A study of the best messages, channels and audiences to increase vocations to the Catholic Diocesan Priesthood

Martin R. Coppola
Rowan College of New Jersey

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A STUDY OF THE BEST MESSAGES, CHANNELS AND AUDIENCES TO INCREASE
VOCATIONS TO THE CATHOLIC DIOCESAN PRIESTHOOD

by

Martin R. Coppola

A thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree in the Graduate Division
of Rowan College
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Approved by

Date Approved 9-14-95
ABSTRACT

Martin R. Coppola

A Study of the Best Messages, Channels and Audiences to Increase Vocations to the Catholic Diocesan Priesthood

Mr. Anthony Fulginiti
Graduate Public Relations Program
1995

The purpose of this study was to determine the best messages, channels and audiences to increase vocations to the Catholic diocesan priesthood. The study sought to determine the best messages, channels for those messages and audiences to receive those messages in an effort to increase vocations to the Catholic diocesan priesthood.

In addition to providing a demographic profile of priests, seminarians and men considering a vocation from three different diocese across the country, the study sought to determine general information on the messages and channels that had influenced men who are already priests, seminarians and considering a vocation.

This non-probability survey revealed that priests are happy with their career choice and that all three groups could be further influenced by, among other things, additional contact with other priests, special programs designed to help men explore the priesthood and being asked outright to consider a vocation.

The challenge of the Catholic Church and its vocation directors is to establish a deliberate plan to communicate the joys and rewards of a Catholic vocation.
The purpose of this study was to determine the best messages, channels and audiences to increase vocations to the Catholic diocesan priesthood. In addition to providing a demographic profile of priests, seminarians and men considering a vocation, the study sought to determine general information on the messages and channels that had influenced men who are already priests, seminarians and considering a vocation. The study revealed that priests are very happy in their work and that certain messages and channels are more persuasive than others at getting men to consider a vocation.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My humble and sincere thanks go to God for giving me the inspiration and perseverance to pursue this course of study. Also to the Catholic Church and all of the priests who helped and encouraged me by telling me they were excited to see the results. I hope they will find this paper useful.

I am grateful to my parents who gave me the encouragement to do what no one in my family had ever done before and to all my teachers, especially Mr. Anthony Fulginiti without whose assistance this paper would not be as professional and complete as it is.

I am also grateful to my Kitty and my Bunny for soothing my nerves and distracting me when I needed it the most. Last, but not least, I am grateful to my wife, Susan, who knew when to help me and when to leave me alone. Thanks for putting up with all my whining and crying and still being here.
In any society, both knowledge and moral stability are necessary for longevity and progress. People must know something about the experiences of previous generations and understand one another to move forward. However, rudimentary skills such as reading and writing are never enough to hold a society together. Additionally, people need a strong moral foundation, based on universal and explicit rules of conduct, which can penetrate the fabric of human behavior and form laws by which all members will abide. After all, this is how "civilization" is defined.

Such a code of conduct was established when God gave Moses the Ten Commandments. And with the birth of Jesus Christ, Christianity was born, further refining that code of behavior. In addition, the code was spread far and wide by Christ’s efforts and those of the Twelve Apostles he chose to assist Him. The Twelve were also instructed and given the power to train others in raising the consciousness and behavior of mankind to greater heights and rewards. The additional men instructed by the original Twelve Apostles were later to become known as bishops and priests.

As people diligently followed Christ’s instructions, Christianity began to flourish and by the 3rd century it had an
immense influence. "The decline of the Roman Empire in the 
West signaled the end of a centralized civil administration which 
could preserve and expand the arts of civilization. Into this 
cultural vacuum stepped the medieval Christian Church to become 
the chief agency for filing away the jagged edges of the rude 
society that came into being as a result of the Germanic 
conquests." 2

By the 4th century, monastic communities were being formed 
which would forever change civilization. Monks and other clerics 
separated themselves from the rest of the world to live a more 
spiritual existence. While the core of their lives revolved 
around religious thought, this was not their only realm of 
expertise. Many monks were schooled in the arts and sciences and 
continued to study these subjects while they strove for a more 
disciplined life. Within their communities, these people spent 
long hours studying and writing. For several centuries, they 
provided the only schools in existence in many regions.

