

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



**A Report to the Secretariat of Clergy, Consecrated Life
and Vocations
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops**

Thu T. Do, LHC, Ph.D.
Thomas P. Gaunt, SJ, Ph.D.

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***Women and Men Professing Perpetual Vows
in Religious Life:
The Profession Class of 2024***

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***Women and Men Professing Perpetual Vows
in Religious Life: The Profession Class of 2024***

Executive Summary

This report presents findings from a national survey of women and men religious who professed perpetual vows in 2024 in a religious institute, province, or monastery based in the United States. To obtain the names and contact information for these men and women, the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) contacted all major superiors of men and women religious institutes in the United States that were identified by the USCCB Secretariat of Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations. Each major superior was asked to provide contact information for every member of the institute who was scheduled to profess perpetual vows in 2024. CARA then contacted these men and women religious by e-mail or mail to explain the project and ask them to complete a brief survey.

After repeated follow-ups, CARA received a response from 533 of 723 major superiors, for an overall response rate of 75% among religious institutes. In all, the major superiors provided contact information for 194 members (91 women and 103 men) who professed perpetual vows in religious life in 2024.

Of these 194 identified women and men religious, a total of 140 religious members, including 73 sisters and nuns and 67 brothers and priests, responded to the survey by January 15, 2025. This represents a response rate of 72% of the 194 members of the Profession Class of 2024 that were reported to CARA by major superiors of men and women religious.

Major Findings

Demographic Background

- A total of 413 major superiors (81% of respondents) report that they had no one professing perpetual vows in 2024. One in ten responding institutes (8%) had one perpetual profession. Forty-four major superiors (9%) report from two to 11 members professing perpetual vows in 2024. In total, the responding religious institutes report 194 members (91 women and 103 men) who professed perpetual vows in religious life in 2024.
- The average age of responding religious of the Profession Class of 2024 is 37. Half of the responding religious are age 34 or younger. The youngest is 25 and the oldest is 69.
- Seven in ten responding religious (69%) were born in the United States. Twelve percent were born in Asia. Ten percent were born in Latin America. Six percent were born in Africa.
- Three in five responding religious (64%) report their primary race or ethnicity as Caucasian, European American, or white. One in ten or less identifies as Asian/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian (14%), as Hispanic/Latino(a) (11%), as African/African American/black (6%), and as mixed race or other (5%).
- Nine in ten responding religious (92%) have been Catholic since birth. Among those who became Catholic later in life, their average age at the time of their conversion was 22.

Family Background

- Almost all respondents (92%) report that when they were children, they had at least one parent who was Catholic. Nearly nine in ten (87%) report that both parents were Catholic.
- Three in ten (31%) report having a relative who is a priest or a religious.
- Almost all (97%) respondents were raised by their biological parents during the most formative part of their childhood. Besides, one in ten (9%) reported being raised by their grandparents during the most formative part of their childhood.
- During the most formative part of their childhood, nine in ten (90%) respondents were raised by a married couple, living together.
- Almost all responding religious (96%) of the Profession Class of 2024 have at least one sibling. A quarter (27%) has one brother or sister. A third (32%) report having two or three. Another a third (37%) have four or more siblings.
- A third of respondents (35%) are the eldest in their family. Another third (35%) were born somewhere in the middle. A quarter (25%) are the youngest. Five percent are the only child in his or her family.

Educational Background

- Two in five respondents (43%) attended a Catholic elementary or middle school. Two in five (38%) attended a Catholic high school. Two in five (41%) attended a Catholic college or university.
- More than three in five respondents (64%) participated in a religious education program/CCD/RCIA in their parish. Almost two in ten (17%) report participating in a Catholic ministry formation program before they entered their religious institute.
- Approximately one in eight (12%) reports being home schooled at some time in their educational background. Among those who were home schooled, the average length of time they were home schooled was eight years.
- Seven in ten (73%) earned an undergraduate or graduate degree before entering their religious institute.
- One in ten responding religious (11%) report that educational debt delayed their application for entrance to the religious institute for three years on average while they paid down an average of \$46,327 in educational debt. Friends and family members are the most common source of assistance for paying down educational debt.

Work and Ministry Experiences

- Four in five (82%) had work experience prior to entering their religious institute. More than half (55%) were employed full-time and about a quarter (27%) were employed part-time before entering their religious institute. Among those who report work experience, the main work fields are business, education, and healthcare.
- Nearly nine in ten responding religious (85%) served in one or more specified ministries before entering their religious institute, either in a paid ministry position or as a volunteer. The most common ministry experiences reported by respondents were as lector (55%), altar server (54%), youth ministry/campus ministry (45%), and Extraordinary minister (42%).
- Three in four (74%) participated in one or more religious programs or activities before entering their religious institute, with the most common ministry being the youth ministry or youth group (49%), with half participating in this ministry.

Vocational Discernment

- Almost all responding religious of the Profession Class of 2024 (94%) participated in one or more prayer practices or groups on a regular basis prior to entering their religious institute.

- On average, respondents report that they were 19 years old when they first considered a vocation to religious life, with half being 18 or younger when they first did so.
- About eight in ten (84%) responding religious report that someone encouraged them to consider a vocation to religious life. More than two in five report being encouraged by a religious sister or brother (59%), friend (59%), and parish priest (38%).
- Nearly six in ten (57%) report that they were discouraged from considering a vocation to religious life by one or more persons. Women are more likely than men to report being discouraged from discerning a religious vocation (61% compared with 43% of men religious).
- On average, responding religious report that they knew the members of their religious institute five years before they entered.
- Most (93%) had participated in at least one of vocational discernment programs prior to entering their religious institute. Among the vocation programs and experiences about which they were asked, respondents are most likely to have participated in a “Come and See” experience (78%).

Introduction

Since 2010, the Secretariat of Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has commissioned the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University to conduct a survey of women and men religious who profess perpetual vows each year in a religious congregation, province, or monastery based in the United States. For this project, CARA was asked to gather information about the characteristics and experiences of these religious and report the findings to the Secretariat for use with the World Day of Consecrated Life in February. For this year's survey, CARA then programmed the questionnaires into an online survey to give respondents the option of completing the survey either online or on paper. This report presents results of this survey of women and men religious of the Profession Class of 2024.

To obtain the names and contact information for these women and CARA contacted all major superiors of men and women religious institutes in the United States that were identified by the USCCB Secretariat of Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations. Each major superior was asked to provide contact information for every member of the institute who was scheduled to profess perpetual vows in 2024. CARA then contacted these men and women religious by e-mail or mail to explain the project and ask them to complete a brief survey.

After repeated follow-ups, CARA received a response from 533 of 723 major superiors, for an overall response rate of 75% among religious institutes. In all, the major superiors provided contact information for 194 members (91 women and 103 men) who professed perpetual vows in religious life in 2024.

Of these 194 identified women and men religious, a total of 140 religious members, including 73 sisters and nuns and 67 brothers and priests, responded to the survey by January 15, 2025. This represents a response rate of 72% of the 194 members of the Profession Class of 2024 that were reported to CARA by major superiors of men and women religious.

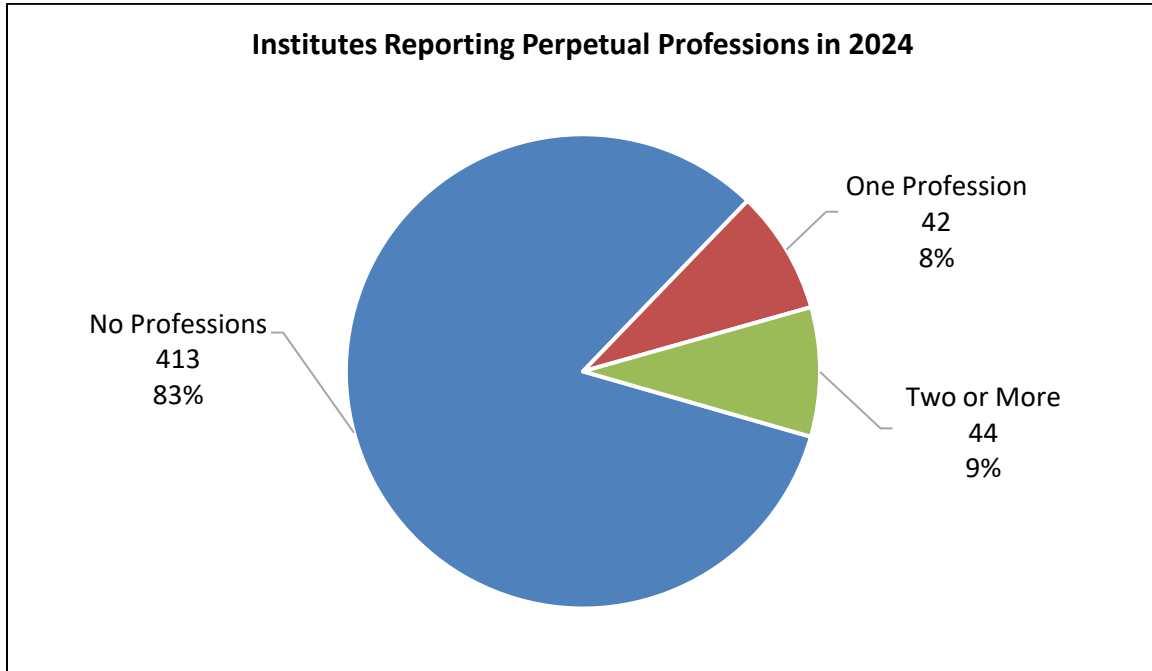
The questionnaire asked these religious about their demographic and religious background, education and work experience, previous ministry or service and other formative experiences, encouragement and discouragement to consider religious life, initial acquaintance with their institutes, and vocation/discernment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

Part I: Demographics of Responding Religious

In Part I, the demographic characteristics of the religious institutes responding as well as the responding women and men religious are described.

Institutes Reporting Perpetual Profession

CARA asked the 723 religious institutes, provinces, or monasteries in the United States to provide the names of members who professed or were planning to profess perpetual vows in 2024. A total of 539 major superiors responded (a 75% response rate) with 194 names of perpetually professed sisters, priests, and brothers.



Among the institutes responding to the question on if they had any members making perpetual profession in 2024, a total of 413 major superiors (82% of respondents) report that they had no one professing perpetual vows in 2024. One in ten institutes (8%) had one perpetual profession. Forty-four major superiors (9%) report from two to 11 members professing perpetual vows in 2024.

The sisters and nuns who responded to the survey represent 41 different religious institutes, provinces, or monasteries. Similarly, the brothers and priests who responded come from 31 different religious institutes, provinces, or monasteries.

Among the institutes having members making perpetual profession in 2024, 55% are women's institutes while 45% are men's institutes. Nine in ten (88%) are active while one in ten is contemplative. Among these institutes, three in ten (31%) are smaller sized (less than 50 professed members), four in ten (42%) are medium sized (51-150 professed members), and three in ten (27%) are larger sized (more than 151 professed members).

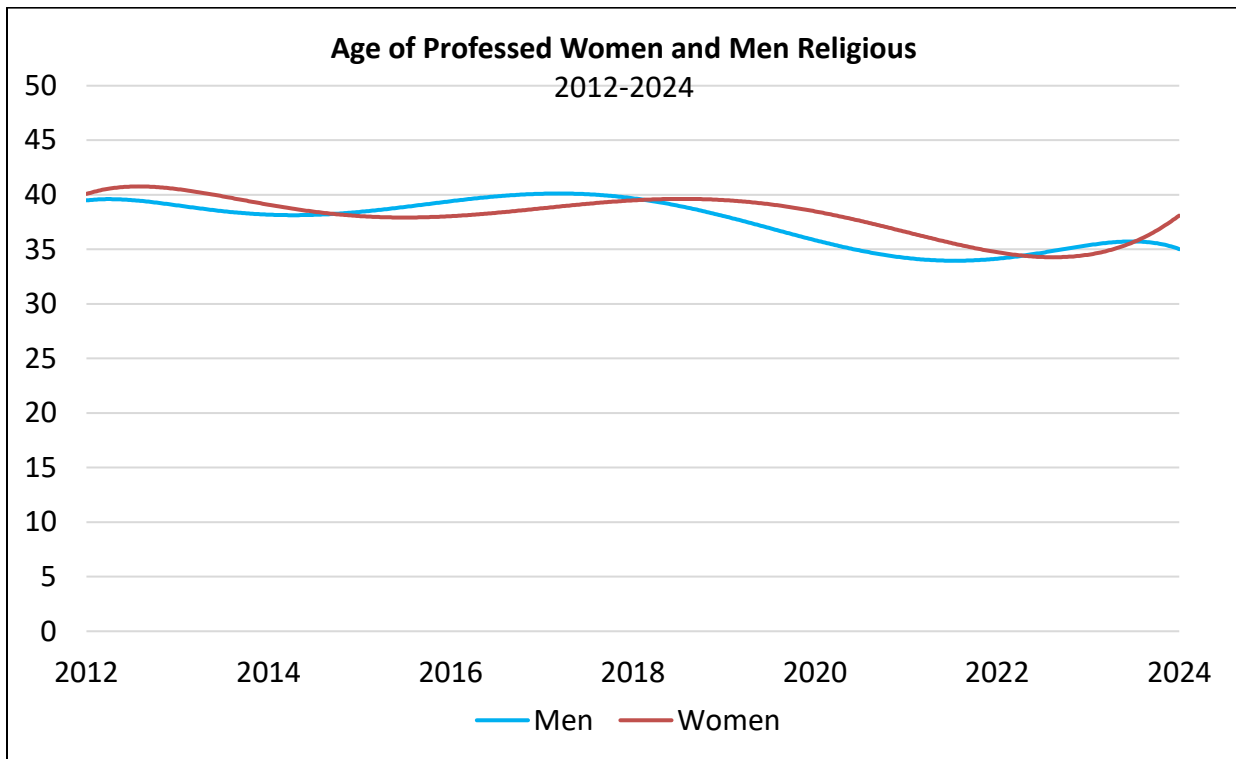
Three-fourths of the responding institutes (75%) having perpetual profession in 2024 have a combination of primary apostolates that include healthcare, education, and pastoral ministry. One in ten reports their primary apostolate is pastoral ministry (14%) or education (11%).

Age of Perpetual Profession

Responding religious making perpetual profession in 2024 were, on average, 37 years old. Half were 34 years or younger.

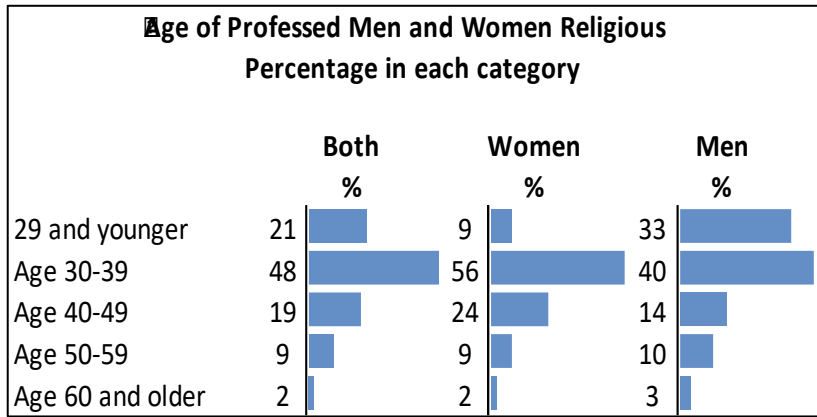
Age of Professed Women and Men <i>Percentage in each age category</i>			
	Both	Women	Men
Average age	37	38	36
Median age	34	35	32
Range in ages	25-69	26-69	25-66

As can be seen in the figure below, the average age of the newly perpetually professed has ranged between 33 and 41 during the years the survey has been conducted.



