

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

***Cultural Diversity in Vocations to Religious Life in the United States:
A National Study of New Religious Members***

February 2021



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Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	1
Major Findings	2
Introduction	5
PART I: BACKGROUND AND CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS	7
Gender	7
Age of Responding Religious.....	8
Racial/Ethnic Background	9
Country of Birth	10
Language Fluency.....	13
Catholic Upbringing	15
Employment and Ministry Experience.....	16
PART II: INFLUENCE OF FAMILY ON VOCATION PROMOTION.....	17
Generations from When Family Emigrated to the United States	17
Family Impacts on Religious Vocation Discernment.....	19
Ethnic Differences	25
Aspects of their Family Lives That Had the Greatest Impact on Vocational Disernment	41
Challenges Encountered from Family while Discerning Religious Vocation	49
PART III: INFLUENCE OF PARISH ON VOCATION PROMOTION.....	53
Parish Location and Attendance	53
Parish Impacts on Religious Vocation Discernment	55
Ethnic Differences	62
Aspects of Parishes That Had the Greatest Impact	78
How the Parish Could Have Better Supported Their Discernment	86
PART IV: EXPERIENCNS OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN RELIGIOUS INSTITUTES.....	92
Current Living Situation	92
Openness of their Institute to Culturally Diverse Members	94
Ethnic Differences	101
Challenges in Religious Life.....	113
Ethnic Differences	118
Challenges in Religious Life Encountered as a Religious of Cultural/Ethnic Heritage	130
Appendix I: Response Frequencies to All Questions	139

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Executive Summary

The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate was commissioned by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation to conduct a study about cultural diversity in vocations to religious life in the United States. Using the contact information requested from the major superiors of men and women religious institutes in the United States, in spring 2020, CARA identified and sent a questionnaire to 3,196 current candidates/postulants, novices, and those in temporary vows or commitment as well as those who had professed final vows or commitment within the last 15 years. A total of 99 invitees responded that they were not willing to participate for various reasons. Altogether, CARA received a total of 1,163 usable responses from new members and those in formation for a response rate of 38%.

The survey on cultural diversity in vocations to religious life was designed to identify what impact parishes and family life might have on vocational discernment of religious members before they entered religious life and if there are any differences regarding cultural diversity; what were their experiences of cultural diversity with their religious institutes; and what members from the non-dominant culture/ethnicity experience as challenges with the dominant culture/ethnicity of their religious institute.

Major Findings

White respondents (68%) make up two-thirds of those who have entered religious life since 2005, with the other third reporting ethnic backgrounds of Asian (12%), Hispanic (11%), black (4%), and all “other” ethnicities (5%). Their ethnicity correlates highly with their country of birth (and, therefore, with where they grew up):

- 82% of those identifying as black were born outside the United States
- 76% of those identifying as Asian were born outside the United States
- 38% of those identifying as Hispanic were born outside the United States
- 8% of those identifying as white were born outside the United States

Family Factors Affecting Vocational Discernment

More than seven in ten (72%) religious priests, brothers and sisters report that family-related factors had “some” or “a great” impact on their discernment of a vocation to religious life. Analyses show that family ethnic background and how many generations ago they and/or their family emigrated to the United States is related to how much of an impact family-related factors had on their decision. The five factors from their family life that had “a great” impact – regardless of when their family emigrated to the United States – are:

- Getting to know a priest or a religious brother or sister/nun besides family members (62% of all respondents say it had “a great” impact)
- Attending Masses or other religious services as a family (60%)
- My parents instilling in me a prayer life (51%)
- Active participating in parish life as a family (46%)
- Sense of religiosity in my family (45%)

Parish Factors Affecting Vocational Discernment

Over eight in ten (83%) religious indicate that a particular parish they attended before entering their religious institute had “some” or “a great” impact on their discernment of a vocation to religious life. Some 86% of the parishes were in the U.S. and 14% were in another country. Black and Asian respondents are most likely to have identified a parish in another country that they attended as adults, with white and Hispanics most likely to have identified one in the U.S. that they attended as children. Those identifying a significant parish outside of the U.S. were most likely to say the following had “a great impact” on them at their parish:

- Masses and liturgies at the parish (67%)
- Participating in the liturgical ministry at the parish (64%)
- Masses and liturgies in the language of my ethnic/cultural heritage at the parish (60%)
- Clergy at my parish supporting and encouraging me to discern my religious vocation (54%)

- Witnessing the presence of religious sisters, or brothers, or priests in the parish (54%)
- Celebrating ethnic Catholic traditions at the parish (50%)
- Conversations with priests or religious brothers or sisters in the parish (49%)

The top factors having “a great impact” on those who attended a U.S. parish are:

- Masses and liturgies at the parish (61%)
- Clergy at my parish supporting and encouraging me to discern my religious vocation (50%)
- Adult faith formation in this parish (47%)
- Participating in the liturgical ministry at the parish (46%)
- Witnessing the presence of religious sisters, or brothers, or priests in the parish (44%)
- Conversations with priests or religious brothers or sisters in the parish (44%)

Openness of their Religious Institute to Cultural Diversity

Most responding religious members say their religious institute is already succeeding at being open to those of different cultural backgrounds. The strongest exceptions are the members who are the sole member with their ethnic background in the communities in which they live. About half of these respondents say the following are areas where their religious institute is only “a little” or “not at all” open:

- Providing a mentor from the same culture, if possible, for those in initial formation (53%)
- Using a prayer practice from another culture (50%)
- Providing an acculturation program for new members from outside the U.S. (49%)
- Having bi-lingual or multilingual prayers (47%)

Cultural Challenges Members Face in their Religious Institutes

The ethnic makeup of the communities in which members live are also related to how much of a cultural challenge members personally find living within their institute. Those who are the sole member with their ethnic background are especially likely to report feeling “somewhat” or “very” challenged in these ways:

- Members who I live with not understanding my culture (49%)
- Not feeling understood by other members of my institute (32%)
- Feeling isolated or lonely (28%)
- Members who I live with not understanding my culture (28%)
- Feeling that I am asked too much to accommodate my culture to fit in the dominant ethnic/racial cohort of my institute (23%)
- My food not being welcomed in my community (23%)
- During my initial formation, my formator requiring me to accommodate my culture to that of my institute (20%)

In sum, the more recent cohort of women and men religious in the United States is more culturally and ethnically diverse than their older cohorts. While this diversity enriches religious life, it also challenges the leadership and the membership of religious communities to better welcome and adjust to the cultural changes in many aspects of their religious life together.

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Introduction

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The survey on cultural diversity in vocations to religious life was designed to identify what impact parishes and family life might have on vocational discernment of religious members before they entered religious life and if there are any differences regarding cultural diversity; what were their experiences of cultural diversity with their religious institutes; and what members from the non-dominant culture/ethnicity experience as challenges with the dominant culture/ethnicity of their religious institute.

This report is arranged in four parts: Part I describes characteristics of respondents. Part II describes the various impacts of the family on vocational discernment of religious members before they entered religious life. Part III describes the various impacts of the parish on the vocational discernment of religious members before they entered religious life. Part IV describes religious members' experience of their religious institutes developing cultural awareness and integrating cultural diversity as well as challenges of cultural diversity in their 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.

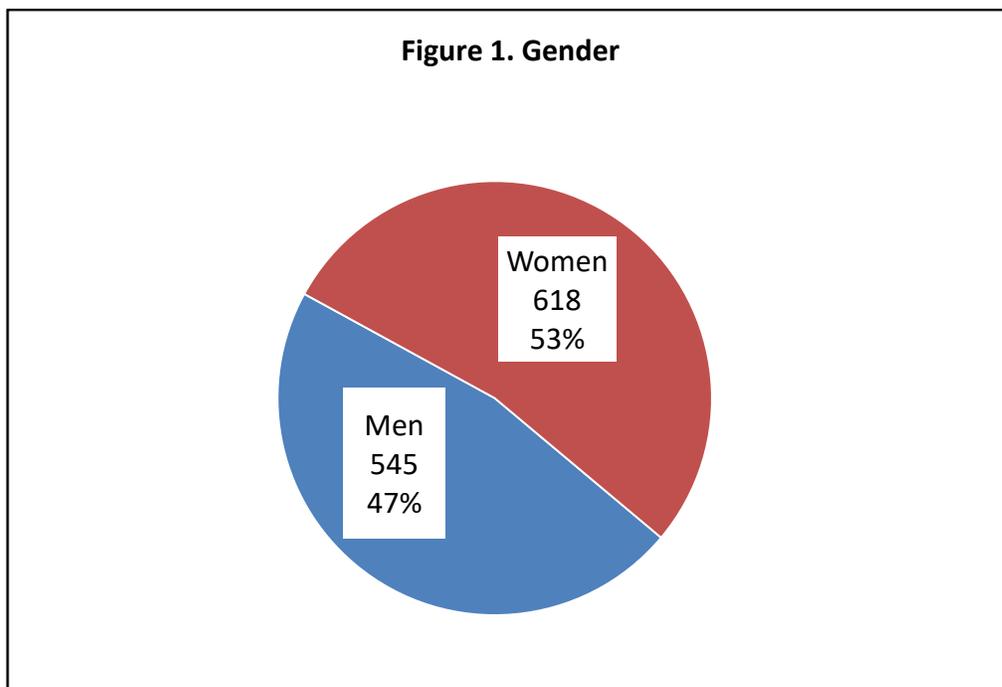
In general, in making comparisons between men and women, tables will show the overall percentage who provided a strong response, followed by the percentage of each subgroup (i.e., men and women) who provided a strong response. Whenever the difference in percentages between these groups approaches or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

PART I: BACKGROUND AND CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

This section describes the demographic characteristics and background experiences of the 1,163 respondents. These characteristics include their gender, age and generation, racial and ethnic background and country of origin, Catholic upbringing and education, previous marriage and children, employment and ministry experience, age at time of entrance and current status in their religious institute, and the age at which they first considered religious life.

Gender

Participants in this study are almost evenly distributed in terms of gender. Half are women (53%) and half are men (47%).



Age of Responding Religious

Respondents were born between 1931 and 2001 and thus range in age from 19 to 80 in 2020. The average age of the respondents overall is 36 (35 for men and 37 for women). The median age for the entire sample is 34 (33 for men and 35 for women). The modal age is 32 for both men and women for the entire sample.

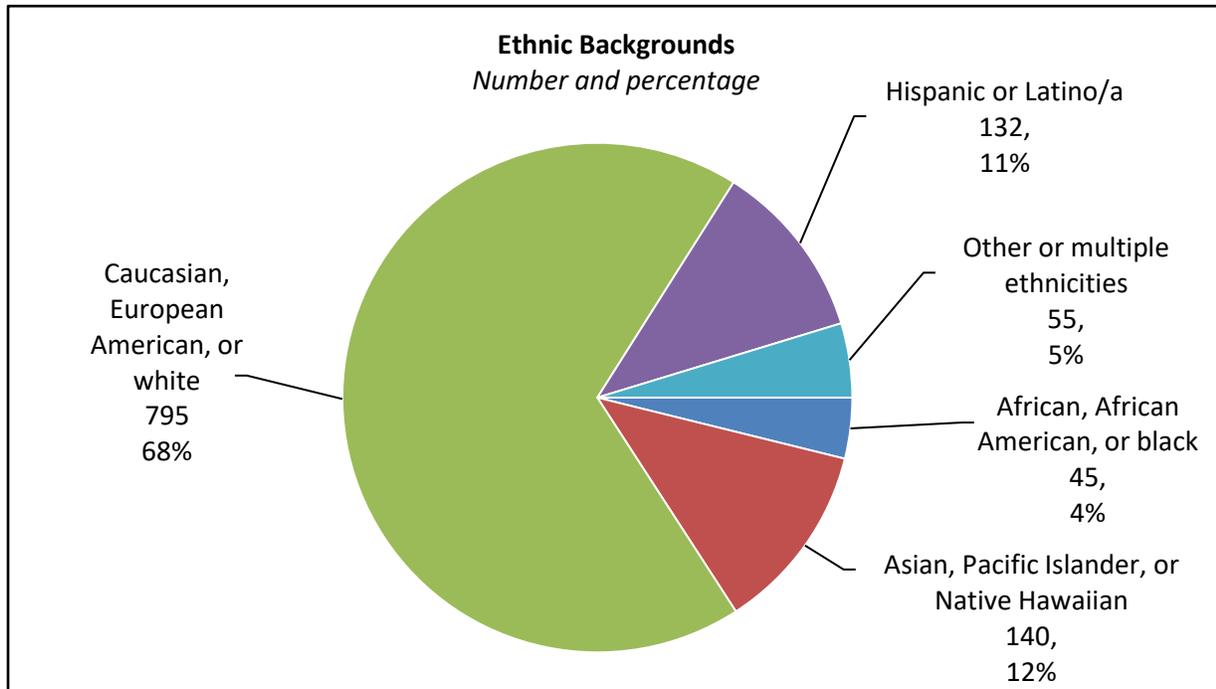
Age Distribution			
<i>Percentage in each category</i>			
	All	Men	Women
	%	%	%
19-28	23	27	20
29-38	47	48	46
39-59	25	23	27
60 and over	5	2	7
Age range	19-80	19-72	19-80
Average age	36	35	37
Median age	34	33	35
Modal age	32	32	32

The range of ages among new members as well as the age differences between newer members and older members that are common in many religious institutes present a number of challenges for these newer members as well as for the religious institutes they have entered.

Racial/Ethnic Background

Consistent with other CARA research findings, there is greater diversity in the racial/ethnic backgrounds among new members than in the overall population of perpetually professed men and women religious.

Two-thirds of responding religious identify as white (68%), followed by Asian (12%), Hispanic (11%), black (4%), and all other ethnicities (5%).



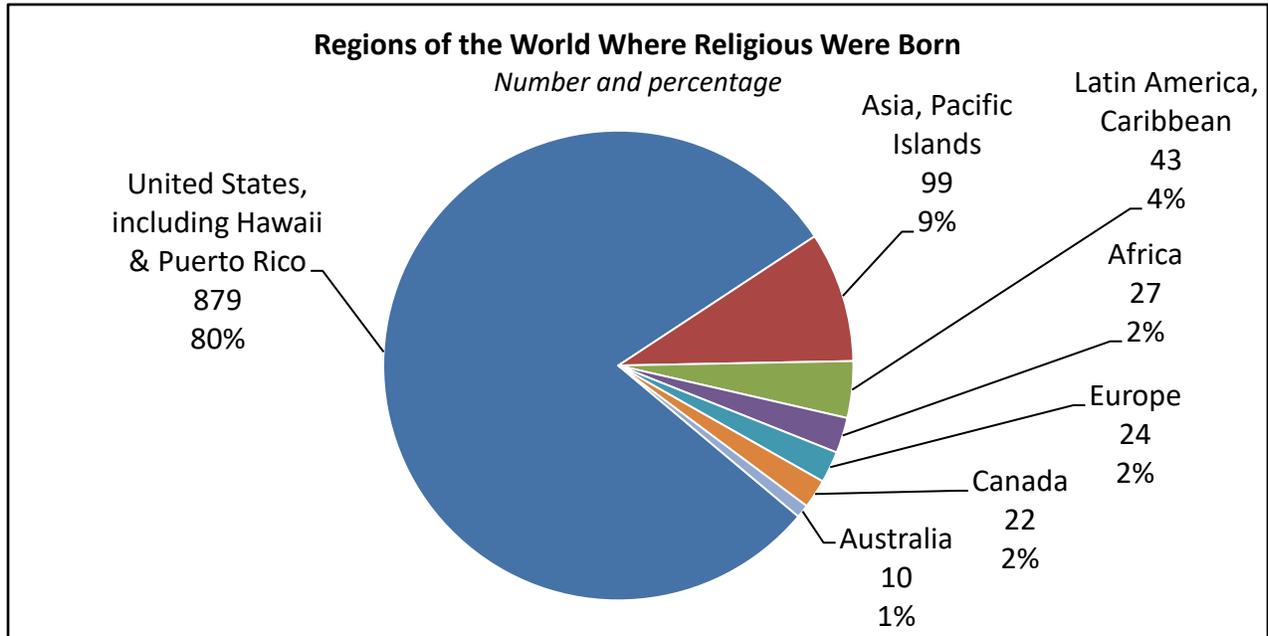
Just over one in ten new members is Asian/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian/Middle Eastern and another one in ten is Hispanic or Latino(a). About 5% report having another race or mixed race or others. And about 4% describe their background as African American, African, or black.

For the purpose of comparison throughout the report, the racial/ethnic background is recoded into the four main groups as follows:

- 72% (795) Caucasian/European American/white
- 13% (140) Asian/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaii
- 12% (132) Hispanic/Latino(a)
- 4% (45) African/African American/black

Country of Birth

The figure below shows the continents or countries of birth of responding religious, with most born in the United States (80%). These respondents come from six of the world's seven continents.



Responding religious' countries of birth are presented in the table below, organized by their ethnic identification and by world regions. After the United States (879 respondents), the next most common countries of birth are Vietnam (41), the Philippines (28), Mexico (26), Canada (22), and Australia (10).

Place of Birth of Responding Religious Priests, Brothers and Sisters				
	African, African American, or black (N = 45) 20%	Asian, Pacific Islander, or Native Hawaiian (N = 140) 25%	Caucasian, European American, or white (N = 795) 95%	Hispanic or Latino/a (N = 132) 62%
Northern Americas (N = 901)				
United States, incl. Hawaii & Puerto Rico (N = 879)	18%	24%	92%	62%
Canada (N = 22)	2%	1%	3%	0%
Asia or Pacific Islands (N = 99)	0%	70%	<1%	0%
Vietnam (N = 41)	0%	29%	0%	0%
Philippines (N = 28)	0%	20%	0%	0%
India (N = 5)	0%	4%	0%	0%
Other Asian countries (N = 15)	0%	11%	<1%	0%
Other Pacific Island countries (N = 10)	0%	6%	0%	0%
Latin America and Caribbean (N = 46)	18%	0%	0%	35%
Mexico (N = 26)	0%	0%	0%	19%
Dominican Republic (N = 8)	0%	0%	0%	6%
Haiti (N = 5)	9%	0%	0%	0%
Other Latin American countries (N = 3)	0%	0%	0%	9%
Other Caribbean countries (N = 4)	9%	0%	0%	1%
Africa (N = 27)	59%	2%	0%	1%
Cameroon (N = 6)	13%	0%	0%	0%
Nigeria (N = 5)	11%	0%	0%	0%
Kenya (N = 5)	11%	0%	0%	0%
Other African countries (N = 11)	24%	2%	0%	1%
Europe (N = 24)	0%	0%	4%	0%
Germany (N = 7)	0%	0%	1%	0%
United Kingdom (N = 5)	0%	0%	1%	0%
Other European countries (N = 12)	0%	0%	2%	0%
Australia (N = 10)	0%	2%	1%	0%
Unknown (N = 4)	3%	1%	0%	1%

Entrance to the United States

On average, those who were born in a country other than the United States first came to live in the United States at age 23; half were 22 or older when they first came here. The youngest was less than one and the oldest was age 62.

Entrance to the United States				
<i>Age responding</i>				
	Year		Age at Entry	
	Overall	Overall	Men	Women
Mean	2006	23	22	23
Median	2008	22	23	22
Range	1961-2020	0-62	0-50	0-62

Three-tenths (28%) of respondents arrived as children, ages 17 or younger. A third (34%) arrived as a young adult, between the age of 18 and 25. Nearly two-fifths (38%) arrived as adults, age 26 or older.

Current Legal Status

Among those who were born outside the United States, half of respondents (46%) are U.S. citizens. Women religious are more likely than men religious to have U.S. citizenship.

<i>Which of these best describes your current status?</i>			
<i>Percentage responding</i>			
	All	Men	Women
	%	%	%
U.S. Citizen	46	36	55
Legal permanent resident (green card)	16	19	12
Non-immigrant student (F1 visa)	16	26	7
Non-immigrant religious worker (R1 visa)	15	12	17
Other	8	7	9

One-sixth (16%) hold legal permanent resident status. Another one-sixth (16 percent) holds non-immigrant student (F1 visa) status. More than one in ten (15%) holds an immigrant religious worker or regular worker visa. About one in ten (8%) report holding other status, including visitor's visa, green card application pending, dual citizen. One respondent reports being a DACA.

Language Fluency

When respondents were asked to report their first language, they report a total of 64 different languages.¹ Four in five (79%) report English as their first language. Six percent report Spanish and 4% report Vietnamese as their first language. No other language is mentioned as a first language by more than 1%.

First Language			
<i>Percentage responding</i>			
	All	Men	Women
	%	%	%
English	79	74	82
Spanish	6	7	5
Vietnamese	4	5	3
Other	12	14	10

Women are more likely than men to report English as their first language, meanwhile men are a little more likely to report that their first language is something other than English.

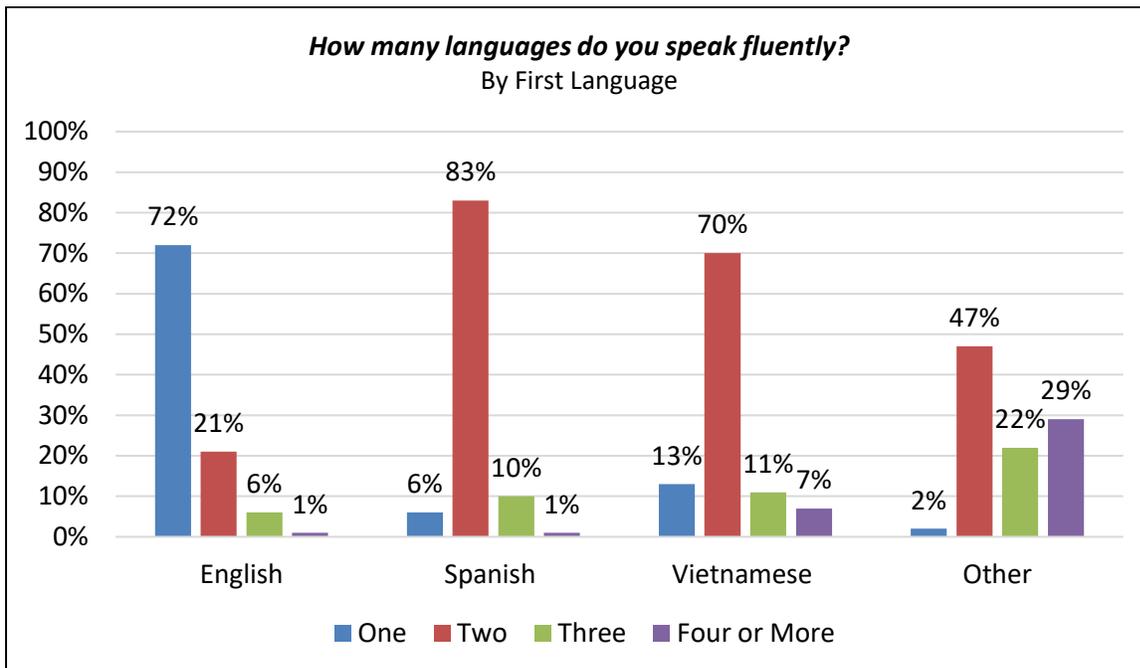
Three in five respondents (59%) speak one language fluently. Three in ten (30%) speak two languages fluently. One in ten (8%) speak three or more languages fluently. One in twenty speak four languages or more.

<i>How many languages do you speak fluently?</i>			
<i>Responding by percentage</i>			
	All	Men	Women
	%	%	%
One	59	46	70
Two	30	36	25
Three	8	13	3
Four or more	4	6	2

¹ Respondents were allowed to write in more than one language, but the first language they listed defines their first language.

Men are a little more likely than women to be multilingual. Under half of men (46%) speak one language fluently, 36% speak two, and 13% speak three or more. Among women, 70% speak one language fluently, 25% speak two, and 3% speak three languages or more.

Among those who speak English as their first language, seven in ten (72%) speak only that language fluently. One in five English speakers (21%) speak two languages fluently and 6% speak three or more fluently. Among those who speak Spanish, only 6% speak that language fluently, 83% speak two languages, and 10% speak three or more fluently. Among those who speak Vietnamese as the first language, 14% speak that language fluently, 70% speak two languages, and 11% speak three languages or more.



Catholic Upbringing

Nine in ten respondents (91%) were raised Catholic.

Catholic Background			
<i>Percentage responding "Yes"</i>			
	Overall	Men	Women
	%	%	%
Catholic since birth	91	92	90
Became Catholic later in life	9	8	10

Those who became Catholic later in life came from a variety of faiths: Anglican, Baptist, Buddhist, Christian, ELCA Lutheran, Episcopalian, Evangelical, Jewish, non-denominational, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Protestant, United Methodist, agnostic, or none.

Just over nine in ten respondents (94%) report that when they were growing up they had at least one parent who was Catholic. Eight in ten (81%) report that both parents were Catholic.

Religious Background of Respondents' Parents			
<i>Percentage responding "Yes"</i>			
	Overall	Men	Women
	%	%	%
Both parents Catholic	81	81	80
Mother Catholic, father not	10	10	10
Father Catholic, mother not	4	5	3
Neither parent was Catholic	6	5	7

Respondents who had non-Catholic parents report that the parents were either Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopal, Baptist, Buddhist, Protestant, UCC, Amish, agnostic, Hindu, non-denominational, atheist, non-religious, Evangelical Protestant, Salvation Army, or none. Regardless of the religious tradition of their parents, two in three (66%) respondents report that religion was "very important" to their mothers and half (48%) report that religion was "very important" to their fathers.

Employment and Ministry Experience

Nearly eight in ten respondents (77%) were employed before they entered religious life. Among those who were employed, three in four (76%) were employed full-time and one in four were employed part-time. Women are more likely than men to have been employed before they entered (84% compared to 70% of men). Men and women are about equally likely to have been employed full-time (78% among men compared to 74% among women).