Because of their schools and the communities that inevitably 
grew up around monasteries, the Catholic Church influenced 
governments as well as those whom they ruled, ensuring an upward 
spiral of human morality. As the sphere of Church influence grew 
by colonization and ministry, human behavior reflected a greater 
adherence to God's commandments and the world became more 
civilized.
Problem Statement

Until the mid 1960s numerous people sought vocations within the Catholic Church. A plentiful supply of priests and nuns educated the community both in and out of schools. There was no shortage of missionaries to do the same for the rest of the world.

By 1966 however, the number of applicants to seminaries began to decline. "The year 1966 was one year after the high point in theological seminary enrollment for the whole Twentieth Century. After Spring 1966, enrollments turned downward, and by the 1970s they were falling precipitously year by year. Whereas in 1966 there were 133 theology schools with 8,916 candidates for the priesthood enrolled, in 1986 there were 54 schools with 4,039 enrolled." 3

In 1963, John F. Kennedy, the United States' only Catholic president, was murdered. That same year, the United States Supreme Court declared that school prayer was unconstitutional. A scant decade later, the same legal body recognized a constitutional right to abortion, an activity never accepted so wholeheartedly by any civilization, with its ruling in Roe v. Wade. Society was becoming more secularized, and the public benefits of Catholic influence were being drastically reduced, especially for an upcoming generation.

While 1994 seems to have brought a slight increase in the number of candidates for ordination compared to previous years,
some religious societies such as the Maryknoll Missionaries had, for the first time since their inception, absolutely no applicants to the priesthood. As disheartening as this was for this group, it was even less optimistic for other groups. Membership in the Catholic Church is increasing every year, but the number of clergy available to minister to the swelling ranks of parishioners is dwindling.

Catholics are not the only ones who suffer from this loss. The Catholic Church has been largely responsible for the "advancement" of the world since the decline of the Roman Empire. With a decrease in the number of leaders to exemplify moral integrity for others, our society has experienced an increase in social problems which are evident on the front pages of every morning newspaper.

In his article, Quantifying America's Decline, William J. Bennett, U.S. Secretary of Education from 1985 to 1988, said that "During the 30-year period (from 1960 to 1990) there has been a 560 percent increase in violent crime; a 419 percent increase in illegitimate births; a quadrupling of divorce rates; a tripling of the percentage of children living in single-parent homes; more than a 100 percent increase in the teenage suicide rate; and a drop of almost 80 points in SAT scores." 4

In another article, Hate, Rape, and Rape, Second Lady Tipper Gore pointed out that "In America a woman is raped once every six minutes. A majority of children surveyed by a Rhode Island Rape
Crisis Center thought rape was acceptable. In New York City, rape arrests for 13-year-old boys have increased 200 percent in the past two years. Children 18 and younger are now responsible for 70 percent of the hate crime committed in the United States. 5

Lifestyles have changed and they are filled with a greater number of distractions than ever before. One of the greatest distractions of all time is television which has influenced viewers since its inception in the 1950s. The majority of current programming uses sex and violence and draws people into a materialistic frame of mind, an attitude counter cultural to spiritual influences. "I fear, wherever riches have increased, the essence of religion has decreased in the same proportion." 6

The 1990s have witnessed the birth of new crimes like carjackings and a resurgence of those crimes we hoped we had left behind such as parents killing their children and mob murder. Without the continued moral influence of Catholic clergy, which has structured human behavior for 2,000 years, further problems are inevitable.