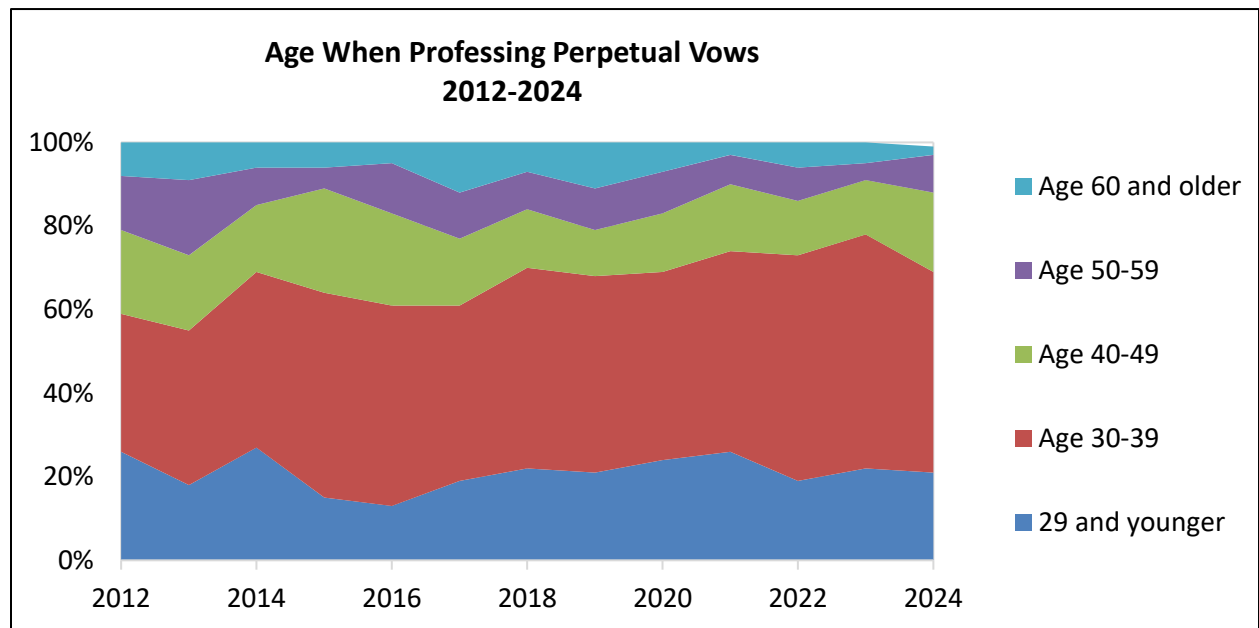
One in five respondents (21%) make their final profession at the age of 29 or younger. The youngest are 25 years of age. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 21% and ranged between 13% and 27%.

Half (48%) profess perpetual vows at age 30 to 39. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 46% and ranged between 33% and 56%.



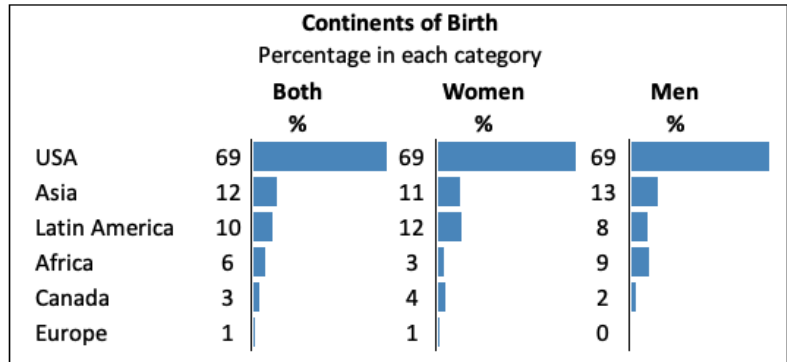
One in five (19%) make perpetual profession between the ages 40 and 49. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 17% and ranged between 11% and 25%.

One in ten (9%) does so at age 50 or older. The oldest sister made her final profession at the age of 69, and the oldest brother made his final profession at the age of 66. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 17% and ranged between 9% and 28%.



Country of Birth

Seven in ten responding religious (69%) were born in the United States. Three in ten (31%) was born outside the United States. These respondents identified a total of 21 different countries of origin.



Between 2012 and 2024, their share among men and women religious born in the United States averaged 74% and ranged between 62% and 77%.

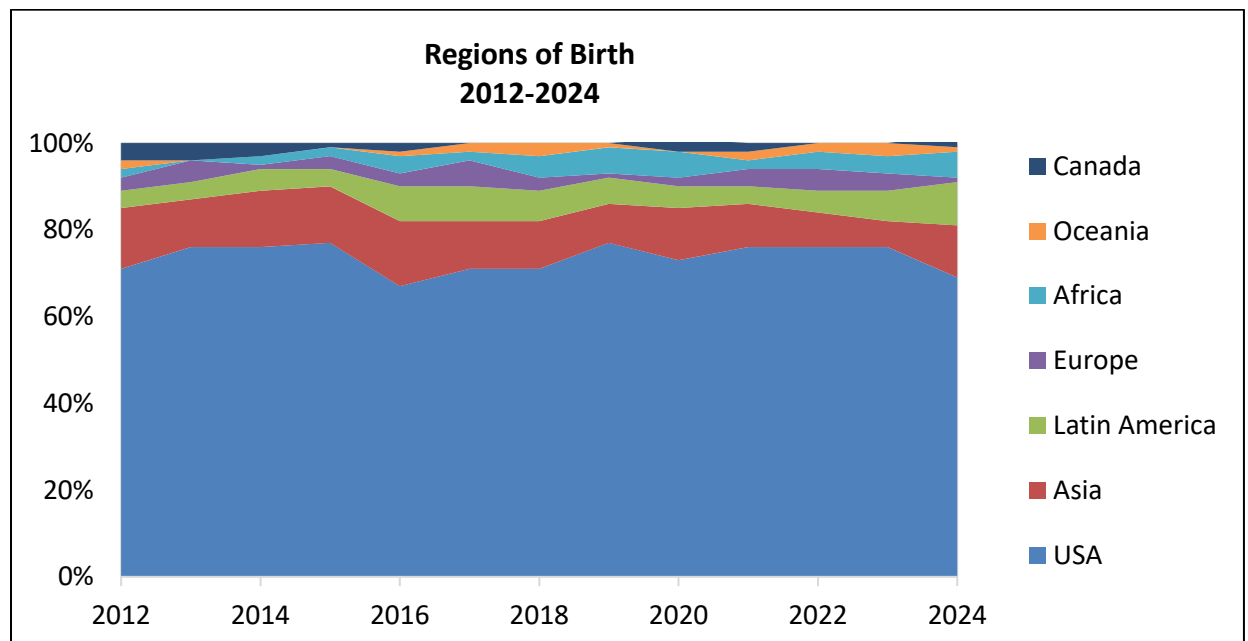
Twelve percent were born in Asia. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 11% and ranged between 6% and 15%.

Ten percent were born in Latin America. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 6% and ranged between 4% and 10%.

Six percent were born in Africa. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 4% and ranged between 0% and 6%.

One percent were born in Europe. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 3% and ranged between 1% and 6%.

Three percent were born in Canada. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 2% and ranged between 0% and 6%.

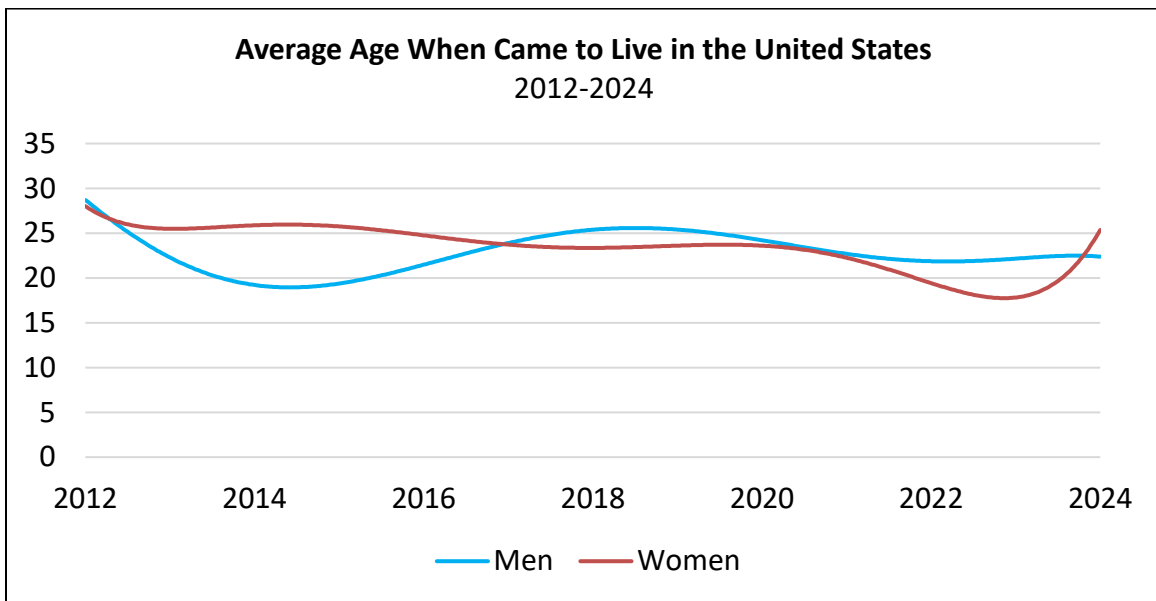


Foreign-born Religious' Age at Entry to the United States

On average, responding foreign-born religious came to live in the United States at age 24. Half were age 24 or younger when they came to live in the United States. The youngest came to the United States at the age of one; the oldest entered the United States at the age of 50.

	Entrance to the United States			
	<u>Year</u>	<u>Age at Entry</u>		
	Both	Both	Women	Men
Mean	2009	24	26	22
Median	2015	24	25	23
Range	1968-2023	1-50	11-50	1-39

Since 2012, the average age was 23 and ranged between 15 and 28.



Racial and Ethnic Background

Race and Ethnic Background			Percentage in each category		
	Both		Women		Men
	%		%		%
Caucasian/European American/White	64		69		58
Asian/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian	14		12		16
Hispanic/Latino(a)	11		12		9
African/African American/Black	6		3		10
Mixed race or other	5		4		7

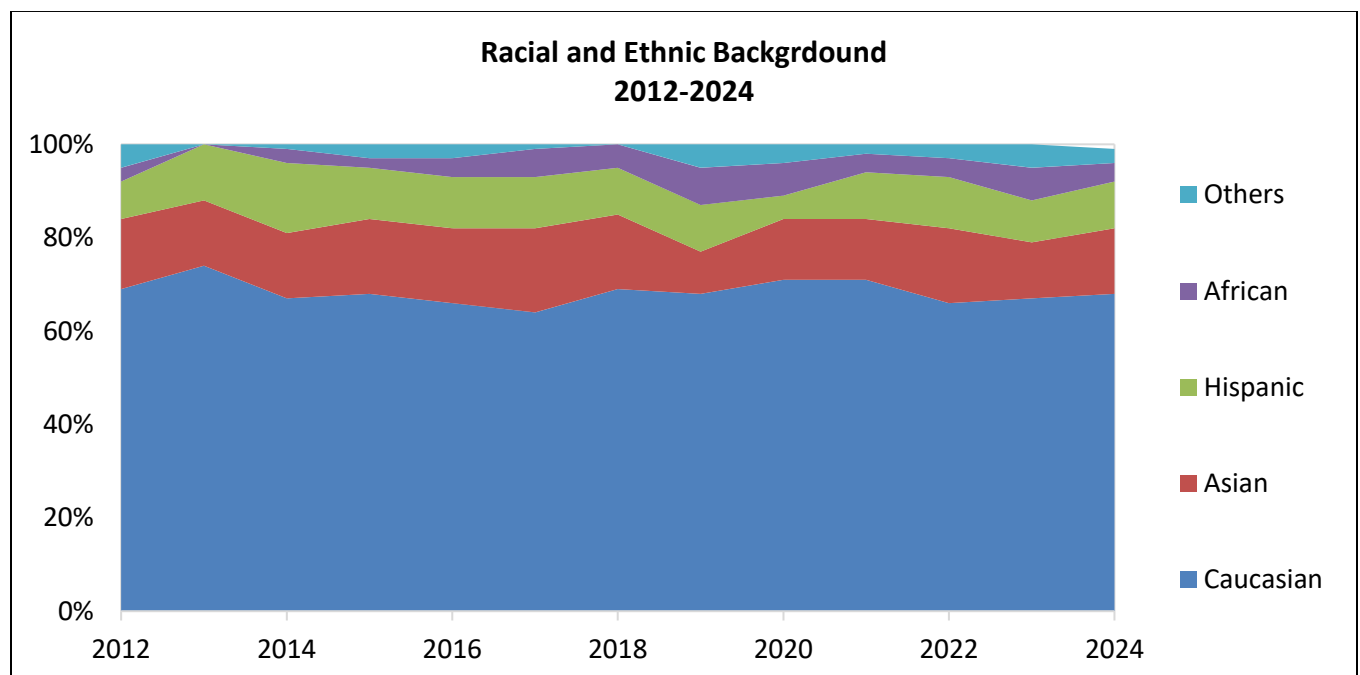
Three in five responding religious (64%) report their primary race or ethnicity as Caucasian, European American, or white. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 68% and ranged between 64% and 74%.

One in ten (14%) responding members identifies as Asian/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 14% and ranged between 9% and 18%.

One in ten identifies as Hispanic/Latino(a) (11%). Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 10% and ranged between 5% and 15%.

One in sixteen identifies as African/African American/black (16%). Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 4% and ranged between 0% and 8%.

Five percent of respondents identify as mixed race or other. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 3% and ranged between 0% and 5%.



Differences by Country of Birth

Among those who were born in the United States, nine in ten responding religious (88%) identify themselves as Caucasian/European American/White. Among those who were born outside the United States, four in ten (36%) identify as Asian/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian, 27% as Hispanic/Latino(a), 18% as African/African American/black, and 11% as Caucasian/European American/white.

