Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate and the National Religious Vocation Conference

Survey of New Members

This survey is part of a study to assist NRVC and CARA in understanding religious life and religious vocations in the United States today. “Religious institute” refers to the congregation, province, or abbey/monastery to which you belong. Your responses are very important. Please respond by marking an “X” in the appropriate boxes. If you do not know how to respond to a question, or if it does not apply, please leave it blank.

Please use the responses below for questions 1-17.
1=Not at All 3=Somewhat
2= Only a Little 4=Very Much

How much did the following attract you to religious life?
1 2 3 4
G G G G 1. A sense of call to religious life
G G G G 2. Desire for prayer and spiritual growth
G G G G 3. Desire for a deeper relationship with God
G G G G 4. Desire to be of service
G G G G 5. Desire to profess and live vows
G G G G 6. Desire to be part of a community
G G G G 7. Desire to be more committed to the Church

How much did the following attract you to your religious institute?
1 2 3 4
G G G G 8. The life and works of your founder/ress
G G G G 9. The charism of the institute
G G G G 10. The mission of the institute
G G G G 11. The spirituality of the institute
G G G G 12. The prayer life of the institute
G G G G 13. The community life of the institute
G G G G 14. The ministries of the institute
G G G G 15. The example of members of the institute
G G G G 16. The cultural diversity of institute members
G G G G 17. Welcome and encouragement by members

How did you first become acquainted with your religious institute? Check all that apply.
G 18. In an institution where members served, e.g., school
G 19. Through working with a member of the institute
G 20. Through a relative or friend in the institute
G 21. Through a presentation at a school/parish/youth ministry event
G 22. Through a vocation fair or exhibit at an event or conference
G 23. Through a vocation match or placement service (e.g., VISION Vocation Match)

G 24. Through your own internet search of websites
G 25. Through on-line content (e.g., podcasts, videos, blogs, vlogs, webinars)
G 26. Through printed materials (e.g., prayer cards, bookmarks, brochures, books, booklets)
G 27. Social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)

Did you participate in any of the following before you entered your religious institute? Check all that apply.
G 28. Diocesan vocation programs (e.g., Quo Vadis, Fiat Days, dinner with the Bishop)
G 29. Busy Persons Retreat, Nun Run, Open House, Theology on Tap, Cursillo, etc.
G 30. On-line discernment forums, chats, etc.
G 31. In-person meetings with a discernment group
G 32. Discernment retreat(s)
G 33. “Come and See” experience(s)
G 34. Living at a Discernment House
G 35. Live in experience with the institute
G 36. Volunteer service immersion experience(s) with members of the institute

Was religious life formally presented, in class or in campus ministry, as an option for you to consider seriously while you were in these settings? Check all that apply.
G 37. Elementary school G 39. High school
G 38. Middle school G 40. College

Please use the responses below for questions 41-51.
1=Not at All 3=Somewhat
2=Only a Little 4=Very Much

How helpful were the following when you were discerning your call to religious life?
1 2 3 4
G G G G 41. Websites of religious institutes
G G G G 42. Talking with my pastor
G G G G 43. Printed materials (e.g., prayer cards, books, bookmarks, brochures, booklets, posters)
44. Social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat)
45. On-line content (e.g., podcasts, videos, blogs, vlogs, webinars)
46. VISION Vocation Guide, online VISION Vocation Network, VocationMatch
47. Other media (e.g., OYE, A Guide to Religious Ministries, EWTN, Salt and Light Media)
48. Invitations to Receptions, Final professions, and Jubilees
49. Discernment with a vocation director
50. Meeting with a member(s) of the institute
51. Communal prayer and meals with a member(s) of the institute
How much did these influence your decision to enter your religious institute?

1. Increase 2 = Only a Little 3 = Somewhat 4 = Very Much

1. The size of the institute
2. Its geographic location(s)
3. The charisma of the institute
4. Prayer life or prayer styles in the institute
5. Community life in the institute
6. The way the vows are lived in the institute
7. The living of the Gospel values
8. The cultural diversity of the members
9. The ages of members
10. Other members also in initial formation
11. The types of ministry of its members
12. The diversity of languages among members
13. The preferential option and commitment for the poor among its members
14. The vitality of members
15. The focus on possibilities for the future of the religious institute

How much encouragement did you receive from the following when you first considered entering your religious institute?