One of the reasons for a decrease in applicants to the priesthood could be that the messages used to recruit new applicants have not been upgraded to account for contemporary changes within our society. With an increase in single-parent families and greater autonomy among Americans, messages that were appropriate 30 years ago may not be effective as we enter the new millennium.
Delimitations

While monks, nuns, brothers and other clergy have contributed both to the Catholic Church and society as a whole, the concern of this thesis is to identify the messages, channels, and appropriate audiences that will lead to an increase in the number of applicants for the secular clergy. No attempt was made to talk with members of religious orders, male or female. Though there are secular clergy throughout the world, the scope of this project will be limited strictly to secular clergy whose apostolate is in United States diocesan structures such as schools, hospitals, and Newman Centers.

Purpose

The reason for this study is to assist Catholic vocation directors and others responsible for recruiting candidates for the priesthood to update their methods and increase the scope of their success.

The questionnaire answered by the focus panels will help to determine which messages, audiences, and channels best serve the purpose of increasing the number of applicants to the priesthood. The author produced a list of customized messages which, when delivered to specific audiences through the correct channels, can increase the number of applicants to religious vocations. In addition, the project assumes that vocation directors will deal with similar target audiences nationwide and that the messages beamed at those audiences will have a similar effect.
Procedure

The author developed a series of questions to be used in a questionnaire to ascertain the best messages, channels and audiences to increase Catholic vocations.

The questions were developed and refined with the assistance of the thesis advisor and conversations with diocesan priests.

Questions could be answered in the individual's own words to allow for possibilities other than those suggested by the author.
Terminology

The following definitions apply for this study:

**Apostle** - One of the 12 disciples sent by Christ to preach the gospel.

**Christian** - Followers of Jesus Christ and His teachings.

**Clergy** - The group of ordained male persons in a religion.

**Cleric** - Clergyman.

**Diocese** - A district under the jurisdiction of a bishop.

**Diocesan** - Of or associated with a diocese.

**Ministry** - The service, functions, or profession of a minister of religion.

**Monastery** - A place of residence occupied by a community of monks.

**Monk** - Male member of a monastic order.

**Moral** - Of or concerned with principles of right or wrong conduct.

**Non-cloistered** - Those who do not live in a place of religious seclusion such as a monastery.

**Nun** - A woman bound to a religious order, especially one living in a convent under solemn vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

**Ordination** - The religious ceremony of investing a man with ministerial functions.

**Parish** - An ecclesiastical district having its own church and member or members of the clergy.
Priest - A member of the Catholic clergy.

Secular - Of or concerned with worldly or nonreligious things.

Secular Clergy - Catholic priests and nuns who work within normal communities not segregated from the rest of society and who have not taken vows of poverty.

Seminary - A special school that trains students for the priesthood.

Spiritual - Of spirit or the soul; of sacred things and matters.
Notes


Chapter II
Previous Work

A number of related studies have been conducted to determine the chief factors involved with choosing a religious vocation within the Catholic Church. In investigating these studies, the author found that each was tailored to specific target groups such as seminarians and recently ordained priests rather than cross-referencing information among those who were thinking about a vocation, those actively engaged in accepting a vocation and those who were already ordained. Typical of these is a publication produced by The National Catholic Educational Association and funded by The Lilly Endowment, Inc.

In researching the variety of materials available on fostering vocations in the Catholic Church, the author endeavored to find central organizations and key figures that were responsible for gathering and disseminating information on the subject. He found three organizations that provide information to assist vocation directors: the National Conference of Diocesan Vocation Directors, the National Catholic Education Association and the National Coalition for Church Vocations. The author
contacted leading figures at each of these organizations by telephone, stating his purpose and inquiring after relevant materials that each organization had produced to assist vocation directors.

**Purpose of Organizations**

The purpose of the National Conference of Diocesan Vocation Directors, hereafter referred to as NCDVD, is to consolidate information on the work and experiences of others on vocation awareness. One of their efforts to disseminate that information is "Share The Wealth," a booklet which lists topics from posters and fliers on the priesthood to vocation programs aimed at high school and college-age students of both genders. The booklet categorizes each topic and lists only the geographic names of particular dioceses that have developed materials or programs on those subjects. Any vocation director who is interested in a particular program is invited to call the particular parish utilizing that program and confer with them about its use and effectiveness.