Part II: Family Background

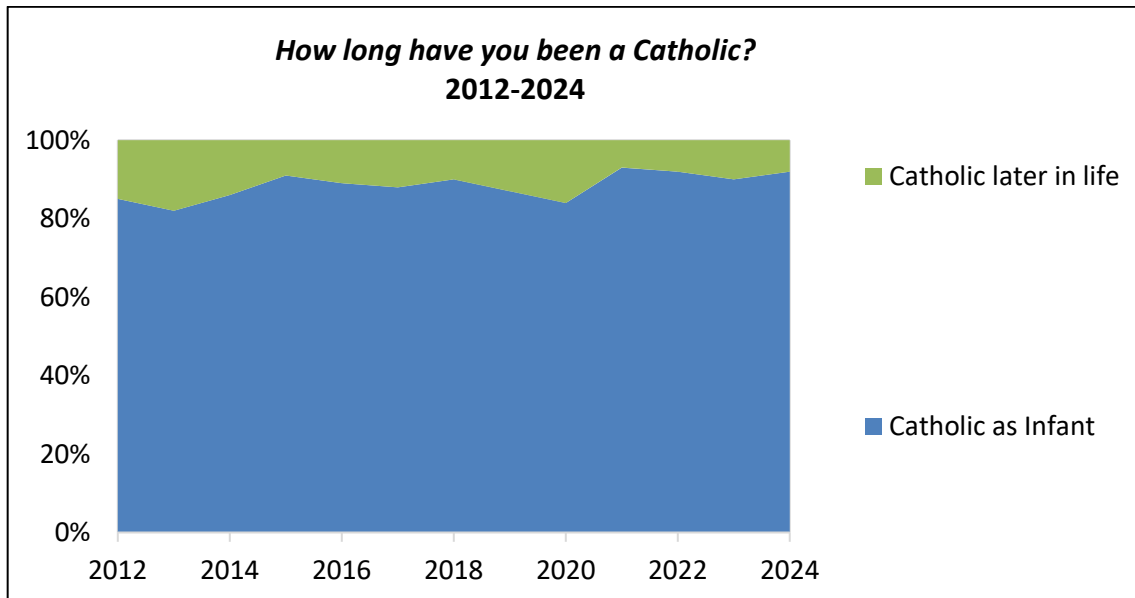
The family backgrounds of the responding women and men religious are described in Part II.

Religious Background

Nine in ten responding religious (92%) have been Catholic since birth. Among those who became Catholic later in life, their average age at the time of their conversion was 22.

Catholic Background			
<i>Percentage responding</i>			
	Both	Women	Men
	%	%	%
Catholic since birth	92	96	88
Became Catholic later in life	8	4	12
Average age at entering the Church	22	14	25

Those who came into full communion with the Catholic Church from another denomination or those who converted from another faith tradition came from a variety of faiths: Evangelical Nondenominational Christian, General Christian, Jehovah Witness, Lutheran, Non-Denominational Evangelical Protestant, None, Southern Baptist, and United Methodist Church.



Family Religious Background

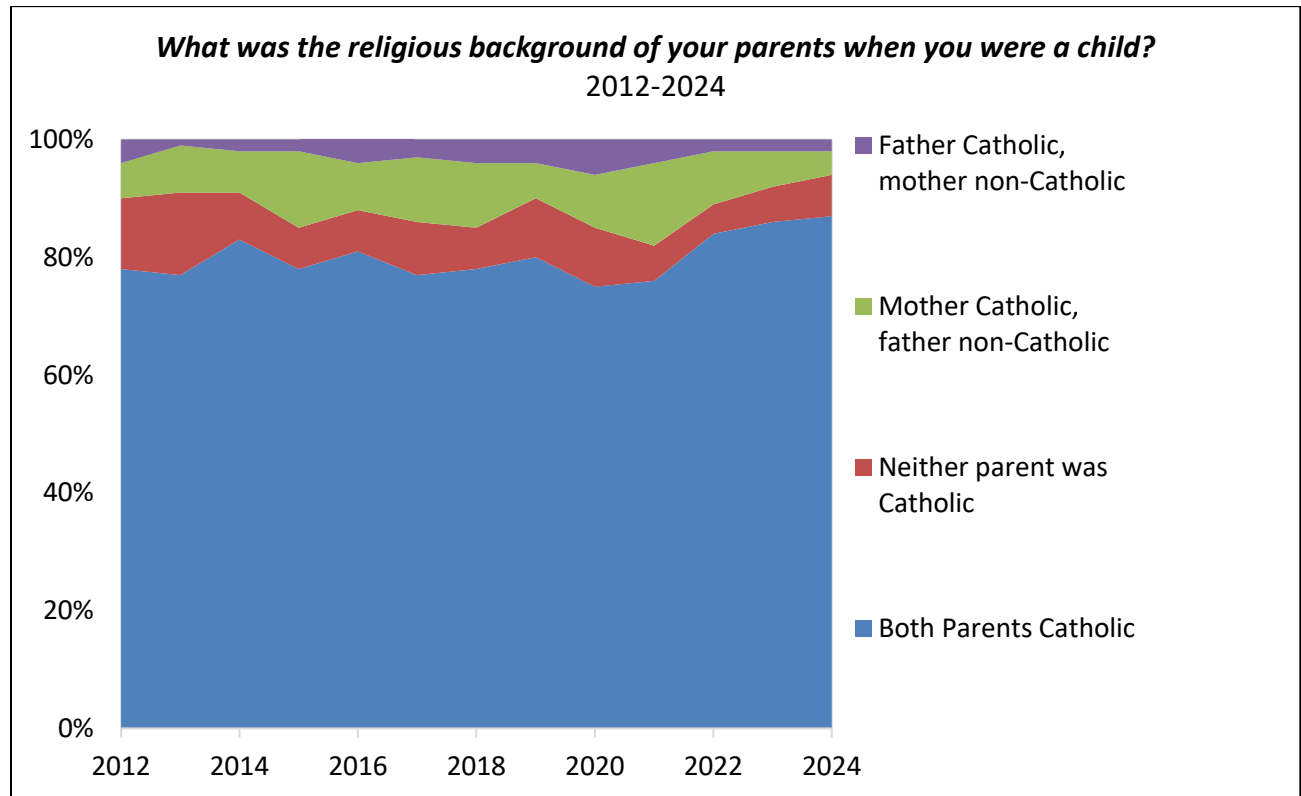
Almost all respondents (92%) report that when they were children, they had at least one parent who was Catholic. Nearly nine in ten (87%) report that both parents were Catholic. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 80% and ranged from 75% and 87%.

Four percent reports their mother was Catholic but not their father when they were a child. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 8% and ranged from 4% and 14%.

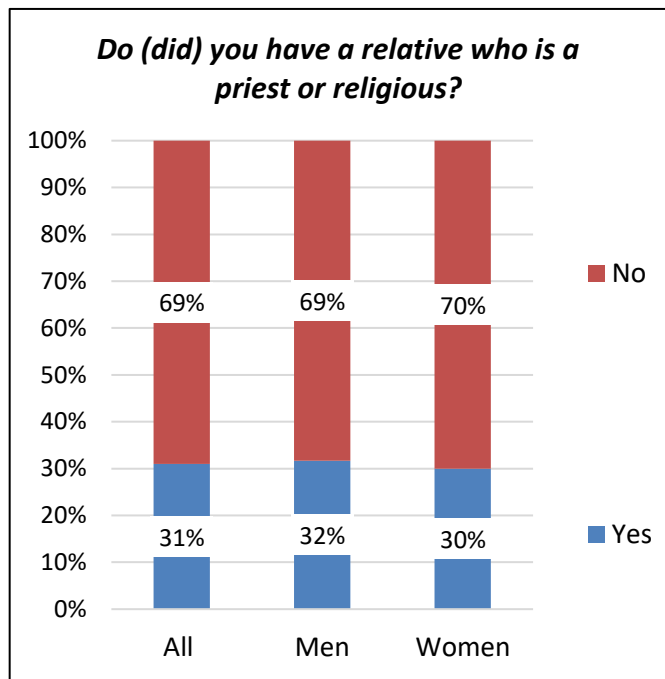
Two percent reports their father was Catholic but not their mother when they were a child. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 3% and ranged from 2% and 18%.

Seven percent reports neither their mother nor their father was Catholic when they were a child. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 9% and ranged from 5% and 14%.

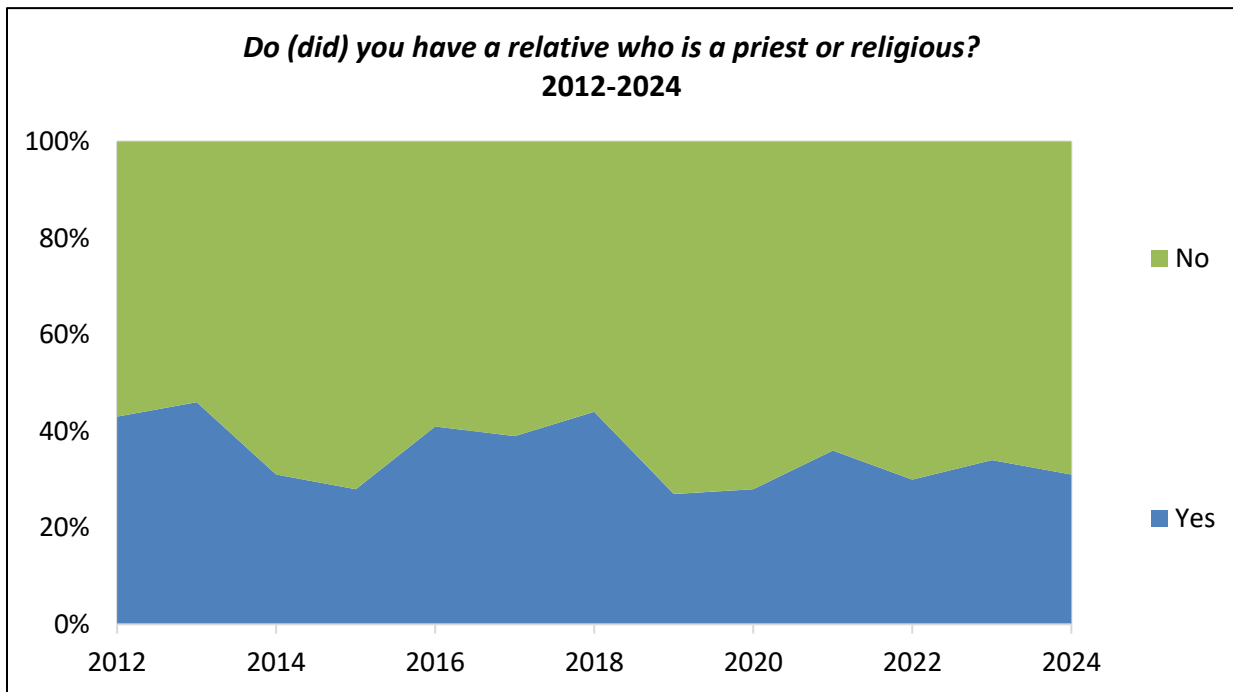
What was the religious background of your parents when you were a child?			
Percentage responding			
	Both	Women	Men
	%	%	%
Both parents Catholic	87	89	85
Mother Catholic, father not	4	4	5
Father Catholic, mother not	2	1	3
Neither parent was Catholic	7	6	8



Three in ten (31%) report having a relative who is a priest or a religious.

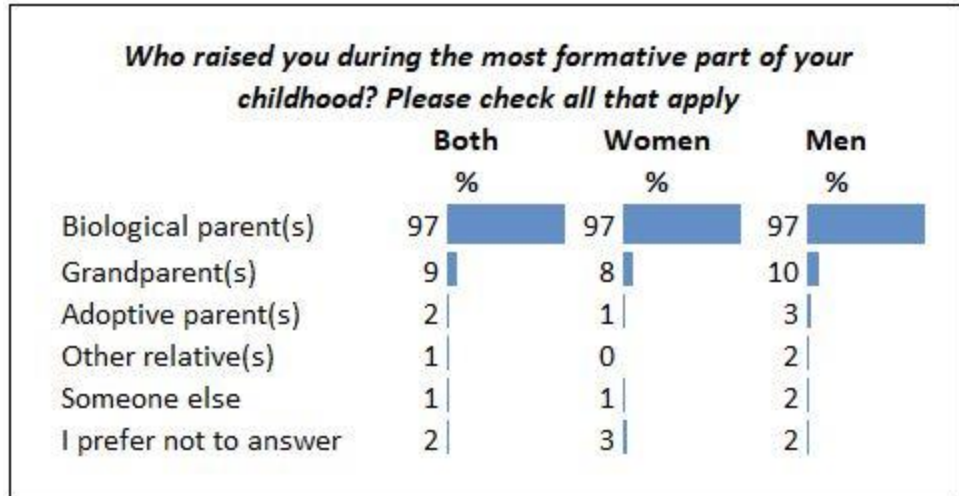


Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 35% and ranged between 27% and 46%.



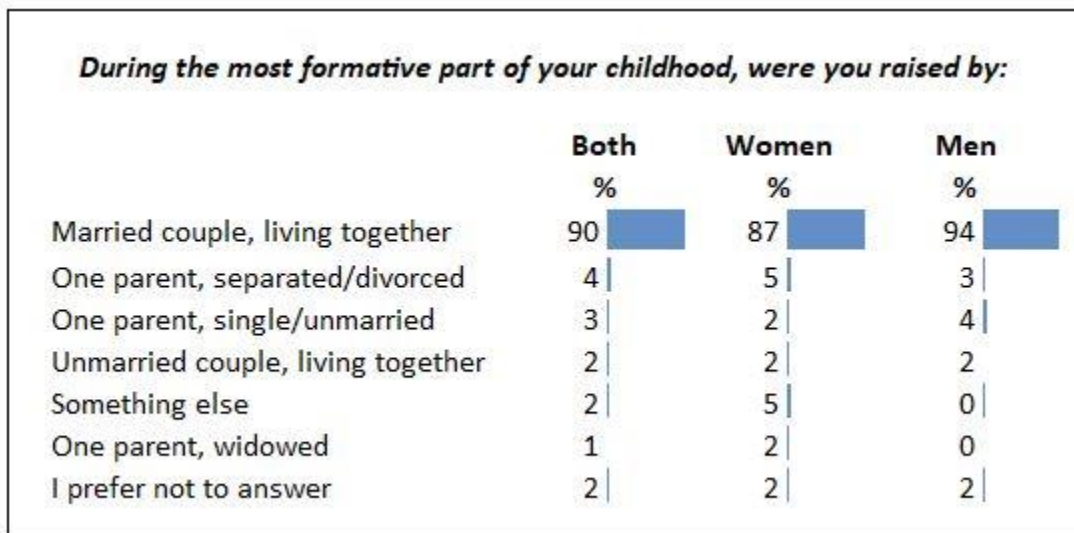
Parenting

Almost all (97%) respondents were raised by their biological parents during the most formative part of their childhood. Between 2021 and 2024, their share averaged 97% and ranged between 95% and 99%.



One in ten (9%) was raised by their grandparents during the most formative part of their childhood. Between 2021 and 2024, their share averaged 10% and ranged between 7% and 13%.