Employment and Ministry Experience			
<i>Percentage responding "Yes"</i>			
	Overall	Men	Women
	%	%	%
<i>Were you employed before you entered?</i>	77	70	84
<i>Were you in ministry before you entered?</i>	53	46	59

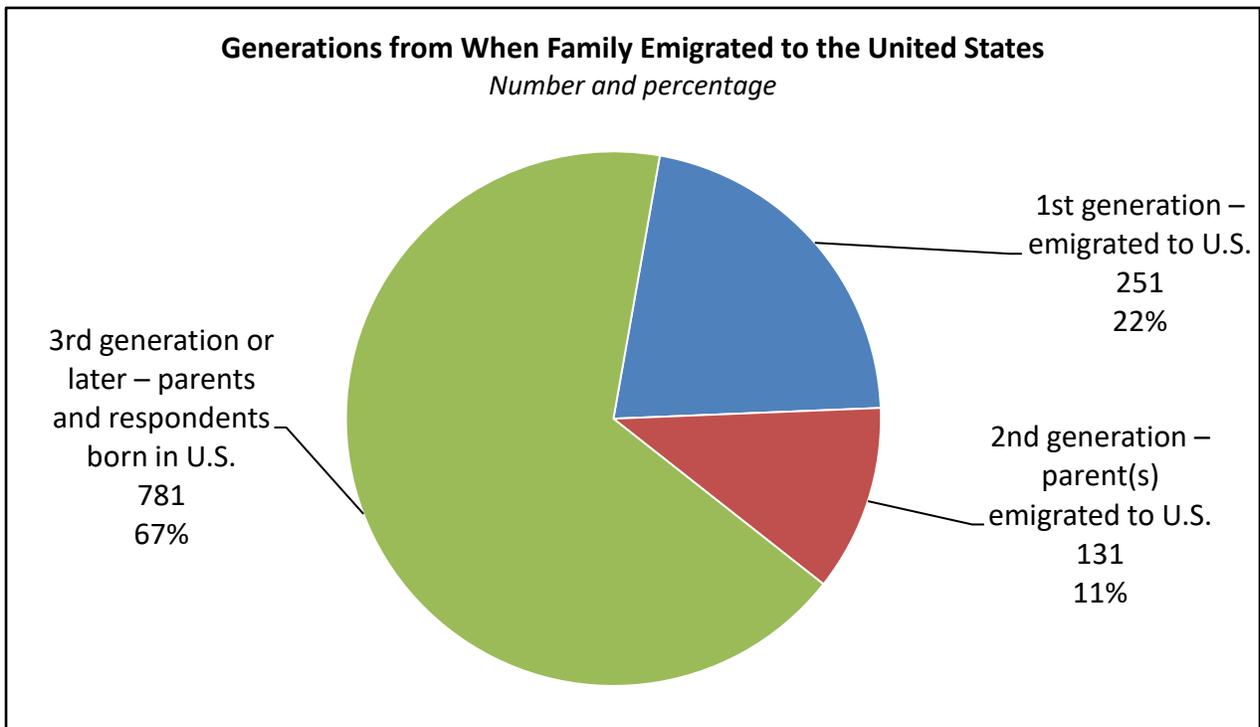
Whether or not they were employed, just over half of respondents (53%) were engaged in ministry before they entered religious life. Among those who were engaged in ministry, most (58%) served in a volunteer capacity, while a little over a quarter (27%) were engaged full-time and 16% were engaged part-time in ministry. Women are also more likely than men to have been engaged in ministry before they entered religious life (59% compared to 46% of men), though there is no significant difference in their level of engagement.

PART II: INFLUENCE OF FAMILY ON VOCATION PROMOTION

Part of understanding how a family affects discernment of a vocation to religious life is knowing and understanding the ethnic or cultural backgrounds of the families. Also influential is what country the person was born in and/or how many generations ago they or their families emigrated to the United States.

Generations from When Family Emigrated to the United States

The figure below shows the number of respondents belonging to each generation. Two in three have parents who were U.S.-born (67%), about two in ten emigrated to the U.S. themselves, (22%) and one in ten has at least one parent who emigrated (11%).

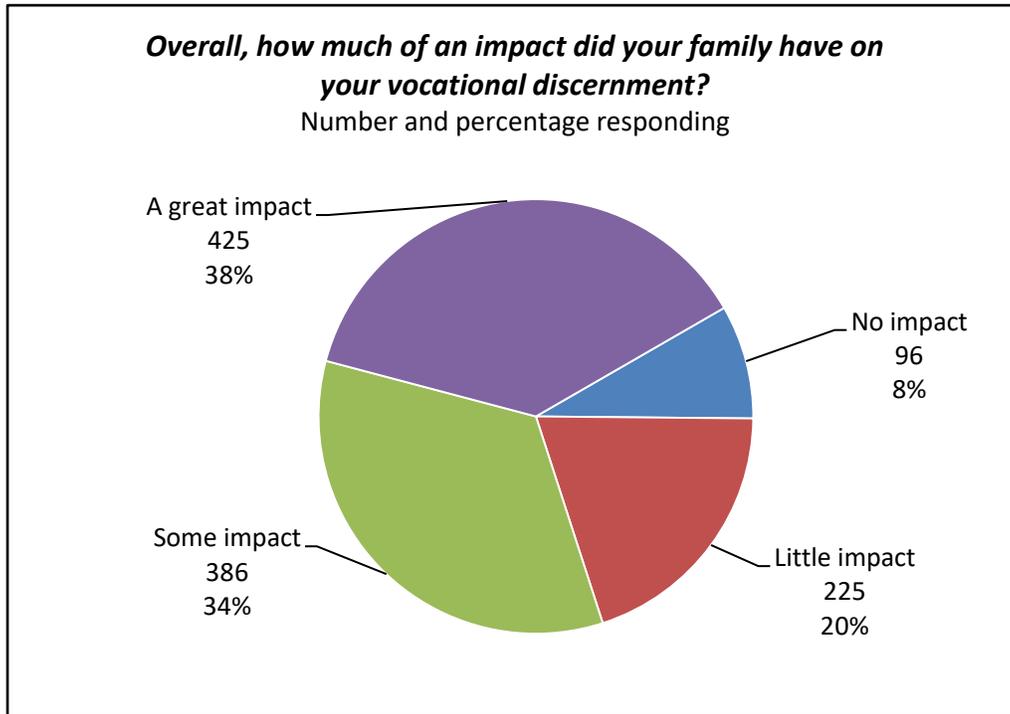


The table below shows how those of different ethnicities compare generationally. Blacks (80%) and Asians (75%) are most likely to be 1st generation, with whites (87%) most likely to be 3rd generation. Hispanics are almost evenly divided between the 1st (38%) and 2nd (41%) generations.

Generation When Family Emigrated to the United States				
	African, African American, or black (N = 45) %	Asian, Pacific Islander, or Native Hawaiian (N = 140) %	Caucasian, European American, or white (N = 795) %	Hispanic or Latino/a (N = 132) %
1 st generation – Emigrated to U.S., born in a foreign country (N = 251)	80	75	8	38
2 nd generation – Parent(s) emigrated to U.S. (N = 131)	4	22	5	41
3 rd generation plus – Parents and respondent born in U.S. (N = 781)	16	3	87	21

Family Impacts on Religious Vocation Discernment

Responding religious sisters, brothers, and priests were asked how much of an impact their family had on their discernment of a vocation to religious life. As can be seen below, about a combined three in ten (28%) say that their families had “little” (20%) or “no” (8%) impact. The other seven-tenths (72%), combined, report that it had “some” (34%) or “a great” (38%) impact.



The table below shows what aspects of their family lives had an impact on their vocational discernment.

While you were growing up in your family, how much impact did these factors have on your vocational discernment before you entered religious life?

Percentage responding

	“Some Impact” or “a Great Impact” Combined %	“A Great Impact” Only %
Getting to know a priest or a religious brother or sister/nun beside family members	83	62
Attending Masses or other religious services as a family	83	60
My parents instilling in me a prayer life	77	51
Sense of religiosity in my family	74	45
Active participation in parish life as family	73	46
Daily prayers as a family	63	35
Home altars/religious art (for example, crucifix, statues, pictures of saints)	59	27
Volunteer or charitable service as a family	57	30
My parents inviting religious and priests to our home	55	30
Pilgrimages (for example, Marian shrines)	54	27
My mother encouraging me to consider a vocation to priesthood or religious life	49	24
Other family members encouraging me to consider a vocation to priesthood or religious life	43	21
Witnessing my siblings or relatives as religious or priests	42	24
My father encouraging me to consider a vocation to priesthood or religious life	40	18
An expectation from my family that their daughter or son might be a priest or a religious	20	7
My father having been a former seminarian/religious/candidate	17	6
My mother having been a former religious sister/candidate	10	4

The top five aspects are related to their family worship life both at home and in their parishes:

- Getting to know a priest or a religious brother or sister/nun beside family members (83% combined positive impact and 62% “a great impact” only).

- Attending Masses or other religious services as a family (83% combined positive impact and 60% “a great impact” only)
- My parents instilling in me a prayer life (77% combined positive impact and 51% “a great impact” only)
- Sense of religiosity in my family (74% combined positive impact and 45% “a great impact” only)
- Active participation in parish life as family (73% combined positive impact and 46% “a great impact” only)

Between 40% and 59% say the following aspects of their families had at least “some” impact on their vocational discernment:

- Daily prayers as a family (63% combined positive impact and 35% “a great impact” only)
- Home altars/religious art (for example, crucifix, statues, pictures of saints) (59% combined positive impact and 27% “a great impact” only)
- Volunteer or charitable service as a family (57% combined positive impact and 30% “a great impact” only)
- My parents inviting religious and priests to our home (55% combined positive impact and 30% “a great impact” only)
- Pilgrimages (for example, Marian shrines) (54% combined positive impact and 27% “a great impact” only)
- My mother encouraging me to consider a vocation to priesthood or religious life (49% combined positive impact and 24% “a great impact” only)
- Other family members encouraging me to consider a vocation to priesthood or religious life (43% combined positive impact and 21% “a great impact” only)
- Witnessing my siblings or relatives as religious or priests (42% combined positive impact and 24% “a great impact” only)
- My father encouraging me to consider a vocation to priesthood or religious life (40% combined positive impact and 18% “a great impact” only)

Two-tenths or less report that the following aspects had at least “some” impact on their vocational discernment

- An expectation from my family that their daughter or son might be a priest or a religious (20% combined positive impact and 7% “a great impact” only)
- My father having been a former seminarian/religious/candidate (17% combined positive impact and 6% “a great impact” only)
- My mother having been a former religious sister/candidate (10% combined positive impact and 4% “a great impact” only)

Differences by Generations Since Families Emigrated

First generation religious (that is those born in a country other than the United States) are most likely to say some aspects of their family lives had “a great” impact on their vocational discernment.

While you were growing up in your family, how much impact did these factors have on your vocational discernment before you entered religious life?

Percentage responding “A great impact” only

	All Respondents (N = 1,163)	1st Generation (N = 251)	2nd Generation (N = 131)	3rd or More Generation (N = 781)
	%	%	%	%
Getting to know a priest or a religious brother or sister/nun beside family members	62	55	64	63
Attending Masses or other religious services as a family	60	58	63	61
My parents instilling in me a prayer life	51	59	53	47
Active participation in parish life as family	46	48	43	47
Sense of religiosity in my family	45	50	52	42
Daily prayers as a family	35	45	35	31
Volunteer or charitable service as a family	30	40	24	28
My parents inviting religious and priests to our home	30	35	37	26
Pilgrimages (for example, Marian shrines)	27	40	26	22
Home altars/religious art (for example, crucifix, statues, pictures of saints)	27	39	34	21
My mother encouraging me to consider a vocation to priesthood or religious life	24	35	25	20
Witnessing my siblings or relatives as religious or priests	24	31	24	21
Other family members encouraging me to consider a vocation to priesthood or religious life.	21	32	18	18
My father encouraging me to consider a vocation to priesthood or religious life	18	25	21	15
An expectation from my family that their daughter or son might be a priest or a religious	7	12	3	6
My father having been a former seminarian/religious/candidate	6	10	10	4
My mother having been a former religious sister/candidate	4	8	3	3

Differences by Racial/Ethnic Background

Respondents of Caucasian/European/American/white are least likely to report that many aspects of their family lives had “a great” impact on their vocational discernment.

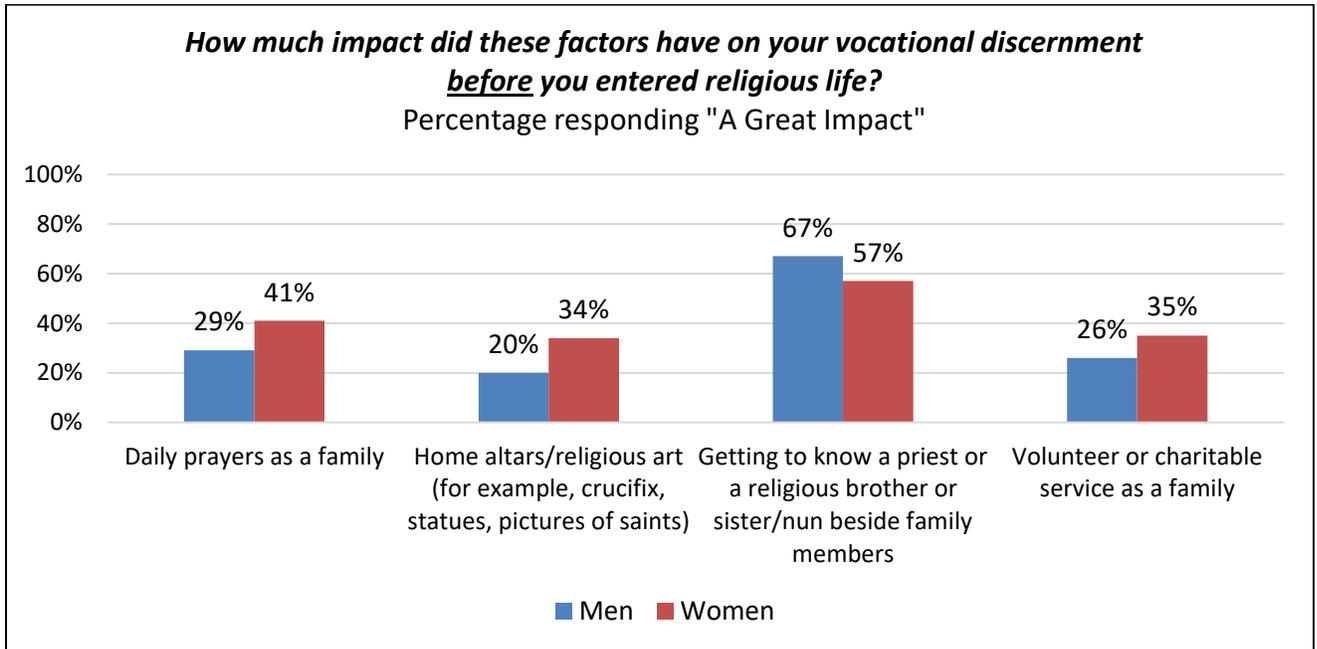
While you were growing up in your family, how much impact did these factors have on your vocational discernment before you entered religious life?

Percentage responding “A great impact” only

	African, African American, or black (N = 45) %	Asian, Pacific Islander, or Native Hawaiian (N = 140) %	Caucasian, European American, or white (N = 795) %	Hispanic or Latino/a (N = 132) %
My parents instilling in me a prayer life	63	61	47	57
Getting to know a priest or a religious brother or sister/nun beside family members	55	56	63	61
Active participation in parish life as family	52	51	47	37
Attending Masses or other religious services as a family	50	61	60	62
Sense of religiosity in my family	47	57	42	49
Daily prayers as a family	46	45	32	36
My parents inviting religious and priests to our home	44	39	27	31
Volunteer or charitable service as a family	42	41	27	36
Other family members encouraging me to consider a vocation to priesthood or religious life.	40	32	17	25
Pilgrimages (for example, Marian shrines)	35	41	24	30
Home altars/religious art (for example, crucifix, statues, pictures of saints)	33	48	22	36
My mother encouraging me to consider a vocation to priesthood or religious life	32	37	20	33
Witnessing my siblings or relatives as religious or priests	25	32	22	27
My father encouraging me to consider a vocation to priesthood or religious life	25	26	15	26
My father having been a former seminarian/religious/candidate	20	10	5	7
My mother having been a former religious sister/candidate	0	10	3	6
An expectation from my family that their daughter or son might be a priest or a religious	18	13	6	0

Differences by Gender

Men religious are more likely than women religious to report that getting to know a priest or a religious brother or sister/nun beside family members has a great impact on their vocational discernment. However, women religious are more likely than men religious to report that the aspects shown in the figure below *have a great impact* on their vocational discernment before entering religious life.



Ethnic Differences

Caucasian, European American, or White Respondents Only

The table below shows the characteristics of those identifying as Caucasian, European American, or white.

Characteristics of Caucasians, European Americans, or Whites (<i>N</i> = 795)	
<i>Country Where Born</i>	%
United States	87
Canada	3
Germany	2
United Kingdom (England)	1
Poland	1
Ireland	1
Australia	1
All other countries	4
<i>Generation</i>	
1 st generation (emigrated from another country)	8
2 nd generation (parent(s) emigrated from another country)	5
3 rd or more generation (self and parents born in U.S.)	87
Raised Catholic	91
Mother a Catholic	91
Father a Catholic	83
Religion “very” important to mother while they grew up	63
Religion “very” important to father while they grew up	47

How long ago a family emigrated to the United States had relatively little effect on how much of an impact their family had on their vocational discernment.²

Overall, how much of an impact did your family have on your vocational discernment?
Percentage responding

	All White Respondents (N = 795) %	1st Generation (N = 60) %	2nd Generation (N = 43) %	3rd or More Generation (N = 692) %
No impact	9	12	7	8
Little impact	21	22	14	21
Some impact	33	33	33	33
A great impact	37	33	45	37

² Only differences of 10 percentage points or more are treated as meaningful.

The table below shows the impact of aspects of their families on their vocational discernment that respondents report for respondents identifying as Caucasian, European American, or white. The percentages responding that an aspect of their family life had “a great impact” are shown for these respondents overall, as well as for how many generations the person had been in the United States.

While you were growing up in your family, how much impact did these factors have on your vocational discernment before you entered religious life?

Percentage responding “A great impact” only

	All White Respondents (N = 795) %	1st Generation (N = 60) %	2nd Generation (N = 43) %	3rd or More Generation (N = 692) %
Getting to know a priest or a religious brother or sister/nun beside family members	63	59	61	63
Attending Masses or other religious services as a family	60	57	54	61
Sense of religiosity in my family	52	40	44	42
My parents instilling in me a prayer life	47	57	42	47
Active participation in parish life as family	47	44	42	47
Daily prayers as a family	32	39	30	32
My parents inviting religious and priests to our home	27	28	42	26
Volunteer or charitable service as a family	27	26	24	28
Pilgrimages (for example, Marian shrines)	24	33	28	23
Home altars/religious art (for example, crucifix, statues, pictures of saints)	22	24	28	21
Witnessing my siblings or relatives as religious or priests	22	15	25	22
My mother encouraging me to consider a vocation to priesthood or religious life	20	18	21	20
Other family members encouraging me to consider a vocation to priesthood or religious life. Please list these family members (siblings, aunt, etc.):	17	15	19	16
My father encouraging me to consider a vocation to priesthood or religious life	15	21	13	14
An expectation from my family that their daughter or son might be a priest or a religious	6	8	7	5
My father having been a former seminarian/religious/candidate	5	11	0	4
My mother having been a former religious sister/candidate	3	0	0	3

The five aspects of their family life most likely to have had “a great” impact on white respondents are:

- Getting to know a priest or a religious brother or sister/nun beside family members (63%)
- Attending Masses or other religious services as a family (60%)
- Sense of religiosity in my family (52%)
- My parents instilling in me a prayer life (47%)
- Active participation in parish life as family (47%)

Caucasian, European American, or white religious differ only slightly among the generations.

While you were growing up in your family, how much impact did these factors have on your vocational discernment before you entered religious life?

Percentage responding “A great impact” only

	All White Respondents (N = 795) %	1st Generation (N = 60) %	2nd Generation (N = 43) %	3rd or More Generation (N = 692) %
My parents instilling in me a prayer life	47	57	42	47
My parents inviting religious and priests to our home	27	28	42	26
Pilgrimages (for example, Marian shrines)	24	33	28	23
Witnessing my siblings or relatives as religious or priests	22	15	25	22
My father having been a former seminarian/religious/candidate	5	11	0	4

Asian, Pacific Islander, or Native Hawaiian Respondents Only

The table below shows the characteristics of those identifying as Asian, Pacific Islander, or Native Hawaiian.

Characteristics of Asians, Pacific Islanders, or Native Hawaiians (<i>N</i> = 140)	
<i>Country Where Born</i>	%
Vietnam	29
United States	25
Philippines	20
India	4
Indonesia	3
South Korea	2
All other countries	17
<i>Generation</i>	
1 st generation (emigrated from another country)	75
2 nd generation (parent(s) emigrated from another country)	22
3 rd or more generation (self and parents born in U.S.)	3
Raised Catholic	94
Mother a Catholic	94
Father a Catholic	88
Religion “very” important to mother while they grew up	81
Religion “very” important to father while they grew up	59

How long ago a family emigrated to the United States had some effect on how much of an impact their family had on their vocational discernment, with 3rd generation religious most likely to report their family having “no” (25%) or “little” (50%) impact.³

Overall, how much of an impact did your family have on your vocational discernment?
Percentage responding

	All Asian Respondents (N = 140)	1st Generation (N = 105)	2nd Generation (N = 31)	3rd or More Generation (N = 4)
	%	%	%	%
No impact	7	8	3	25
Little impact	15	11	23	50
Some impact	33	32	39	0
A great impact	45	49	35	25

³ Only differences of 15 percentage points or more are treated as meaningful.

The table below shows the impact of aspects of their families on their vocational discernment that respondents report for respondents identifying as Asian, Pacific Islander, or Native Hawaiian. The percentages responding that an aspect of their family life had “a great impact” are shown for these respondents overall, as well as for how many generations the person had been in the United States.

While you were growing up in your family, how much impact did these factors have on your vocational discernment before you entered religious life?

Percentage responding “A great impact” only

	All Asian Respondents (N = 140) %	1st Generation (N = 105) %	2nd Generation (N = 31) %	3rd or More Generation (N = 4) %
My parents instilling in me a prayer life	61	63	58	0
Attending Masses or other religious services as a family	61	59	67	50
Sense of religiosity in my family	57	58	56	25
Getting to know a priest or a religious brother or sister/nun beside family members	56	53	68	50
Active participation in parish life as family	51	49	58	50
Home altars/religious art (for example, crucifix, statues, pictures of saints)	48	49	43	67
Daily prayers as a family	45	49	32	50
Pilgrimages (for example, Marian shrines)	41	44	29	50
Volunteer or charitable service as a family	41	42	32	67
My parents inviting religious and priests to our home	39	41	32	0
My mother encouraging me to consider a vocation to priesthood or religious life	37	41	16	50
Other family members encouraging me to consider a vocation to priesthood or religious life.	32	41	0	0
Witnessing my siblings or relatives as religious or priests	32	38	14	0
My father encouraging me to consider a vocation to priesthood or religious life	26	28	21	0
An expectation from my family that their daughter or son might be a priest or a religious	13	16	0	0
My mother having been a former religious sister/candidate	10	14	0	0
My father having been a former seminarian/religious/candidate	10	11	9	0

More than half Asian, Pacific Islander, or Native Hawaiian religious say these aspects of their family life had “a great” impact on their vocational discernment:

- My parents instilling in me a prayer life (61%)
- Attending Masses or other religious services as a family (61%)
- Sense of religiosity in my family (57%)
- Getting to know a priest or a religious brother or sister/nun beside family members (56%)
- Active participation in parish life as family (51%)

When comparing the generations from emigration of the family, generally, the 1st generation is especially distinctive and those who emigrated themselves are most likely to report that almost all aspects of their family life mentioned in the table above had “a great” impact on their vocational discernment.

Hispanic or Latino/a Respondents Only

The table below shows the characteristics of those identifying as Hispanic or Latino/a.

Characteristics of Hispanics or Latinos/as	
<i>(N = 132)</i>	
<i>Country Where Born</i>	%
United States	63
Mexico	19
Dominican Republic	6
Brazil	2
Colombia	2
Puerto Rico	2
Venezuela	2
All other countries	4
<i>Generation</i>	
1 st generation (emigrated from another country)	37
2 nd generation (parent(s) emigrated from another country)	41
3 rd or more generation (self and parents born in U.S.)	21
Mother a Catholic	95
Father a Catholic	94
Religion “very” important to mother while they grew up	66
Religion “very” important to father while they grew up	40

How long ago a family emigrated to the United States had some effect on how much of an impact their family had on their vocational discernment, with the 2nd generation (one or both of their parents having emigrated to the United States) differing most.⁴

Overall, how much of an impact did your family have on your vocational discernment?
Percentage responding

	All Hispanic Respondents (N = 132)	1st Generation (N = 50)	2nd Generation (N = 54)	3rd or More Generation (N = 28)
	%	%	%	%
No impact	7	10	6	7
Little impact	20	18	24	14
Some impact	39	43	31	47
A great impact	34	29	39	32

⁴ Only differences of 15 percentage points or more are treated as meaningful.

The table below shows the impact of aspects of their families on their vocational discernment that respondents report for respondents identifying as Hispanic or Latino/a. The percentages responding that an aspect of their family life had “a great impact” are shown for these respondents overall, as well as for how many generations the person had been in the United States.

While you were growing up in your family, how much impact did these factors have on your vocational discernment before you entered religious life?

Percentage responding “A great impact” only

	All Hispanic Respondents (N = 131) %	1st Generation (N = 49) %	2nd Generation (N = 54) %	3rd or More Generation (N = 28) %
Attending Masses or other religious services as a family	62	60	67	52
Getting to know a priest or a religious brother or sister/nun beside family members	61	54	65	67
My parents instilling in me a prayer life	56	47	58	67
Sense of religiosity in my family	48	44	54	44
Active participation in parish life as family	38	47	29	37
Volunteer or charitable service as a family	36	49	22	39
Home altars/religious art (for example, crucifix, statues, pictures of saints)	36	33	34	46
Daily prayers as a family	35	42	36	21
My mother encouraging me to consider a vocation to priesthood or religious life	34	35	33	31
My parents inviting religious and priests to our home	31	26	33	38
Pilgrimages (for example, Marian shrines)	30	39	23	21
Witnessing my siblings or relatives as religious or priests	27	26	30	20
My father encouraging me to consider a vocation to priesthood or religious life	26	23	26	40
Other family members encouraging me to consider a vocation to priesthood or religious life.	25	21	24	39
An expectation from my family that their daughter or son might be a priest or a religious	9	15	7	0
My father having been a former seminarian/religious/candidate	7	0	13	0
My mother having been a former religious sister/candidate	6	7	7	0

More than half say these aspects of their family lives had “a great” impact on their vocational discernment:

- Attending Masses or other religious services as a family (62%)
- Getting to know a priest or a religious brother or sister/nun beside family members (61%)
- My parents instilling in me a prayer life (61%)
- Sense of religiosity in my family (56%)

The first generation of Hispanics or Latino/as religious are most likely to report that their family lives growing up had “a great” impact on their discernment of a vocation.

While you were growing up in your family, how much impact did these factors have on your vocational discernment before you entered religious life?

Percentage responding “A great impact” only

	All Hispanic Respondents (N = 131)	1st Generation (N = 49)	2nd Generation (N = 54)	3rd or More Generation (N = 28)
	%	%	%	%
Attending Masses or other religious services as a family	62	60	67	52
My parents instilling in me a prayer life	56	47	58	67
Active participation in parish life as family	38	47	29	37
Volunteer or charitable service as a family	36	49	22	39
Daily prayers as a family	35	42	36	21
Pilgrimages (for example, Marian shrines)	30	39	23	21

African, African American, or Black Respondents Only

The table below shows the characteristics of those identifying as African, African American, or black.