The NCDVD also holds national conferences each year as a forum for vocation directors to exchange ideas and attend workshops on preselected topics of general interest. The last conference was held in Philadelphia in 1994 and focused on vocations within a multicultural church.
The primary vocational tool available from the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) is a national survey of seminarians that has been produced several times in the past decade, the latest of which appeared in 1993. This booklet provided data on men who were in an active stage of discernment without mentioning statistics on those who might be considering a vocation or already ordained. While the information available from the NCEA's study has some value, it covers only one audience in its efforts to assess the messages, channels and audiences relative to the Catholic Church's vocation program.

The National Coalition for Church Vocations (NCCV) is a partnership of the National Religious Vocation Conference (NRVC), National Conference of Diocesan Vocation Directors (NCDVD), Serra International and J.S. Paluch Company, a major publisher of Catholic literature. The NCCV is similar to a clearinghouse for Catholic vocation materials from posters and prayer cards to calendars and pamphlets. They also publish Horizon magazine, the quarterly journal of the National Religious Vocation Conference (NRVC). The journal consists of vocation-related articles written by vocation directors across the U.S. Topics usually cover personal experiences, observations and pilot programs used by individual directors.

In addition to researching published material, the author conducted personal and phone interviews with key people directly involved with the publication of these journals, vocation
directors, associate vocation directors and others responsible for conducting research in the area of religious vocations.

The author's preliminary interview was conducted with Reverend John Frey, vocation director for the Camden Diocese in New Jersey. Reverend Frey was instrumental in providing examples of posters, publications and brochures typical of those used by vocation offices. He was unaware of any publication that included questions aimed at the three groups involved in this study.

A secondary interview was conducted with Reverend Louis Marucci, Reverend Frey's associate director of vocations. Reverend Marucci had personally conducted research with high school students in the Camden Diocese and provided the author with a copy of the questionnaire he used, but was also unaware of any work including the three groups involved in the author's study.

The author conducted a phone interview with Elizabeth Ann Murphy, OP, creative director of media resources for the National Coalition for Church Vocations. She informed him of several individual religious orders that had conducted unusual vocation awareness campaigns, but directed him to another person for information related to his study.

The author conducted another telephone interview with Patricia A. Knopp, SNDN, Director of Communications for the Chicago-based National Religious Vocation Conference. Sister Knopp provided copies of Horizon and several other publications;
but she, too was unaware of any studies similar to the one proposed here. At her suggestion, the author contacted Dr. Joseph O'Hara, assistant director of the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

A phone interview with Dr. O'Hara confirmed the limitations of previous studies to seminarians and recently ordained priests. It led to an additional phone interview with Reverend Eugene Hemrick, director of research at the U.S. Catholic Conference center in Washington, D.C. Reverend Hemrick, who co-authored the 1987 publication, "Seminary Life and Visions of the Priesthood: A National Survey of Seminarians," and the 1993 publication, "Seminarians in the Nineties: A National Study of Seminarians in Theology," told the author once again that research into the subject of Catholic vocations had focused on seminarians and newly ordained priests without encompassing those who might be susceptible to a Catholic vocation.

Aims of Previous Research

Each organization seems to function semi-independently of the others as do individual parishes and religious organizations across the country with respect to vocation discernment and development. While all of these organizations provide information to one another as well as vocation directors, none seems to be
comprehensive in its efforts to compile specific data universally applicable to the audiences vocation directors deal with. The reasons are twofold: 1) the individualized needs of different communities; 2) the belief that the most accurate information regarding all groups can be obtained by questioning those in formation for ordination and the recently ordained. To make a complete assessment of the best messages, channels and audiences to increase Catholic vocations however, it is the author’s belief that one of the most crucial audiences has been left out. Reverend Hemrick’s opinion of this situation is that “Identifying those who might consider a vocation is difficult because there is no way to be certain who is called and who will accept.” 10

Overall, the main reasons cited for a decline in vocations appear to be celibacy, an increase in the number of mixed marriages, a decline in the number of children receiving a Catholic education, and the reduced opportunity to meet and interact with priests.11 In an article published by Momentum magazine, Edward F. DeRoche pointed out that “One study indicates that while there are 58,085 priests now, there may be fewer than 25,000 in the U.S. by the year 2000.”12
Evaluation of Existing Research

In evaluating current research, the author found that what work has been done on Catholic vocations has been limited to specific groups. The work did not cross reference the information to target the best messages, audiences and channels to increase vocations in the Catholic Church.