During the most formative part of their childhood, nine in ten (90%) respondents were raised by a married couple, living together. Four percent were raised by one parent who was either separated or divorced. Three percent were raised by one parent, single/unmarried, an unmarried couple who lived together, or married couple living separately, or one parent either single or unmarried.



Siblings

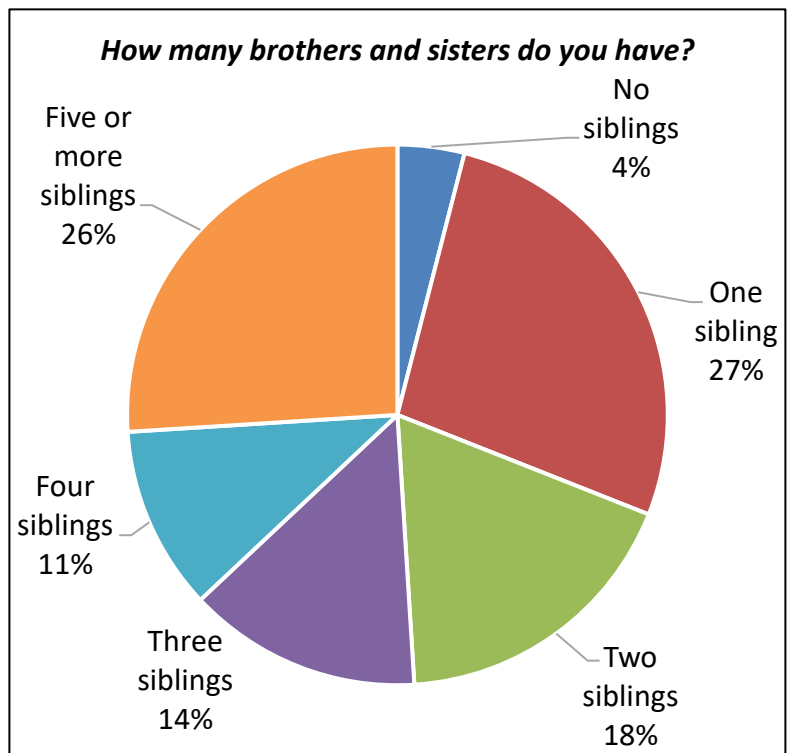
Almost all responding religious (96%) of the Profession Class of 2024 have at least one sibling.

Nearly three in ten respondents (27%) have one brother or sister. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 19% and ranged between 11% and 27%.

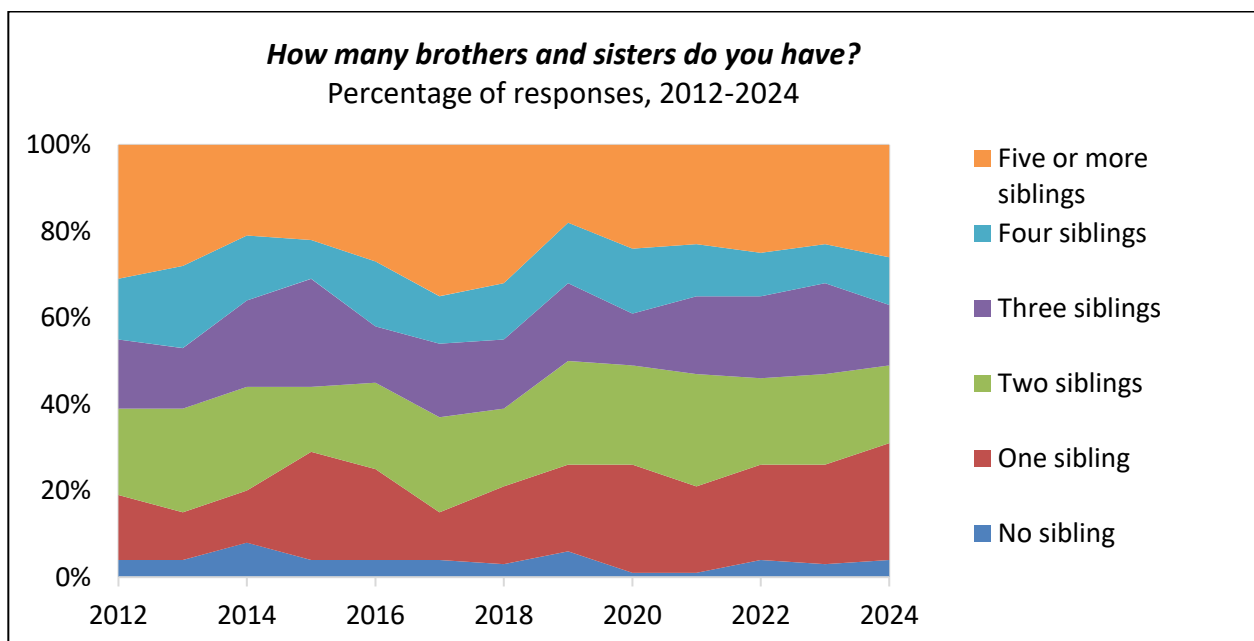
One in five (18%) reports having two siblings. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 21% and ranged between 15% and 26%.

One in ten (14%) reports having three siblings. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 17% and ranged between 12% and 25%.

One in ten (11%) reports having four siblings. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 13% and ranged between 9% and 19%.



A quarter (26%) have five or more siblings. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 26% and ranged between 18% and 35%.

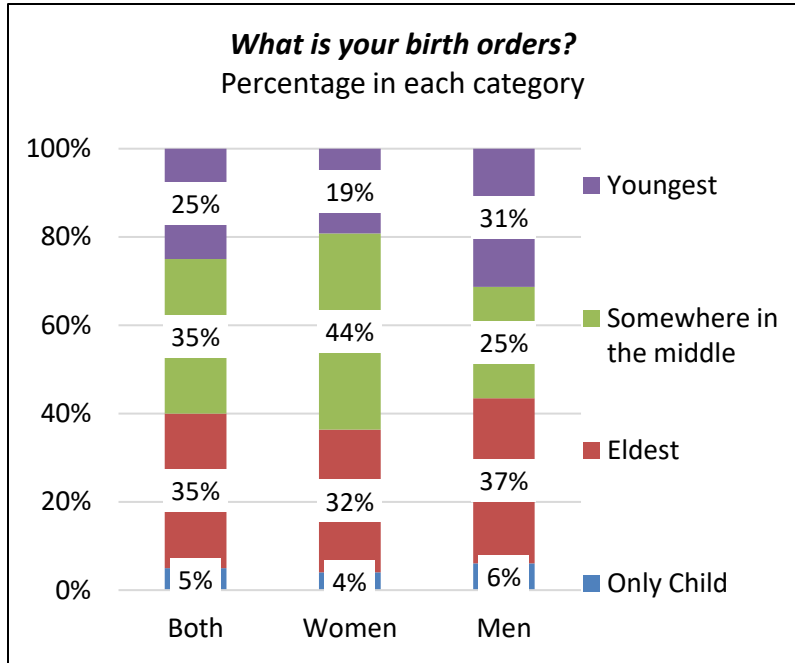


Birth Order

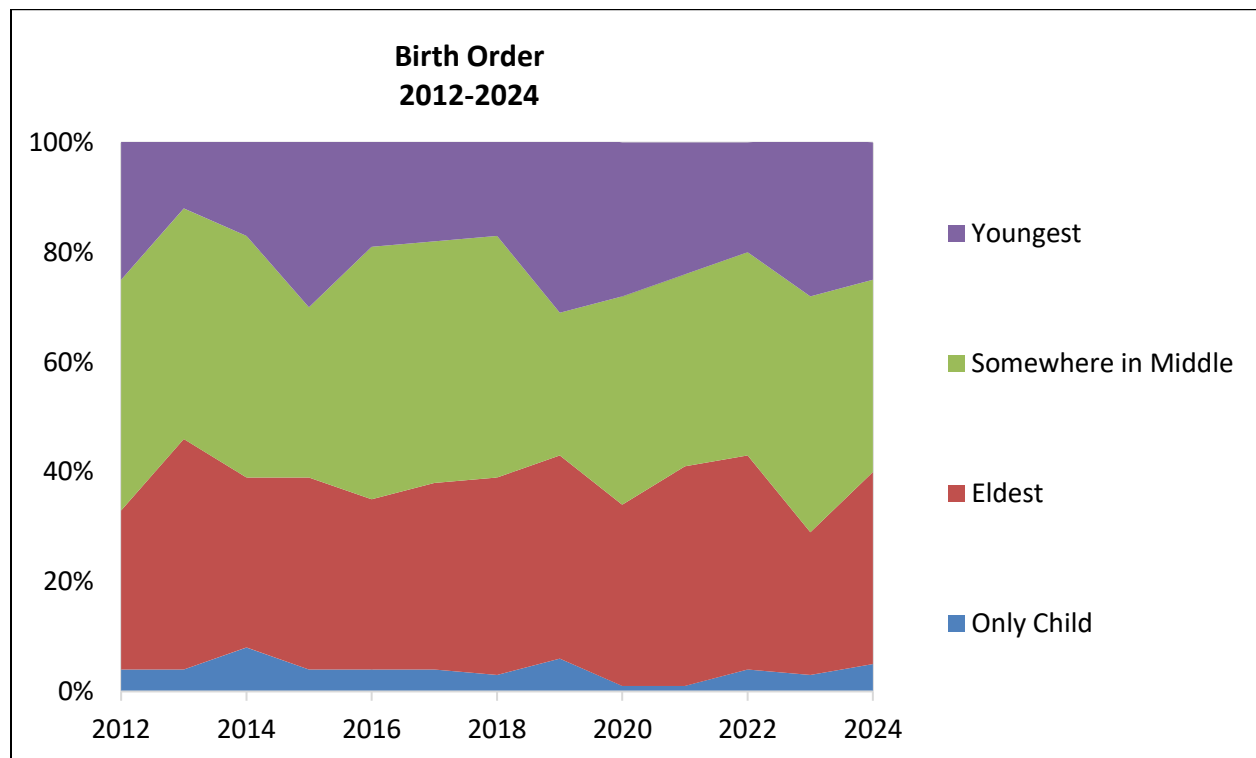
A third of respondents are the eldest. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 34% and ranged between 26% and 42%.

A third of the 2024 respondents (35%) were born somewhere in the middle. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 39% and ranged between 26% and 46%.

A quarter of respondents (25%) are the youngest. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 25% and ranged between 17% and 33%.



Five percent are the only child in his or her family. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 4% and ranged between 1% and 8%.



Part III: Educational Background

The educational background of the men and women religious is described in Part III.

Catholic Education

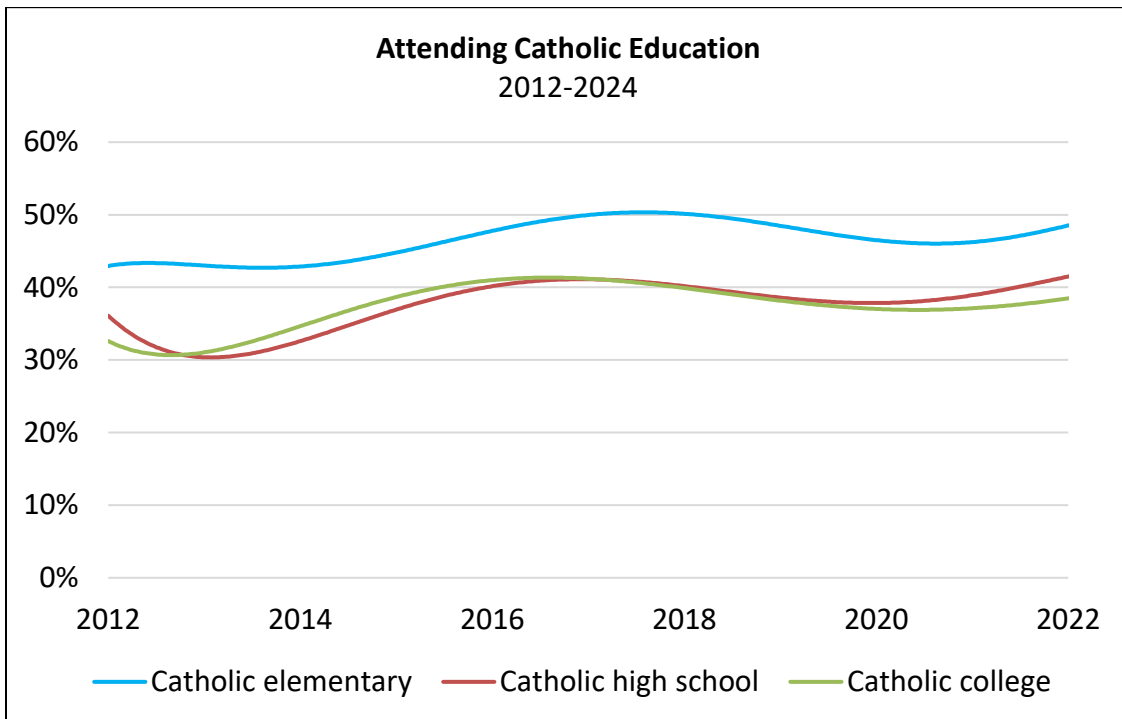
*Did you attend any of the following before you entered your religious institute?
Please check all that apply*

	Both %	Women %	Men %
Catholic Elementary	43	38	49
Catholic High school	38	34	42
Catholic College	41	38	45

Two in five (43%) responding religious professing final vows in 2024 attended a Catholic elementary or middle school. Men are more likely than women to attend a Catholic elementary school. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 47% and ranged between 42% and 51%.

Two in five (38%) attended a Catholic high school. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 38% and ranged between 31% and 46%.

Two in five (41%) attended a Catholic college or university. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 38% and ranged between 30% and 43%.



