moments of exercise, rest, recreation etc. the authentic joy and beauty of the sisters really attracted me which at the moment I was wondering the source of it, now I know its Christ of course. Finally, I would like to mention that something else that attracted me was their great love for mercy and the different ways of maintaining their daily life.

Q. 145: What do you find most challenging about religious life?

The following is a presentation of the responses of new entrants on what they find challenging about religious life. Slight editing has been done. Their responses include:

Balancing work, prayer, and obedience.

Being a 43-year-old man and having superiors that you have to ask permission to do things

Being apart from family and living with brothers now instead of on my own.

Being away from family and friends is the most challenging part.

Being challenged to grow, getting used to a new lifestyle

Being far from my friends and family

Being only a few months, into this initial transition the most challenging thing is having such a radical shift in communicating with and seeing family, as I talk with them so much less now. This is by far the biggest sacrifice.

Being patient with my brothers and with myself.

Being so eager at a time when patience is required is the most challenging, thus in religious life.

Being so far from home.

Being willing. I have to accept that I do not know where this path will lead, but only in Jesus, who guided me to it.

Changes in activities.

Common life/prayers together are challenging with older members in location. Also, with some having multiple obligations to fulfill.

Communal living.

Communicating effectively with different personality types and temperaments.

Community life - it is such a huge blessing but also a challenge because its something new and different for me. Learning to grow with my sisters in Christ towards heaven.

Community life can be challenging, but it is so beautiful.

Community life can be challenging, it would be impossible had it not been for the Holy Spirit.

Community life is both an immense gift and a persistent call/challenge. It requires the constant exercise of grace, forgiveness, and humility before my brothers.

Community life- the many different personalities of other sisters living together in one community/convent

Community life!

Community life, not seeing family and friends.

Community life.

Community life.

Constant community interaction and generational gaps

Continually realizing the many ways, I still need to grow and keep increasing my trust in Jesus. I thought when I left everything to come here that I totally trusted Him but I have so much room to grow. Also, the discipline of being faithful to the schedule and customs even if paths are illogical or inefficient.

Cost of discipleship, self-sacrifice.

Currently, I find the human dimension most challenging - it has been a process of adjusting to living with my sisters and accepting them as they are - including their personalities. Where before I could go somewhere else if I needed a break from my roommates, family, or friends, now I can no longer avoid issues or specific people and must learn to face them. To be honest, corrections have been the most difficult - it's difficult for me to accept my own faults, let alone be confronted by them by my superiors.

Detaching from family

Detachment from daily communication with loved ones.

Detachment from my plans and desires or interests.

Entering at an older age as well as relating to younger members. Time away from family and friends who are outside religious life.

Figuring out how to live poverty authentically has been difficult.

Getting adjusted to a new way of living. Missing family, However, in everything that might seem hard the grace has always been there those things are even made sweeter because that is the sacrifice you give to the lord.

Getting used from being independent to having to depend on the monastery for all needs.

Giving everything. It is a temptation to hold part of myself back.

Giving up many good things in the world as well as denying my will.

Giving up other opportunities.

Growing in humility and obedience

Growing in humility; setting aside my personal wants and desires in deference to those of my superiors and the community at large; being away from family and friends.

How often members of a community come and go (assigned to another place)

I am so weak and selfish, it is hard to die to myself. But Jesus' love is so transforming, and I know that if He is calling me to this life, He will give me the grace to do it! I guess to expand, I am used to doing what I want, when I want, how I want, etc. so becoming detached from my own will and clinging only to Jesus.

I find building relationships with other sisters in the convent to be the most challenging quality of religious life so far. At first, it was learning and adjusting to the mannerism, customs, and etiquette of the community. Now however I have accepted that and offer it gladly for the love of the lord. It is different though to find opportunities to love the other sisters in the ways I have come to know before religious life. And I am pondering if and how friendships are formed in the convent.

I find living in community and the horarium to be challenging.

I find separation from family and friends to be the most challenging thing about religious life - both when it comes to being in different places physically, as well as less communication.

I find the community structure to be most challenging but also most rewarding. Living surrounded by other people means there are always many opinions about how things should be done, but the order provided by a common goal-sanctity and superiors allows this hardship to also be widely fruitful in the development of virtue , as we can see quite tangibly in our older sisters.

I have been a diocesan priest for a number of years and have just turned 50; so this requires a lot of personal adjustments by me at middle age, but also of the institute, since a diocesan priest as a novice is unusual for it! So, this year requires adjustments; but I suspect that ministry on the other side of it will be pretty smooth.