There is an obvious need for this study to cut across the individual barriers of religious congregations and other groups to establish common criteria among those who are thinking about a vocation, actively pursuing a vocation or who have already chosen a vocation within the Catholic Church.
Notes


10 Reverend Eugene F. Hemrick, ibid.


12 DeRoche, Edward F. *Updating Religious Vocation Information*, (Momentum, 1982), 33-35.
Because the topic was vocations to the priesthood, the data needed were the best messages, channels and audiences to encourage men to accept a vocation to the Catholic priesthood.

The author researched the data bases of several libraries known as Academic Abstracts (a general periodical index), ERIC (Education reports and articles), and SOJOURN (a regional card catalogue including all library books in South Jersey) on the subject headings of "priests," "vocations," "education," "Seminary," "Catholic," "Catholic church," "supply and demand," and a combination of these words. Each library held 10 to 20 books collectively under both headings and a small collection of articles from a variety of publications.

Of the data bases used, SOJOURN was the most fruitful because it listed several articles in different publications that were relevant to the author's purpose. However, with the exception of these few articles, most authors had written on subjects such as the philosophy of the priesthood, the duties of priests, or other subjects irrelevant to the author's purpose.
The author conducted phone interviews with the Catholic offices responsible for disseminating vocation information. Questioning of five vocation directors and three researchers and the materials they had published, revealed that no study has been done using the three groups involved in the study.

The best way to collect the information was to conduct a non-probability study through the vocation offices of three large dioceses. The author selected the dioceses of Los Angeles, Chicago and Camden, N.J. for the study. The three offices constitute a national cross section and guarantee data from a range of men who might be influenced by different messages or channels because of geographic locations.

The author elected to perform a non-probability study because a universe of potential candidates for the priesthood was not available and a statistical study was not necessary. However, the study should appeal to vocation directors as a fruitful area for their own dioceses.

The author had to enlist the cooperation of the gatekeepers, or vocation directors, of each of the study cities to access members of each of the three groups proposed in the study.

The research method consisted of creating a questionnaire with both forced-choice and open-ended questions to find out what influences priests, seminarians, and men in discernment experience in the process of choosing, and living out a vocation. The questions were determined primarily by the author with the
assistance of his thesis advisor and two vocation directors, Reverend Frey and Reverend Marucci.

The sample size was limited to 30 men in each diocese, 10 in each category, for a total sample of 90. In all cases, the author left the decision of who received the questionnaires to the vocation directors in each of the three dioceses sampled.

A cover letter (Appendix A) explaining the study, its purpose, who was conducting it, and 30 copies of the questionnaire (Appendix B) were sent to vocation directors in Los Angeles, Chicago and Camden.
Chapter 4

To ascertain the best messages, channels and audiences to increase vocations to the Catholic diocesan priesthood, thirty questionnaires were sent to each of three cities: Los Angeles, Chicago and Camden, N.J.

The author asked the vocation director in each of these cities to administer the questionnaires to ten priests, ten seminarians and ten men who were considering a vocation. The total number of questionnaires distributed was 90.

Out of those 90, the author received a total of 69 responses. Twenty-four were from priests, twenty-three were from seminarians and twenty-two were from men considering the priesthood.

The following tables show responses from each group to each of six questions. Other tables show the responses from each group to eight demographic questions. In addition, priests and seminarians were asked to respond to three additional questions.