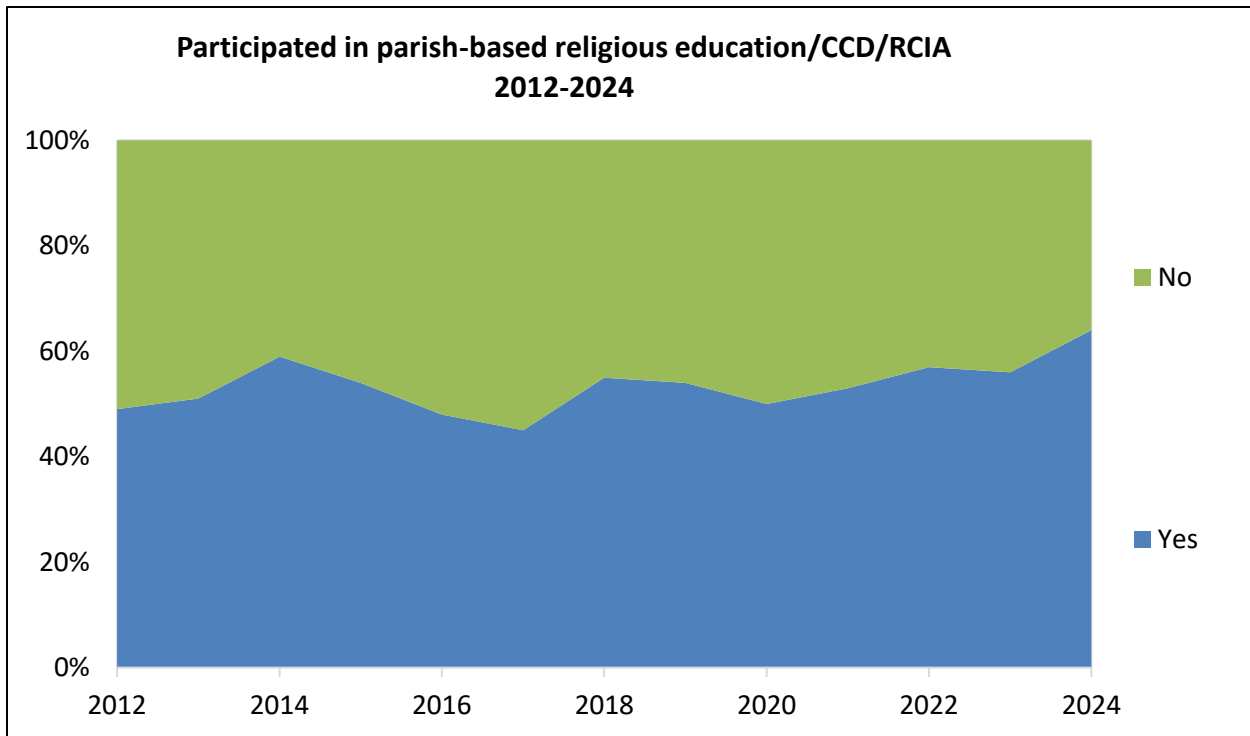
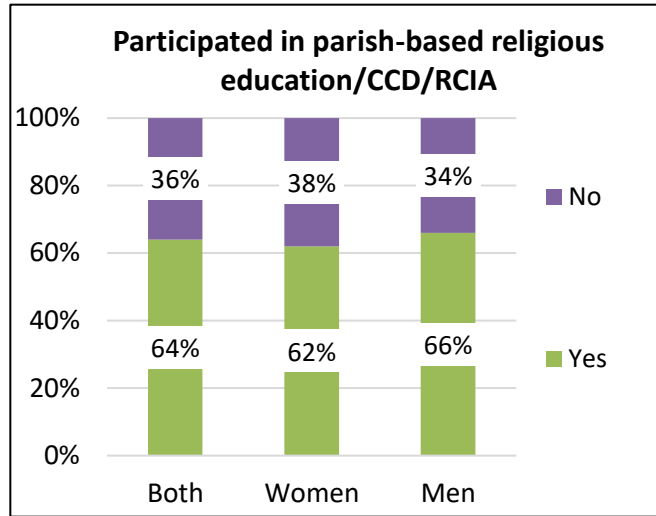
Members of the Profession Class of 2024 are more likely than other U.S. adult Catholics to have attended a Catholic elementary school. In a 2022 national poll conducted by CARA¹, 40% of U.S. adult Catholics report having attended a Catholic elementary school compared to 51% of the members of the Profession Class of 2024. Responding perpetually professed religious of 2024 are also more likely than other U.S. adult Catholics to have attended a Catholic high school (46% among responding religious, compared to 24% of U.S. adult Catholics) and much more likely to have attended a Catholic college (43% of responding religious, compared to 7% of U.S. adult Catholics).

¹ CARA Catholic Poll, 2022. Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate.

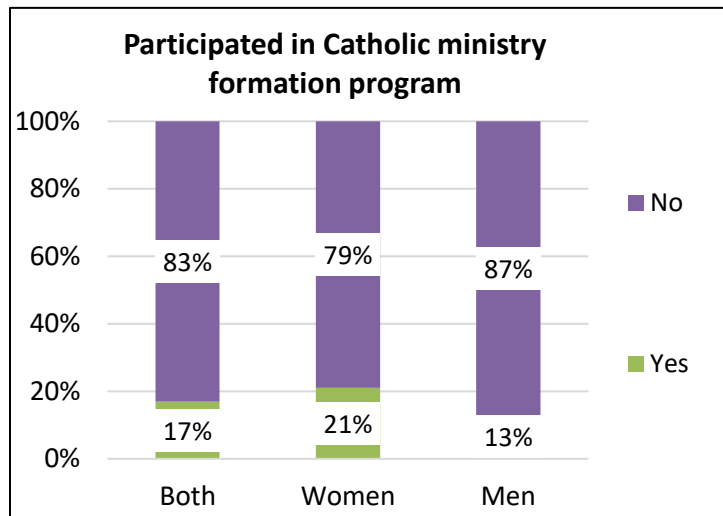
Catholic Religious Education

More than three in five respondents (64%) participated in a religious education program/CCD/RCIA in their parish. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 53% and ranged between 45% and 64%.

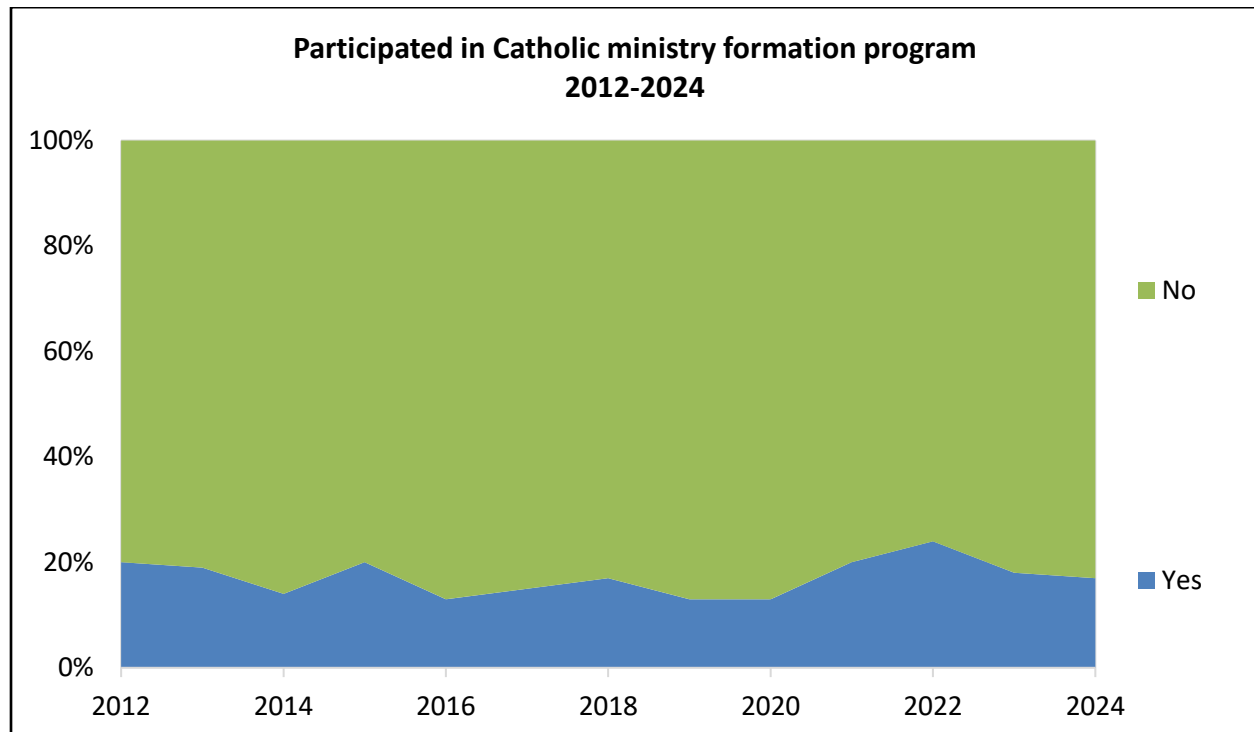
Among respondents who said they participated in a religious education program in their parish, 73% did not report attending a Catholic elementary school and 68% did not attend a Catholic high school.



Almost two in ten (17%) responding women and men religious report that they participated in a Catholic ministry formation program before they entered their religious institute.

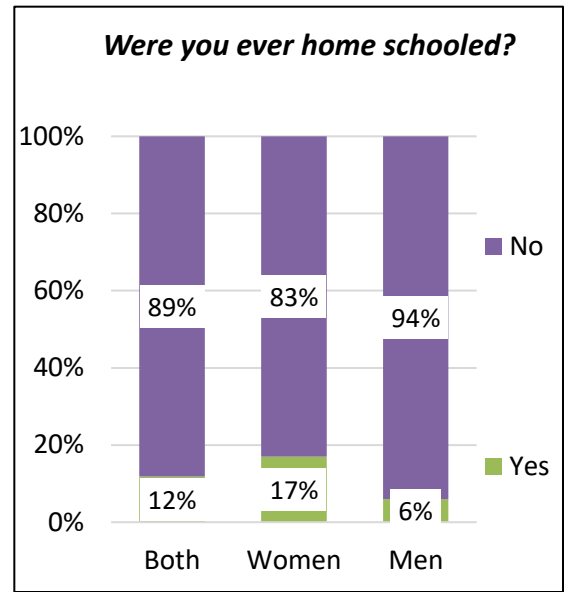


Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 17% and ranged between 13% and 24%.

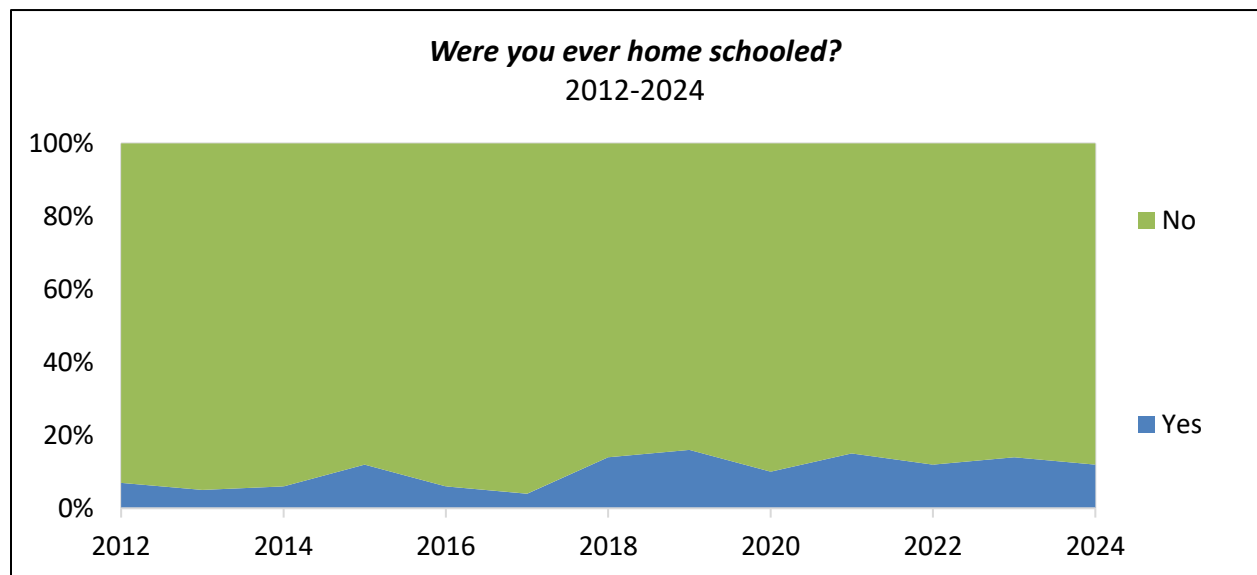


Home Schooling

One in ten (12%) responding religious reports being home schooled at some time in their educational background.



Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 10% and ranged between 4% and 16%.



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

If you were home schooled, total number of years of home schooling?
Profession Class of 2024

	Both [year]	Women [years]	Men [years]
	%	%	%
Mean	8	8	7
Median	9	9	7
Range	2-13	2-13	2-11

Highest Education

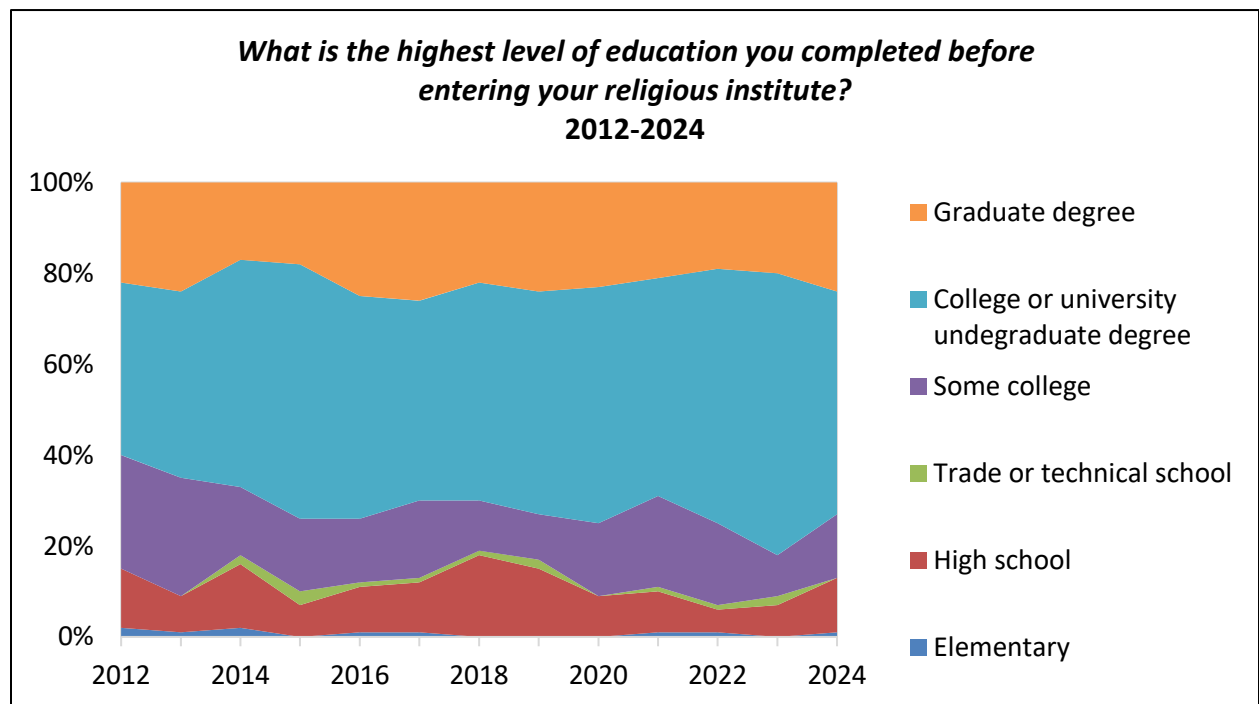
The responding religious are highly educated. Seven in ten (73%) earned an undergraduate or graduate degree before entering their religious institute.

Half of respondents of the Profession Class of 2024 completed an undergraduate degree before entering. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 49% and ranged between 38% and 62%.

	Both %	Women %	Men %
Elementary	1	3	0
High school	12	11	13
Some college, no degree	14	16	12
Undergraduate degree	49	48	49
Graduate degree	24	22	25

A quarter (24%) had a graduate degree before entering their religious institute. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 22% and ranged between 17% and 26%.