Characteristics of African, African American, or Black	
<i>(N = 45)</i>	
<i>Country Where Born</i>	%
United States	20
Cameroon	13
Kenya	11
Nigeria	11
Haiti	9
Ghana	7
Togo	7
All other countries	22
<i>Generation</i>	
1 st generation (emigrated from another country)	80
2 nd generation (parent(s) emigrated from another country)	4
3 rd or more generation (self and parents born in U.S.)	16
Raised Catholic	84
Mother a Catholic	80
Father a Catholic	69
Religion “very” important to mother while they grew up	77
Religion “very” important to father while they grew up	49

How long ago a family emigrated to the United States had some effect on how much of an impact their family had on their vocational discernment.^{5 6}

Overall, how much of an impact did your family have on your vocational discernment?
Percentage responding

	All Black Respondents (N = 45) %	1st Generation (N = 36) %	2nd Generation (N = 2) %	3rd or More Generation (N = 7) %
No impact	9	8	0	14
Little impact	18	20	0	14
Some impact	38	33	50	57
A great impact	35	39	50	14

⁵ Note how few respondents are 2nd or 3rd generation. As such, these differences should not be considered significant.

⁶ Only differences of 25 percentage points or more are treated as meaningful.

The table below shows the impact of aspects of their families on their vocational discernment that respondents report for respondents identifying as African, African American, or black. The percentages responding that an aspect of their family life had “a great impact” are shown for these respondents overall, as well as for how many generations the person had been in the United States.

While you were growing up in your family, how much impact did these factors have on your vocational discernment before you entered religious life?

Percentage responding “A great impact” only

	All Black Respondents (N = 45) %	1st Generation (N = 36) %	2nd Generation (N = 2) %	3rd or More Generation (N = 7) %
My parents instilling in me a prayer life	63	65	100	40
Getting to know a priest or a religious brother or sister/nun beside family members	55	54	50	57
Active participation in parish life as family	52	52	100	25
Attending Masses or other religious services as a family	50	50	100	33
Sense of religiosity in my family	47	45	100	40
Daily prayers as a family	46	42	100	40
My parents inviting religious and priests to our home	44	41	0	67
Volunteer or charitable service as a family	42	46	0	40
Other family members encouraging me to consider a vocation to priesthood or religious life.	40	46	0	20
Pilgrimages (for example, Marian shrines)	35	39	0	0
Home altars/religious art (for example, crucifix, statues, pictures of saints)	33	38	0	0
My mother encouraging me to consider a vocation to priesthood or religious life	32	38	0	17
Witnessing my siblings or relatives as religious or priests	25	30	0	0
My father encouraging me to consider a vocation to priesthood or religious life	25	27	0	20
My father having been a former seminarian/religious/candidate	20	14	100	0
An expectation from my family that their daughter or son might be a priest or a religious	18	23	0	0
My mother having been a former religious sister/candidate	0	0	0	0

Half or more say the following aspects of family life had “a great” impact on their vocational discernment among black religious:

- My parents instilling in me a prayer life (63%)
- Getting to know a priest or a religious brother or sister/nun beside family members (55%)
- Active participation in parish life as family (52%)
- Attending Masses or other religious services as a family (50%)

Generally, 1st generation blacks are most likely to report that an aspect of their family lives had “a great” impact on their vocational discernment.

Aspects of their Family Lives That Had the Greatest Impact on Vocational Discernment

Respondents were asked to briefly identify the aspects of the family life that had most impact on their vocational discernment. A total of 1,019 members provided at least one comment in response to this question. Similar to some aspects in the multiple-choice questions in the questionnaire, the members shared some aspects of the family life that mainly had impact on their vocation discernment. CARA analyzed the responses to this question and grouped their responses into general categories below. Each category is illustrated by a few representative comments.

Prayer Life in the Family

One major aspect that respondents mentioned most is the prayer life as a family and prayer life of family members that impacted most on their vocational discernment.

As a family praying together, teaching the significance of having faith, the connection of faith and praying for loved ones. Parents influence on both faith and action.

Daily Prayer life as a family (rosary), religiosity, being in contact with religious family members, deep faith of my family in difficult times, their witness and testimony.

Daily Rosary as a family, Sunday Mass attendance as a family, annually visiting the Motherhouse of the community my mom had entered briefly, having an uncle who is a diocesan priest.

Family prayer, regular mass, story-telling (especially biblical stories), and many family-togetherness that always started and ended with prayers. These are what made the most impact on my vocational discernment.

Fostering devotion and a prayer life (daily mass, rosary, Sunday mass, observance of liturgical seasons i.e. lent/advent devotions). Encouraging participation with a youth group run by consecrated women. Participating in a catholic home-school group.

My family was faithful to daily prayer as a family, including part of the Divine Office, and the rosary. We also went to daily Mass and attended a weekly Holy Hour geared towards families. I was homeschooled, so the atmosphere of faith and prayer in which I was raised had all the greater impact on me.

My mom instilled prayer life in me with daily family prayer and daily mass as a family. My dad read the bible many times and named me after a biblical figure in the OT. My dad instilled the importance of the crucifix to me when I was dating. My older sister encouraged my discernment and I feel safe sharing with her my discernment process. Going to Marian Days in 2013 as a family was the beginning of my vocation discernment.

My mother prayed with me every night when I was little, and took my sister and I to Eucharistic Adoration often. In this way I learned to trust God, from the little things to the big things. I was consecrated to Mary with my sister when I was young, and when I was a little older there was this particular statue of Our Blessed Mother towards the center of our house that, I think reminded me of that and always pointed my mind to the higher things. Through Mary and a growing trust in the Lord, I grew in desiring to just give my life to God.

Daily and Sunday Mass Attendance

The second major aspect that respondents is the Mass attendance as a family really impacts on their vocational discernment.

Being Catholic and going to Sunday mass was the extent of our religiosity, but I knew that it was important and that they would support me.

Going to mass with my grandparents when I was little was what brought me to Catholicism, but wanting to pursue religious life as a Lutheran, but eventually as a Catholic was by attending Sunday school, confirmation and other faith formation programs. It's all by God's grace really.

Having a father devoted to weekly Mass was important. Seeing his devotion to his faith and reverence during Mass was important. Having a grandmother that cared deeply about her faith was an important role model for me.

I regularly went to Mass with my mom as a child. As I got older my dad also became Catholic and we went to Mass as a family. my family were/are very involved with the parish and this inspired me.

I was raised Lutheran. It was a compromise when my Catholic father married my Methodist mother. My parents prayed with us at least twice a day every day: at dinner and before bed. My mom was insistent that we attend Church every Sunday (a practice that I have carried with me). When I started discerning, my mom was going to a Catholic parish with my dad. She has since converted, but she was super supportive.

Making Sunday mass the highest priority. Very good moral upbringing. Attending many parish activities. Prayer as a family early in life.

My parents were committed to Mass every week and prayers as a family most nights. We prayed before meals, and there was a general sense of deep religiosity about our home. Priests were invited over for dinner often, and my parents sacrificed a lot of time and energy to provide us with opportunities to make good Catholic friends (even from far away). There were always saint books around the house, we had frequent conversations about religion, faith, society, politics, so that being Catholic made sense and was compelling. My mother was especially faithful and would often (non-forcefully) invite any of us kids to attend daily

Mass with her, confession on week-ends, or just drive to the Church at night for half an hour of quiet prayer before bed.

We never missed Mass -- ever! I grew up being aware that faith made demands on our lives. We were both culturally and religiously Catholic. My parents discussed faith with us. My mother volunteered at Vincent de Paul and my father's whole attitude to possessions and serving others was a reflection of his faith. My values now, having been in monastic life for 42 years, is a reflection of the selflessness and active charity of my parents.

Openness, Support, and Encouragement to Vocational Discernment

Another major aspect that respondents mentioned most is the openness, support, and encouragement to the vocational discernment of the family members.

Although my parents did not actively encourage me to discern religious life, when I came to them about it they were supportive, which helped me to continue the path of discernment. The openness and support of my parents, along with their willingness to help me attend various retreats, visits to religious communities, etc. had an impact on me. My father was a diocesan seminarian for a year after high school, and his openness about his own discernment also had a big impact on me.

I felt called to be a priest at age 5 or 6 and my family supported me as I played Mass and preached to the neighborhood children. During graduate school for my MDiv. I left formation. While I am sure my parents were disappointed, they were supportive. 20 years later when I asked to re-enter formation, my parents were also supportive.

My family was very supportive of me entering religious life even from when I first mentioned the idea. Having a family that was very involved in parish life really helped foster my religious vocation.

My family was very supportive, especially my father. We also had a strong Catholic faith and practice (Sunday and sometimes weekday Mass, daily Rosary, etc.) in the home. My sisters and I were homeschooled as well, and the program we used laid a strong emphasis on learning the Faith. Finally, we often discussed social and religious issues from a Catholic perspective as a family.

My father and mother always said that i had a religious vocation. It was always a constant reminder as I was growing up. Though i lost my way for a time, my parents and extended family never stopped loving me and encouraging me to continue searching.

My parents were very supportive, especially as they found how joyful my discernment process was. My grandparents were daily communicants when I was very young and I

would often see them going to or coming back from mass. Also, my extended family's prayers for me were a great support.

The openness to a religious vocation, guiding me to search not for what I wanted, but what God wanted for my life. Regular prayer life, and encouragement and practical support when I wanted to start going to daily Mass.

The openness to allow me to discern. There was no pressure one way or the other, just that I would do God's will and follow what I felt like God was calling me to. They were very supportive of whatever decision as long as I actually discerned it.

The support of my family started when I told them I was going to be a religious. The journey to the discernment is unknown to them. I was baptized as a child (because the first part of my primary school was in a catholic school). And I came back to the catholic church after 17 years. So I came back on my own basically. We were told that mum used to be catholic and my dad does not go to Church. He does not forbid it either.

The support of my parents when I told them that I am thinking about being a Capuchin Franciscan. They told me to continue to pray and ask for guidance from God. The unconditional love and support of my parents for me at all stages of my vocational journey. They never encouraged me to consider religious life but, when I began thinking about religious life, they were fully supportive, and admitted they were more than happy that I was considering this life.

Their gentle encouragement to stay open to the idea of a vocation to the priesthood was greatly helpful. It taught me that this was an option to pray about. Despite my dad spending several good years in formation with the Augustinians he didn't talk much about or expose us much to religious life but made sure to mention priesthood as an option. Also, my younger brother in middle school discerning priesthood helped keep the idea fresh in my mind of that as an option although I thought of it as something he'd do rather than me.

Faith Life in the Family

The faith life in the family and the faith life of family members were reported to have big impact on their vocational discernment.

Being brought up in the Church; attending Sunday services and praying the liturgy at home; witnessing my parents' active involvement in parish and diocesan life; attending Sunday School throughout my childhood; having my mother read the bible to me -- and once I could read, with me -- from a young age; attending summer camps run by Christian churches.

Faith was at the center of our family life. My Father also became a permanent deacon while I was in college and seeing him enter into this dedicated service of the Church made it clear to me that such a life was valued in my family.

Faith was important in our family and brought us closer together. We prayed and went to Mass together.

Instilling a strong faith from childhood, encouraging service to others and prayer, strong devotion to the church and to Mass, encouraging us to learn the faith (CCD).

My family did not overtly encourage religious or priestly vocations, but our faith was a crucial part of our family life, including daily prayers, occasional service as a family, never missing Sunday mass, and Catholic schools. An important witness for me was my father going through RCIA when I was 13. He and my mother went through that process together and continued to deepen their faith through Bible studies, continued work in RCIA, and other programs. The witness to me was that their faith mattered and that it continued to grow throughout their lives.

My family indirectly influenced my vocation by providing an atmosphere and education love and in the Catholic faith. After I entered religious life, they have all encouraged me while still making sure I was making a free choice.

My mother and father were models of faith and discipleship growing up; they always put others before themselves. My father was religiously devout with Mass and prayer, and my mom was the very image of unconditional love. Each of them had a profound but different impact on my faith development. After I approached my family - my siblings and parents - that I was considering a vocation to religious life and the priesthood, they encouraged me to inquire into the religious order that served the high school my siblings and I attended.

My parents instilled the gift of faith in their children. I was encouraged in my spiritual interests as I grew up, especially with being involved in youth group in high school. My family was supportive of my discerning a vocation and accepted it as a normal and good thing to do.

My parents lived their faith in their daily life; it was part of our culture. There wasn't pressure to live our faith; living their faith was just who my parents were.

The Faith was a lived reality in our daily family life. In addition to daily family prayer, my family also attended daily Mass and Eucharistic Adoration. These were the greatest supports in developing my own relationship with Christ. My parents also recognized the beauty of religious life and were extremely supportive in my discernment process.

Opportunities for Presence of Religious Members in the Family

Another aspect that had great impact on the respondents' vocational discernment is that the family give vocations to religious life high regard. Respondents also report that their family attempted to invite religious members into their house. Besides, their extended family

also had other members who are religious members. These all had great impact on their vocational discernment.

Getting to know Sisters and Priests as "real people" because of relationships with family. Family showing respect for the Religious in our parish.

Giving me a deep faith and a prayer life at a young age. Also, there was an openness to vocation but no pressure. Having priests and sisters routinely invited to our house was huge - I saw them as real people and not statues or some unattainable ideal.

I grew up in a very religious household, with regular prayer as a family and attending mass together each week. We were not overly zealous or traditional per se, but we did have a strong sense of Catholic identity and religiosity. My aunt is also a religious sister, who worked at a Jesuit high school, and so we had a number of priests/nuns as family friends regularly around the household.

I grew up with an uncle, great uncle and great aunt who were religious, so priests and nuns were familiar to me and not a mystery. The biggest impact my family had on my vocation was their support. They never pressured me, but they never discouraged me either. They were 100% supportive.

We prayed, went to church, and did service together often. Love of God was always at the forefront of our family life.

My family life was incredibly loving and encouraging. I wanted to share that more broadly. My uncle is a Jesuit. He helped me see that priests are normal people. My mother is devout and considers faith very important.

My father had been a seminarian in high school in the '50s. My aunt is a Sister of Notre Dame. My mother is very devout and dedicated me to the Blessed Mother at Baptism. My father also appeared to be on friendly terms with the pastor of our parish as well as other religious and former religious. My grandmother worked for the Archdiocese of Washington and also knew a great many religious. I was thoroughly culturally Catholic. The call to priesthood did not seem a strange possibility until 7th or 8th grade. By high school, a call was not even considered as an option.

My mom always spoke highly of the Jesuits and very much looked up to the Jesuits who taught her in India. She always presented religious life as a worthy ideal, though never had any expectation we would become religious. Mom would encourage us to go to Mass every Sunday and would invite priests over regularly for meals. My dad, although not religious and somewhat opposed to religious vocations, would always encourage us to pray and ask questions about faith.

Welcoming and supporting the priests of our parish. They were always showing great respect towards them and making sure they were taken care of. We had a constant stream of priests visiting who knew they were always welcome. Their presence was a huge part of my growing up. It also helped me know who to reach out to when I began discerning my vocation.

Participation in Charity Service and Life at the Parish

Besides faith life and support from family, respondents also report their family's participation in the parish life that has great impact on their vocational discernment.

I have always been impressed by my family's faithfulness; the parish, that is to say, their faith was at the center of their live. They found great meaning in serving the community and being a part of a community parish life.

My parents introduced me to the idea of charity work and service as inseparable from faith in God since the beginning of my life in the church. I remember myself cleaning with my father the bathrooms and floors of diocesan retreat houses and serving food with my mother in my local church, when I was five or six years old. This, alongside their prayer life and commitment to faith, was very important for me.

The involvement in parish life was the most impactful aspect of my family life on vocational discernment. I was used to be someone who knew the importance of ministry and service and that stuck with me once I went to college. Also, I would also say their openness to religious life and a positive view of it was comforting to me.

My family is very loving and supportive, which gave me the freedom to entertain all possibilities for my life, including religious life. Faith was a value and priority in our family. My family was heavily involved in the school and parish and friendly with the sisters and priests. This exposure to religious life helped dispel some of the "mystery" and made it seem possible for me.

My family didn't directly affect my vocational discernment, but they brought me up in the Faith and taught me how to pray and how to serve others. They also encouraged me to attend youth faith activities and retreats which put me into contact with religious brothers and priests who greatly and directly affected my discernment.

My parents lived the faith deeply and our family life centered around the life of the parish and made sure God always came first.

Regular involvement in our parish - altar serving, music. A connection between religious customs and family traditions. Reverence for the deceased. Frequent conversations about matters of faith. Intergenerational support for religious customs and practices.

Stable commitment and involvement in the parish. Participation not only in Sunday mass but also in devotional life of the parish, especially at Christmas and Holy Week.

My parents were supportive of me. They just wanted me to end up being fulfilled. There was an openness in them to the possibility of religious life, but they didn't push it one way or the other. They left me free. Prayer and participation in our parish and parish school as a family did have a big impact on my vocational journey.

Challenges Encountered from Family while Discerning Religious Vocation

Respondents were asked to briefly identify the aspects of the family life that had the most impact on their vocational discernment. A total of 989 members provided at least one comment in response to this question. CARA analyzed the responses to this question and grouped their responses into general categories below. Each category is illustrated by a few representative comments.

Lack of Knowledge of Vocations to Religious Life

One of the main challenges that the respondents shared was that their family did not understand the nature of vocations to religious life.

Despite being faithful Catholics, my family openly discouraged vocations to religious life saying that it would be too great a sacrifice. Their opinion changed after I entered religious life.

Explaining to them the difference between a brother and a priest and that I want to be a brother. Inviting them and finding opportunities to share my life in a religious community. Not knowing how to explain celibacy as a healthy way of life, where as it is largely perceived as a cross to be born in comparison with marriage.

Family members themselves not understanding what pursuing religious life entails and simply not being exposed a whole lot to members of religious Orders.

I guess the challenge was lack of knowledge and awareness of religious vocation. My family didn't have any experience with sisters and neither did I.

I suppose the above response answers this question as well. My family was quite resistant since they did not have exposure to sisters growing up, and it was difficult for them to understand my desire for religious life. However, after visiting our Motherhouse and getting to know the sisters, much of the fear dissipated. Though elements of the life can still be difficult for them to understand, they are extraordinarily supportive.

Many of my family members did not understand why I would have to move away from Buffalo to enter a community. They also did not like that I could not correspond with them as frequently or as long as before entrance.

My extended family was less understanding but not problematically so. My immediate family was nothing but supportive, and the only difficulty was the great pain in leaving them behind.

My family didn't understand my decision to discern because of the lack of familiarity with religious life. They had a lot of questions and were not overly positive but came around.

My family resisted my vocation, and forced me to have a psychological consult by someone who was not connected to the Church. Their lack of understanding about what a vocation was became the greatest challenge in helping them to come to see my desire to respond to the call.

My family was very angry when I wanted to be a cloistered nun because of the restrictions and they think I'm not "working". They have no understanding of redemptive suffering, and they go with what the culture says.

Non-Catholic Family Members

Lack of understandings of religious life from non-Catholic members is another major challenge that respondents mention. The idea of vocations to religious life is not understood.

I converted to Catholicism on my own during college. My family manifested a lot of resistance to my vocation, and to this day (12 years later) does not really understand its significance.

Attachment of my family to me, the fear that they were losing me. Not understanding a religious vocation from relatives who were non-Catholic or nominal Catholics.

Both of my parents tried to instill in us the idea that one must go to college immediately after high school, so my decision to enter a convent right after graduation was shocking to them. Additionally, my father was a non-practicing Protestant. He was utterly shocked and did not understand my vocation. This was a great cross for me, but my Spouse took it into His Hands and my father had a conversion to the Catholic Faith when I was a first-year novice.

Father is not catholic so he didn't know anything about religious life family discouraged me while I was discerning. They're supportive now.

My dad was fully supportive. But my mother was completely against it. My mom grew up Protestant. She became Catholic when she married my dad. So she did not have any of the traditional Catholic mentality as much as my dad did. She had no value for religious life. So it was very hard for her to accept.

My extended family, who are not Catholic, but vaguely Christian, were not as supportive at first. All they really knew about the Church was based on the news they saw or heard about the Church sexual abuse scandal. They found it hard to understand why I would want to join anything like that. So, we had some hard conversations during my time of deeper discernment.

My family is not Catholic, so they had very little positive impact on my vocation discernment; rather, they strongly discouraged it and made it very painful and difficult for me to follow my call.

Not understanding. They didn't know how to answer other people's questions as to why I would choose this or what I would be doing. It got a lot better once I got here and they can come to visit and I have a routine and a job and structure. It's not this ambiguous thing anymore. They also thought it was weird, or that me getting married would be easier and make more sense.

Preferences for Married Life and Grandchildren

Another challenge is that the family members would prefer the respondents to a married life, having children, and able to support a family. This expectation is even stronger among those who are an only child.

Although they respected my decision to enter religious life, they preferred to see me married and with children.

Concern for the lack of having children (or grandchildren), as well as livelihood and financial security were two issues that arose for my family.

I experienced some pressure from my family to go on a develop a family of my own as opposed to going in to religious life.

My grandma at the beginning resisted the idea because she wanted grandchildren from me. An aunt thought I was wasting opportunities by becoming a Sister.

My mother was looking forward to having grandkids and expected me to raise a family. She was also afraid that I would be lonely. My grandmothers were concerned about not being able to see me regularly because of my new life.

I'm an only son. My father still struggles a bit with my vocation. He was never against it, always expressed if this is what I want then he supports it, but I can tell it's tough for him. I think he always saw us as being physically closer growing up.

It was difficult for my mom to think she would have to give me up forever. I am her only daughter, we were very close, and she did not have a positive view of or healthy relationship with the Lord at that time, so it wasn't a happy prospect for her. She figured he was going to take me away from her and also in some way she felt it was a punishment. She tried to support me as much as she was able, but she was in so much pain over it. A couple years ago she began to heal from this, praise God! Other family members also did not understand and some of them would joke about it.

My family has always wanted the best for me, and what has been a challenge is being an only child. The realization that they will never have grandchildren does cross my mind but knowing that they still love and support me has helped tremendously.

Strong Disapproval and Pressure

Given lack of understanding and having opposite expectations, family members strongly opposed and challenged respondents in their discernment of a vocation to religious life.

Both my parents were quite hostile to the idea when I first made the decision and acquired my application to be a Capuchin.

My dad thought I was wasting my youth and my college education. My mom was thought I was trying to be the family's savior. My protestant brother thought I was signing my life and will away and that I would be brainwashed by the Roman Catholic church.

My family opposed my decision of becoming a religious. My parents were divorced since I was 11 and my dad had my custody. My dad doesn't practice the Catholic faith even if he was baptized in the Catholic Church. My mom belongs to the Protestant Church (the Church of the Assembly of God).

My family was resistant to the idea of a religious vocation. They were completely surprised that I would consider a religious vocation. My family disagrees with the Church's celibacy requirement and wishes I could have a wife and children.

My Father was opposed: Stating he wanted me to continue my career at the corporate ladder and then I was throwing my life away if I became a Sister. He became very angry and called me bad names. My Mother seem to be ambivalent and finally admitted she always prayed that I would become a nun. She seemed to lack an understanding and was confused and thought I was having a midlife crisis. My brothers thought I was crazy, I was possibly homosexual and they despise me and turned their back on me.

My father was vehemently opposed to my vocation during my teens, 20's and 30's, and because of his strong opposition/harassments and insults and explicitly verbal lack of moral support from other family members (and not really having someone I could talk to about his opposition), I postponed my entry until I felt that I was considered "adult" or "old" enough by my father to the point that he would eventually "grow out of it", accept it or give into my vocational calling. I was about 43 when I attempted to try to enter the convent again.

The challenges I encountered were resistance to join a religious community from my brother and aunts. They felt that I was making a mistake. They did not think that I should leave my teaching career and hometown. Their hope was that I would continue to stay and things would continue on as before my mother died. Thus, I did not receive much support from them to discern my call.

PART III: INFLUENCE OF PARISH ON VOCATION PROMOTION

Parish Location and Attendance

Respondents were asked to list the name of the parish they attended before entering religious life and what age they attended this parish.⁷ Some 86% identified a parish in the United States, with 14% identifying a parish in another country. U.S. vs. foreign location of the parish varies by ethnicity, shown in the table below. African, African American, or black respondents (70%) are most likely to have been greatly impacted at a parish in another country, followed by Asians, Pacific Islanders, or Native Hawaiians (42%).

<i>Before entering religious life, which parish had the greatest impact on your discernment of a vocation to religious life?</i>		
Percentage responding		
	U.S. Parish <i>(N = 979)</i>	Foreign Parish <i>(N = 154)</i>
	%	%
African, African American, or black	30	70
Asian, Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian	48	42
Caucasian, European American, or white	95	5
Hispanic or Latino	79	21

Around four in ten attended the parish at different ages. About one in ten attended this parish at every age. The table below also shows the results depending on whether the parish identified was in the United States or in another country.

<i>What age did you attend this parish?</i>			
Percentage responding			
	All <i>(N = 1,133)</i>	U.S. Parish <i>(N = 979)</i>	Foreign Parish <i>(N = 154)</i>
	%	%	%
Elementary school age	41	41	49
Middle school age	43	45	36
High school age	48	50	44
College age	42	44	38
Adulthood	37	40	25
All of the above	9	9	6

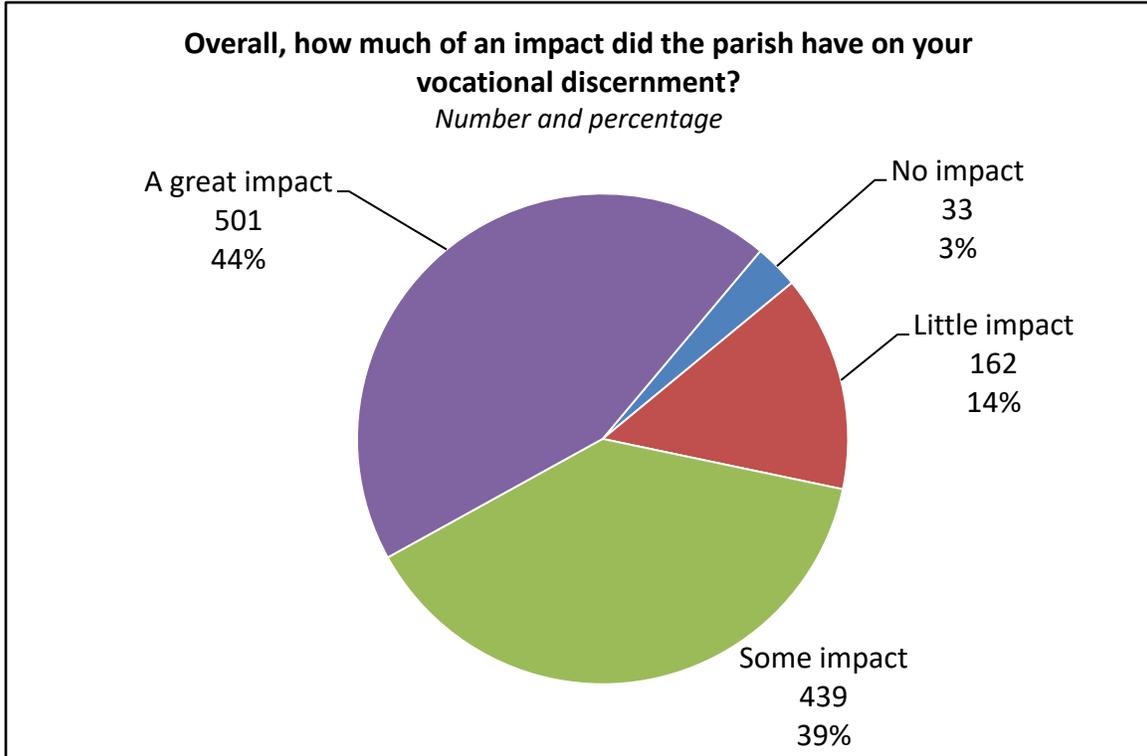
⁷ Of the 1,133 parishes identified, 147 respondents (13%) listed a campus ministry or Newman center as the parish that had the greatest impact on them when they were college age.