The complete responses to the entire questionnaire appear at the end of this chapter. The preliminary tables show a cross reference of those tables indicating the most predominant
For the purposes of this study, the four possible answers to forced-choice questions have been divided into two categories. "Very important" and "Somewhat important" have been labeled as "important" while the answers "Of little importance" and "Not important at all" have been categorized as "Not important."

All of the following tables are designed to be read horizontally from left to right. \( P \) = Priest, \( S \) = Seminarian and \( C \) = Considering a vocation.

**Table 1**

Are you a priest, seminarian or considering a vocation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>( F/% )</th>
<th>( F/% )</th>
<th>( F/% )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>( P )</td>
<td>24/35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( S )</td>
<td>23/33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( C )</td>
<td></td>
<td>22/32</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Of the 69 respondents, 35\% were priests, 33\% were seminarians and 32\% were considering a vocation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>( N ) = 24</th>
<th>( N ) = 23</th>
<th>( N ) = 22</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>( P )</td>
<td>% = 35</td>
<td>% = 33</td>
<td>% = 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( S )</td>
<td>% = 33</td>
<td>% = 33</td>
<td>% = 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( C )</td>
<td>% = 32</td>
<td>% = 32</td>
<td>% = 32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2

How long did you or have you been considering the priesthood?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F/%</th>
<th>F/%</th>
<th>F/%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>3/12</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>0/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - 5 years</td>
<td>8/33</td>
<td>6/26</td>
<td>10/45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - 10 years</td>
<td>3/12</td>
<td>9/39</td>
<td>10/45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more than 10 years</td>
<td>11/46</td>
<td>8/35</td>
<td>2/9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12% of the priests considered a vocation for 5 to 10 years while 39% of the seminarians and 45% of those considering a vocation spent the same amount of time in discernment.

The majority of priests, 46%, spent more than 10 years considering a vocation. The majority of seminarians, 39%, spent 5 to 10 years considering a vocation. The majority of those considering a vocation, 45% and 45%, were divided between the 1 to 5 year and 6 to 10 year categories.
Table 3

Please rank the items according to their influence on your vocation decision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inner Feeling/calling</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>24/100</td>
<td>23/100</td>
<td>18/82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not important</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>4/10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

100% of the priests, 100% of the seminarians and 82% of those considering a vocation said inner feeling or calling was important to their vocation decision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Desire to help others</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>24/100</td>
<td>23/100</td>
<td>21/95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not important</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>1/5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

100% of the priests, 100% of the seminarians and 95% of those considering a vocation said that the desire to help others was important to their vocation decision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concern for personal salvation</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>14/58</td>
<td>14/61</td>
<td>9/41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not important</td>
<td>10/42</td>
<td>9/39</td>
<td>13/59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

58% of the priests, 61% of the seminarians and 41% of those considering a vocation said a concern for personal salvation was important to their vocation decision.
Table 3 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading religious material</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>11/46</td>
<td>15/65</td>
<td>8/36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not important</td>
<td>13/54</td>
<td>8/35</td>
<td>14/64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

46% of the priests, 65% of the seminarians and 36% of those considering a vocation said that reading religious material was important to their vocation decision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence of parents</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>15/62</td>
<td>13/56</td>
<td>10/45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not important</td>
<td>9/41</td>
<td>10/44</td>
<td>12/55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

62% of the priests, 56% of the seminarians and 45% of those considering a vocation said that parental influence was important to their vocation decision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence of friends</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>12/50</td>
<td>9/39</td>
<td>3/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not important</td>
<td>12/50</td>
<td>14/61</td>
<td>19/86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

50% of the priests, 39% of the seminarians and 14% of those considering a vocation said that friends were an important influence on their vocation decision.
Table 3 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Admiration of priest/religious</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>22/92</td>
<td>21/91</td>
<td>20/92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not important</td>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>2/9</td>
<td>2/8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

92% of the priests, 91% of the seminarians and 92% of those considering a vocation said that admiration of a priest or religious person was an important influence on their vocation decision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious education classes</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>14/58</td>
<td>8/35</td>
<td>7/32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not important</td>
<td>10/42</td>
<td>15/65</td>
<td>15/68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