I have found that my friendships with those outside the order are changing because I don't have the same access to communication with many of them. At the same time, I obviously haven't had time to build the same sort of bonds inside the order. The result has been a feeling of loneliness/isolation that I know is only temporary but has been challenging nonetheless.

I think the most challenging thing is seeing the good and bad of the life and assimilating the good and rejecting the bad parts.

I wish I had entered earlier and was sent to study theology in a full course.

I wish that, in my community, we had a stronger identity and willingness to witness visibly that we are religious. I often feel like we're trying to live a normal middle-class life with a handful of abnormal "restrictions"--there isn't necessarily the kind of single-minded integrity that I would prefer.

I'm in a group of originally 18 postulants and am one of the eldest. I get along very well with the first year professed, apostolic novices and most of the canonical novice, but I find it challenging in my own postulant group while we are still setting into a group dynamic. I know the situation will improve as we progress in formation and everyone learns to be more open to others but that is definitely the thing I have found most challenging so far.

Knowing that my generation will be tasked with completely reshaping the future of religious life

Lack of younger sisters

Learning a new way of life without daily contact/support of my friends and friends.

Learning poverty and obedience

learning to accept and offer my shortcomings and weakness to God and trying to grow in these areas.

Learning to give all things to Jesus

Learning to live in obedience and community after living as an independent adult for the last 12 years - is something I desire to grow in, but it is a challenge.

Leaving family, friends and adjusting different life and shedding all the things I've put on from my life in the world.

Leaving friends behind.

leaving friends, a small group that became closer than family, who loved me and supported me during this journey. Receiving letters from them, especially their kids, is a joy and sacrifice.

Leaving my old life behind. I was a parish priest before entering and loved the ministry.

Less contact with family and friends - adjusting to life in the community after living on my own for almost 10 years - the small daily sacrifice of time, way of offering things of personal comfort/pleasure - surmounting my "weaknesses"

Limited contact with friends and family.

Living in a community house versus a house of formation. Our house has lots of visitors coming and going frequently. It does not provide for the stable home environment as I have to frequently be "on" and hospitable.

Living in community

Living in community and learning to love each of my sisters as Jesus loves them

Living in community is one of the greatest joys and one of the greatest challenges of religious life

Living in community with women from a variety of backgrounds.

Living in community. There are so many subtleties of etiquette and culture that you just don't think about when living alone. Missing those subtle cues can result in conflict.

Living out a genuine spirit according to the founder in modern times.

Living out the vows perfectly especially Franciscan poverty, as well as the lack of sleep and overcoming selfishness.

Loneliness., not connecting well with other postulants, the lavish lifestyle lived by some members, the distance between the Order and the poor.

Long formation process ahead, distance from family on holidays, and learning to live well with brothers of various temperaments and backgrounds.

Loving God beyond all other things.

Making life adjustments and making new friends.

My own need for growth, and my attachment to the world.

My own weakness as they are revealed by living this life

Navigating all the different personalities in the monastery and the balance of prayer life, community life, and individual time.

Not being able to fast as much as I would like and limitedness in reaching out to the poor as much and often as, I would like, in their needs.

Obedience

Obedience and sacrifice are the most challenging aspects of religious life for me. Surrendering my will daily is very difficult but possible and fulfilling with the grace of God. The many sacrifices that I made to enter religious life are very difficult, especially leaving family and friends.

Obedience and self-denial are the most challenging but I know that this is the way to holiness.

Often my own worldly habits and feelings produce difficulties most recently with personal charity toward brothers I disagree with. Other difficulties exist with my family situation, as both of my parents are opposed to a vocation.

one of the most challenging aspects of religious life, sometime is community. it is one of the hugest blessing to live our life in community. but it can also challenge at other times too.

Overcoming my own will/ stubbornness

Persevering through the growth

Poverty and not seeing family as much

Pride

Putting up with brothers in the community that I struggle with.

Receiving formation for our charismatic form of community worship

Remaining focused on living solely for Christ each day.

Right now, I think the most challenging thing is that sometimes I will be getting introspective or really have something on mind that could be helped if I could 'talk it out' with another sister (through extreme processing) but cannot do that because I am in silence almost all of day. I know that this will get easier with time, and there will be more opportunities to talk when I am no longer in the 1st 2years of formation, but I also recognize that this challenge is for my own good so that I can learn to discuss everything with Christ.