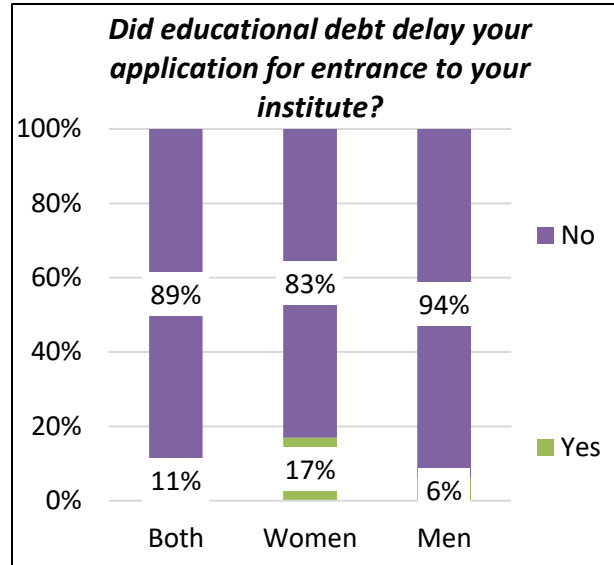
One in ten (14%) religious of the Profession Class of 2024 completed only high school or less before entering the religious institute. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 12% and ranged between 5% and 18%.



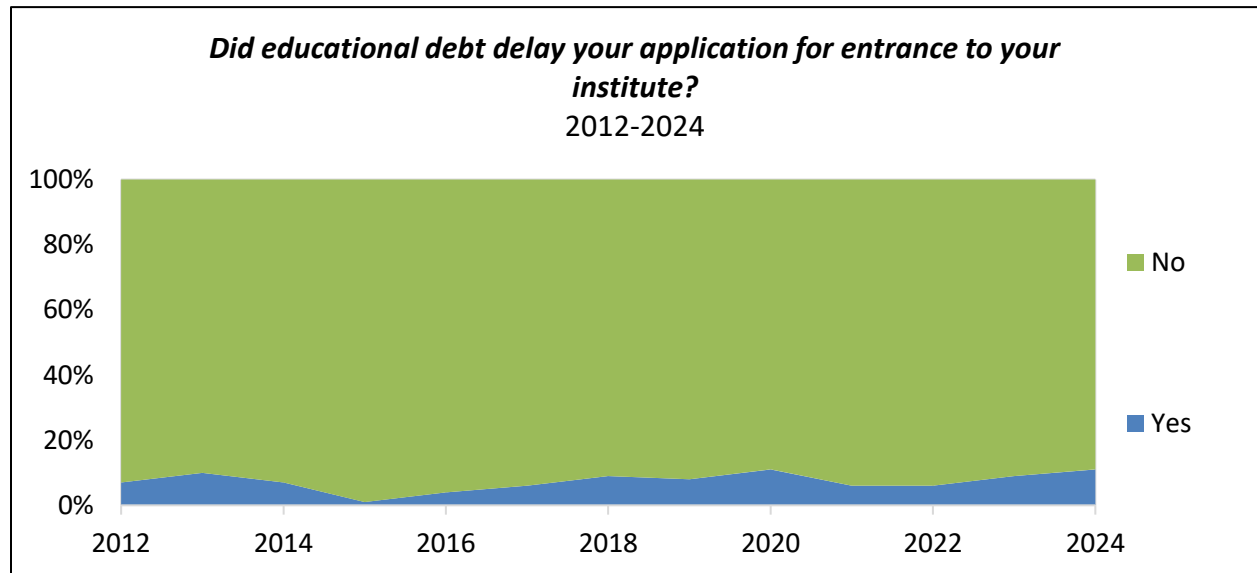
Educational Debt

One in ten responding religious (11%) reports that educational debt delayed their application for entrance to the religious institute. While 12 sisters report having educational debt, four religious brothers or priests report the same.

On average, their application for entrance to their institute was delayed because of educational debt for about three years.



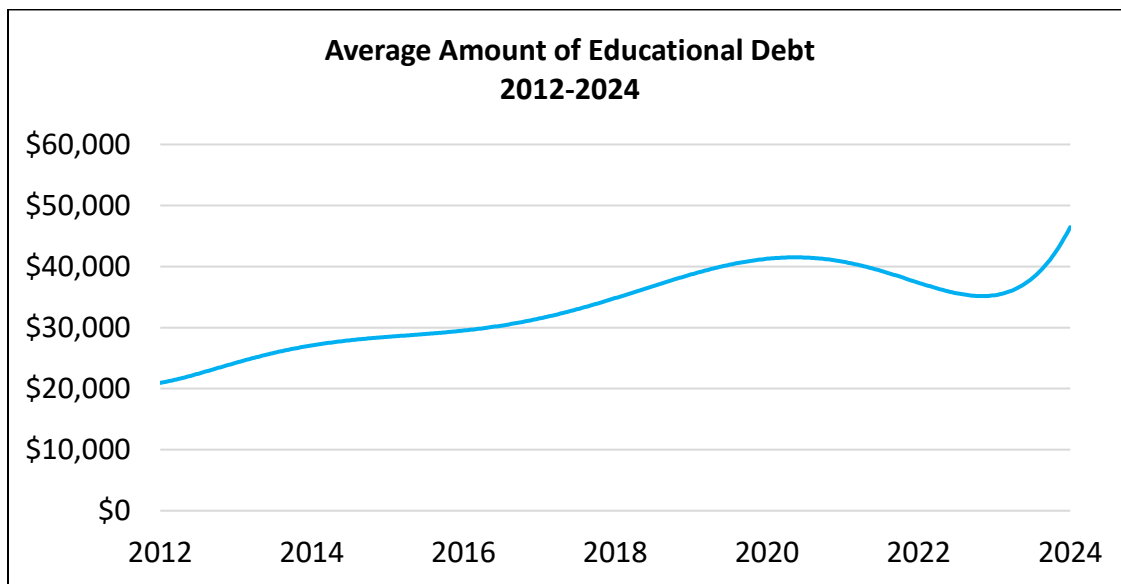
Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 7% and ranged between 1% and 11%.



Those responding professed members who had educational debt had, on average, \$46,327 of educational debt at the time of making perpetual profession (half had between \$7,000 and \$35,000 and the other half between \$40,000 and \$200,000).

Impact of Educational Debt on Entrance to Religious Life			
	Both	Women	Men
Average amount of debt	\$46,327	\$33,521	\$200,000
Median amount of debt	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$200,000
Range	\$7000-\$200,000	\$7000-\$56,000	\$200,000

Since 2012, the average amount of debt was \$33,575 and ranged between \$15,750 and \$50,000.



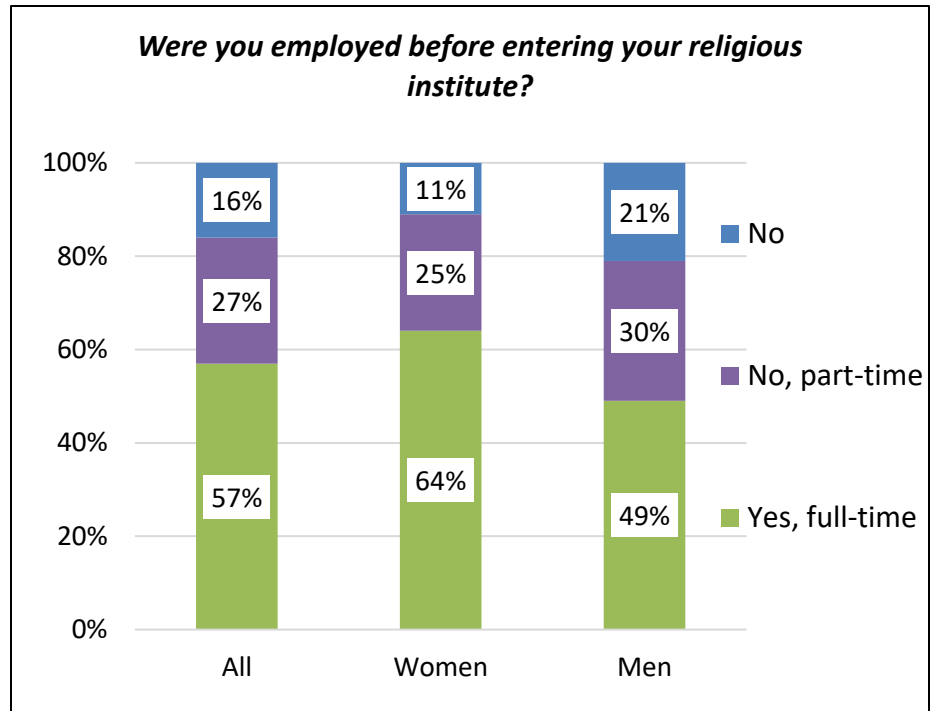
Those responding professed members who had educational debt had report receiving assistance from family members (6 members), from friends/co-workers (3 members), from parish (3 members), from the Laboure Society (3 members), from National Fund for Catholic Religious Vocations (2 members), from religious community (1 member), from Mater Ecclesiae Fund for Vocations (1 member), and others (2 members) in paying down their debt.

Part IV: Work and Ministry Experience Before Entering

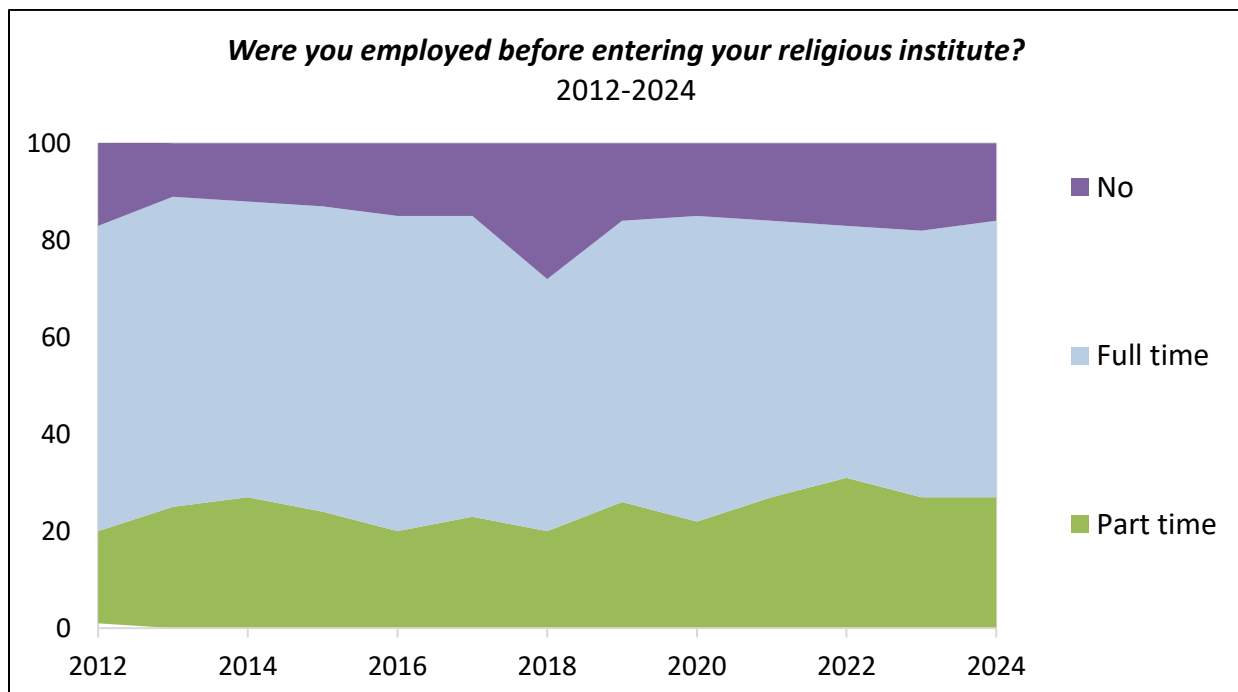
In Part IV, the work and ministry experiences of the women and men religious are described.

Work Experience

More than eight in ten (84%) responding religious report some type of work experience prior to entering their religious institute. Six in ten (57%) were employed full-time and three in ten (27%) were employed part-time before entering their religious institute.



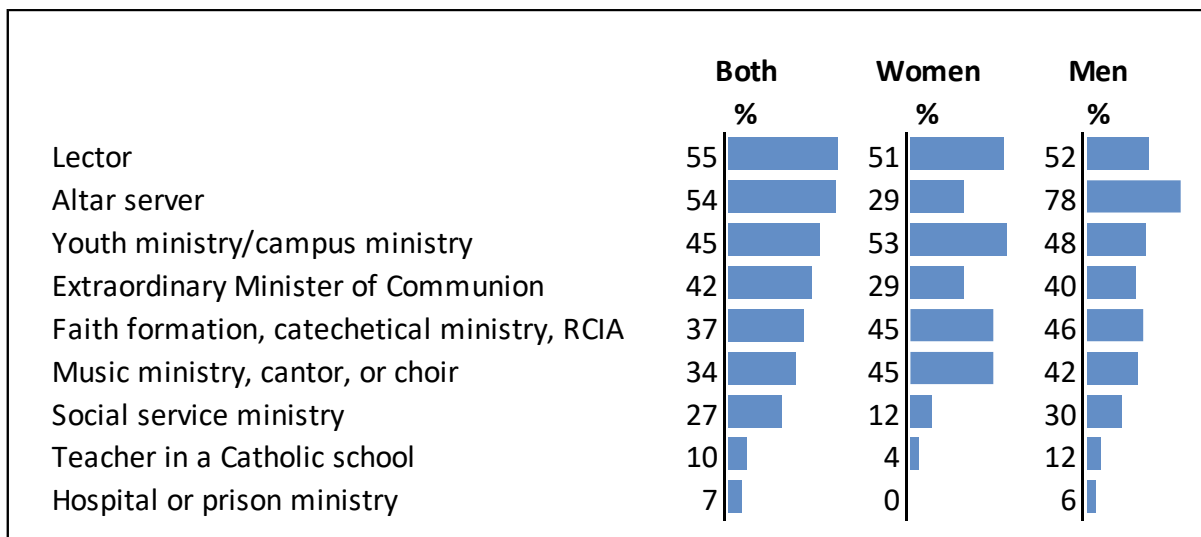
Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 83% and ranged between 72% and 89%.



Prior Work Experience			
<i>Percentage in each category</i>			
	Both	Women	Men
	%	%	%
Business/Occupational	39	34	43
Education/Academic	32	30	34
Church/pastoral ministry	20	26	13
Health care	6	8	4
Others	4	2	6

Two in five responding religious (39%) report that they were in some form of business, or an occupation or trade, or technology prior to entering their religious institute. A third had been employed in education (32%). One in five was employed in a church or pastoral ministry (20%). One in twenty (6%) was employed in a health care field.

Ministry Experience



Nearly nine in ten responding religious (85%) served in one or more specified ministries before entering their religious institute, either in a paid ministry position or as a volunteer.

Half served as lectors (55%). Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 49% and ranged between 42% and 55%.

