- Nearly 1,000 U.S. women are in formation preparing to become sisters.
- More than 100 women and men in the U.S. profess perpetual vows annually.
- Fifty percent of new religious report that they were 17 or younger when they first considered a vocation to religious life.
- In 2014 approximately 477 entered priesthood—266 to diocesan priesthood (from 114 dioceses) and 96 to religious priesthood. Among religious orders, the largest number of respondents came from the Jesuits, Dominicans, and Benedictines.
- The average age of entrance to religious life is 30 for men and 32 for women.
- Newer entrants are 58 percent Caucasian; 21 percent Hispanic/Latino/a; 14 percent Asian/Pacific Islander; 6 percent African American; 1 percent other.
- 70 percent of newer entrants have a bachelor's degree when they enter.

The information above was gathered from a number of recent studies and reports. For the list of sources, see the Vocation Fact Sheet online at VocationNetwork.org, under the Year of Consecrated Life tab.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The call to "religious life" in the Catholic Church—also known as "vowed life" or "consecrated life"—is a call to become more like Christ by living the values of prayer, ministry, and community. This call can be lived out in a number of unique ways (see main forms outlined below). Yet all religious priests, sisters, and brothers take vows of poverty, celibacy, and obedience, commonly called the "evangelical counsels."

APOSTOLIC/ACTIVE While prayer and community life are important to them, apostolic religious communities are engaged for the most part in active ministries, such as teaching, parish ministry, health care, social work, care for the elderly, work with young people, service to the poor, and many others.

MISSIONARY Missionary communities focus their lives on spreading the gospel in areas in need of evangelization and service. These communities serve in a variety of ministries, such as preaching, teaching, healthcare and other forms of witness among the people with whom they live.

CONTEMPLATIVE Members of contemplative religious communities focus on daily prayer, especially the Mass, the Liturgy of the Hours, and individual prayer. They tend to live in greater solitude than apostolic communities so that they can direct their prayer and work toward contemplation, though some communities that consider themselves contemplative are also engaged in apostolic ministries.

SEMI-CLOISTERED/CLOISTERED Often, contemplative religious communities are cloistered or partially cloistered. That is, they live separated from the outside world and focus on prayer, including prayer for the needs of the world. As cloistered religious, they rarely leave their monasteries, and all or most of their work is done within the monastery.

MONASTIC Monastic communities fall somewhere in between apostolic and cloistered. Monastic men and women place a high value in prayer and community life, but many are also engaged in active ministries. Monasticism centers on living in community, common prayer, and Christian meditation.

Find an expanded glossary of terms at VocationNetwork.org under the Year of Consecrated Life tab.

ADDITIONAL VOCATION RESOURCES

» VISION Vocation Network for hundreds of articles and videos, podcasts, and interactive features including:

- Vocation Match (*VocationMatch.com*)
- Spirituality Quiz | Celibacy Quiz | Catholic Quiz
- Vocation Events Calendar (*VocationNetwork.org/opportunities*)
- VISION Vocation Guide (www.*digitalvocationguide.org* or order print copies online at *VocationNetwork.org/orders*)
- VISION bookmarks (these free resources come in packs of 25. Order online at *VocationNetwork.org/orders*)
- E-books: *Discover your path; Being Catholic: A user's guide*
- Year of Consecrated Life banners (Order banners at *nrvc.net/store* or download a PDF at *VocationNetwork.org* under the Year of Consecrated Life tab.)
- Year of Consecrated Life song downloadable sheet music and audio files

» National Religious Vocation Conference (Find recent vocation studies at *nrvc.net* and vocation resources in the online store.)

» United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (*USCCB.org*)

» Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (*cara.georgetown.edu)*

» A Nun's Life Ministry *(anunslife.com)*

» National Catholic Sisters Week (*nationalcatholicsistersweek.org*)

» Global Sisters Report (*globalsistersreport.org*)

» Men Religious in the U. S. (*yearforconsecratedlife.com*)

» Catholic Volunteer Network (*catholicvolunteernetwork.org*)

» Take Five for Faith: Daily renewal for busy Catholics (*takefiveforfaith.com*)

» Prepare the Word: Whole parish evangelization (*PrepareTheWord.com*, featuring weekly prayers of the faithful for the Year of Consecrated Life)

» Many other Catholic publishers have books and articles on prayer and discernment, religious life, and the lives of saints. Please check out their websites and catalogs for additional resources to build your library of vocation-related resources. Find a list of Catholic Press Association Member publications at *www.catholicpress.org* under the About Us tab.