58% of the priests, 35% of the seminarians and 32% of those considering a vocation said that religious education classes were an important influence on their vocation decision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lectures/retreats/programs</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>16/67</td>
<td>15/65</td>
<td>16/73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not important</td>
<td>8/33</td>
<td>8/35</td>
<td>6/37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

67% of the priests, 65% of the seminarians and 73% of those considering a vocation said that lectures/retreats/programs were an important influence on their vocation decision.
Table 3 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>4/17</td>
<td>5/26</td>
<td>4/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not important</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>0/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>20/83</td>
<td>18/78</td>
<td>18/82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17% of the priests, 26% of the seminarians and 18% of those considering a vocation said that some other event or person was influential to their vocation decision.

Priests who answered other included: others, the seminary, vocation homily and excitement of the priesthood as influential to their vocation decision.

Seminarians who answered other included prayer, charitable activities, parish liturgy, the Blessed Virgin and work satisfaction as influential to their vocation decision.

Men considering a vocation who answered other included: liturgical ministry, volunteer work in the Catholic Chaplain's program and altar server as influential to their vocation decision.

Note: Four influences were most predominant for all three groups surveyed: inner feeling/calling, the desire to help others, admiration of a priest or religious person and lectures, retreats and other special programs.
Table 4

Rank importance of activities on vocation decision

Note: The author assumed that those who did not rank the influence of an activity either did not have the opportunity to engage in it or chose not to and therefore could not rank it as an influence on their vocation decision. These have been categorized as "No Answer" in the tables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>P/%</th>
<th>P/%</th>
<th>P/%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Altar server</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>23/96</td>
<td>15/65</td>
<td>17/77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not important</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>5/26</td>
<td>7/32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>4/17</td>
<td>2/9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

96% of the priests, 65% of the seminarians and 77% of those considering a vocation said that being an altar server was an important influence on their vocation decision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>P/%</th>
<th>P/%</th>
<th>P/%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lector</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>12/50</td>
<td>12/52</td>
<td>12/55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not important</td>
<td>5/21</td>
<td>8/34</td>
<td>6/27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>7/29</td>
<td>3/13</td>
<td>4/18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

50% of the priests, 52% of the seminarians and 55% of those considering a vocation said that being a lector was an important influence on their vocation decision.
33% of the priests, 43% of the seminarians and 45% of those considering a vocation said that being a Eucharistic minister was an important influence on their vocation decision.

54% of the priests, 34% of the seminarians and 32% of those considering a vocation said that being a religious education teacher was an important influence on their vocation decision.

30% of the priests, 43% of the seminarians and 36% of those considering a vocation said that some other activity was an important influence on their vocation decision.
The priests who answered "other" included youth ministry, parish involvement, hospital ministry, rectory work, youth retreats and apostolate as activities that were important influences on their vocation decision.

The seminarians who answered "other" included parish involvement, music ministry, deacon, youth group, Newman club, prayer groups, leading retreats, helping the poor and counseling others as activities that are important influences on their vocation decision.

The men who are considering and answered "other" included volunteer counselor, choir, participation at Mass, and parish vocation coordinator as activities that are important influences on their vocation decision.

The most important influence to all three groups was being an altar server; 96% of the priests, 65% of the seminarians and 77% of those considering a vocation. This was closely followed by the activity, or channel, of being a lector; 50% of the priests, 52% of the seminarians and 55% of those considering a vocation.

In addition, for seminarians and those considering a vocation, the activity, or channel, of being a Eucharistic minister ranked very important; 43% of the seminarians and 45% of those considering a vocation.

The author assumed that this last activity was not so important for priests because 37% of the priests surveyed said
that it was not applicable in their case meaning that they had been ordained before the activity of Eucharistic minister was instituted in the Church.