Half served as altar server (54%). They represented 29% of women religious and 78% of men religious. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 41% and ranged between 21% and 54%.

Nearly half served as youth minister/campus minister (45%). Between 2016 and 2024, their share averaged 27% and ranged between 29% and 49% (data available since 2016).

Two in five served as an Extraordinary Minister of Communion (42%). They represented 29% of women religious and 40% of men religious. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 41% and ranged between 32% and 52%.

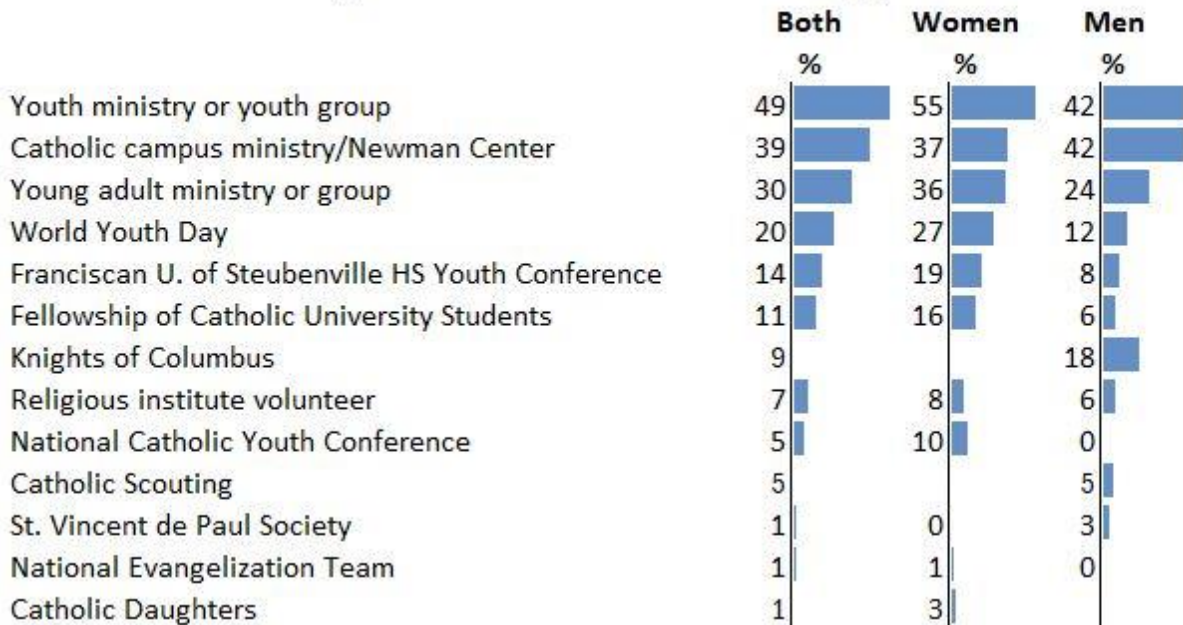
Nearly two in five served in faith formation, catechetical ministry, RCIA (37%). Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 43% and ranged between 36% and 54%.

A third served in music ministry, cantor, or choir (34%). Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 36% and ranged between 39% and 49%.

A quarter served social service ministry (e.g., Catholic Charities program, other community service) (27%). Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 28% and ranged between 20% and 41%.

One in ten (10%) served as a teacher in a Catholic school. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 13% and ranged between 9% and 18%.

Did you participate in any of these programs or activities before entering your religious institute? Please check all that apply



Three in four (74%) participated in one or more religious programs or activities before entering their religious institute, with the most common ministry being the youth ministry or youth group (49%), with half participating in this ministry.

Two in five respondents (39%) participated in Catholic campus ministry/Newman Center.

Three in ten (30%) participated in a young adult ministry or group before entering religious life.

One in five participated in World Youth Day (20%). Women are more likely than men to have participated in this ministry.

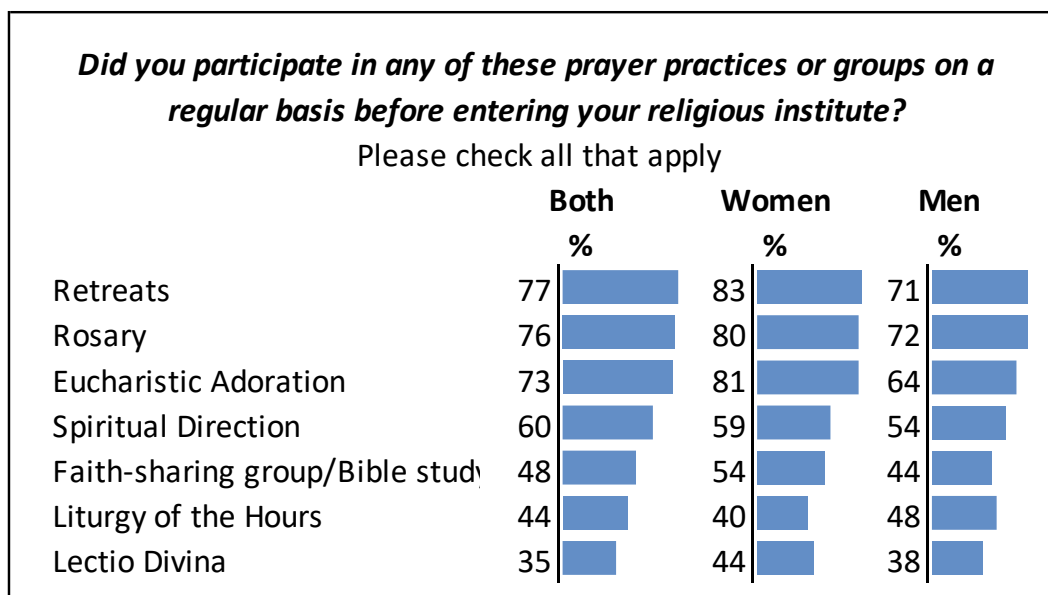
At least one in ten participated in the Franciscan University of Steubenville High School Youth Conference (14%), the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (11%), and the Knights of Columbus (9%) before entering their religious institute.

Six in twenty participated in religious institute volunteer programs (7%), National Catholic Youth Conference (5%) and Catholic Scouting (5%).

Part V: Vocational Discernment

Part V summarizes the experiences of women and men religious during their vocational discernment period.

Private Prayer Practices and Prayer Groups



Almost all responding religious of the Profession Class of 2024 (94%) participated in one or more of these prayer practices or groups on a regular basis prior to entering their religious institute.

Retreat is the most common type of formative prayer experience. Nearly four in five did this on a regular basis before entering their religious institute. Women are more likely than men to report regularly doing retreat before entering their religious institute. Between 2012 and 2024, their share for retreats averaged 66% and ranged between 56% and 77%.

Nearly four in five regularly did rosary before joining their religious institute. Between 2012 and 2024, their share for rosaries averaged 68% and ranged between 59% and 76%.

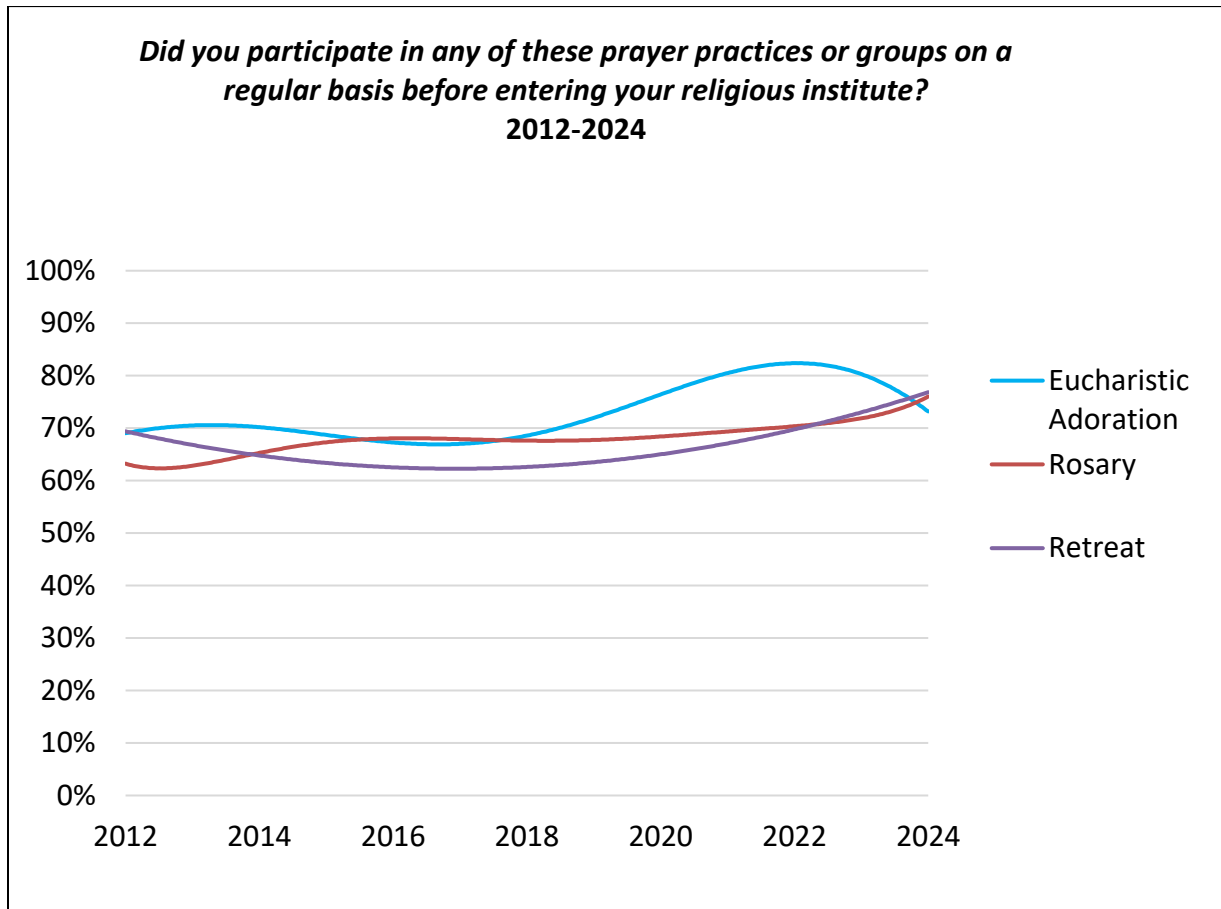
Seven in ten regularly participated in Eucharistic adoration before joining their religious institute. Between 2012 and 2024, their share for rosaries averaged 73% and ranged between 61% and 86%.

Six in ten (60%) regularly participated in spiritual direction before joining their religious institute. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 60% and ranged between 54% and 66%.

Four in ten (44%) regularly prayed the Liturgy of the Hours.

About a half (48%) regularly participated in a faith-sharing group or a Bible study group. Women are more likely than men to participate in this practice. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 48% and ranged between 44% and 55%.

A third (35%) regularly participated in the *Lectio Divina* prayer practice prior to entering their religious institute. This is an ancient prayer practice from the Order of St. Benedict. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 34% and ranged between 28% and 42%.

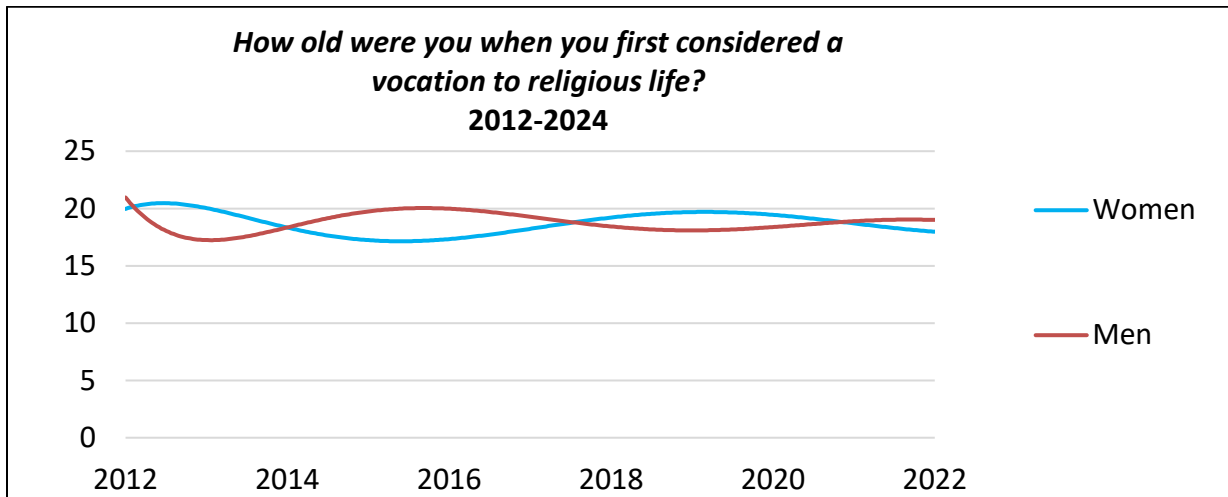


Age When First Considered a Vocation to Religious Life

On average, responding religious report being 19 years old when they first considered a vocation to religious life, with half being 18 or younger when they first considered a vocation. Some religious considered a vocation to religious life as early at the age six and as old at the age 62.

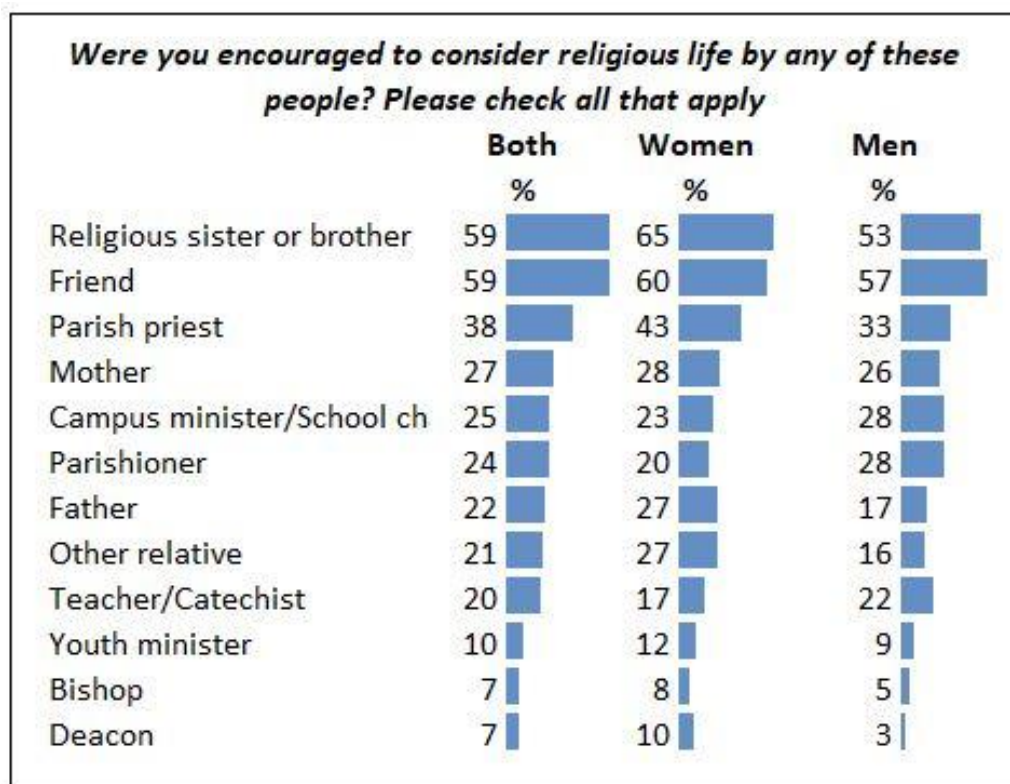
	Age		
	Both [years]	Women [years]	Men [years]
Mean	19	18	19
Median	18	18	18
Range	6-62	6-62	7-35

Between 2012 and 2024, the average age was 19 and ranged between 18 and 20.