To summarize, 68% attended that influential parish as an adult (42% exclusively as an adult and 26% both as a child and as an adult) and 58% attended that influential parish as a child (32% exclusively as a child and 26% both as a child and as an adult). That dynamic is flipped depending on whether the parish was in the U.S. (where 70% combined attended the parish as an adult) or was in another country (where 73% combined attended that parish as a child).

<i>What age did you attend this parish?</i>			
Percentage responding			
	All	U.S. Parish	Foreign Parish
	(N = 1,133)	(N = 979)	(N = 154)
	%	%	%
High school age or younger	32	30	50
Ages 18 and above	42	44	27
Both of the above	26	26	23

Parish Impacts on Religious Vocation Discernment

Respondents were further asked to gauge how much of an impact that parish had on their vocational discernment, with the results shown in the figure below. As can be seen below, a combined one in six (17%) say that parish had “little” (14%) or “no” (3%) impact. The other five in six (87%), combined, report that it had “some” (39%) or “a great” (44%) impact.



The table below shows the impact of aspects of their most influential parish on their vocational discernment that respondents report. The first column of numbers shows the combined percentage saying an aspect had “some” or “a great” impact, with the final column showing only those saying the aspect had a “great” impact, the highest rating.

<i>Thinking of <u>the parish you named above</u>, how much impact did these factors have on your vocational discernment <u>before</u> you entered religious life?</i>		
	Percentage responding	
	“Some Impact” or “A Great Impact” Combined %	“A Great Impact” Only %
Masses and liturgies at the parish	88	62
Overall support and encouragement from the parish	76	41
Clergy at my parish supporting and encouraging me to discern my religious vocation	74	50
Participating in the liturgical ministry at the parish (e.g., lector, extraordinary minister, music)	73	48
Witnessing the presence of religious sisters, or brothers, or priests in the parish	70	46
Conversations with priests or religious brothers or sisters at the parish	70	45
Individual parishioners supporting and encouraging me to discern my religious vocation	69	41
Service opportunities	60	34
Prayer groups at this parish	57	31
Masses and liturgies in the language of my ethnic/cultural heritage at the parish	54	35
Its ministry programs for young adults, ages 18-35	50	32
Its ministry and formation programs for teenagers, ages 13-17	48	27
Adult faith formation in this parish	47	25
Celebrating ethnic Catholic traditions at the parish	44	25
Its ministry and formation programs for children, ages 4-12	40	17
Religious vocation promotion events at the parish	33	15
Devotion to a saint of my ethnicity/culture at the parish	30	16
Vocational literature at the parish	24	7

The seven aspects of the parish that had the greatest impact on their vocational discernment are:

- Masses and liturgies at the parish (88% combined positive impact and 62% “a great impact” only)
- Overall support and encouragement from the parish (76% combined positive impact and 41% “a great impact” only)
- Clergy at my parish supporting and encouraging me to discern my religious vocation (74% combined positive impact and 50% “a great impact” only)
- Participating in the liturgical ministry at the parish, such as being a lector, extraordinary minister, music (73% combined positive impact and 48% “a great impact” only)
- Witnessing the presence of religious sisters, or brothers, or priests in the parish (70% combined positive impact and 46% “a great impact” only)
- Conversations with priests or religious brothers or sisters at the parish (70% combined positive impact and 45% “a great impact” only)
- Individual parishioners supporting and encouraging me to discern my religious vocation (69% combined positive impact and 41% “a great impact” only)

A second tier of aspects of the parish that had an impact on respondents’ discernment of their vocations are:

- Service opportunities (60% combined positive impact and 34% “a great impact” only)
- Prayer groups at this parish (57% combined positive impact and 31% “a great impact” only)
- Masses and liturgies in the language of my ethnic/cultural heritage at the parish (54% combined positive impact and 35% “a great impact” only)
- Its ministry programs for young adults, ages 18-35 (50% combined positive impact and 32% “a great impact” only)
- Its ministry and formation programs for teenagers, ages 13-17 (48% combined positive impact and 27% “a great impact” only)
- Adult faith formation in this parish (47% combined positive impact and 25% “a great impact” only)
- Celebrating ethnic Catholic traditions at the parish (44% combined positive impact and 25% “a great impact” only)

Finally, it is instructive to look at those aspects of the parish that are least likely to have had an impact on their vocational discernment:

- Its ministry and formation programs for children, ages 4-12 (40% combined positive impact and 17% “a great impact” only)
- Religious vocation promotion events at the parish (33% combined positive impact and 15% “a great impact” only)
- Devotion to a saint of my ethnicity/culture at the parish (30% combined positive impact and 16% “a great impact” only)
- Vocational literature at the parish (24% combined positive impact and 7% “a great impact” only)

Differences by Country Where their Most Influential Parish Is Located

Those identifying most influential U.S. parishes and most influential foreign parishes do not differ significantly in how much of an impact they say that parish had on the discernment of their vocations.

<i>Overall, how much of an impact did the parish on your vocational discernment?</i>			
Percentage responding			
	All	U.S. Parishes	Foreign Parishes
	(N = 1,133)	(N = 979)	(N = 154)
	%	%	%
No impact	3	2	2
Little impact	14	15	10
Some impact	39	39	39
A great impact	44	44	49

The table below summarizes those aspects of parish life that had significantly different effects depending on whether the respondents' most influential parish is located in the United States or in another country, with all of the findings below more likely to have "a great" impact in a parish in another country.

Thinking of the parish you named above, how much impact did these factors have on your vocational discernment before you entered religious life?

Percentage responding "A great impact" only

	U.S. Parishes (N = 979)	Foreign Parishes (N = 154)
	%	%
Masses and liturgies at the parish	61	67
Participating in the liturgical ministry at the parish (e.g., lector, extraordinary minister, music)	46	64
Masses and liturgies in the language of my ethnic/cultural heritage at the parish	30	60
Overall support and encouragement from the parish	39	54
Clergy at my parish supporting and encouraging me to discern my religious vocation	50	54
Witnessing the presence of religious sisters, or brothers, or priests in the parish	44	54
Celebrating ethnic Catholic traditions at the parish	21	50
Conversations with priests or religious brothers or sisters at the parish	33	49
Individual parishioners supporting and encouraging me to discern my religious vocation	40	47
Service opportunities	32	47
Prayer groups at this parish	29	43
Its ministry and formation programs for teenagers, ages 13-17	25	39
Devotion to a saint of my ethnicity/culture at the parish	13	37
Its ministry programs for young adults, ages 18-35	31	36
Religious vocation promotion events at the parish	13	29
Its ministry and formation programs for children, ages 4-12	14	29
Vocational literature at the parish	6	18

Differences by Racial/Ethnic Background

Respondents of Caucasian/European/American/white are least likely to report that many aspects of their parish had “a great” impact on their vocational discernment.

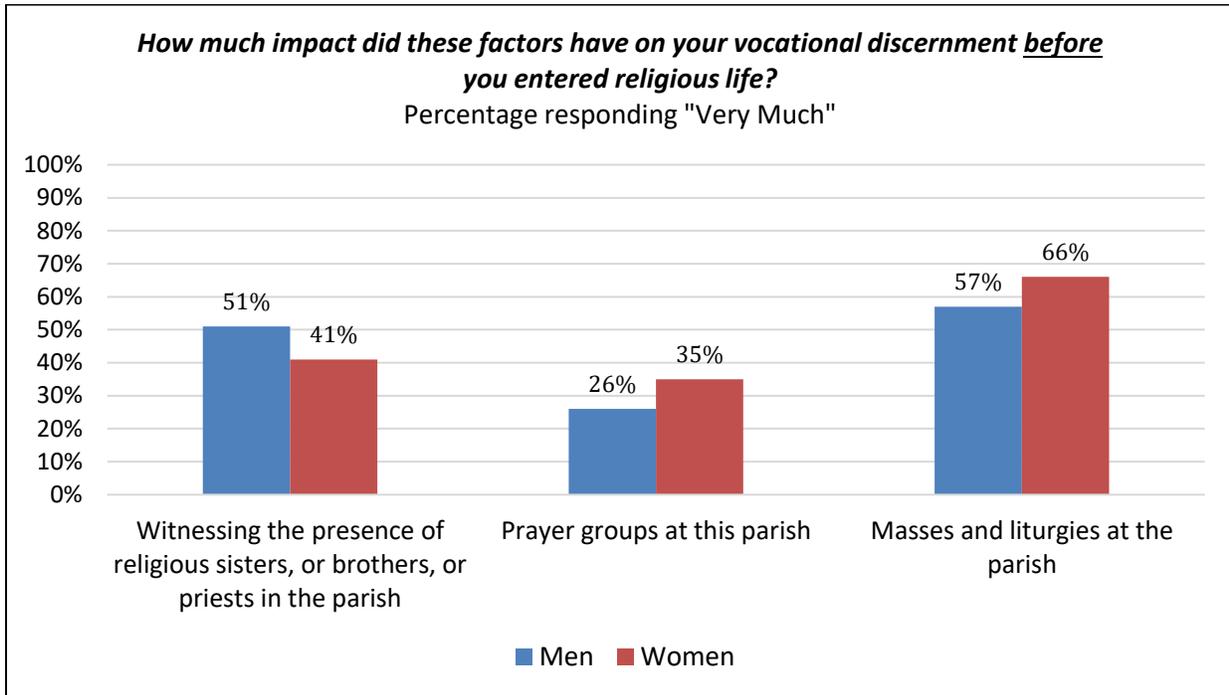
Thinking of the parish you named above, how much impact did these factors have on your vocational discernment before you entered religious life?

Percentage responding “A great impact” only

	African/African American/black	Asian/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian	Caucasian/ European American/ white	Hispanic / Latino(a)
	(N = 45) %	(N = 140) %	(N = 795) %	(N = 132) %
Overall support and encouragement from the parish	62	50	37	53
Clergy at my parish supporting and encouraging me to discern my religious vocation	61	51	49	55
Witnessing the presence of religious sisters, or brothers, or priests in the parish	54	52	43	51
Conversations with priests or religious brothers or sisters at the parish	56	48	42	58
Religious vocation promotion events at the parish	46	26	12	22
Vocational literature at the parish	21	19	5	10
Masses and liturgies at the parish	67	67	62	58
Masses and liturgies in the language of my ethnic/cultural heritage at the parish	53	47	29	47
Celebrating ethnic Catholic traditions at the parish	52	42	16	40
Prayer groups at this parish	66	45	25	37
Devotion to a saint of my ethnicity/culture at the parish	24	36	10	27
Its ministry and formation programs for children, ages 4-12	35	32	13	19
Its ministry and formation programs for teenagers, ages 13-17	55	36	22	37
Its ministry programs for young adults, ages 18-35	45	38	28	43
Individual parishioners supporting and encouraging me to discern my religious vocation	51	46	39	50
Participating in the liturgical ministry at the parish (e.g., lector, extraordinary minister, music)	72	58	43	60
Adult faith formation in this parish	36	32	22	35
Service opportunities	56	45	28	48

Differences by Gender

Men religious respondents are more likely than women religious to report that witnessing the presence of religious sisters, or brothers, or priests in the parish had a great impact on their vocational discernment, meanwhile women religious respondents are more likely to say prayer groups and Mass and liturgies at the parish had a great impact on their vocational discernment.



Ethnic Differences
Caucasian, European American, or White Respondents Only

The table below shows the characteristics of those identifying as Caucasian, European American, or white.

Characteristics of Caucasians, European Americans, or Whites	
<i>(N = 795)</i>	
Age range	19 – 80
Average age	36
Median age	33
	%
Early Millennial Generation (Ages 19-28)	25
Late Millennial Generation (Ages 29-38)	50
Post-Vatican II Generation (Ages 39-59)	20
Vatican II Generation (Ages 60 and older)	5
Female	58
Male	42
Have a bachelor’s degree or higher	91
English is first language	99
<i>Country Where Born</i>	
United States	87
Canada	3
Germany	2
United Kingdom (England)	1
Poland	1
Ireland	1
Australia	1
All other countries	4
Raised Catholic	91
Were engaged in ministry before they entered	52
Mother a Catholic	91
Father a Catholic	83
Religion “very” important to mother while they grew up	63
Religion “very” important to father while they grew up	47

Some 71% of white respondents⁸ attended the parish they described as being the most influential on their vocational discernment as an adult (44% exclusively as an adult and 27% both as a child and as an adult) and 57% attended that influential parish as a child (27% exclusively as a child and 30% both as a child and as an adult). The percentages are similar whether the parish identified was in the United States or in another country.^{9 10}

What age did you attend this parish?			
Percentage responding			
	All White Respondents (N = 774)	U.S. Parish Identified (N = 736)	Foreign Parish Identified (N = 38)
	%	%	%
High school age or younger	30	30	29
Ages 18 and above	44	44	40
Both of the above	27	27	31

Those identifying a most influential parish in the United States (42%) are more likely to say it had “a great” impact on them than those identifying a parish in another country (29%).

Overall, how much of an impact did the parish on your vocational discernment?			
Percentage responding			
	All White Respondents (N = 774)	U.S. Parish Identified (N = 736)	Foreign Parish Identified (N = 38)
	%	%	%
No impact	3	3	0
Little impact	15	15	23
Some impact	40	41	49
A great impact	41	42	29

The table below shows the impact of aspects of their most influential parish on their vocational discernment that respondents report for respondents identifying as Caucasian,

⁸ For brevity’s sake, in the tables throughout the rest of this report, “white respondents” refers to all of those identifying as “Caucasian, European American, or white.”

⁹ Only differences of 10 percentage points or more are treated as meaningful.

¹⁰ Note that 95% of all white respondents (N = 733) identified a U.S. parish.

European American, or white. The percentages responding that the parish aspect had “a great impact” are shown for these respondents overall, as well as for those identifying a parish in the United States and those identifying one in another country.

Thinking of the parish you named above, how much impact did these factors have on your vocational discernment before you entered religious life?

Percentage responding “A great impact” only

	All White Respondents (N = 774) %	U.S. Parish Identified (N = 736) %	Foreign Parish Identified (N = 38) %
Masses and liturgies at the parish	62	62	56
Clergy at my parish supporting and encouraging me to discern my religious vocation	49	49	46
Witnessing the presence of religious sisters, or brothers, or priests in the parish	43	44	28
Participating in the liturgical ministry at the parish (e.g., lector, extraordinary minister, music)	43	42	50
Conversations with priests or religious brothers or sisters at the parish	41	42	24
Individual parishioners supporting and encouraging me to discern my religious vocation	40	39	48
Overall support and encouragement from the parish	37	37	39
Masses and liturgies in the language of my ethnic/cultural heritage at the parish	29	29	27
Its ministry programs for young adults, ages 18-35	28	29	8
Service opportunities	28	28	19
Prayer groups at this parish	25	26	17
Its ministry and formation programs for teenagers, ages 13-17	22	23	13
Adult faith formation in this parish	22	22	17
Celebrating ethnic Catholic traditions at the parish	16	16	18
Its ministry and formation programs for children, ages 4-12	13	13	8
Religious vocation promotion events at the parish	12	12	4
Devotion to a saint of my ethnicity/culture at the parish	10	10	14
Vocational literature at the parish	5	5	0

The seven aspects of their parish that are most likely to have had “a great impact” on the vocational discernment these Caucasian, European American, or white respondents are:

- Masses and liturgies at the parish (62%)
- Clergy at my parish supporting and encouraging me to discern my religious vocation (49%)
- Witnessing the presence of religious sisters, or brothers, or priests in the parish (43%)
- Participating in the liturgical ministry at the parish (e.g., lector, extraordinary minister, music) (43%)
- Conversations with priests or religious brothers or sisters at the parish (41%)
- Individual parishioners supporting and encouraging me to discern my religious vocation (40%)
- Overall support and encouragement from the parish (37%)

The table below shows those aspects where those identifying another country are more likely to say an aspect had “a great impact” on their vocational discernment than those identifying a U.S. parish.

Thinking of the parish you named above, how much impact did these factors have on your vocational discernment before you entered religious life?

Percentage responding “A great impact” only

	U.S. Parish Identified (N = 736) %	Foreign Parish Identified (N = 38) %
Witnessing the presence of religious sisters, or brothers, or priests in the parish	44	28
Conversations with priests or religious brothers or sisters at the parish	42	24
Its ministry programs for young adults, ages 18-35	29	8
Its ministry and formation programs for teenagers, ages 13-17	23	13

Asian, Pacific Islander, or Native Hawaiian Respondents Only

The table below shows the characteristics of those identifying as Asian, Pacific Islander, or Native Hawaiian.

Characteristics of Asians, Pacific Islanders, or Native Hawaiians	
<i>(N = 140)</i>	
Age range	20 – 66
Average age	37
Median age	36
	%
Early Millennial Generation (Ages 19-28)	17
Late Millennial Generation (Ages 29-38)	44
Post-Vatican II Generation (Ages 39-59)	37
Vatican II Generation (Ages 60 and older)	2
Female	48
Male	52
Have a bachelor's degree or higher	75
First language	
Vietnamese	33
English	26
Tagalog (or other Philippine language)	11
<i>Country Where Born</i>	
Vietnam	29
United States	25
Philippines	20
India	4
Indonesia	3
South Korea	2
All other countries	17
Raised Catholic	94
Were engaged in ministry before they entered	52
Mother a Catholic	94
Father a Catholic	88
Religion "very" important to mother while they grew up	81
Religion "very" important to father while they grew up	59

Some 59% of Asian respondents¹¹ attended the parish they described as being the most influential on their vocational discernment as an adult (46% exclusively as an adult and 13% both as a child and as an adult) and 54% attended that influential parish as a child (41% exclusively as a child and 13% both as a child and as an adult). That dynamic is flipped depending on whether the parish was in the U.S. (where 78%, combined, attended the parish as an adult) or was in another country (where 77%, combined, attended that parish as a child).^{12 13}

What age did you attend this parish?
Percentage responding

	All Asian Respondents (N = 135)	U.S. Parish Identified (N = 79)	Foreign Parish Identified (N = 56)
	%	%	%
High school age or younger	41	23	67
Ages 18 and above	46	62	24
Both of the above	13	16	10

Those identifying a most influential parishes in the United States and those identifying one in another country do not differ significantly in how much of an impact they say that parish had on the discernment of their vocations.

Overall, how much of an impact did the parish on your vocational discernment?
Percentage responding

	All Asian Respondents (N = 135)	U.S. Parish Identified (N = 79)	Foreign Parish Identified (N = 56)
	%	%	%
No impact	2	2	2
Little impact	14	15	11
Some impact	33	33	33
A great impact	51	50	54

¹¹ For brevity's sake, in the tables throughout the rest of this report, "Asian respondents" refers to all of those identifying as "Asian, Pacific Islander, or Native Hawaiian."

¹² Only differences of 15 percentage points or more are treated as meaningful.

¹³ Note that 58% of all Asian respondents (N = 72) identified a U.S. parish.

The table below shows the impact of aspects of their most influential parish on their vocational discernment that respondents report for respondents identifying as Asian, Pacific Islander, or Native Hawaiian. The percentages responding that the parish aspect had “a great impact” are shown for these respondents overall, as well as for those identifying a parish in the United States and those identifying one in another country.

Thinking of the parish you named above, how much impact did these factors have on your vocational discernment before you entered religious life?

Percentage responding “A great impact” only

	All Asian Respondents (N = 135) %	U.S. Parish Identified (N = 79) %	Foreign Parish Identified (N = 56) %
Masses and liturgies at the parish	67	62	74
Participating in the liturgical ministry at the parish (e.g., lector, extraordinary minister, music)	60	54	68
Clergy at my parish supporting and encouraging me to discern my religious vocation	51	50	53
Witnessing the presence of religious sisters, or brothers, or priests in the parish	51	45	60
Overall support and encouragement from the parish	50	47	53
Prayer groups at this parish	48	49	46
Service opportunities	48	47	48
Individual parishioners supporting and encouraging me to discern my religious vocation	47	54	39
Conversations with priests or religious brothers or sisters at the parish	47	45	48
Masses and liturgies in the language of my ethnic/cultural heritage at the parish	47	33	66
Celebrating ethnic Catholic traditions at the parish	43	30	61
Its ministry programs for young adults, ages 18-35	40	42	38
Its ministry and formation programs for teenagers, ages 13-17	38	35	41
Devotion to a saint of my ethnicity/culture at the parish	36	18	59
Adult faith formation in this parish	35	34	35
Its ministry and formation programs for children, ages 4-12	35	29	42
Religious vocation promotion events at the parish	25	17	36
Vocational literature at the parish	19	14	25

The ten aspects of their parish that are most likely to have had “a great impact” on the vocational discernment these Asian, Pacific Islander, or Native Hawaiian respondents are:

- Masses and liturgies at the parish (67%)
- Participating in the liturgical ministry at the parish (e.g., lector, extraordinary minister, music) (60%)
- Clergy at my parish supporting and encouraging me to discern my religious vocation (51%)
- Witnessing the presence of religious sisters, or brothers, or priests in the parish (51%)
- Overall support and encouragement from the parish (50%)
- Prayer groups at this parish (48%)
- Service opportunities (48%)
- Individual parishioners supporting and encouraging me to discern my religious vocation (47%)
- Conversations with priests or religious brothers or sisters at the parish (47%)
- Masses and liturgies in the language of my ethnic/cultural heritage at the parish (47%)

The table below shows those aspects where the findings differ depending on whether the parish identified is in the U.S. or in another country. Those differences where the foreign parishes are more likely to have had a greater impact are presented first, with the last row showing the finding where the U.S. parishes are more likely to have had a greater impact.

Thinking of the parish you named above, how much impact did these factors have on your vocational discernment before you entered religious life?

Percentage responding “A great impact” only

	U.S. Parish Identified (N = 72) %	Foreign Parish Identified (N = 53) %
Witnessing the presence of religious sisters, or brothers, or priests in the parish	45	60
Masses and liturgies in the language of my ethnic/cultural heritage at the parish	33	66
Celebrating ethnic Catholic traditions at the parish	30	61
Devotion to a saint of my ethnicity/culture at the parish	18	59
Religious vocation promotion events at the parish	17	36
Individual parishioners supporting and encouraging me to discern my religious vocation	54	39

Hispanic or Latino/a Respondents Only

The table below shows the characteristics of those identifying as Hispanic or Latino/a.

Characteristics of Hispanics or Latinos/as	
<i>(N = 132)</i>	
Age range	19 – 71
Average age	37
Median age	36
Early Millennial Generation (Ages 19-28)	25
Late Millennial Generation (Ages 29-38)	34
Post-Vatican II Generation (Ages 39-59)	35
Vatican II Generation (Ages 60 and older)	6
Female	45
Male	55
Have a bachelor's degree or higher	65
First language	
Spanish	52
English	39
<i>Country Where Born</i>	
United States	63
Mexico	19
Dominican Republic	6
Brazil	2
Colombia	2
Puerto Rico	2
Venezuela	2
All other countries	4
Raised Catholic	94
Were engaged in ministry before they entered	61
Mother a Catholic	95
Father a Catholic	94
Religion "very" important to mother while they grew up	66
Religion "very" important to father while they grew up	40

Some 64% of Hispanic respondents¹⁴ attended the parish they described as being the most influential on their vocational discernment as an adult (38% exclusively as an adult and 26% both as a child and as an adult) and 62% attended that influential parish as a child (36% exclusively as a child and 26% both as a child and as an adult). That dynamic changes depending on whether the parish was in the U.S. (where 23%, combined, attended the parish as an adult *and* as a child) or was in another country (where 44%, combined, attended that parish as an adult *and* as a child).^{15 16}

What age did you attend this parish?			
Percentage responding			
	All Hispanic Respondents (N = 130)	U.S. Parish Identified (N = 103)	Foreign Parish Identified (N = 27)
	%	%	%
High school age or younger	36	37	32
Ages 18 and above	38	40	24
Both of the above	26	23	44

Those identifying a most influential parishes in the United States and those identifying one in another country do not differ significantly in how much of an impact they say that parish had on the discernment of their vocations.

Overall, how much of an impact did the parish on your vocational discernment?			
Percentage responding			
	All Hispanic Respondents (N = 130)	U.S. Parish Identified (N = 103)	Foreign Parish Identified (N = 27)
	%	%	%
No impact	2	0	9
Little impact	12	13	4
Some impact	34	36	26
A great impact	52	51	61

¹⁴ For brevity’s sake, in the tables throughout the rest of this report, “Hispanic respondents” refers to all of those identifying as “Hispanic or Latino/a.”

¹⁵ Only differences of 15 percentage points or more are treated as meaningful.

¹⁶ Note that 79% of all Hispanic respondents (N = 93) identified a U.S. parish.

The table below shows the impact of aspects of their most influential parish on their vocational discernment that respondents report for respondents identifying as Hispanic or Latino/a. The percentages responding that the parish aspect had “a great impact” are shown for these respondents overall, as well as for those identifying a parish in the United States and those identifying one in another country.

Thinking of the parish you named above, how much impact did these factors have on your vocational discernment before you entered religious life?

Percentage responding “A great impact” only

	All Hispanic Respondents (N = 129) %	U.S. Parish Identified (N = 102) %	Foreign Parish Identified (N = 27) %
Participating in the liturgical ministry at the parish (e.g., lector, extraordinary minister, music)	60	58	68
Conversations with priests or religious brothers or sisters at the parish	59	52	86
Masses and liturgies at the parish	58	56	71
Clergy at my parish supporting and encouraging me to discern my religious vocation	55	53	74
Overall support and encouragement from the parish	54	50	70
Witnessing the presence of religious sisters, or brothers, or priests in the parish	51	44	77
Individual parishioners supporting and encouraging me to discern my religious vocation	50	51	48
Service opportunities	49	43	70
Masses and liturgies in the language of my ethnic/cultural heritage at the parish	47	40	81
Its ministry programs for young adults, ages 18-35	42	39	55
Celebrating ethnic Catholic traditions at the parish	40	39	50
Prayer groups at this parish	39	35	52
Its ministry and formation programs for teenagers, ages 13-17	36	32	48
Adult faith formation in this parish	35	34	42
Devotion to a saint of my ethnicity/culture at the parish	26	27	25
Religious vocation promotion events at the parish	23	22	29
Its ministry and formation programs for children, ages 4-12	18	17	21
Vocational literature at the parish	11	8	25

The nine aspects of their parish that are most likely to have had “a great impact” on the vocational discernment these Hispanic or Latino/a respondents are:

- Participating in the liturgical ministry at the parish (e.g., lector, extraordinary minister, music) (60%)
- Conversations with priests or religious brothers or sisters at the parish (59%)
- Masses and liturgies at the parish (58%)
- Clergy at my parish supporting and encouraging me to discern my religious vocation (55%)
- Overall support and encouragement from the parish (54%)
- Witnessing the presence of religious sisters, or brothers, or priests in the parish (51%)
- Individual parishioners supporting and encouraging me to discern my religious vocation (50%)
- Service opportunities (49%)
- Masses and liturgies in the language of my ethnic/cultural heritage at the parish (47%)

The table below shows those aspects where those identifying another country are more likely to say an aspect had “a great impact” on their vocational discernment than those identifying a U.S. parish.