1. Members of your institute
2. Vocation director/team
3. Spiritual director, if applicable
4. Religious sisters, brothers, and/or priests
5. Diocesan priests, deacons, and/or bishop
6. Your parents, if applicable
7. Your grandparents, if applicable
8. Your siblings, if applicable
9. Other family members
10. People in your parish
11. Teachers, mentors, or others in your school or workplace
12. Youth minister or college campus minister
13. Friends outside the institute

80. After entering religious life, did familial support and encouragement for your vocation: Check only one.
1. Increase 2. Stay the same 3. Decrease

Yes No

81. Do you have a relative who is a priest, deacon, or religious sister or brother?

How important to you are these types of prayer?

1. Personal private prayer
2. Journal writing, poetry, prayer blogs
3. Daily Eucharist
4. Liturgy of the Hours
5. Non-liturgical common prayer (i.e. rosary, devotions)
6. Common meditation/centering prayer
7. Faith sharing
8. Ecumenical interfaith prayer (e.g. Taizé)
9. Lectio Divina/spiritual reading and reflection
10. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
11. Prayer using an app/on-line resources

How important to you are these aspects of community life?

1. Living with other members
2. Praying with other members
3. Praying with lay partners in ministry
4. Ministering/working with other members
5. Ministering wherever the need is greatest
6. Sharing meals with other members
7. Sharing meals with lay partners in ministry
8. Socializing/sharing leisure time together
9. Celebrating holidays/feast days together
10. Participating in neighborhood outreach
11. Discussing local/global news and events
12. Corporate stances on social justice issues
13. Learning and implementing cultural competencies with other members
14. Valuing cultural diversity beyond tolerance
G G G G 111. Ongoing formation and lifelong education

How much do you prefer living in these settings?
1 2 3 4
G G G G 112. Singly (or with family members)
G G G G 113. In a community of 2-3 unit members
G G G G 114. In a community of 4-7 unit members
G G G G 115. In a community of 8 or more unit members
G G G G 116. With members close to you in age
G G G G 117. With members of different ages
G G G G 118. With members of different cultures
G G G G 119. With members in different ministries
G G G G 120. Living at or near your ministry site
G G G G 121. Living simply, in solidarity with the poor, marginalized, and neglected
G G G G 122. In community with non-vowed (e.g., volunteers, associates, refugees)

Please use the responses below for questions 123-142.
1=Poor 2=Fair 3=Good 4=Excellent

How would you rate the following in your religious institute?
1 2 3 4
G G G G 123. Efforts to promote vocations
G G G G 124. Welcome and support of newer members
G G G G 125. Initial formation/incorporation programs
G G G G 126. Ongoing formation and spiritual growth
G G G G 127. Lifelong educational opportunities
G G G G 128. Preparation for ministry
G G G G 129. Opportunities to lead/learn leadership skills
G G G G 130. Opportunities to voice opinions/be heard
G G G G 131. Diversity of cultures within the institute
G G G G 132. Sense of identity as institute members
G G G G 133. Fidelity to the Church and its teachings
G G G G 134. Vision for the future of religious life
G G G G 135. Focus on mission and its relevance today
G G G G 136. Care and support of the elderly members
G G G G 137. Response to the needs of our time
G G G G 138. Efforts to promote social justice
G G G G 139. Quality of community life
G G G G 140. Communal prayer experiences
G G G G 141. Relationships with one another
G G G G 142. Communal work around racism

Were you involved in any of the following before you entered? Check all that apply.
G 143. Youth ministry, parish youth group, or LifeTeen
G 144. Young adult ministry or group
G 145. College campus ministry/Newman Center
G 146. Liturgical ministry (e.g., lector, extraordinary minister)
G 147. Music ministry (e.g., cantor, choir, musician)
G 148. Adult faith formation, catechist, RCIA team
G 149. Other volunteer work in a parish or ministry setting
G 150. Bible study group
G 151. Military service/Armed Forces, active or reserve
G 152. FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students)
G 153. National Catholic Youth Conference
G 154. Steubenville High School Youth Conference
G 155. Right to Life March in Washington, D.C.
G 156. World Youth Day
G 157. From Service to Sisterhood volunteer program
G 158. Volunteer service immersion experiences (e.g., Mercy Corps or Jesuit Volunteer Corps)

Yes No
G G 159. Did someone invite you to consider vocation discernment?