Encouragement to Consider a Vocation

More than eight in ten (84%) responding religious report that someone encouraged them to consider a vocation to religious life.



Three in five report being encouraged by a religious sister or brother (59%). Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 46% and ranged between 39% and 59%.

Three in five report being encouraged by a friend (59%). Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 43% and ranged between 39% and 59%.

Two in five report being encouraged by a parish priest (38%). Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 44% and ranged between 38% and 53%.

A quarter was encouraged to consider a vocation to religious life by their mother (27%). Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 26% and ranged between 16% and 34%.

A quarter was encouraged to consider a vocation to religious life by their campus minister (25%). Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 17% and ranged between 16% and 34%.

Another quarter reports being encouraged to consider a vocation to religious life by a parishioner (24%). Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 22% and ranged between 17% and 28%.

One in five reports being encouraged to consider a vocation to religious life by father, other relative, and teacher/catechist.

Discouragement from Considering a Vocation

Nearly six in ten (57%) report that they were discouraged from considering a vocation to religious life by one or more persons.

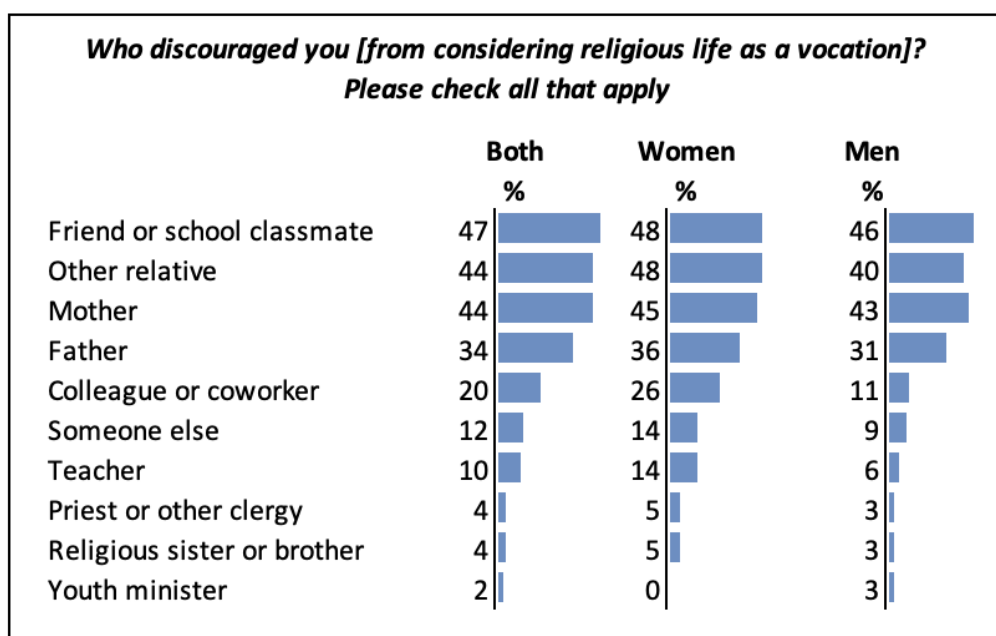
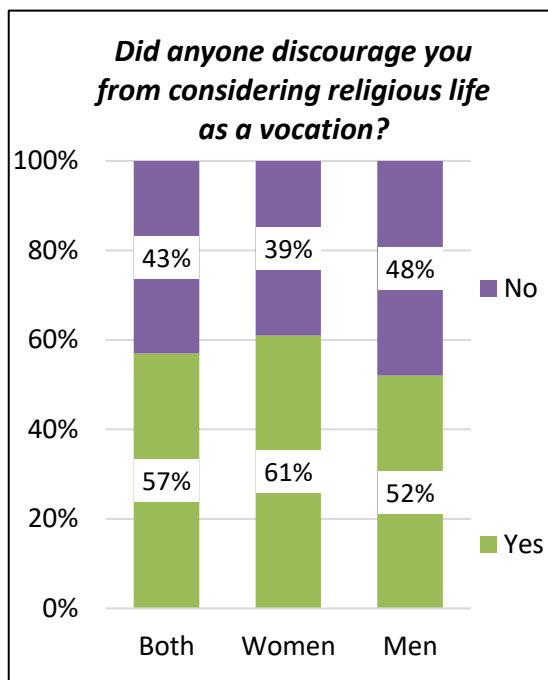
Those who report being discouraged from considering religious life as a vocation are most likely to report that they were discouraged by a friend or school classmate (47%). Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 32% and ranged between 21% and 52%.

Two in five report being discouraged from considering religious life as a vocation by their relative (44%). Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 35% and ranged between 26% and 53%.

Two in five report being discouraged from considering religious life as a vocation by their mother (44%). Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 27% and ranged between 17% and 44%.

A third reports being discouraged from considering religious life as a vocation by their father (34%). Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 24% and ranged between 15% and 43%.

One in five reports being discouraged from considering religious life as a vocation by their colleague or coworker (20%). Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 13% and ranged between 5% and 21%.



Initial Acquaintance with the Religious Institute

On average, responding religious report that they knew the members of their religious institute five years before they entered. Since 2012, the average length was four years.

Responding religious were asked to indicate how they first became acquainted with their religious institute.

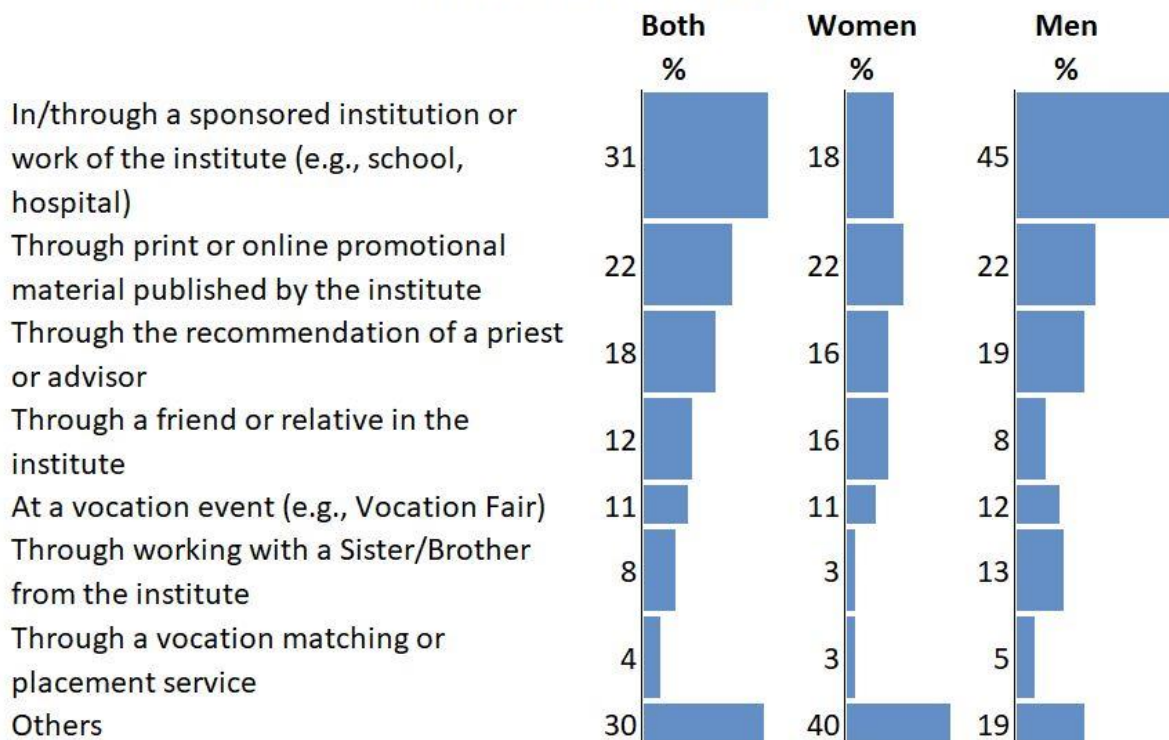
Three in ten (31%) report being first acquainted with their institute in/through a sponsored institution or work of the institute (e.g., school, hospital). Men are more likely than women to have become acquainted through this way (45% compared with 18% of women). Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 22% and ranged between 15% and 31%.

How many years did you know the members of your religious institute before entering?

	Both [years]	Women [years]	Men [years]
Mean	5	4	5
Median	3	3	4
Range	1-22	1-22	1-20

How did you first become acquainted with your religious institute?

Please check all that apply



One in five became first acquainted with their institute through print or online promotional material published by the institute (22%). Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 25% and ranged between 19% and 36%.

One in five indicates that they first became acquainted with their institute through the recommendation of a priest or advisor (18%). Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 20% and ranged between 16% and 28%.

One in five indicate that they first became acquainted with their institute through a friend or relative in the institute (12%). Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 14% and ranged between 9% and 22%.

About one in ten first became acquainted with their institute at a vocation event (e.g., Vocation Fair) (11%). Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 9% and ranged between 5% and 13%.

Three in ten (30%) said they first became acquainted with their religious institute through some other means. Some of those “other” responses included:

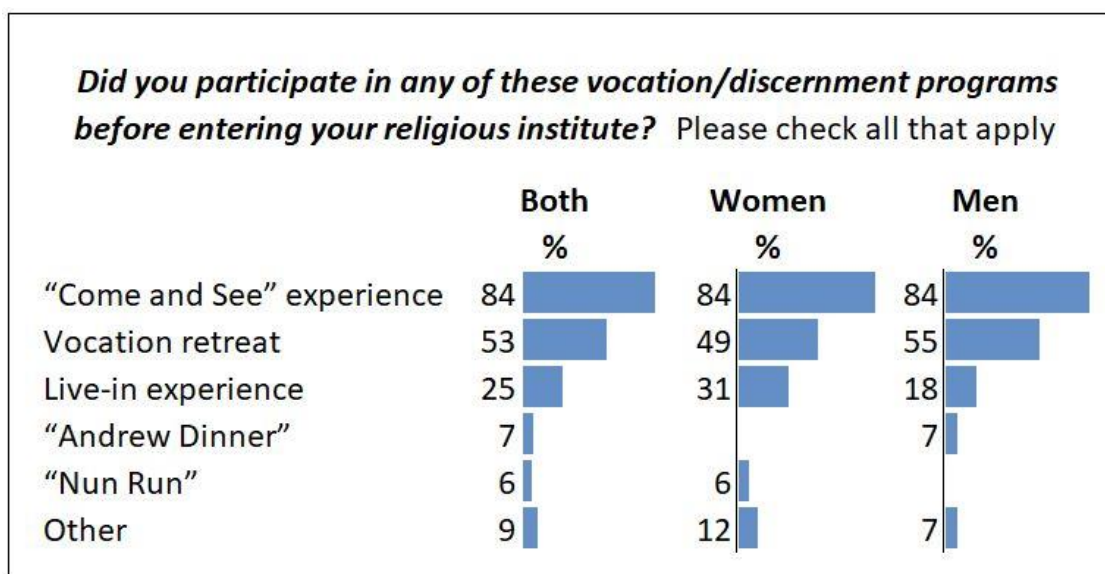
- A friar gave a mission at my home parish.
- A friend called the Sisters for me and got me connected to them
- A friend had attended a school sponsored by my religious institute.
- A friend who had worked with one of our sisters
- Acquaintance who entered
- Article in religious life magazine
- At a youth retreat
- Attended their weekend retreats
- Enrollment in brown Scapular at parish
- Focus conference for college students, the Sisters had a table
- FOCUS events
- General brand awareness
- Grad School classmate
- I googled men's monasteries.
- I taught Totus Tuus and one of the evenings we had dinner with a host family whose daughter is a Sister here.
- I went to daily Mass while travelling and met a Sister of Life who was also there during a visit to her family. God arranged that!
- Living next door to a priory and through classes at CUA
- Meet the friars during a help out
- Newman Center
- Norbertine Fathers
- Observing the fruits of my father going to Spiritual Direction with a member of my Religious Order. My father was a lay leader
- On pilgrimage to the same shrine
- Praying the liturgy with the religious institute
- Recommendation of a Bishop
- Recommendation of a friend
- Recommended by another vocation minister
- School
- Seminarian in my parish
- Sweets with Sisters event hosted by Samantha Kelley who was a FOCUS Missionary

- The friars frequently covered Masses at my home parish, where I served Mass for them and/or sacristan for them since I was 12.
- Through a friend who had visited the community
- Through a friend who knew the Community
- Through an RCIA retreat.
- Visited Eucharistic Adoration chapel at Motherhouse and then was employed at Motherhouse
- Weekend Spiritual Exercises Retreat
- When they visited for the first time the LA area in 2009.
- World Youth Day, 2008
- Young adult Mass that they attended
- Youth leader formation event
- Youth retreat.

Participating in Vocation/Discernment Programs and Experiences

More than nine in ten (93%) had participated in at least one of these programs or experiences shown in the table below prior to entering their religious institute.

Among the vocation programs and experiences about which they were asked, respondents are most likely to have participated in a “Come and See” experience. More than four in five (84%) report participating in this program before they entered their religious institute. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 67% and ranged between 56% and 84%.



More than half of responding religious (53%) participated in a vocation retreat before entering their religious institute. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 50% and ranged between 45% and 59%.

A quarter (25%) participated in some sort of live-in experience with their religious institute before entering. Between 2012 and 2024, their share averaged 26% and ranged between 17% and 34%.

Six in twenty men had participated in an “Andrew Dinner” (7%) (asked only of men) and women had participated in a “Nun Run” (6%) (asked only of women).

Respondents were also allowed to add any “other” vocational discernment experiences which they might have had. Their responses included the following:

- Catholics on Call
- Discernment Group (Cincinnati Archdiocese)
- Discernment prayer mornings with local Daughters of St. Paul
- Live in monastic experience with Precious Blood Sisters in London, Ontario at age 19 x 2 months; physician retreat with Alma Mercy Sisters in 2014 was first introduction to my community
- long weekend stays with DSOP communities in different locations
- Private 1-week silent retreat with a member of my religious order.

- Psychological Exam (weekend)
- Samuel Group
- Vocation In Progress days with the archdiocese.
- Volunteer/Service program