Thinking of the parish you named above, how much impact did these factors have on your vocational discernment before you entered religious life?

Percentage responding “A great impact” only

	U.S. Parish Identified (N = 102)	Foreign Parish Identified (N = 27)
	%	%
Conversations with priests or religious brothers or sisters at the parish	52	86
Masses and liturgies at the parish	56	71
Clergy at my parish supporting and encouraging me to discern my religious vocation	53	74
Overall support and encouragement from the parish	50	70
Witnessing the presence of religious sisters, or brothers, or priests in the parish	44	77
Service opportunities	43	70
Masses and liturgies in the language of my ethnic/cultural heritage at the parish	40	81
Its ministry programs for young adults, ages 18-35	39	55
Prayer groups at this parish	35	52
Its ministry and formation programs for teenagers, ages 13-17	32	48
Vocational literature at the parish	8	25

African, African American, or Black Respondents Only

The table below shows the characteristics of those identifying as African, African American, or black.

Characteristics of African, African American, or Black	
<i>(N = 45)</i>	
Age range	25 – 62
Average age	37
Median age	39
	%
Early Millennial Generation (Ages 19-28)	19
Late Millennial Generation (Ages 29-38)	28
Post-Vatican II Generation (Ages 39-59)	51
Vatican II Generation (Ages 60 and older)	2
Female	38
Male	62
Have a bachelor's degree or higher	73
First language	
English	42
French	9
Igbo	9
<i>Country Where Born</i>	
United States	20
Cameroon	13
Kenya	11
Nigeria	11
Haiti	9
Ghana	7
Togo	7
All other countries	22
Raised Catholic	84
Were engaged in ministry before they entered	56
Mother a Catholic	80
Father a Catholic	69
Religion "very" important to mother while they grew up	77
Religion "very" important to father while they grew up	49

Some 66% of black respondents¹⁷ attended the parish they described as being the most influential on their vocational discernment as a child (49% exclusively as a child and 17% both as a child and as an adult) and 51% attended that influential parish as an adult (34% exclusively as an adult and 17% both as a child and as an adult). That dynamic is flipped depending on whether the parish was in the U.S. (where 75%, combined, attended the parish as an adult) or was in another country (where 79%, combined, attended that parish as a child).^{18 19}

What age did you attend this parish?
Percentage responding

	All Black Respondents (N = 44) %	U.S. Parish Identified (N = 13) %	Foreign Parish Identified (N = 31) %
High school age or younger	49	25	58
Ages 18 and above	34	67	21
Both of the above	17	8	21

Those identifying a most influential parishes in the United States (75%) are more likely than those identifying one in another country (57%) to say it had “a great” impact on their vocational discernment.

Overall, how much of an impact did the parish on your vocational discernment?
Percentage responding

	All Black Respondents (N = 44) %	U.S. Parish Identified (N = 13) %	Foreign Parish Identified (N = 31) %
No impact	5	8	0
Little impact	0	0	0
Some impact	35	17	43
A great impact	61	75	57

¹⁷ For brevity’s sake, in the tables throughout the rest of this report, “Black respondents” refers to all of those identifying as “African, African American, or black.”

¹⁸ Only differences of 20 percentage points or more are treated as meaningful.

¹⁹ Note that 29% of all black respondents (N = 12) identified a U.S. parish.

The table below shows the impact of aspects of their most influential parish on their vocational discernment that respondents report for respondents identifying as African, African American, or black. The percentages responding that the parish aspect had “a great impact” are shown for these respondents overall, as well as for those identifying a parish in the United States and those identifying one in another country.

Thinking of the parish you named above, how much impact did these factors have on your vocational discernment before you entered religious life?

Percentage responding “A great impact” only

	All Black Respondents (N = 44) %	U.S. Parish Identified (N = 13) %	Foreign Parish Identified (N = 31) %
Participating in the liturgical ministry at the parish (e.g., lector, extraordinary minister, music)	73	80	70
Prayer groups at this parish	67	63	68
Masses and liturgies at the parish	65	64	66
Overall support and encouragement from the parish	63	64	62
Clergy at my parish supporting and encouraging me to discern my religious vocation	62	73	57
Service opportunities	56	67	53
Its ministry and formation programs for teenagers, ages 13-17	56	40	59
Conversations with priests or religious brothers or sisters at the parish	54	70	48
Masses and liturgies in the language of my ethnic/cultural heritage at the parish	53	33	58
Celebrating ethnic Catholic traditions at the parish	52	33	56
Witnessing the presence of religious sisters, or brothers, or priests in the parish	51	50	52
Individual parishioners supporting and encouraging me to discern my religious vocation	51	46	54
Its ministry programs for young adults, ages 18-35	47	44	48
Religious vocation promotion events at the parish	46	38	48
Adult faith formation in this parish	35	57	27
Its ministry and formation programs for children, ages 4-12	33	20	37
Devotion to a saint of my ethnicity/culture at the parish	22	0	28
Vocational literature at the parish	19	9	25

The fourteen aspects of their parish that are most likely to have had “a great impact” on the vocational discernment these African, African American, or black respondents are:

- Participating in the liturgical ministry at the parish (e.g., lector, extraordinary minister, music) (73%)
- Prayer groups at this parish (67%)
- Masses and liturgies at the parish (65%)
- Overall support and encouragement from the parish (63%)
- Clergy at my parish supporting and encouraging me to discern my religious vocation (62%)
- Service opportunities (56%)
- Its ministry and formation programs for teenagers, ages 13-17 (56%)
- Conversations with priests or religious brothers or sisters at the parish (54%)
- Masses and liturgies in the language of my ethnic/cultural heritage at the parish (53%)
- Celebrating ethnic Catholic traditions at the parish (52%)
- Witnessing the presence of religious sisters, or brothers, or priests in the parish (51%)
- Individual parishioners supporting and encouraging me to discern my religious vocation (51%)
- Its ministry programs for young adults, ages 18-35 (47%)
- Religious vocation promotion events at the parish (46%)

The table below shows those aspects where those identifying another country are more likely to say an aspect had “a great impact” on their vocational discernment than those identifying a U.S. parish.

Thinking of the parish you named above, how much impact did these factors have on your vocational discernment before you entered religious life?

Percentage responding “A great impact” only

	All Black Respondents (N = 44) %	U.S. Parish Identified (N = 13) %	Foreign Parish Identified (N = 31) %
Conversations with priests or religious brothers or sisters at the parish	54	70	48
Masses and liturgies in the language of my ethnic/cultural heritage at the parish	53	33	58
Celebrating ethnic Catholic traditions at the parish	52	33	56
Adult faith formation in this parish	35	57	27
Devotion to a saint of my ethnicity/culture at the parish	22	0	28

Aspects of Parishes That Had the Greatest Impact

Respondents were asked to share any thoughts they had about what the aspects of the parish that had the most impact on their vocation discernment. A total of 1,063 members provided at least one comment in response to this question. CARA analyzed the responses to this question and grouped their responses into general categories below. Each category is illustrated by a few representative comments.

Presence and Encouragement of Priests and Religious Members at the Parish

The most commonly shared impact that men and women religious have about the parish they attended is the presence and encouragement of both priests and religious members at the parish. The presence of priests and religious members at the parish served as a witness, enabling the responding men and women to further understand religious life and giving them more encouragement to discern a religious vocation. At least four in ten (40%) shared this experience.

A religious Sister had a great influence on my vocation. She encouraged me to teach religious education, go to daily Mass, and attend parish Scripture classes.

Having a school connected to the parish in which religious sisters ministered had a huge impact on my vocational discernment. I eventually became friends with some of the sisters there upon graduating from the elementary/middle school and would go back and help with various things. They encouraged/supported me along with my parish priest to consider a religious vocation. I now belong to that same group of religious sisters.

I chose to live in the rectory of this parish to do a discernment year, so I was able to live, eat, and pray with the priests in common each day. I was also able to participate in various activities and help on the RCIA team. This parish is run by the religious order I joined.

I think the priest at that time of this parish was also the vocation director of the diocese, so as students I got to interact with lot of young men and women who were either in seminary or discerning religious life, which was a greater impact. Also the priest continuously promoted religious life.

Priests being willing to share their struggles; made priesthood seem approachable. Connecting me with other young people who were discerning religious life and priesthood. The presence of a religious sister, a religious brother and an encouraging pastor had the most impact on my vocational discernment. The CSJ sister worked as a hospice chaplain and attended our parish. She took the time to meet with me and answer my many questions about religious life and personal matters. The religious brother shared vocation material with me and also became a trusted person with whom I shared my discernment questions and comments. My pastor encouraged me to keep searching if God was calling me to religious life.

The presence of consecrated religious in the parish and the school communities helped me to discern my vocation. The priests at the parish and their love for traditional liturgies helped me to see the beauty and desirability of a personal relationship with God.

The presence of the Dominican friars and sisters made religious life seem normal, approachable, and something that I could see myself doing one day. We also had a tremendous youth group that helped me to grow in my faith to the point where I was open to discerning a religious/priestly vocation.

There was a religious sister who was a pastoral associate at the parish (an Ursuline sister) who was a good witness of religious life and encouraged me to think about religious life. She invited me to join a prayer group for discerning women that she formed. The people of the parish have also been very supportive of me along my vocational journey, as well as the pastor (who has known my family for a long time).

Encouraging, Prayerful, and Welcoming Parish Community

Responding men and women religious mentioned the parish community, that is welcoming and prayerful, supported and encouraged them with a warm, encouraging, and welcoming spirit. At least three in ten respondents (32%) report this aspect.

A warm, encouraging community of faith where I was given opportunities to serve and to feel important.

A welcoming, prayerful parish, that went through some painful cultural growth, but was able to rise above the challenge. A pastor with a Christ centered spirituality who took risks inviting me to participate in ministries I had no experience with. Active outreach to the disabled, homebound, poor, immigrants, and foreign missions.

Everyone was very hospitable and they made you feel as if you were family. The prayer group was very good in evangelizing of walking with you in your personal journey with Jesus. The priest was very involved in everything and always available.

Having the space and encouragement of peers/parishioners of ethnic Catholic heritage with whom I could built fraternity within the matrix of a greater sense of Catholic Community, people with whom I could relate to in my trials as a young Catholic of color (also a first-generation child of an immigrant background) and bond in the joys and woes shared in multicultural experiences. Having a space of worship and liturgy that was more receptive to integrating forms of Spanish/etc. liturgical music into liturgies par liturgies/holy hours, receptive to trying more contemporary forms of gospel/liturgical music, and more open to inviting guest speakers on topics of interest for young adult Catholics of today in an urban milieu.

My parish fostered my relationship with God, which helped me to hear his voice and ultimately discern my vocation. There were religious priests at my parish, and the sisters from their women's branch were involved as well. At the "Bible study" one of these sisters ran for middle school girls many seeds of my vocation and discernment were planted.

My parish was alive with the love of Jesus and love for one another. I knew that the people in my parish had made sacrifices to follow Jesus and had committed their lives to him. This witness gave me courage to do the same in the way God was calling me.

A vibrant parish life and strong youth ministry program encouraged me to enter deeper into my relationship with the Lord and with the people He has placed in my life. The religious sisters and priests were very supportive of vocations and it was helpful that the parish has had many other young men and women enter the priesthood and/or religious life - there was very much a culture that encouraged vocational discernment and growth in faith.

Simply the culture of faith and the love of the "daily Mass crew" probably impacted me the most. They loved and supported me in my faith more than in my vocational journey (I didn't tell them about it until it was pretty much already happening, anyway), but their faith and love for God made a difference. Also, the presence of religious sisters for part of my High School years did, I think, witness to me.

St. Therese was/is a predominantly African American parish. Though I am Mexican American, the fact that the parish was filled with people of color celebrating the Eucharist was impactful and demonstrated that there is room for a person of color to be part of the Church. Going to all white churches and seeing the lack of diversity not only in the congregation but also in the liturgical ministries and leadership, was not very hopeful.

Something the Church as whole doesn't get but St. Therese Church did understand, is that people of color are always looking for representation of themselves and their experiences, people of color work out of being a village where most white experiences that are expressed tend to be individual focused.

The culture of my Parish was very familial- people cared about you and not what they could get from you. I never felt pushed to discern a vocation, but the members of my parish celebrated with me and supported me in my decision- both with prayer and with my temporal needs.

Liturgy and Sacraments

Respondents indicate liturgical and sacramental celebrations at the parish had a great impact on their vocational discernment. At least a quarter (26%) indicate this aspect.

Eucharistic adoration, emphasis on prayer and sacraments, lived faith witness of lay adults, vibrant witness of those living a celibate vocation, encouragement to discern one's vocation,

youth group, retreats, Destination Jesus high school retreat (vocation call), engaging and challenging homilies, small group sharing, promotion of the theology of the body.

Excellence in liturgy, in both the ordinary and extraordinary forms of the mass; devout and dedicated priests; constancy of the lay community in supporting the life of parish.

Having daily Mass available at a time my family could attend, weekly adoration and confession and having some women religious at the parish and school. Also the parish's involvement with the Eucharistic Congress in our state.

It was the place that we went to Mass every Sunday, and where I had opportunities to pray in front of the Blessed Sacrament, to attend Eucharistic Adoration some First Thursday/Fridays during High School, and to go to daily Mass during summers and breaks from college. My grandparents and parents were part of the parish, and involved in the parish, as well as some close family friends, and these were aspects of my growth in faith and hearing God's call. Individual members of the parish also prayed for me and encouraged me.

Liturgical celebrations with other lay women and men as well as women religious, some from diverse backgrounds, gave me a sense of Church, a sense of community, an experience of the Body of Christ.

My family participated very consistently in the liturgical life of the parish - certainly attending Sunday Mass, but also some weekday Masses and seasonal devotions (for example, Stations of the Cross during Lent). This helped globally to nourish my faith. - There were several priests (diocesan) who served in our parish who provided good examples of dedication to God and the Church.

Participating in Divine Liturgy had a great impact on my vocation because the more I participated and received Jesus in the Eucharist, the more I wanted to stay in Church and remain with Him. We also have a great devotion to Mary, Most Holy Theotokos, and we always sang to her before and after every Divine Liturgy and this had a great impact on my vocation because Mary always said yes to God and God's plan and I experienced her maternal care from a young age due to our cultural devotions as a Byzantine Ruthenian church.

The ability growing up to participate in an active parish life- from taking part in liturgical ministry first as an altar server and then later as a Eucharistic Minister. An active youth ministry that allowed me to grow in my faith and establish my own identity as a person of faith before going to college. An active social justice and community service component that allowed me to do ministry and live out my faith.

The Alter Serving program had a big impact on my love for the liturgy and learning about the mass. The holy hour serves that I help serve when I was young influenced my

relationship with God greatly. And the daily masses offered helped as well. The Vocations weekend at the parish also nudged me to discern.

Youth/Faith Program

At least one in five (22%) mentioned the youth/faith programs at the parishes really had impact on their vocation discernment.

A vibrant youth group which met regularly and also gave us exposure to religious life at various retreats in the country.

Activities in my parish's young adult group was what introduced me to the idea of having a relationship with God, led me to read about St. Francis, and realize how much that life called to me. St. Agnes parish began to teach me how to pray and taught me that God could be related to, which is the foundation of how my vocation developed. The group did this by jolting me out of my comfort zone through interacting with others (I was fairly introverted), going to a Steubenville Youth Conference, having prayer groups, and the like.

It had a very vibrant youth ministry and young adult ministry. I also volunteered in the retreat ministry that offered retreats to Confirmation students. All of this provided a rich community from which my faith grew and I discerned a calling to be a priest.

It was the parish youth group for high school aged young adults that had the greatest impact on my vocational discernment. This group was filled with other teenagers and peer leaders, young adult leaders, and more mature adult leaders who were filled with love for following Christ and the Gospel, through prayer, liturgy, retreats, service, and life in general. It was being in this environment that caused me to turn to the Lord myself and have my own spiritual awakening. This made Mass and the Liturgy more appealing to me.

It was the youth group (high school) at the parish that most directly impacted my vocational discernment in its beginning stages. I was more impacted by the ministries of my college campus, Benedictine in Atchison, Kansas in the active steps I took towards my vocation.

The parish youth ministry program had the most impact on my vocational discernment. It helped me to deepen my prayer life, intimacy with Jesus, and desire to engage in service activities that demonstrated my faith.

They had a vibrant youth ministry that I was somewhat involved in although we were parishioners elsewhere. The youth ministers there encouraged me to grow in my Catholic faith and seek God's will. They were very supportive of young people discerning vocations.

We had a very strong Life Teen/Youth program that regularly went on retreats throughout the year. At these retreats I came into contact with religious Sisters (my current Community) who were young and joyful. We had two elderly Sisters in the parish who were kind, joyful,

and supportive of my discernment, though I was not attracted to their Community. Without these high school retreats, I may not have met my Community for a long time.

Adoration and Prayer Opportunities

Adoration and prayer opportunities at the parish are other aspects that religious members reported had the most impact on their vocational discernment.

A place of prayer, silent place where people come and pray. I saw busy people come by from their workplaces to that quiet place to recollect themselves and maybe and probably to meet God. That was a witness of faith that even in secular world, people want something more.

Opportunities to pray in front of the tabernacle. This was not Adoration, but simply a chapel dedicated to the Blessed Sacrament in the chapel and place to pray. Most importantly, the church was open until late and early in the morning, which I needed because I worked. Too many churches are closed during daytime evenings.

Participating in Divine Liturgy had a great impact on my vocation because the more I participated and received Jesus in the Eucharist, the more I wanted to stay in Church and remain with Him. We also have a great devotion to Mary, Most Holy Theotokos, and we always sang to her before and after every Divine Liturgy and this had a great impact on my vocation because Mary always said yes to God and God's plan and I experienced her maternal care from a young age due to our cultural devotions as a Byzantine Ruthenian church.

The adult prayer group that I was involved with when I was in high school. It was the forming of my relationship with the Lord. This made a large impact. The aspects of this parish which had the most impact on my vocational discernment were the opportunities for prayer and Eucharistic Adoration included in various high school faith formation programs.

The greatest impact was Bible study and Eucharistic Adoration. These two aspects impacted me the most because they sparked my life of prayer and relationship with Christ. Bible study put me in contact with the Word of God in a deeper way. It also exposed me to fervent Catholics who provided community to my family. Eucharistic Adoration fostered my life of prayer. Adoration is where I fell in love with Jesus.

The opportunity to attend daily Mass and pray the Rosary with the parishioners after Mass. The parish offered Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament twice a week. I am convinced that it is the result of so much time spent in Adoration combined with the prayers of fellow parishioners that I discerned my vocation to religious life.

There is a Eucharistic Adoration Chapel that is 24 hours a day, 5 days a week. I know the prayers of the parish for vocations have borne fruit, as did the time that I was able to spend in Adoration, even if it was just for a few minutes on my way home. The youth ministry program also had a tremendous impact, allowing me to be loved, to encounter Christ in the Eucharist, and to be exposed to a variety of opportunities to grow in my relationship with God.

What most impacted my discernment was the opportunities for Eucharistic adoration. In particular, my parish has a prayer group called Morning Star Family Holy Hour, which exposed me to prayer and Eucharistic adoration, on a weekly basis, in a child and family friendly way, from the age of 7. My discernment was born from this foundation in prayer and Eucharistic faith.

Vocation Promotion

Another factor the respondents mention is that their parish promoted religious vocations through various activities, including vocation prayer, vocation fairs, discernment groups, discernment retreats:

A weekly discernment group and a full year living in a discernment community Discernment retreat put on by the Diocese of [Name] and its promotion in the parish. I also lived in the Discernment House for young women run by the diocese that was across the street from the parish. Fellowship of my fellow college students who were open to discerning their vocation Weeknight mass at 9:15 PM with Adoration before on Tuesdays. I went on the parish retreat every semester of college.

Faith formation opportunities, parishioners joyfully living their Faith, daily Mass and Confession, women's discernment group, discernment retreat opportunities, spiritual direction.

I would identify two aspects: firstly, that religious vocations (at least for women - I'm a man) were promoted and celebrated (there were a few from my small parish); secondly, the culture of prayer, especially for vocations, and particularly before the Blessed Sacrament with semi-perpetual adoration.

Men's discernment group, visiting religious houses, spiritual direction, opportunities for leadership in ministry.

These TWO parishes had a consistent "vocation prayer" that was passed from family to family each week. Each of them encouraged the prayer among the family with the vocation item (cross or something physical, can't remember from childhood). The mere existence of that prayer pointed out the need in the church.

Vocations were strongly supported and encouraged; we prayed for vocations to the priesthood, diaconate, and religious life at every Mass; traditional devotions were fostered and a sense of reverence for the divine was the norm among parishioners.

Youth ministry's promotion of vocations when I was growing up. Mostly on the part of the Youth Director. The ministry has changed a lot, so it is no longer the same.

Talks at vocation promotion events, support of pastor/letter of recommendation for monastery, regular appearances of religions at various events.

Services and Outreach

Additionally, respondents indicate that the service opportunities offered by the parish also had impact on their vocation discernment.

Active outreach to the disabled, homebound, poor, immigrants, and foreign missions.

Accompaniment from the parish community and service opportunities.

All the opportunities to grow and mature in the spiritual life through a variety of educational programs, service opportunities and especially through perpetual Eucharistic Adoration. Attending youth group and going on service trips had the most impact on my vocational discernment.

Catholic Social Teaching and service programs.

Encouragement from the pastor and associate, as well as the opportunity to do service at a local hospital - visiting the sick and bringing them communion on behalf of the parish. These were the biggest influences.

How the Parish Could Have Better Supported Their Discernment

Respondents were asked to share any thoughts they had about what activities the parish might have done to support their vocational discernment. A total of 837 members provided at least one comment in response to this question. CARA analyzed the responses to this question and grouped their responses into general categories below. Each category is illustrated by a few representative comments.

Vocation Talks or Events

One of the most commonly shared activity that men and women religious wish the parish might have done was to organize vocation talks or events that would introduce religious vocation into the parish. The parish could organize religious vocations events and invite men and women religious to talk about vocations to religious life and priesthood:

Anything young adult related. Had sisters, monks, brothers come in and talk about religious life at some point during faith formation classes. Provide trips for young people to vocation relation conferences such as the NET center. Many students never have seen a religious sister besides the Pope Pious X sisters who live up the hill from the Catholic Church. Religious life as a Roman Catholic felt non-existent, or a thing of the past. Sisters use to work and staff the school and fond memories/stories float round but now they just disappeared.

Besides the vocation prayer I mentioned above, as far as I can remember there were no parish-sponsored vocation promotion activities. We never had vocation Sundays, there were no vocation brochures, or any talk of anyone from the parish discerning vocations (outside of the youth group setting). I wish that my parish had done these things, and that there was more of a culture of vocations at my parish. Unfortunately, the average family at my parish (and there were hundreds of families) did not even have vocations on their radar. There was also no presence of habited men or women religious. There was one elderly religious Sister, but she was dressed in secular clothes and so growing up as a child I did not realize that she was a religious.

Bringing in more sisters, brothers, or priests to speak with middle and high school age students about vocations would have been beneficial. I think that sometimes, being a Dominican Parish, we take the presence of the friars for granted, recognizing their presence as the greatest witness to Religious life, but we forget to actually speak about it with our youth and young adults.

Having more events in which women religious came to talk and or having young adult group meetings where we discussed different articles of the Church that had to do with vocations. Having vocational events and panels are very effective. In addition, teenagers need to understand different religious order ministries.

I hope they can organize some vocation workshops to present and guide the young people they would like to know what is the religious life look like and help them to discern their vocation, because some of them they couldn't know, they have a call from God or not. So, I hope the parish should open some talks to them

I never had any classes, that I can recall, that invited religious into discussion with the students to explore what that life entails. It always seemed to be a mystery to me and I am sure many other students. I might have had regular visits from as many different types of religious as I could've gotten to agree to speak to the students, especially religious women, given that they are precious few.

I really don't remember there being any events specifically for vocation awareness. Might have been helpful to me, as an 'older' vocation but most particularly it would have been helpful to those women 35 and under (or 45 and under). Vocations to the priesthood were very well-advertised; not so with sisters.

I think that the parish could have talked about vocations more, perhaps a kind of monthly "open house" where interested young men could join the friars for prayer and dinner.

I don't think they have much vocation promotion, so I would say to have a vocation fair with the diocese and different religious orders there. I would also say to make the parish an atmosphere of vocation - not just religious vocation, but what vocation is and promoting an attitude of healthy discernment.

I wish my parish had more "come and see" events promotion or even a vocational ministry to help young people discern what God is calling them too: Marriage, Missionary, Single Life, Religious vocation...etc. I wish we also had a group that promote "nun runs" trip or "come and see" events.

More Interaction with and Presence to Religious Members

Another major suggestion is that the parish could bring more religious members to the parish so that young people have more opportunities to interact with them personally, that they could understand and learn more about vocations to religious life:

It would have been helpful to have a casual vocation talk with young religious sisters in habit, although I doubt I would have had the courage to talk to them in a single visit. I think it would have made a bigger impact. Perhaps a follow-up visit with opportunity to speak with a sister one-on-one may have proved beneficial as well. I may also have taken such an opportunity if sisters were present to be able to talk to at a Steubenville Youth Conference too.

Have the witness of religious Sisters--either ministering in the parish/school or invited for specific vocational events.

Actually mention the possibility of a vocation explicitly, the interaction I had was minimal, I wish there were more contact with them and their life.

I think having more religious come and visit since we didn't have any religious in the parish at that time.

I wish there had been a greater presence of religious around the parish. We just had a couple of sisters visit briefly over my time in college.

I would have liked to meet more religious sisters; they could come and tell young women about what it means and what a gift it is to consecrate oneself to Christ. It would be nice for there to be gatherings in which young women or even moms with their daughters could come meet Sisters from different communities and learn about them.

It is highly preferable if there are more personal interactions and encounters with the parish priests; having liturgical and service ministries; opportunities to work and know religious.

It would have been helpful to have Sisters at the parish or visiting the parish.

The only thing the parish lacked at that time was the presence of women religious, but the parish was in the process of requesting the presence of women religious and now has the presence of a religious community of men and a religious community of women.

We did not have the presence of Sisters at my parish, although I am certain my pastor would have made that happen if it were possible.

Discernment Group, Retreats and Days of Discernment

Another suggestion that respondents mention is that the parish could develop activities on discernment groups, organize retreats or days of discernment, where interested people will be able to discern and nurture vocations to religious life:

Done more promotion for vocation such as retreats, placing posters that promote vocations would have also inspired the thought to the possibility.

Form a group for young people to discern their future, whatever vocation that may be. Had a group for women in order to discern their vocations. They had a group for men discerning the priesthood, but nothing for women.

I guess the parish might have made it clearer who in the parish was discerning in general...like a discernment group. There wasn't anything like that, and if there had been it

would have been nice to talk to other young people if I knew they were also discerning religious life too!