Sacrificing career, family, and freedoms of all sorts

Schedule

Separation from family and friends.

Separation from family, friends. Adjusting to living by vows of chastity, obedience, and poverty after living alone, single but dating, and with full-time income.

Sharing a bathroom

Submitting my free will in obedience has been great, but things being so early is still something I am getting used to. Also, the fast pace of this life can be challenging too, but so far, it's been very rewarding. The reality of sacrificing family life for the higher state of religious life is also difficult, but again things are new, so this is something I am still getting used to.

Surrendering comforts and preferences

Taming my pride and some aspects of community -- especially working on my tendency to compare (and despair) my myself with other members of the community and then take my eyes off of Jesus as a result

The Adjustment to not just a whole new way of life but also to a whole new mindset and in a certain sense to a new identity (as religious instead of lay) has been perhaps most difficult more and more I realize that my life here is not for myself and while I do not want to live for myself, at times this constant self-sacrifice is just hard.

The age groups.

the aspect that are meant to be challenging are challenging- it is a call to die to yourself, very challenging.

The biggest challenge so far has been recognizing the areas of my life that I need to grow in and die to self and trying to really overcome these with God's Grace. our formation is a huge blessing, so although that has been my biggest challenge thus far, it is also probably the biggest gift.

The blessing and challenge of religious life for me is community life. There is an incredible amount of support and encouragement. Yet, the differences in personalities and preferences purify us to work on communication, acceptance, flexibility, correction, forgiveness, and all various virtues.

The common life is very challenging; we take our participation in it very seriously and this is both fruitful and difficult. I am also finding it difficult to prioritize my internal formation at this early stage of postulancy before being prepared to enter the apostolate in a few years. Our institute emphasizes each sister's own responsibility for her own formation, which can be hard: we do have a very robust formation program and formators that guide us, but I must take the initiative to do the difficult work of investing myself in my formation.

The constant changing as a new postulant. It is wonderfully difficult to wrestle with parts of myself that I either hadn't noticed or payed much attention to before entering.

The disappointment my family has in me

The interior life.

The lack of understanding people has about it.

The limited time and communication with family and friends.

The most challenging aspect of religious life is encountering my own poverty and weakness in deeper ways than ever before and learning to rely on the Lord above myself; the radical vulnerability of this way of life. There's quite an intensity to the stripping away of worldly habits, mindsets, and ways.

The most challenging for me is community life. I am the ethnic minority in my institute, so the language and cultural barriers are sometimes a struggle. Still, God has been very good to me and my sisters are very supportive of me and patient in teaching me.

The most challenging thing right now is finding my place in a community where most of the sisters are decades older than me.

The new way of life, new language and culture.

The radical renunciation of self-will

The radicality of community life lived at the sacrifice of a sole experience relationship with Christ - truly being one heart and mind with my Sisters. Yet "alone with Christ."

The renunciation of marriage

The separation of my family has been the most challenging part of religious life.

The strong personalities within the community.

To be away from those that I hold most dear.

Trying not to overthink things and discernment of spirits is really helping with that which is a big part of our formation stages.

vow of chastity

What I find challenging is also the biggest grace. There are no distractions so I see my weaknesses and my wounds more easily!

What I find most challenging in religious life is the separation from my family because we are really close family.

What I find most challenging is continued perseverance towards perfection. It is all too easy to become complacent.

What I find most challenging is time management.

What I found most challenging about religious life is living with other men you may not always see eye-to-eye with or have a very different personality in contrast to you.

where I find most challenging about religious life is living patient with my inadequacies and how they affect the rest of the community.

Within religious life getting up early before the sun rises is hard since I'm a night-owl. Also living with other brothers is hard, but it is also one of the joys of religious life as well as they help build and strengthen you as well. As well as forming your life to the Order which can be difficult at some points. Within my own religious institute. I find it particularly challenging that the order has refused to celebrate the "optional memorial" Saints in the Mass (even if the main celebrant wants to do so) as well as in the Liturgy of the Hours even the more "popular" saints within the Church today. I came from a college group of friends and colleagues that would incorporate all the saints in the liturgy of the Hours, especially the more popular ones as well as priests who would celebrate these saints in the Mass. Sometimes it feels like we are missing out on important spiritual family members and role models by not having the option to celebrate these saints. I also find it hard that we don't wear the rosary on our habits, I thought that all religious did, I carry one in my pocket just to allow myself to "wear one".

You have to face your weakness.