160. How long were you in a formal discernment process?
G 1. Less than 6 months
G 3. One to two years
G 2. 6-11 months
G 4. More than two years

About You

161. What is your current status in your religious institute?
G 1. Candidate/postulant
G 2. Novice
G 3. Temporary vows/commitment
G 4. Final/perpetual vows/commitment

Yes No
G G 162. Were either of your parents born outside the United States?
G G 164. Were you born outside the United States?

163. If yes to #162, country(ies) of birth:

G G 165. If yes to #164, country of birth:

166. If yes to #164, age you first came to live in the United States

167. If no to #164, in what U.S. region did you grow up?
□ 1. Northeast (CT, MA, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT)
☐ 2 South Atlantic (DE, DC, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, WV)
☐ 3 South Central (AL, AR, KY, LA, MS, OK, TN, TX)
☐ 1 Midwest (IA, IL, IN, KS, MI, MN, MO, ND, NE, OH, SD, WI)
☐ 5 Mountain West (AZ, CO, ID, MT, NM, NV, UT, WY)
☐ 6 Pacific West (AK, CA, HI, OR, WA)
☐: Puerto Rico, Guam, or other U.S. Territory

168. What is your first language?____________________

169. How many languages do you speak fluently?
   G 1. One  G 2. Two  G 1. Three  G 2. Four or more

170. Which socioeconomic category best describes your family when you were in elementary school?
   G 1. Poverty  G 3. Middle class

   Yes  No

   G 171. Were you employed before you entered?  
         G 1. If yes to #171, were you employed 
         G 1. Full-time  G 2. Part-time

   G 172. If yes to #171, were you engaged in ministry before you entered?
         G 1. If yes to #172, were you engaged in ministry 

   G 173. Were you in ministry before you entered?

   G 174. If yes to #173, were you engaged in ministry

   G 175. Are you:  G 1. Male  G 2. Female

   G 176. If male, are you (or do you expect to be) a 
         G 1. Brother  G 2. Priest

   G 177. What best describes your racial or ethnic background?
         G 1. African American/African/black
         G 2. Asian/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian/Middle Eastern
         G 3. Caucasian/European American/Anglo/white
         G 4. Hispanic/Latino(a)
         G 5. Native American/Alaskan Native
         G 6. Other/Mixed races or ethnicities

   _______ 178. Year you were born
   _______ 179. Year you entered your religious institute
   _______ 180. Year you professed/expect to profess final vows/perpetual commitment
   _______ 181. Year you were ordained/expect to be ordained to the priesthood (if applicable)
   _______ 182. Age you first considered religious life

   _______ 183. Did you enter another religious institute before this one?
   _______ 184. If yes, number of years in that institute
   _______ 185. Were you raised Catholic?
   _______ 186. If you became Catholic as an adult, age you entered the Catholic Church
   _______ 187. Were you ever home-schooled?
   _______ 188. If yes, number of years home-schooled

   Yes  No

   G 197. What are the greatest obstacles in vocation discernment for discerners and vocation directors?
Did you attend any of the following before you entered?  
*Check all that apply.*

- G 189. Parish-based religious education/CCD/RCIA
- G 190. Catholic elementary or middle school
- G 191. Catholic high school
- G 192. Catholic college or university

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

- G 1. High school diploma
- G 2. Some college credits
- G 3. Technical college or Associate degree
- G 4. Bachelor’s degree
- G 5. Master’s degree
- G 6. Doctoral degree

194. Would you be willing to participate in a focus group?

- G 1. Yes
- G 2. No

Please provide your contact information:

Name: __________________________
Email: __________________________
Phone: __________________________

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

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