I think if there was a regular night of vocation discernment or exposure to other religious life and particularly the priesthood.

I think one helpful thing would be a discernment group. I went to young adult programs, but they were mainly for single Catholics looking to get married. I think a bi-weekly/monthly faith sharing/discernment group would be awesome. I also think talking about vocations would be nice. The parish did not really ever mention vocations. They would have a holy hour for those in formation for priesthood/diaconate/religious life, but that was about it.

I wish the parish had a group dedicated to young women who wanted to discern their vocation. They had one for men, but none for women. I felt alone in my desire to pursue religious life. I also wish religious sisters were given more opportunity to come and be involved at the parish, somehow.

I wish the parish had held some evening talks or days of recollection about religious vocations, especially for women. It would have been nice to have vocational discernment materials readily available in the faith formation offices or with the other pamphlets kept in the church Narthex.

Offered discernment events for religious life (there was a discernment group for men considering the archdiocese, but not for religious life). Even the discernment group that we did have didn't meet very often, so if there was a discernment group that met regularly, this would have helped my discernment.

There wasn't a lot of direct vocational discernment available at all... which is why it took me until the past few years to discern that I really did have a religious vocation.

Vocation retreats and contact with religious at a younger age. We had no religious brothers/sisters at my parish.

Vocational group that meets with women religious and explores religious communities. Philosophy and theology group that discusses deep questions of life with some guidance from those who are more learned and experienced the faith.

Encouragement in Vocations to Religious Life

Respondents believe that the parish could more to promote and encourage vocations to religious life. Some respondents experience that their parishes have promoted vocations to diocesan priesthood but not on religious life vocations:

At the time that I was discerning religious life there were no activities aimed at fostering religious vocations. There were diocesan and parish youth retreats for young men discerning a call to the priesthood, but there was not anything for women at the time. I had to look outside my parish community for any support.

I wish the parish would have made people more aware of consecrated life. There was little, if any, formal vocation promotion done by the parish. When there was, it only promoted diocesan priesthood.

I did not experience a lot of direct vocation promotion in my parish. Through the strong Eucharistic devotion and prayer learned at the parish, I began to experience a call to religious life in my heart, but had to find resources elsewhere to understand and pursue the call.

I wish more could have been done to promote vocations. My parish's vocational outreach is virtually none. On rare occasion would I see a religious at the parish, for there just wasn't a connection with any religious community besides the Benedictine Monks who live in the outskirts of town.

I wish the parish would promote religious life more. They are definitely open to it but there is not an active promotion of it. I think this would have helped me when I was in high school and believing in false stereotypes and misconceptions. They are doing it more now though., Praise God!

More vocation promotion activities; but by "vocation promotion" I don't mean the typical talks or day-long conferences with religious, priests, etc., but perhaps apostolate with religious or priests/seminarians, more "normal" activities, or just their presence.

On official level, encourage men to join religious life rather than strictly promoting diocesan priesthood. More promotional events to encourage young men and children from parish to consider religious life and priestly formation, rather than just fundraisers for diocese and praying for vocations. Young priests to talk about beauty of priesthood or religious life. Groups for high school students who are considering a vocation to priesthood or religious life (parish was very large).

Talked to one of the priests about religious life. They weren't interested in women religious. all their activities were about promoting the priesthood. I would say I became a religious despite my parish. What served me well was my grounding in the faith. also attended program at retreat centers and monasteries, these made huge difference.

To tell you the truth, our pastor wasn't particularly supportive of my religious vocation. I think he thought I was too old. I don't think he had much respect for the Franciscans or religious life in general. He was a diocesan priest to the bone. A good man. But he wasn't particularly interested in encouraging me in my vocation. To tell you the truth, I'm not really sure what the parish might have done to support me in my vocational discernment.

Introduction to Religious Communities

Another activity that respondents suggest is to host opportunities for religious institutes to come to introduce themselves. And the parish could organize opportunities for young people to visit religious institutes:

I wish my parish sponsored, supported, and recommended youth retreats, and offered invitations to other religious communities to attend CCD.

Vocation days where various communities of religious would participate so that people can know that there is more than one community of religious that you can join, because I don't think many know that there are other communities out there that they can join and might be what they are called to.

Actually, talked to us about the different orders and their charisms especially those that are in the local area.

Arranging visits of different communities of sisters for encounter evenings.

Campus ministry did- offer free trips to visit convents offer spiritual direction offer formation groups or living a discerning life offer vocation fairs.

I wish they would have had something like God Teens or nun runs so that we could visit communities with other young women who were also interested in religious life.

More promotion of discernment events which involved visiting communities of religious sisters or inviting them to the parish to speak about vocation. I had to seek this out myself.

The establishment of the vocational group, the visits to various religious community and seminaries these were all sponsored by the parish to encourage us. The priests payed especial attention on the young people of the parish.

PART IV: EXPERIENCES OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN RELIGIOUS INSTITUTES

When candidates who come from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial cohort of the institute approach a religious institute, it is important that those they encounter are open and welcoming. This section explores how open different parts of religious institutes are to welcoming culturally diverse candidates as well as the variety of practices institutes have to integrate culturally diverse novices into their initial formation programs.

Current Living Situation

Responding religious were asked to describe the ethnic makeup of their current living situation. As the choices offered are not mutually exclusive, they were invited to select all that apply. Half of respondents report that they live in a community with members from many different cultural/ethnic backgrounds (50%).

<i>Which of these best describes your current living situation?</i>			
	Percentage responding		
	All	Men	Women
	%	%	%
I live in a community with members from many different cultural/ethnic backgrounds	50	59	42
I live in a community with at least one other member of the same cultural/ethnic background as mine	48	45	50
I live in a community in which I am the only one whose culture is different from the dominant ethnic/racial cohort	7	5	9
Other:	12	9	14

- Another half (48%) report that they live in a community with at least one other member of the same cultural/ethnic background as theirs.
- Around one in 20 (7%) report they live in a community in which they are the only one whose culture is different from the dominant ethnic/racial cohort.

Differences by Racial/Ethnic Background

Respondents of non-dominant culture/ethnicity, particularly African/African American/black, are most likely to live in a community with members from many different cultural/ethnic backgrounds.

Which of these best describe your current living situation?				
Percentage responding				
	African/ African American/ black	Asian/Pacific Islander/Nativ e Hawaiian	Caucasian/ European American/ white	Hispanic/ Latino(a)
	%	%	%	%
I live in a community with members from many different cultural/ethnic backgrounds	80	59	46	59
I live in a community with at least one other member of the same cultural/ethnic background as mine	19	26	57	34
I live in a community in which I am the only one whose culture is different from the dominant ethnic/racial cohort	19	23	2	19
Other:	4	11	14	5

- Caucasian/ European American/ white respondents are most likely to live in a community with at least one other member of the same cultural/ethnic background as theirs.
- Respondents of the non-dominant culture/ethnicity are most likely to live in a community in which he/she is the only one whose culture is different from the dominant ethnic/racial cohort.

Openness of their Institute to Culturally Diverse Members

Respondents were asked how open they believe their religious institute is to welcoming and accommodating those of various cultural backgrounds.

<i>In your experience, how open is your institute to the followings?</i>		
Percentage responding		
	“Somewhat” or “Very” Open Combined %	“Very Open” Only %
Welcoming those in initial formation who are from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute	91	68
Recruiting candidates from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute	90	66
Accommodating family visit(s) for those whose families live in another country	88	69
Celebrating the feast day of the patron saint of another country or culture	88	65
Encouraging members to share their culture in community life	87	61
Encouraging members to learn another language	86	64
Integrating foods from other cultures into the community's meals	83	59
Openly discussing cultural differences	81	54
Educating community members about another culture	78	48
Celebrating the holidays of different cultures	74	45
Accommodating customs and practices of new members from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute	72	34
Accepting candidates with limited English skills	65	34
Providing a mentor from the same culture, if possible, for those in initial formation	62	33
Celebrating liturgies in a language other than or in addition to English	61	38
Having bi-lingual or multilingual prayers	61	37
Celebrating with ethnic dance or song	60	33
Establishing a discernment group with people of diverse cultures	60	33
Providing an acculturation program for new members from outside the United States	60	30
Using a prayer practice from another culture	58	25

Three in four religious indicate that their institute is “somewhat” or “very” open in the ways listed below, 45% to 68% reporting that their institute is “very” open in these ways:

- Welcoming those in initial formation who are from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute (91% responded “somewhat” or “very” open; 68% responded “very” open)
- Recruiting candidates from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute (90% responded “somewhat” or “very” open; 66% responded “very” open)
- Accommodating family visit(s) for those whose families live in another country (% responded “somewhat” or “very” open; 66% responded “very” open)
- Celebrating the feast day of the patron saint of another country or culture (88% responded “somewhat” or “very” open; 65% responded “very” open)
- Encouraging members to share their culture in community life (87% responded “somewhat” or “very” open; 61% responded “very” open)
- Encouraging members to learn another language (86% responded “somewhat” or “very” open; 64% responded “very” open)
- Integrating foods from other cultures into the community's meals (83% responded “somewhat” or “very” open; 59% responded “very” open)
- Openly discussing cultural differences (81% responded “somewhat” or “very” open; 54% responded “very” open)
- Educating community members about another culture (78% responded “somewhat” or “very” open; 48% responded “very” open)
- Celebrating the holidays of different cultures (74% responded “somewhat” or “very” open; 45% responded “very” open)

About six in ten or more say their institute is “somewhat” or “very” open in the ways listed below.

- Accommodating customs and practices of new members from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute (72% responded “somewhat” or “very” open; 34% responded “very” open)
- Accepting candidates with limited English skills (65% responded “somewhat” or “very” open; 34% responded “very” open)
- Providing a mentor from the same culture, if possible, for those in initial formation (62% responded “somewhat” or “very” open; 33% responded “very” open)
- Celebrating liturgies in a language other than or in addition to English (61% responded “somewhat” or “very” open; 38% responded “very” open)
- Having bi-lingual or multilingual prayers (61% responded “somewhat” or “very” open; 37% responded “very” open)
- Celebrating with ethnic dance or song (60% responded “somewhat” or “very” open; 33% responded “very” open)
- Establishing a discernment group with people of diverse cultures (60% responded “somewhat” or “very” open; 33% responded “very” open)
- Providing an acculturation program for new members from outside the United States (60% responded “somewhat” or “very” open; 30% responded “very” open)
- Using a prayer practice from another culture (58% responded “somewhat” or “very” open; 25% responded “very” open)

Differences by Generations Since Families Emigrated

The perceptions of those belonging to different generations (that when their family emigrated to the United States) differ in some ways, which are presented in the table below.²⁰

<i>In your experience, how open is your institute to the followings?</i>				
Percentage responding "Very Open" only, presented by Generation since Family Emigrated				
	All Respondents	1st Generation	2nd Generation	3rd or More Generation
	<i>(N = 1,163)</i>	<i>(N = 251)</i>	<i>(N = 131)</i>	<i>(N = 781)</i>
	%	%	%	%
Accommodating family visit(s) for those whose families live in another country	69	63	73	70
Welcoming those in initial formation who are from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute	68	65	78	67
Recruiting candidates from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute	66	62	76	66
Celebrating the feast day of the patron saint of another country or culture	65	52	63	69
Encouraging members to learn another language	64	61	61	65
Encouraging members to share their culture in community life	61	57	65	62
Integrating foods from other cultures into the community's meals	59	55	66	59
Openly discussing cultural differences	54	49	58	55
Educating community members about another culture	48	45	48	49
Celebrating the holidays of different cultures	45	39	49	46
Celebrating liturgies in a language other than or in addition to English	38	41	45	36

²⁰ Only differences of 10 percentage points or more are treated as meaningful.

Cont'd: In your experience, how open is your institute to the followings?

Percentage responding "Very Open" only, presented by Generation since Family Emigrated

	All Respondents (N = 1,163)	1st Generation (N = 251)	2nd Generation (N = 131)	3rd or More Generation (N = 781)
	%	%	%	%
Having bi-lingual or multilingual prayers	37	46	40	34
Accepting candidates with limited English skills	34	46	36	30
Accommodating customs and practices of new members from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute	34	36	37	32
Celebrating with ethnic dance or song	33	38	31	31
Establishing a discernment group with people of diverse cultures	33	37	28	32
Providing a mentor from the same culture, if possible, for those in initial formation	33	32	34	33
Providing an acculturation program for new members from outside the United States	30	36	29	29
Using a prayer practice from another culture	25	27	30	23

Differences by Racial/Ethnic Background

Respondents of Caucasian/ European American/ white are least likely to say that their institutes are open to integrating various aspects of culture and diversity.

<i>In your experience, how open is your institute to the followings?</i>				
Percentage responding "Very Open" only				
	African/African American/ black/others	Asian/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian	Caucasian/ European American/ white	Hispanic/ Latino(a)
	(N = 45)	(N = 140)	(N = 795)	(N = 132)
	%	%	%	%
Recruiting candidates from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute	68	68	66	65
Welcoming those in initial formation who are from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute	71	69	67	69
Accepting candidates with limited English skills	54	45	31	39
Accommodating customs and practices of new members from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute	44	39	32	35
Providing an acculturation program for new members from outside the United States	36	33	30	29
Celebrating liturgies in a language other than or in addition to English	51	43	35	46
Having bi-lingual or multilingual prayers	43	50	33	44
Using a prayer practice from another culture	32	30	23	29

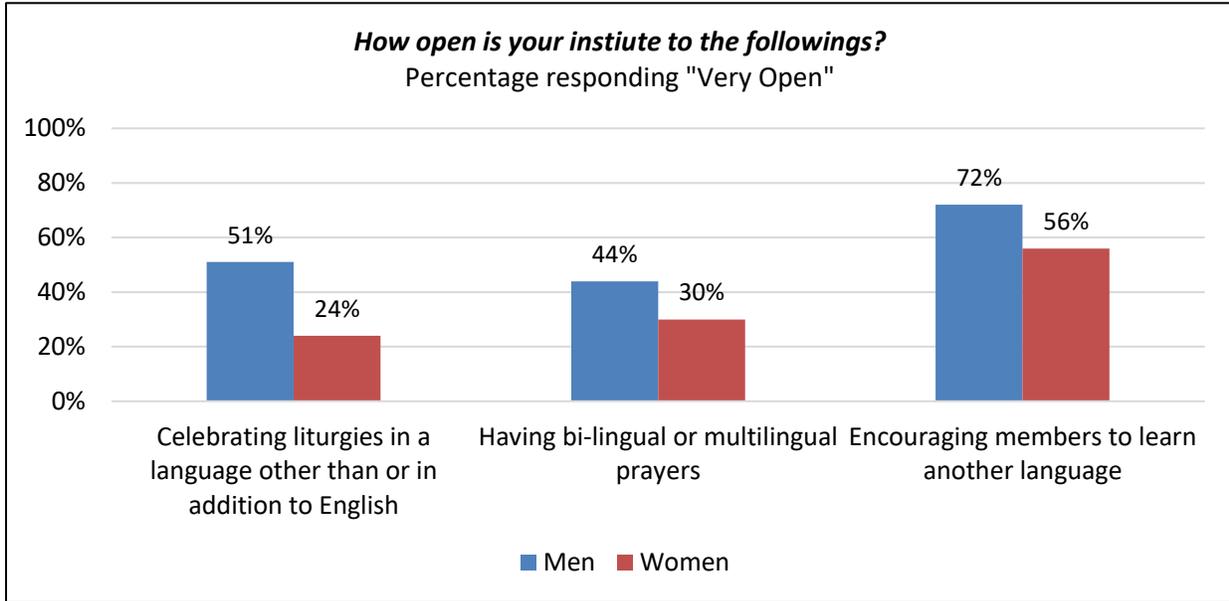
Cont'd: In your experience, how open is your institute to the followings?

Percentage responding "Very Open" only

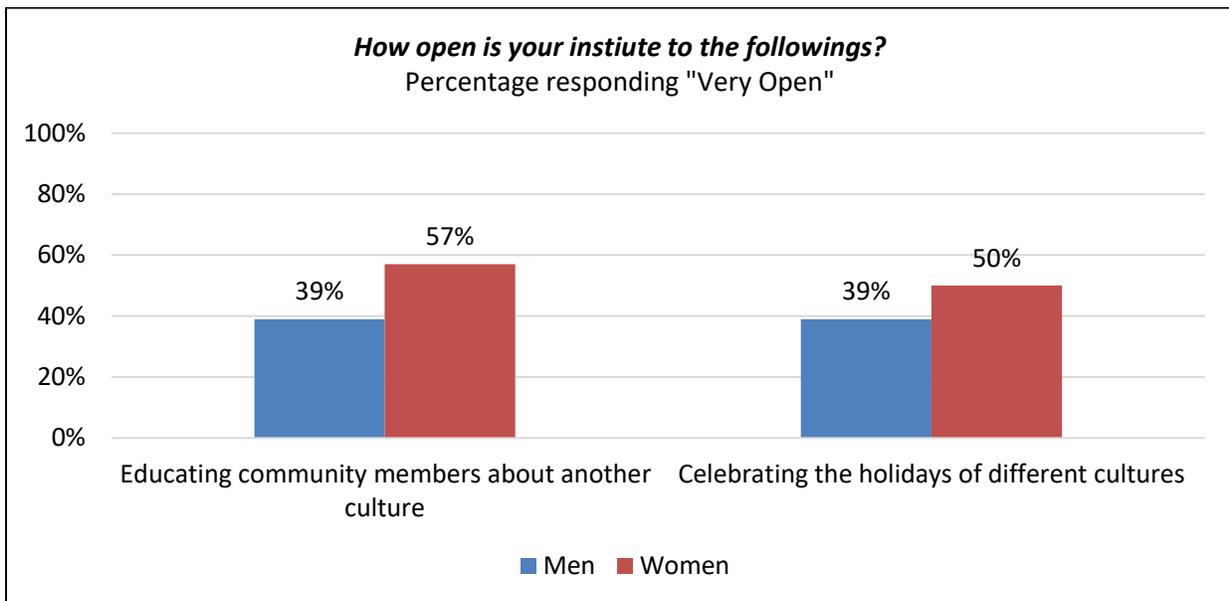
	African/African American/ black/others	Asian/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian	Caucasian/ European American/ white	Hispanic/ Latino(a)
	<i>(N = 45)</i>	<i>(N = 140)</i>	<i>(N = 795)</i>	<i>(N = 132)</i>
	%	%	%	%
Celebrating the feast day of the patron saint of another country or culture	53	51	69	57
Integrating foods from other cultures into the community's meals	52	56	59	64
Celebrating with ethnic dance or song	56	38	31	31
Educating community members about another culture	39	48	50	45
Providing a mentor from the same culture, if possible, for those in initial formation	45	32	34	27
Celebrating the holidays of different cultures	45	44	46	39
Openly discussing cultural differences	49	54	54	52
Encouraging members to learn another language	62	65	64	62
Establishing a discernment group with people of diverse cultures	33	45	31	28
Accommodating family visit(s) for those whose families live in another country	55	65	70	69
Encouraging members to share their culture in community life	61	60	61	60

Differences by Gender

Men religious are most likely to report that their religious institute is *very* open to the aspects mentioned in the chart below.



Meanwhile, women religious are most likely to report that their religious institute is *very* open to educating community members about another culture and celebrating the holidays of different cultures.



Ethnic Differences

Caucasian, European American, or White Respondents Only

The table below shows the characteristics of those identifying as Caucasian, European American, or white.

Characteristics of Caucasians, European Americans, or Whites	
(N = #)	
<i>Country Where Born</i>	%
United States	87
Canada	3
Germany	2
United Kingdom (England)	1
Poland	1
Ireland	1
Australia	1
All other countries	4
<i>Generation</i>	
1 st generation (emigrated from another country)	8
2 nd generation (parent(s) emigrated from another country)	5
3 rd or more generation (self and parents born in U.S.)	87
I live in a community with members from many different cultural/ethnic backgrounds	46
I live in a community with at least one other member of the same cultural/ethnic background as mine	57
I live in a community in which I am the only one whose culture is different from the dominant ethnic/racial cohort	2

The table below shows how respondents identifying as Caucasian, European American, or white have experienced cultural diversity in their religious institutes.

In your experience, how open is your institute to the followings?

Percentage responding “Very Open” only, presented by Ethnicity and Generation since Family Emigrated

	All White Respondents (N = 795) %	1st Generation (N = 60) %	2nd Generation (N = 43) %	3rd or More Generation (N = 692) %
Recruiting candidates from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute	66	61	76	66
Welcoming those in initial formation who are from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute	67	59	81	67
Accepting candidates with limited English skills	31	32	41	31
Accommodating customs and practices of new members from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute	32	29	33	32
Providing an acculturation program for new members from outside the United States	30	27	42	30
Celebrating liturgies in a language other than or in addition to English	35	26	37	36
Having bi-lingual or multilingual prayers	33	36	29	33
Using a prayer practice from another culture	23	9	29	24
Celebrating the feast day of the patron saint of another country or culture	69	61	66	70
Integrating foods from other cultures into the community's meals	59	56	60	59
Celebrating with ethnic dance or song	31	26	32	31
Educating community members about another culture	50	43	54	50
Providing a mentor from the same culture, if possible, for those in initial formation	34	26	42	34
Celebrating the holidays of different cultures	46	36	64	46
Openly discussing cultural differences	54	42	64	55
Encouraging members to learn another language	64	58	46	65
Establishing a discernment group with people of diverse cultures	31	24	29	32
Accommodating family visit(s) for those whose families live in another country	70	70	76	70
Encouraging members to share their culture in community life	61	55	64	62

The table below shows how respondents identifying as Caucasian, European American, or white have experienced cultural diversity in their religious institutes.

White Respondents: *In your experience, how open is your institute to the followings?*

Percentage responding “Very Open” only, presented by Ethnicity and Generation since Family Emigrated

	Live in a Community with Many Cultures (N = 369) %	Community with at Least One Other Member of their Ethnicity (N = 453) %	Community Where Respondent Only Member of their Ethnicity (N = 14) %
Recruiting candidates from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute	79	60	57
Welcoming those in initial formation who are from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute	81	63	71
Accepting candidates with limited English skills	43	27	46
Accommodating customs and practices of new members from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute	41	28	36
Providing an acculturation program for new members from outside the United States	39	27	33
Celebrating liturgies in a language other than or in addition to English	45	31	18
Having bi-lingual or multilingual prayers	40	28	27
Using a prayer practice from another culture	28	21	9
Celebrating the feast day of the patron saint of another country or culture	79	67	50
Integrating foods from other cultures into the community's meals	72	55	43
Celebrating with ethnic dance or song	37	28	25
Educating community members about another culture	59	49	36
Providing a mentor from the same culture, if possible, for those in initial formation	41	31	9
Celebrating the holidays of different cultures	58	42	23
Openly discussing cultural differences	65	52	64
Encouraging members to learn another language	73	62	57
Establishing a discernment group with people of diverse cultures	41	25	33
Accommodating family visit(s) for those whose families live in another country	79	67	79
Encouraging members to share their culture in community life	73	57	64

Asian, Pacific Islander, or Native Hawaiian Respondents Only

The table below shows the characteristics of those identifying as Asian, Pacific Islander, or Native Hawaiian.

Characteristics of Asians, Pacific Islanders, or Native Hawaiians	
<i>(N = 140)</i>	
<i>Country Where Born</i>	%
Vietnam	29
United States	25
Philippines	20
India	4
Indonesia	3
South Korea	2
All other countries	17
<i>Generation</i>	
1 st generation (emigrated from another country)	75
2 nd generation (parent(s) emigrated from another country)	22
3 rd or more generation (self and parents born in U.S.)	3
I live in a community with members from many different cultural/ethnic backgrounds	59
I live in a community with at least one other member of the same cultural/ethnic background as mine	26
I live in a community in which I am the only one whose culture is different from the dominant ethnic/racial cohort	23

The table below shows how respondents identifying as Asian, Pacific Islander, or Native Hawaiian have experienced cultural diversity in their religious institutes.

In your experience, how open is your institute to the followings?

Percentage responding “Very Open” only, presented by Ethnicity and Generation since Family Emigrated

	All Asian Respondents (N = 140) %	1st Generation (N = 105) %	2nd Generation (N = 31) %	3rd or More Generation (N = 4) %
Recruiting candidates from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute	68	63	84	50
Welcoming those in initial formation who are from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute	69	65	84	50
Accepting candidates with limited English skills	45	48	31	50
Accommodating customs and practices of new members from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute	39	37	45	50
Providing an acculturation program for new members from outside the United States	33	37	20	25
Celebrating liturgies in a language other than or in addition to English	43	43	43	25
Having bi-lingual or multilingual prayers	50	53	43	25
Using a prayer practice from another culture	30	34	23	0
Celebrating the feast day of the patron saint of another country or culture	51	49	62	25
Integrating foods from other cultures into the community's meals	56	57	57	0
Celebrating with ethnic dance or song	38	39	38	25
Educating community members about another culture	48	49	43	50
Providing a mentor from the same culture, if possible, for those in initial formation	32	35	22	25
Celebrating the holidays of different cultures	44	43	48	50
Openly discussing cultural differences	54	56	54	25
Encouraging members to learn another language	65	66	63	50
Establishing a discernment group with people of diverse cultures	45	49	29	25
Accommodating family visit(s) for those whose families live in another country	65	64	71	50
Encouraging members to share their culture in community life	60	58	70	50

The table below shows how respondents identifying as Asian, Pacific Islander, or Native Hawaiian have experienced cultural diversity in their religious institutes.

Asian Respondents: *In your experience, how open is your institute to the followings?*

Percentage responding “Very Open” only, presented by Ethnicity and Generation since Family Emigrated

	Live in a Community with Many Cultures (N = 82) %	Community with at Least One Other Member of their Ethnicity (N = 36) %	Community Where Respondent Only Member of their Ethnicity (N = 32) %
Recruiting candidates from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute	75	78	69
Welcoming those in initial formation who are from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute	74	74	66
Accepting candidates with limited English skills	50	41	32
Accommodating customs and practices of new members from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute	53	48	23
Providing an acculturation program for new members from outside the United States	45	38	22
Celebrating liturgies in a language other than or in addition to English	49	55	22
Having bi-lingual or multilingual prayers	56	53	37
Using a prayer practice from another culture	38	32	25
Celebrating the feast day of the patron saint of another country or culture	59	57	44
Integrating foods from other cultures into the community's meals	67	71	38
Celebrating with ethnic dance or song	48	38	32
Educating community members about another culture	56	52	43
Providing a mentor from the same culture, if possible, for those in initial formation	42	35	15
Celebrating the holidays of different cultures	56	44	37
Openly discussing cultural differences	64	59	44
Encouraging members to learn another language	73	72	50
Establishing a discernment group with people of diverse cultures	58	46	38
Accommodating family visit(s) for those whose families live in another country	69	63	76
Encouraging members to share their culture in community life	70	61	53

Hispanic or Latino/a Respondents Only

The table below shows the characteristics of those identifying as Asian, Pacific Islander, or Native Hawaiian.

Characteristics of Hispanics or Latinos/as	
<i>(N = 132)</i>	
<i>Country Where Born</i>	%
United States	63
Mexico	19
Dominican Republic	6
Brazil	2
Colombia	2
Puerto Rico	2
Venezuela	2
All other countries	4
<i>Generation</i>	
1 st generation (emigrated from another country)	37
2 nd generation (parent(s) emigrated from another country)	41
3 rd or more generation (self and parents born in U.S.)	21
I live in a community with members from many different cultural/ethnic backgrounds	59
I live in a community with at least one other member of the same cultural/ethnic background as mine	34
I live in a community in which I am the only one whose culture is different from the dominant ethnic/racial cohort	18

The table below shows how respondents identifying as Hispanics or Latinos/as have experienced cultural diversity in their religious institutes.

Hispanics Only: In your experience, how open is your institute to the followings?

Percentage responding "Very Open" only, presented by Ethnicity and Generation since Family Emigrated

	All Hispanic Respondents (N = 132) %	1st Generation (N = 50) %	2nd Generation (N = 54) %	3rd or More Generation (N = 28) %
Recruiting candidates from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute	64	51	74	70
Welcoming those in initial formation who are from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute	69	63	76	67
Accepting candidates with limited English skills	40	48	35	33
Accommodating customs and practices of new members from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute	35	37	39	25
Providing an acculturation program for new members from outside the United States	29	36	26	24
Celebrating liturgies in a language other than or in addition to English	46	48	51	32
Having bi-lingual or multilingual prayers	44	48	46	35
Using a prayer practice from another culture	29	29	35	17
Celebrating the feast day of the patron saint of another country or culture	57	49	62	59
Integrating foods from other cultures into the community's meals	64	53	76	62
Celebrating with ethnic dance or song	32	41	26	25
Educating community members about another culture	45	47	47	39
Providing a mentor from the same culture, if possible, for those in initial formation	27	24	34	20
Celebrating the holidays of different cultures	39	30	39	54
Openly discussing cultural differences	53	45	57	59
Encouraging members to learn another language	62	54	72	59
Establishing a discernment group with people of diverse cultures	28	28	27	32
Accommodating family visit(s) for those whose families live in another country	68	61	75	69
Encouraging members to share their culture in community life	31	57	64	62

The table below shows how respondents identifying as Hispanic or Latino/a have experienced cultural diversity in their religious institutes.

Hispanic Respondents: *In your experience, how open is your institute to the followings?*

Percentage responding “Very Open” only, presented by Ethnicity and Generation since Family Emigrated

	Live in a Community with Many Cultures (N = 78) %	Community with at Least One Other Member of their Ethnicity (N = 44) %	Community Where Respondent Only Member of their Ethnicity (N = 24) %
Recruiting candidates from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute	71	66	58
Welcoming those in initial formation who are from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute	74	73	63
Accepting candidates with limited English skills	49	49	14
Accommodating customs and practices of new members from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute	45	54	4
Providing an acculturation program for new members from outside the United States	36	34	19
Celebrating liturgies in a language other than or in addition to English	57	47	19
Having bi-lingual or multilingual prayers	50	46	19
Using a prayer practice from another culture	34	46	5
Celebrating the feast day of the patron saint of another country or culture	69	64	35
Integrating foods from other cultures into the community's meals	77	70	35
Celebrating with ethnic dance or song	38	36	14
Educating community members about another culture	49	50	44
Providing a mentor from the same culture, if possible, for those in initial formation	31	47	6
Celebrating the holidays of different cultures	51	33	32
Openly discussing cultural differences	65	50	42
Encouraging members to learn another language	69	67	48
Establishing a discernment group with people of diverse cultures	33	38	19
Accommodating family visit(s) for those whose families live in another country	71	76	64
Encouraging members to share their culture in community life	71	61	46

African, African American, or Black Respondents Only

The table below shows the characteristics of those identifying as African, African American, or black.

Characteristics of African, African American, or Black Respondents Only	
(N = 45)	
<i>Country Where Born</i>	%
United States	20
Cameroon	13
Kenya	11
Nigeria	11
Haiti	9
Ghana	7
Togo	7
All other countries	22
<i>Generation</i>	
1 st generation (emigrated from another country)	80
2 nd generation (parent(s) emigrated from another country)	4
3 rd or more generation (self and parents born in U.S.)	16
I live in a community with members from many different cultural/ethnic backgrounds	80
I live in a community with at least one other member of the same cultural/ethnic background as mine	18
I live in a community in which I am the only one whose culture is different from the dominant ethnic/racial cohort	20

The table below shows how respondents identifying as African, African American, or black have experienced cultural diversity in their religious institutes.

Blacks Only: In your experience, how open is your institute to the followings?

Percentage responding "Very Open" only, presented by Ethnicity and Generation since Family Emigrated

	All Black Respondents (N = 45) %	1st Generation (N = 36) %	2nd Generation (N = 2) %	3rd or More Generation (N = 7) %
Recruiting candidates from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute	68	71	50	57
Welcoming those in initial formation who are from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute	71	75	50	57
Accepting candidates with limited English skills	54	59	50	29
Accommodating customs and practices of new members from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute	44	49	0	33
Providing an acculturation program for new members from outside the United States	36	42	0	17
Celebrating liturgies in a language other than or in addition to English	51	46	100	57
Having bi-lingual or multilingual prayers	43	36	100	57
Using a prayer practice from another culture	32	34	50	17
Celebrating the feast day of the patron saint of another country or culture	53	50	50	67
Integrating foods from other cultures into the community's meals	52	50	100	50
Celebrating with ethnic dance or song	56	53	50	71
Educating community members about another culture	39	36	50	50
Providing a mentor from the same culture, if possible, for those in initial formation	45	48	50	33
Celebrating the holidays of different cultures	45	47	0	50
Openly discussing cultural differences	49	47	50	57
Encouraging members to learn another language	62	64	50	57
Establishing a discernment group with people of diverse cultures	33	35	0	33
Accommodating family visit(s) for those whose families live in another country	55	50	50	83
Encouraging members to share their culture in community life	61	60	50	67

The table below shows how respondents identifying as African, African American, or black have experienced cultural diversity in their religious institutes.

Black Respondents: *In your experience, how open is your institute to the followings?*

Percentage responding “Very Open” only, presented by Ethnicity and Generation since Family Emigrated

	Live in a Community with Many Cultures (N = 36) %	Community with at Least One Other Member of their Ethnicity (N = 8) %	Community Where Respondent Only Member of their Ethnicity (N = 9) %
Recruiting candidates from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute	69	71	78
Welcoming those in initial formation who are from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute	75	88	68
Accepting candidates with limited English skills	61	43	33
Accommodating customs and practices of new members from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute	49	33	22
Providing an acculturation program for new members from outside the United States	39	33	22
Celebrating liturgies in a language other than or in addition to English	55	33	44
Having bi-lingual or multilingual prayers	45	29	43
Using a prayer practice from another culture	32	0	38
Celebrating the feast day of the patron saint of another country or culture	55	17	38
Integrating foods from other cultures into the community's meals	59	33	22
Celebrating with ethnic dance or song	59	43	38
Educating community members about another culture	39	33	33
Providing a mentor from the same culture, if possible, for those in initial formation	48	0	20
Celebrating the holidays of different cultures	47	17	33
Openly discussing cultural differences	49	29	56
Encouraging members to learn another language	65	71	67
Establishing a discernment group with people of diverse cultures	32	0	44
Accommodating family visit(s) for those whose families live in another country	58	14	56
Encouraging members to share their culture in community life	65	43	44

Challenges in Religious Life

Being asked how much of a challenge is each aspect in the table below, most respondents report that these aspects are not much of a challenge to them. Two in ten report that feeling isolated or lonely (21%), members who I live with not understanding my culture (19%) and not feeling understood by other members of my institute (19%) are at least somewhat of a challenge to them.

<i>Since you entered your religious institute, how much of a challenge is each of these to you personally?</i>		
Percentage responding		
	“Somewhat” or “Very Much” of Challenge	“Very Much” of Challenge Only
	%	%
Feeling isolated or lonely	21	7
Members who I live with not understanding my culture	19	5
Not feeling understood by other members of my institute	19	7
Members who I live with not accepting my culture	12	4
Not feeling welcomed by other members of my institute	10	4
During my initial formation, my formator requiring me to accommodate my culture to that of my institute	10	3
Members who I live with not accommodating my cultural practices	9	3
Feeling that I am asked too much to accommodate my culture to fit in the dominant ethnic/racial cohort of my institute	9	4
My culture not being welcome in my community	8	3
My food not being welcome in my community	8	2
Discrimination due to my cultural/ethnic heritage	6	3
My not understanding American culture well enough	6	3
Finding it hard to find a ministry because of my own ethnic background	5	3
Finding it hard to find a ministry in an institution sponsored by my institute because of my ethnic background	5	3

Differences by Generations Since Families Emigrated

The perceptions of those belonging to different generations (that when their family emigrated to the United States) differ in some ways, which are presented in the tables below.²¹

Since you entered your religious institute, how much of a challenge is each of these to you personally?
 Percentage responding “Somewhat” or “Very Much”, by Ethnicity and Generation since Family Emigrated

	All Respondents (N = 1,163) %	1st Generation (N = 251) %	2nd Generation (N = 131) %	3rd or More Generation (N = 781) %
Members who I live with not understanding my culture	19	39	27	10
Members who I live with not accepting my culture	11	26	10	6
Members who I live with not accommodating my cultural practices	9	23	7	4
My culture not being welcome in my community	7	17	5	4
My food not being welcome in my community	8	17	10	4
Feeling isolated or lonely	21	28	19	19
Not feeling understood by other members of my institute	19	28	19	16
Not feeling welcomed by other members of my institute	10	18	8	7
Discrimination due to my cultural/ethnic heritage	6	14	7	3
Finding it hard to find a ministry because of my own ethnic background	5	13	4	2
Finding it hard to find a ministry in an institution sponsored by my institute because of my ethnic background	4	12	3	2
Feeling that I am asked too much to accommodate my culture to fit in the dominant ethnic/racial cohort of my institute	8	19	14	4
My not understanding American culture well enough	7	19	2	3
During my initial formation, my formator requiring me to accommodate my culture to that of my institute	10	21	8	6

²¹ Only differences of 10 percentage points or more are treated as meaningful.

Cont'd: In your experience, how open is your institute to the followings?

Percentage responding "Very Open" only, presented by Generation since Family Emigrated

	All Respondents (N = 1,163)	1st Generation (N = 251)	2nd Generation (N = 131)	3rd or More Generation (N = 781)
	%	%	%	%
Having bi-lingual or multilingual prayers	37	46	40	34
Accepting candidates with limited English skills	34	46	36	30
Accommodating customs and practices of new members from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute	34	36	37	32
Celebrating with ethnic dance or song	33	38	31	31
Establishing a discernment group with people of diverse cultures	33	37	28	32
Providing a mentor from the same culture, if possible, for those in initial formation	33	32	34	33
Providing an acculturation program for new members from outside the United States	30	36	29	29
Using a prayer practice from another culture	25	27	30	23

Differences by Current Living Situation

Respondents who live in a community where the respondent is the only member of their ethnicity are likely to at least experience challenges in many aspects listed in the table below.

Since you entered your religious institute, how much of a challenge is each of these to you personally?

Percentage responding "Somewhat" or "Very Much", by Current Living Situation

	Live in a Community with Many Cultures (N = 580) %	Community with at Least One Other Member of their Ethnicity (N = 554) %	Community Where Respondent Only Member of their Ethnicity (N = 79) %
Members who I live with not understanding my culture	19	13	49
Not feeling understood by other members of my institute	16	20	32
Feeling isolated or lonely	19	22	28
Members who I live with not accepting my culture	10	9	28
My food not being welcome in my community	6	6	23
Feeling that I am asked too much to accommodate my culture to fit in the dominant ethnic/racial cohort of my institute	8	5	23
During my initial formation, my formator requiring me to accommodate my culture to that of my institute	10	7	20
Members who I live with not accommodating my cultural practices	10	6	19
My culture not being welcome in my community	7	6	17
Not feeling welcomed by other members of my institute	8	10	16
Finding it hard to find a ministry because of my own ethnic background	5	4	11
Discrimination due to my cultural/ethnic heritage	5	3	11
My not understanding American culture well enough	8	5	9
Finding it hard to find a ministry in an institution sponsored by my institute because of my ethnic background	5	3	9

Differences by Racial/Ethnic Background

Comparing among respondents of the non-dominant culture/ethnicity with those who identify themselves as Caucasian/white, in all aspects, respondents of the non-dominant culture are most likely to report these aspects are at least *somewhat* of a challenge to them.

Since you entered your religious institute, how much of a challenge is each of these to you personally?

Percentage responding "Somewhat" and "Very Much" of Challenge

	African/ African American/ black (N = 45) %	Asian/Pacifi c Islander/ Native Hawaiian (N = 140) %	Caucasian/ European American/ white (N = 795) %	Hispanic/ Latino(a) (N = 132) %
Members who I live with not understanding my culture	49	39	10	37
Members who I live with not accepting my culture	28	26	6	22
Members who I live with not accommodating my cultural practices	23	18	5	18
My culture not being welcome in my community	17	17	4	15
My food not being welcome in my community	17	19	4	15
Feeling isolated or lonely	21	30	16	25
Not feeling understood by other members of my institute	21	30	16	25
Not feeling welcomed by other members of my institute	15	19	7	16
Discrimination due to my cultural/ethnic heritage	22	16	2	12
Finding it hard to find a ministry because of my own ethnic background	21	13	2	8
Finding it hard to find a ministry in an institution sponsored by my institute because of my ethnic background	14	11	2	10
Feeling that I am asked too much to accommodate my culture to fit in the dominant ethnic/racial cohort of my institute	21	22	3	17
My not understanding American culture well enough	20	18	3	8
During my initial formation, my formator requiring me to accommodate my culture to that of my institute	31	17	6	18

Ethnic Differences

Caucasian, European American, or White Respondents Only

The table below shows the characteristics of those identifying as Caucasian, European American, or white.

Characteristics of Caucasians, European Americans, or Whites (<i>N</i> = 795)	
<i>Country Where Born</i>	%
United States	87
Canada	3
Germany	2
United Kingdom (England)	1
Poland	1
Ireland	1
Australia	1
All other countries	4
<i>Generation</i>	
1 st generation (emigrated from another country)	8
2 nd generation (parent(s) emigrated from another country)	5
3 rd or more generation (self and parents born in U.S.)	87
I live in a community with members from many different cultural/ethnic backgrounds	46
I live in a community with at least one other member of the same cultural/ethnic background as mine	57
I live in a community in which I am the only one whose culture is different from the dominant ethnic/racial cohort	2

The table below shows how respondents identifying as Caucasian, European American, or white have experienced cultural diversity in their religious institutes.

Since you entered your religious institute, how much of a challenge is each of these to you personally?
 Percentage responding “Somewhat” or “Very Much”, by Ethnicity and Generation since Family Emigrated

	All White Respondents (N = 795) %	1st Generation (N =57) %	2nd Generation (N = 40) %	3rd or More Generation (N = 601) %
Feeling isolated or lonely	19	25	16	19
Members who I live with not understanding my culture	10	16	18	9
Not feeling understood by other members of my institute	16	16	22	16
Members who I live with not accepting my culture	6	7	3	6
Not feeling welcomed by other members of my institute	7	5	3	7
During my initial formation, my formator requiring me to accommodate my culture to that of my institute	6	8	6	6
Members who I live with not accommodating my cultural practices	4	13	3	4
Feeling that I am asked too much to accommodate my culture to fit in the dominant ethnic/racial cohort of my institute	3	7	5	3
My culture not being welcome in my community	4	2	0	4
My food not being welcome in my community	4	5	5	4
Discrimination due to my cultural/ethnic heritage	2	0	0	2
My not understanding American culture well enough	3	6	6	3
Finding it hard to find a ministry because of my own ethnic background	2	2	3	2
Finding it hard to find a ministry in an institution sponsored by my institute because of my ethnic background	2	0	3	2

The table below shows how respondents identifying as Caucasian, European American, or white have experienced cultural diversity in their religious institutes.

Since you entered your religious institute, how much of a challenge is each of these to you personally?
 Percentage responding “Somewhat” or “Very Much”, by Ethnicity and Generation since Family Emigrated

	Live in a Community with Many Cultures (N = 369) %	Community with at Least One Other Member of their Ethnicity (N = 453) %	Community Where Respondent Only Member of their Ethnicity (N = 14) %
Feeling isolated or lonely	16	22	36
Members who I live with not understanding my culture	8	9	36
Not feeling understood by other members of my institute	12	19	29
Members who I live with not accepting my culture	4	6	21
Not feeling welcomed by other members of my institute	5	9	14
During my initial formation, my formator requiring me to accommodate my culture to that of my institute	5	5	14
Members who I live with not accommodating my cultural practices	4	4	21
Feeling that I am asked too much to accommodate my culture to fit in the dominant ethnic/racial cohort of my institute	2	3	21
My culture not being welcome in my community	2	4	21
My food not being welcome in my community	2	5	14
Discrimination due to my cultural/ethnic heritage	1	1	8
My not understanding American culture well enough	3	3	7
Finding it hard to find a ministry because of my own ethnic background	2	2	0
Finding it hard to find a ministry in an institution sponsored by my institute because of my ethnic background	2	2	0

Asian, Pacific Islander, or Native Hawaiian Respondents Only

The table below shows the characteristics of those identifying as Asian, Pacific Islander, or Native Hawaiian.

Characteristics of Asians, Pacific Islanders, or Native Hawaiians (<i>N</i> = 140)	
<i>Country Where Born</i>	%
Vietnam	29
United States	25
Philippines	20
India	4
Indonesia	3
South Korea	2
All other countries	17
<i>Generation</i>	
1 st generation (emigrated from another country)	75
2 nd generation (parent(s) emigrated from another country)	22
3 rd or more generation (self and parents born in U.S.)	3
I live in a community with members from many different cultural/ethnic backgrounds	59
I live in a community with at least one other member of the same cultural/ethnic background as mine	26
I live in a community in which I am the only one whose culture is different from the dominant ethnic/racial cohort	23

The table below shows how respondents identifying as Asian, Pacific Islander, or Native Hawaiian have experienced cultural diversity in their religious institutes.

Since you entered your religious institute, how much of a challenge is each of these to you personally?
 Percentage responding “Somewhat” or “Very Much”, by Ethnicity and Generation since Family Emigrated

	All Asian Respondents (N = 140) %	1st Generation (N = 98) %	2nd Generation (N = 30) %	3rd or More Generation (N = 4) %
Members who I live with not understanding my culture	39	44	27	25
Members who I live with not accepting my culture	26	30	13	0
Members who I live with not accommodating my cultural practices	18	22	10	0
My culture not being welcome in my community	17	20	7	25
My food not being welcome in my community	19	22	7	25
Feeling isolated or lonely	26	27	21	25
Not feeling understood by other members of my institute	29	33	18	25
Not feeling welcomed by other members of my institute	19	21	11	25
Discrimination due to my cultural/ethnic heritage	16	17	14	0
Finding it hard to find a ministry because of my own ethnic background	13	16	4	25
Finding it hard to find a ministry in an institution sponsored by my institute because of my ethnic background	11	13	4	25
Feeling that I am asked too much to accommodate my culture to fit in the dominant ethnic/racial cohort of my institute	22	22	25	0
My not understanding American culture well enough	18	24	0	0
During my initial formation, my formator requiring me to accommodate my culture to that of my institute	17	18	15	0

The table below shows how respondents identifying as Asian, Pacific Islander, or Native Hawaiian have experienced cultural diversity in their religious institutes.

Since you entered your religious institute, how much of a challenge is each of these to you personally?
 Percentage responding “Somewhat” or “Very Much”, by Ethnicity and Generation since Family Emigrated

	Live in a Community with Many Cultures (N = 82) %	Community with at Least One Other Member of their Ethnicity (N = 36) %	Community Where Respondent Only Member of their Ethnicity (N = 32) %
Members who I live with not understanding my culture	37	27	58
Members who I live with not accepting my culture	26	21	30
Members who I live with not accommodating my cultural practices	22	9	16
My culture not being welcome in my community	19	15	16
My food not being welcome in my community	14	15	26
Feeling isolated or lonely	24	24	23
Not feeling understood by other members of my institute	31	29	36
Not feeling welcomed by other members of my institute	19	12	16
Discrimination due to my cultural/ethnic heritage	15	15	13
Finding it hard to find a ministry because of my own ethnic background	17	15	16
Finding it hard to find a ministry in an institution sponsored by my institute because of my ethnic background	13	9	16
Feeling that I am asked too much to accommodate my culture to fit in the dominant ethnic/racial cohort of my institute	18	18	26
My not understanding American culture well enough	23	15	7
During my initial formation, my formator requiring me to accommodate my culture to that of my institute	14	13	16

Hispanic or Latino/a Respondents Only

The table below shows the characteristics of those identifying as Asian, Pacific Islander, or Native Hawaiian.

Characteristics of Hispanics or Latinos/as	
<i>(N = 132)</i>	
<i>Country Where Born</i>	%
United States	63
Mexico	19
Dominican Republic	6
Brazil	2
Colombia	2
Puerto Rico	2
Venezuela	2
All other countries	4
<i>Generation</i>	
1 st generation (emigrated from another country)	37
2 nd generation (parent(s) emigrated from another country)	41
3 rd or more generation (self and parents born in U.S.)	21
I live in a community with members from many different cultural/ethnic backgrounds	59
I live in a community with at least one other member of the same cultural/ethnic background as mine	34
I live in a community in which I am the only one whose culture is different from the dominant ethnic/racial cohort	18

The table below shows how respondents identifying as Hispanic or Latino/a have experienced cultural diversity in their religious institutes.

Since you entered your religious institute, how much of a challenge is each of these to you personally?
 Percentage responding “Somewhat” or “Very Much”, by Ethnicity and Generation since Family Emigrated

	All Hispanic Respondents (N = 132) %	1st Generation (N = 46) %	2nd Generation (N = 54) %	3rd or More Generation (N = 24) %
Members who I live with not understanding my culture	36	50	32	21
Members who I live with not accepting my culture	22	37	14	9
Members who I live with not accommodating my cultural practices	19	38	8	4
My culture not being welcome in my community	15	32	6	4
My food not being welcome in my community	15	20	15	4
Feeling isolated or lonely	25	33	19	22
Not feeling understood by other members of my institute	24	33	17	23
Not feeling welcomed by other members of my institute	16	30	8	9
Discrimination due to my cultural/ethnic heritage	12	20	6	9
Finding it hard to find a ministry because of my own ethnic background	8	17	2	5
Finding it hard to find a ministry in an institution sponsored by my institute because of my ethnic background	10	22	2	4
Feeling that I am asked too much to accommodate my culture to fit in the dominant ethnic/racial cohort of my institute	17	27	13	9
My not understanding American culture well enough	8	18	0	5
During my initial formation, my formator requiring me to accommodate my culture to that of my institute	18	33	7	9

The table below shows how respondents identifying as Hispanic or Latino/a have experienced cultural diversity in their religious institutes.

Since you entered your religious institute, how much of a challenge is each of these to you personally?
 Percentage responding “Somewhat” or “Very Much”, by Ethnicity and Generation since Family Emigrated

	Live in a Community with Many Cultures (N = 77) %	Community with at Least One Other Member of their Ethnicity (N = 44) %	Community Where Respondent Only Member of their Ethnicity (N = 24) %
Members who I live with not understanding my culture	33	36	48
Members who I live with not accepting my culture	19	22	30
Members who I live with not accommodating my cultural practices	16	15	26
My culture not being welcome in my community	15	10	17
My food not being welcome in my community	13	13	26
Feeling isolated or lonely	22	22	30
Not feeling understood by other members of my institute	19	26	35
Not feeling welcomed by other members of my institute	10	20	23
Discrimination due to my cultural/ethnic heritage	9	12	13
Finding it hard to find a ministry because of my own ethnic background	5	11	9
Finding it hard to find a ministry in an institution sponsored by my institute because of my ethnic background	9	11	5
Feeling that I am asked too much to accommodate my culture to fit in the dominant ethnic/racial cohort of my institute	15	21	22
My not understanding American culture well enough	9	5	5
During my initial formation, my formator requiring me to accommodate my culture to that of my institute	15	16	18

African, African American, or Black Respondents Only

The table below shows the characteristics of those identifying as African, African American, or black.

Characteristics of African, African American, or Black Respondents Only	
<i>(N = 45)</i>	
<i>Country Where Born</i>	%
United States	20
Cameroon	13
Kenya	11
Nigeria	11
Haiti	9
Ghana	7
Togo	7
All other countries	22
<i>Generation</i>	
1 st generation (emigrated from another country)	80
2 nd generation (parent(s) emigrated from another country)	4
3 rd or more generation (self and parents born in U.S.)	16
I live in a community with members from many different cultural/ethnic backgrounds	80
I live in a community with at least one other member of the same cultural/ethnic background as mine	18
I live in a community in which I am the only one whose culture is different from the dominant ethnic/racial cohort	20

The table below shows how respondents identifying as African, African American, or black have experienced cultural diversity in their religious institutes.

Since you entered your religious institute, how much of a challenge is each of these to you personally?
 Percentage responding “Somewhat” or “Very Much”, by Ethnicity and Generation since Family Emigrated

	All Black Respondents (N = 45) %	1st Generation (N = 36) %	2nd Generation (N = 2) %	3rd or More Generation (N = 7) %
Members who I live with not understanding my culture	49	47	100	43
Members who I live with not accepting my culture	28	31	50	0
Members who I live with not accommodating my cultural practices	23	24	50	14
My culture not being welcome in my community	17	18	50	0
My food not being welcome in my community	17	21	0	0
Feeling isolated or lonely	31	30	50	29
Not feeling understood by other members of my institute	21	21	50	14
Not feeling welcomed by other members of my institute	15	16	50	0
Discrimination due to my cultural/ethnic heritage	22	19	50	29
Finding it hard to find a ministry because of my own ethnic background	21	20	50	14
Finding it hard to find a ministry in an institution sponsored by my institute because of my ethnic background	14	18	0	0
Feeling that I am asked too much to accommodate my culture to fit in the dominant ethnic/racial cohort of my institute	21	21	50	14
My not understanding American culture well enough	20	25	0	0
During my initial formation, my formator requiring me to accommodate my culture to that of my institute	31	36	0	17

The table below shows how respondents identifying as African, African American, or black have experienced cultural diversity in their religious institutes.

Since you entered your religious institute, how much of a challenge is each of these to you personally?
 Percentage responding “Somewhat” or “Very Much”, by Ethnicity and Generation since Family Emigrated

	Live in a Community with Many Cultures (N = 36) %	Community with at Least One Other Member of their Ethnicity (N = 8) %	Community Where Respondent Only Member of their Ethnicity (N = 9) %
Members who I live with not understanding my culture	50	38	44
Members who I live with not accepting my culture	26	38	22
Members who I live with not accommodating my cultural practices	24	38	11
My culture not being welcome in my community	12	14	22
My food not being welcome in my community	15	14	22
Feeling isolated or lonely	30	29	44
Not feeling understood by other members of my institute	24	14	11
Not feeling welcomed by other members of my institute	19	14	0
Discrimination due to my cultural/ethnic heritage	22	14	11
Finding it hard to find a ministry because of my own ethnic background	23	0	13
Finding it hard to find a ministry in an institution sponsored by my institute because of my ethnic background	17	14	0
Feeling that I am asked too much to accommodate my culture to fit in the dominant ethnic/racial cohort of my institute	23	0	11
My not understanding American culture well enough	21	13	25
During my initial formation, my formator requiring me to accommodate my culture to that of my institute	33	14	33

Challenges in Religious Life Encountered as a Religious of Cultural/Ethnic Heritage

The difference in reporting challenges is more obvious among religious members of the non-dominant culture/ethnicity than Caucasian/white members in their responses to the open-ended question. Being asked to briefly identify the challenges in religious life that they encountered as a religious of a different cultural/ethnic heritage, 231 responding members of the non-dominant culture/ethnicity responded to this question.

Responding Religious Members of Non-Dominant Culture/Ethnicity

Among 231 responding members of the non-dominant culture responding to the open-ended question, 33 reported no challenges, while others report various challenges. One of the main challenges the responding religious members of the non-dominant culture/ethnicity report is that their culture is not understood in their community:

I felt like isolated and misunderstood because my white middle class peers had very limited understanding of my culture. Some older members of the community sometimes refer to me as "brown boy" in an endearing way, but it still makes me feel uncomfortable in a subtle way, because it reminds me that I am a minority in this group.

Lack of understanding of the mentality and values of my culture/other minority cultures. Lack of understanding of how my culture celebrates life (birthdays) and death. Using the dominant culture as the default way of celebrating feasts. Sometimes a presumption that the dominant culture is the best.

My Novice brothers do not understand where I come from. They only see me as somewhat boring, kind but unsophisticated man. I can only show my brothers who I truly am, as much as they are willing to see me as who I am. And I am only half American. I am Korean American. So, if I am accepted only as an American, then my brothers always only see me as half-self.

My sisters do not understand that I am mostly culturally American with some Chinese roots. They have never encountered anyone like me. Other sisters are only used to meeting our Korean Sisters who were born in Korea.

*Of the literally thousands of other men in my religious institute in the United States and Canada, I can only think of a few who have my heritage, being born here in the States. The isolation is masked by the label generic label of "Asian." Even when we talk about diversity, it's usually about White, Latino, and Black, and being Asian gets lumped with Latino & Black into yet another generic term: non-White. I'm also asked to learn about other cultures and languages, with my superiors not realizing that learning White American culture *IS* me learning another culture/language.*

The challenge in religious life is living with people with different cultures and personality however it will not bring a problem if each member of the community can understand one

another and the guideline in the congregation really encourage each member to appreciate each different in the community.

The greatest challenge is ignorance on the part of our members about cultures other than their own. It's not that they are not welcoming or not accepting. They just sometimes don't have knowledge that differences exist in some areas of life.

The only challenge I can think of is there are at times misunderstandings because my culture can tend to be very rigid and rule following. That can come off as being cold or distant or impersonal.

Understanding the culture, I am in but those I live with not understanding my culture. Being part of a group with a dominant culture that is not mine means I often stretch. The challenge of retaining what is good in my culture and enriching others with this even when there is not much around me to remind me of where I came from.

Due to the misunderstandings or lack of understandings of other cultures, there seems to be little appreciation or acceptance of cultures:

Formators has no appreciation of cultural differences and power dynamics in relationships with the men. They had no idea how to care for me, or that I would need a different type of relationship or communication mode.

I think the challenge arises from the fact that I am Although I am Latino American I didn't grow up with the predominant Mexican-American culture and I was raised speaking English. I think that is harder for some professed Latino members to accept and appreciate.

My community did not challenge me classmates to accept things from my culture sometimes. For example, in initial formation you were to cook once in three months and so I will cook food from my country, sometimes the members of my community all skip meals when it was my turn or another member from Africa's turn to cook.

Not a whole lot of interest in my culture. Not asked to speak or teach community about my culture.

Seeing foods/practices of my culture as disgusting or despised or joked about made me sad, but it strengthened my hope in My Spouse.

I feel that my culture is not somewhat not accepted. Sometimes, I feel like being force to speak their language.

My biggest challenge is to help my brother realize that I am Latino rather than grouping me into the dominant culture.

Lack of cultural understanding also leads to various assumptions and individual mindsets about other cultures:

Because both of my parents come from cultures that are generally more "reserved" than "mainstream American" culture, I tend to communicate in a more restrained / less emotionally expressive way than most of the other Sisters in our community. I think this has sometimes been misinterpreted as lack of interest or enthusiasm. - There have been some times when other Sisters have made inaccurate assumptions about my views or feelings about various things based on my cultural background.

A lot of assumptions of where I come from, what I like or how I pray.

Assumptions being made about my particular ethnic background or upbringing, rather than asking clarifying questions in order to be informed.

Assumptions made about cultural preferences, important ethnoreligious celebrations not observed, ethnic foods seen as too "exotic."

Assumptions made of what is important for members of the community.

It has been somewhat challenging to realize that I was not aware of some social norms that are commonplace in my community, and being of a more reserved temperament, I am more hesitant to ask questions and clarify what is truly expected, and can tend to be insecure about whether I am doing something acceptable or proper.

Most of the challenge comes from other members of my religious institute being unaware of their own prejudices and biases against Asian Americans or those of us of mixed racial heritage.

Responding religious feel that their ethnic culture is not accommodated, especially food:

Religious superiors making decisions that do not take into account the cultural baggage that I bring. For example, I was not able to attend a funeral of a very close relative because it was held outside the US. Superiors making assumptions about certain things about me because they make a generalization about my culture.

Being open minded about the reactions that others may have about the smells and taste of ethnic foods.

I experience loneliness often not necessary because of cultural heritage. I have the challenge of not having my cultural food at my disposal always.

Living in areas like North East and Midwest United States and not finding cultural food readily available.

The biggest challenge, which in fact isn't that big of a problem, is not always being able to share my food with the community. YET, the brothers are very kind to at least try and allow us to cook for ourselves if we need to.

There are other brothers that are not tolerant of cultural food and other cultural practices. They look at it as barbaric. I found it difficult with conferees that are German-American descent. They are setting the standard of what is a religious community in my institute.

Very different type of food from what I used to eat daily. Eating my preference is discouragement from the beginning to avoid special treatments.

One significant factor is that their language and acculturation is not fully supported and accommodated:

An ignorance which can lead US born Sisters to say/do offensive things. Some young Sisters constantly ask you to say certain things so they can hear it in your accent, then to laugh about how it sounds. Laughing at word choice from non-American English. All this is almost always out of ignorance, not malice. Difficulty with being understood and a perceived lack of patience from US born Sisters.

I think the main issue for us had been in formation. Even though I grew up in the US, I was once asked by formation to take speech classes.

People don't understand my culture. Loneliness. Life of individualism. Difficulties to get my cultural food.

Communication in the English language is a problem because I don't understand some vocabulary.

Differences in language, feel that because my accent they don't understand me.

Language barrier. Even though I can understand most of it, I am still struggling with slang words and jokes. If I don't laugh, people can misunderstand for my ignorance or dislike.

Learning a new language (English), Not being about to understand English / what people say in English.

Miscommunication regarding my linguistic background.

Missing hearing Tagalog spoken, missing Filipino food. Different ways of showing respect and deference. Not having a common history or memory being the only Filipino sister.

One of my challenges as a Missionary sister is learning of new Language when I arrives in a new mission.

More severely is the racism in religious life that responding religious members encounter in their community:

A deliberate resistance to learn about the problem of racism and how to avoid it. One thing is to say that someone is ignorant. Another to realize that that person does not want to know and is actively working to remain ignorant. This is the most painful thing I encounter: the desire to remain ignorant of the sufferings of racial minorities in the US and of solutions to solve the problem.

Racism - Hair, stereotyping.

Racism and failure to acknowledge or address it. Failure of sisters to identify my nationality so opting to say our African sisters. Criticism and gossip of my way of being prescriptive leadership instead of mutual discernment. Infantilization.

Subtle racism from other members and people I minister to.

Suspicion of Spanish being spoken around them. The sense that "real candidates to the institute" would be from a European American or European background, but since there aren't any suitable candidates they settle for what comes.

The general hostility toward European Hispanidad and belittlement of it, as well as a general preference for Ibero-American culture by Anglo Americans. there is also a consistent tendency of Anglo-Americans to view the Spanish colonial experiment as being the same as the English colonization of the Americas, demonizing Spain and its heritage.

The liturgical life of my parish and college was very robust. That of my religious institute is not, which is a challenge. What is more challenging are the effects of American political divisions upon the unity amongst members of my religious institute.

The only challenge, if any, has been explained people the diversity among Latinos. We are not all "Mexicans."

The problem that I see is that those of us minorities are often pigeonholed into certain ministries.

The subtle racism of older members of the institute.

When I did philosophy studies in [City], I experienced racism from [Community Members] particularly from the Midwest. I remember it was my turn to cook Sunday meal for the entire community, all 40 of us. I made Filipino food. One of my brothers from the Midwest walked through the door before we were going to say grace. He took one look at the food and then turned and said to me, "I am looking forward to having dog tonight." My jaw dropped. I could not believe the blatant racism, the lack of care especially since I spent so much time cooking, and the dismissive tone he said it in. Those kinds of experiences stay with me.

Responding religious members of the non-dominant culture/ethnicity report another challenge that they are expected to adapt to the dominant culture in their community:

Provincial Liturgies (like vow masses and ordinations) are almost always (almost without exception) done in the main land. Relatives and friends that live in other American territories or Central American countries are left with the responsibility to pay more money and make bigger sacrifices to come to the Provincial liturgies. Space for non-English language hymns, music, and instruments is "tokenistic." It is described as an event of the Province, but an "event of the US region" of our province suits it better. The ironic part of this, is that the poorest people of the province, are asked to make the biggest sacrifices, and to make it worse, this is the dominant rule for these kinds of events. When apostolic priorities are discussed among fellow "brothers in formation," one has to literally argue sometimes in order to get the interests of minorities heard. Otherwise, only idealistic and generic things (like "let us pray better") are mentioned as priorities that do not touch the urgent sufferings of minorities (racism against African Americans, undocumented people being put into cages, colonialism of Puerto Rico, etc.).

It is expected that we do all to assimilate the dominant culture.

It is not the outright racism that is a problem. It's the subtle things that make you feel you always have to adapt to the dominant culture. This leaves me feeling isolated and uncomfortable in my community.

It is hard to incorporate or want to share an ethnic culture when you are the only one. It is even harder when the northern hemisphere isn't as familiar or exposed to the ethnic culture.

Sometimes, I find that I will have to be the one to make accommodations in order to live amicably with the sisters.

Speak the language of the country where you are. See and integrate all culture and members in the community at the same level.

The challenge comes from how one self-identifies. 99% of my community is U.S. Hispanic; however, the challenges come from the number of generations away "from" Mexico one counts. My grandparents were born in the U.S. Most of my community members' parents were born in Mexico and emigrated to the U.S. When I identify myself as American, which includes a preference for the "Spanglish" language and prayers, and cosmopolitan food and entertainment, etc., then I am deemed a "traitor" to my Mexican roots or "arrogant" in my choices.

The challenge hasn't been directed at me personally. Usually it comes out when speaking of ministries where my Sisters served a "minority" population and the unintentional biases and prejudices come out in the conversation. I'm also challenged in that my own "culture" and heritage are still an evolving category, commonly referred to as Mexican-American, which is

a title I reject. This rejection of the title is not of the culture, but of being labeled in a way that does not encompass who I am. This leave a challenge to actually discuss "who I am" because with my brown skin and the food that I eat, "they" would "label" me as "Mexican" which of course, as I was born in the USA, I am not Mexican. I know this isn't brief. I tried.

The Sisters of the local dominant American culture speaking ignorantly of other parts of the world or in a tone that would suggest that the American way is the way or the best way or that "America is the best" attitude.

Responding Caucasian/White Religious Members

Altogether, 380 Caucasian/white respondents responded to the open-ended question regarding the challenges to members of a different cultural/ethnic heritage. While the majority of the respondents report no challenges, a few mentioned the challenges in regional culture and the challenges in different generations in the community.

Some respondents report their cultural challenges as a result of different regions where they are from:

As a Southerner living with Jesuits from the Northwest I sometimes find my home culture at odds with my adopted culture.

At times I am challenged by the feeling that I should give up my cultural heritage and assimilate to the Midwestern American culture dominant in my religious community. This occurs somewhat with regards to traditional foods, but also from a lack of understanding of cultural patterns of social interaction, e.g. I come from a culture which is more affectionately expressive, vocal about feelings and opinions, has strong family loyalty, etc. Sometimes even sharing about my past family/cultural experiences feels alienating because it can be so different, even incomprehensible, to many of the other community members' own experiences.

Even though I am very North American, I am from a region of the USA only one other sister is from and I have noticed cultural differences even in that distinction which have been challenging - having different values and priorities than the "community culture" of

I am from the South and that is a different culture from the North in America. I find it a bit hard because our foods/experiences are different and sometimes not appreciated.

I think my only challenge was a personal cultural challenge of moving from a rural Midwest American culture and way of doing things to living in the heart of NY city.

I'm from a very rural area. My experiences and cultural upbringing are different than "mainstream" America. The challenges I had were solved through communication and dialogue in my community.

My responses above only reflect my experience as someone who is from a different region of the US as compared to the location of my community (all the Sisters are also from this region), so that should be taken into account. We are all Caucasian and from the US, so the differences, of course, are not as strong as if I had a different ethnic background or was from another country. Because many Sisters seem very region-centric (and they don't know it!), it would be interesting to see their openness to others from different cultures/countries.

Another main challenge that Caucasian/white respondents report is the generational culture that they experience in their religious institute:

Although my Institute is "American," and I am "American," my personal experience was that the members of my Institute were very ignorant of modern American culture. As a "millennial," I felt that the members of my Institute were VERY critical of American young adults, of technology advances, of the values that young adults hold, of everything "American." The perspective of the Sisters seemed to be, "America is a culture of death." I find that contrary to my personal experience and it was very hurtful to me.

Here is another aspect you could consider. My cultural challenges in community came from being of a different GENERATION. I am a millennial. The next youngest member of my community is older than my mother. But this is also a genuine difference in culture.

I am the same culture as my peers. The only thing is I am much younger than many of the sisters. This brought its own unique set of challenges.

I have experienced generational challenges more than cultural challenges. My generation is criticized and put-down often. I do not believe the other community members are aware they do this.

I think of culture as being a younger member that must accommodate to a culture that is more elderly. Since our median age is in their 70s, being a younger member, I feel we must accommodate to meet the needs of our elderly sisters who are still in ministry rather than compromising.

Most of the men in our community are Caucasian, yet differences in religious practice and articulation are very difficult to overcome. The young found it very difficult to relate to some of the solemnly professed members of the community and the question was often raised "Why join this community when I can pray more and connect better with others were I not here." There has been a fairly large sense of ingratitude among some of the older men of the community.

My greatest cultural challenges came from generational and ideological differences. It can be a challenge for sisters who are older than me to understand my culture as a Millennial. It was a challenge when I first entered to recognize my culture as a Millennial and as someone raised in a low-practicing Catholic household. I had to learn to appreciate religiosity,

popular piety, devotional life and to recognize that not everyone thinks the way I do about political issues, global awareness, and other ideological/ways of thinking that my family instilled in me.

The generational gap is the biggest challenge I experience because the culture I was raised in vastly differs from the majority of my congregation

The largest challenge for me is that my understanding of the world is different as a result of my age. This can be isolating, as I don't have anyone in my generational cohort in the congregation, which makes it hard to have the shared understanding that was possible for the sisters of older generations.

While many people focus on ethnic cultures, I have found the greatest difficulty with the generational cultures, the generational ways of thinking. The older friars tend to be very progressive while younger people, myself included, tend to be more conservative. This has not been accepted by most of the older friars and is often the point of contention.

Appendix I: Response Frequencies to All Questions



Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate *Cultural Diversity in Vocations to Religious Life*

This survey is part of a study that seeks to understand how new religious members of a diverse cultural/ethnic heritage discern a vocation to religious life, and what their experience of cultural diversity in their religious institutes has been. If you do not know how to answer a question or if it does not apply to you, **please leave it blank**.

Parish on Vocation Promotion

1. Before entering religious life, which parish has had the greatest impact on your discernment of a vocation to religious life? Please include the name, city, state and country: **NR=2**

2. What age did you attend this parish? *Please check all that apply.* **NR=4**

- 41 Elementary school age
- 43 Middle school age
- 48 High school age
- 42 College age
- 37 Adulthood

7 *Please use the responses below for questions 3 - 20.*

1=Not at All **3=Somewhat**
2=Only a Little **4=Very Much**
NR=Non-response percentage

Thinking of the parish you named above, how much impact did these factors have on your vocational discernment before you entered religious life?

- | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NR | |
|----|----|----|----|----|--|
| 7 | 16 | 35 | 41 | 8 | 3. Overall support and encouragement from the parish |
| 11 | 15 | 24 | 50 | 8 | 4. Clergy at my parish supporting and encouraging me to discern my religious vocation |
| 15 | 15 | 24 | 46 | 14 | 5. Witnessing the presence of religious sisters, or brothers, or priests in the parish |
| 15 | 15 | 25 | 45 | 11 | 6. Conversations with priests or religious brothers or sisters at the parish |
| 45 | 21 | 18 | 15 | 28 | 7. Religious vocation promotion events at the parish |
| 52 | 24 | 17 | 7 | 25 | 8. Vocational literature at the parish |
| 4 | 9 | 26 | 62 | 6 | 9. Masses and liturgies at the parish |
| 37 | 10 | 19 | 35 | 43 | 10. Masses and liturgies in the language of my ethnic/cultural heritage at the parish |
| 40 | 17 | 19 | 25 | 40 | 11. Celebrating ethnic Catholic traditions at the parish |
| 26 | 18 | 26 | 31 | 19 | 12. Prayer groups at this parish |

- | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NR | 1 |
|--|----|-------------------|----|----|--|
| 52 | 18 | 14 | 16 | 41 | 13. Devotion to a saint of my ethnicity/culture at the parish |
| 43 | 18 | 23 | 17 | 32 | 14. Its ministry and formation programs for children, ages 4-12 |
| 37 | 15 | 21 | 27 | 30 | 15. Its ministry and formation programs for teenagers, ages 13-17 |
| 37 | 14 | 18 | 32 | 30 | 16. Its ministry programs for young adults, ages 18-35 |
| 13 | 18 | 28 | 41 | 11 | 17. Individual parishioners supporting and encouraging me to discern my religious vocation |
| 16 | 11 | 25 | 48 | 15 | 18. Participating in the liturgical ministry at the parish (e.g., lector, extraordinary minister, music) |
| 38 | 15 | 22 | 25 | 33 | 19. Adult faith formation in this parish |
| 23 | 18 | 26 | 34 | 18 | 20. Service opportunities |
| 21. Overall, how much of an impact did the parish have on your vocational discernment? NR=2 | | | | | |
| 3 No Impact | | 39 Some Impact | | | |
| 14 Little Impact | | 44 A Great Impact | | | |
| | | 2 Not Applicable | | | |

22. Briefly identify the aspects of this parish that had the most impact on your vocational discernment.
NR=9

23. Briefly identify the activities you wish the parish might have done to support your vocational discernment.
NR=28

Family on Vocation Promotion

Please use the responses below for questions 24 - 40

1=No Impact **3=Some Impact**
2=A Little Impact **4=A Great Impact**
NR=Non-response percentage

While you were growing up in your family, how much impact did these factors have on your vocational discernment before you entered religious life?

1 2 3 4 NR

42 19 22 18 37 24. My father encouraging me to consider a vocation to priesthood or religious life

33 19 25 24 33 25. My mother encouraging me to consider a vocation to priesthood or religious life

40 17 22 21 36 26. Other family members encouraging me to consider a vocation to priesthood or religious life. Please list these family members (siblings, aunt, etc):

86 4 6 4 23 27. My mother having been a former religious sister/candidate

74 9 11 6 25 28. My father having been a former seminarian/religious/candidate

7 16 26 51 11 29. My parents instilling in me a prayer life

47 12 18 24 37 30. Witnessing my siblings or relatives as religious or priests

24 22 25 30 41 31. My parents inviting religious and priests to our home

9 9 21 62 17 32. Getting to know a priest or a religious brother or sister/nun beside family members

6 11 23 60 11 33. Attending Masses or other religious services as a family

9 18 27 46 18 34. Active participation in parish life as family

18 25 27 30 29 35. Volunteer or charitable service as a family

13 24 28 35 26 36. Daily prayers as a family

28 18 27 27 44 37. Pilgrimages (for example, Marian shrines)

16 25 32 27 21 38. Home altars/religious art (for example, crucifix, statues, pictures of saints)

9 18 29 45 13 39. Sense of religiosity in my family

60 20 13 7 57 40. An expectation from my family that their daughter or son might be a priest or a religious

41. Overall, how much of an impact did your family have on your vocational discernment? **NR=9**

9 No Impact 34 Some Impact
 20 Little Impact 38 A Great Impact
 3 Not Applicable

42. Briefly identify the aspects of your family life that had the most impact on your vocational discernment?

NR=12

43. Briefly identify the challenges you encountered from your family while discerning your religious vocation?

NR=15

Cultural Diversity in Religious Vocations

Please use the responses below for questions 45 - 63

1=Not at All Open **3=Somewhat Open**
2=Only a Little Open **4=Very Open**
5=Non-response percentage

In your experience, how open is your institute to the followings?

1 2 3 4 NR

2 9 24 66 10 45. Recruiting candidates from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute

2 8 23 68 7 46. Welcoming those in initial formation who are from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute

14 20 31 34 14 47. Accepting candidates with limited English skills

5 23 38 34 11 48. Accommodating customs and practices of new members from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial group of the institute

15 25 30 30 31 49. Providing an acculturation program for new members from outside the United States

17 21 23 38 21 50. Celebrating liturgies in a language other than or in addition to English

1 2 3 4 NR

17 21 24 37 20 51. Having bi-lingual or multilingual prayers

16 26 33 25 23 52. Using a prayer practice from another culture

3 10 23 65 11 53. Celebrating the feast day of the patron saint of another country or culture

3 14 24 59 7 54. Integrating foods from other cultures into the community's meals

16 25 27 33 18 55. Celebrating with ethnic dance or song

4 19 30 48 12 56. Educating community members about another culture

13 25 29 33 32 57. Providing a mentor from the same culture, if possible, for those in initial formation

6 20 29 45 16 58. Celebrating the holidays of different cultures

3 16 27 54 9 59. Openly discussing cultural differences

3 11 22 64 10 60. Encouraging members to learn another language

12 29 27 33 34 61. Establishing a discernment group with people of diverse cultures

3 10 19 69 14 62. Accommodating family visit(s) for those whose families live in another country

2 11 26 61 9 63. Encouraging members to share their culture in community life

64. Which of these best describe your current living situation? *Check all that apply.* NR=4

50 I live in a community with members from many different cultural/ethnic backgrounds

48 I live in a community with at least one other member of the same cultural/ethnic background as mine

7 I live in a community in which I am the only one whose culture is different from the dominant ethnic/racial cohort

12 Other _____

65. Briefly identify how your religious institute could better accommodate new members from different cultures.

NR=38

About You

66. Are you: 47 Male 53 Female

67. Year you were born: _____ NR=4

68. What is your first language? _____ NR=3

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

59 One 30 Two 8 Three 4 Four or more

Yes No

77 23 70. Were you employed before you entered? NR=25

70a. *If yes to #70, were you employed?* NR=25

75 Full-time 25 Part-time

53 47 71. Were you in ministry before you entered? NR=2

71a. *If yes to #71, were you engaged in ministry?* NR=49

27 Full-time 16 Part-time 58 Volunteer

Yes No

91 9 72. Were you raised Catholic? NR=2

72a. *If no to #72, what was your prior religious affiliation:*

91 9 73. Was your mother Catholic? NR=2

73a. *If no to #73, what was her religious preference?*

74. How important was religion to your mother while you were growing up? NR=2

4. Not at all 22. Somewhat important

9. Only a little 66. Very important

84 16 75. Was your father Catholic? NR=2

75a. *If no to #75, what was his religious preference?*

76. How important was religion to your father while you were growing up? NR=3

11. Not at all 26. Somewhat important

16. Only a little 48. Very important

77. What best describes your racial or ethnic background?

4 African/African American/black

11 Asian/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian

69 Caucasian/European American/white

11 Hispanic/Latino(a)

0 Native American/American Indian

2 Mixed race

3 Other _____ NR=2

78. How would you describe your cultural/ethnic/racial background or heritage? NR=16

79. What was the highest level of education you completed before you entered your religious institute? **NR=2**

- 11. High school or less
- 15. Some college
- 49. Bachelor's degree
- 19. Master's degree
- 4. Doctoral degree
- 2. Other: _____

Yes No

78 23 80. Were you born in the United States? **NR=2**

80a. *If no to #80*, country of birth: _____

80b. *If no to #80*, year you first moved to United States _____

80c. *If no to #80*, which of these best describes your current legal status? *Please check only one response.*

NR=78

- 45 U.S. citizen
- 15 Legal permanent resident ("green card")
- 15 Non-immigrant religious worker (R1 visa)
- 16 Non-immigrant student (F1 visa)
- 9 Other: _____

Yes No

70 30 81. Was your mother born in the United States?

NR=2

81a. *If no to #81*, her country of birth: _____

71 29 82. Was your father born in the United States?

NR=2

82a. *If no to #82*, his country of birth: _____

Please use the responses below for questions 83 - 96.

- 1=Not at All** **3=Somewhat**
- 2=Only a Little** **4=Very Much**
- 5=Non-response percentage**

Since you entered your religious institute, how much of a challenge is each of these to you personally?

1 2 3 4 NR

- 56 25 14 5 11 83. Members who I live with not understanding my culture
- 74 15 8 4 14 84. Members who I live with not accepting my culture
- 77 14 6 3 15 85. Members who I live with not accommodating my cultural practices
- 83 9 5 3 15 86. My culture not being welcome in my community
- 81 11 6 2 16 87. My food not being welcome in my community
- 50 30 14 7 12 88. Feeling isolated or lonely

1 2 3 4 NR

- 48 33 12 7 11 89. Not feeling understood by other members of my institute
- 76 14 6 4 13 90. Not feeling welcomed by other members of my institute
- 87 8 3 3 16 91. Discrimination due to my cultural/ethnic heritage
- 91 4 2 3 17 92. Finding it hard to find a ministry because of my own ethnic background
- 92 4 2 3 18 93. Finding it hard to find a ministry in an institution sponsored by my institute because of my ethnic background
- 81 11 5 4 18 94. Feeling that I am asked too much to accommodate my culture to fit in the dominant ethnic/racial cohort of my institute
- 84 9 3 3 20 95. My not understanding American culture well enough
- 78 12 7 3 20 96. During my initial formation, my formator requiring me to accommodate my culture to that of my institute

97. Briefly identify the challenges in religious life, if any, that you have encountered as a religious of a different cultural/ethnic heritage. **NR=47**

98. Would you be willing to participate in a focus group?
73 Yes 27 No **NR=4**

If yes to #98, please provide your contact information:

Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

City/state where you reside: _____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!

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