Table 5

What contributes most to the growth and development of your vocation decision?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contribution</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prayer</td>
<td>6/25</td>
<td>11/48</td>
<td>7/32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retreat</td>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>0/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>4/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacraments</td>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>5/22</td>
<td>2/8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conviction of God's call</td>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>0/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support of others</td>
<td>7/29</td>
<td>6/26</td>
<td>3/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>0/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support/example of priests</td>
<td>9/37</td>
<td>6/26</td>
<td>9/41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>2/9</td>
<td>4/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active faith</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>2/9</td>
<td>2/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patience</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>0/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>1/5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To determine percents use the following key:

P N = 24
S N = 33
C N = 22
The priests surveyed said the three most important messages and channels that contributed to the growth and development of their vocation decision in order of priority were: example of other priests (37%), support of others (29%) and prayer (25%).

The three most important messages and channels for seminarians surveyed were, by priority: prayer (48%), support of others (26%), and the support and example of priests (26%).

Among those considering a vocation, the three most important messages and channels by priority were: the support and example of priests (41%), prayer (32%) and service (18%). Among this group, 18% also said that study was important.

The most important messages and channels to all three groups were prayer and the support and example of priests. Priests and seminarians also ranked the support of others as very important while those considering a vocation listed study as their third most important influence. The author assumes that this is because priests and seminarians have studied or are studying on a regular basis.
Table 6

What would make or might have made the decision easier?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F/4</th>
<th>F/8</th>
<th>F/4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening carefully</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>0/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support of others</td>
<td>4/16</td>
<td>3/13</td>
<td>0/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Catholic education</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>3/13</td>
<td>0/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More vocation information</td>
<td>5/21</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>2/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>10/42</td>
<td>4/17</td>
<td>3/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No celibacy</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>3/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money for education</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>0/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>0/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More contact with world</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>0/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apostolic activities</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>1/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal discernment</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>3/13</td>
<td>2/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodox seminary training</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>0/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No relationship</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>6/27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earlier start</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>2/9</td>
<td>0/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal invitation</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>2/9</td>
<td>1/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact with priests</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>5/22</td>
<td>0/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less responsibility</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>1/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An act of God</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>2/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less study time</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>1/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being Married</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>5/23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=24  N=33  N=22

Respondents selected as many as were appropriate.
The top reasons priests said would have made the vocation decision easier were: more vocation information (21%) and the support of others (16%). 42% offered no response to this question.

The top reasons seminarians gave to the same question were: contact with priests (22%) and more personal discernment (13%). 17% offered no response to this question.

For those considering a vocation, the top reasons that would have made the vocation decision easier were: not having a relationship (27%), being married (23%) and no vow of celibacy (14%).
Table 7

Rank effect of obstacles/motivation problems on vocation decision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>P</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vow of chastity</td>
<td>Troublesome</td>
<td>15/62</td>
<td>13/56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No trouble</td>
<td>9/38</td>
<td>10/44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

62% of the priests, 56% of the seminarians and 68% of those considering a vocation said that the promise of chastity was a problem relative to their vocation decision. This does not correlate with the responses of "no celibacy" in Table 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>P</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vow of obedience</td>
<td>Most troublesome</td>
<td>6/25</td>
<td>10/43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No trouble</td>
<td>18/75</td>
<td>13/56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only 25% of the priests, 43% of the seminarians and 32% of those considering a vocation said that the promise of obedience was a problem relative to their vocation decision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>P</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loneliness</td>
<td>Most troublesome</td>
<td>12/50</td>
<td>9/39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No trouble</td>
<td>12/50</td>
<td>14/61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

50% of the priests, 39% of the seminarians and 23% of those considering a vocation said that loneliness was a problem relative to their vocation decision.
17% of the priests, 18% of the seminarians and 36% of those considering a vocation said that commitment was a problem relative to their vocation decision.

The vow of chastity was the greatest obstacle or motivational problem among all three groups: 62% of the priests, 56% of the seminarians and 68% of those considering a vocation.

For 50% of the priests surveyed, loneliness was a problem. For 43% of the seminarians, the vow of obedience was troublesome. And for 36% of those considering a vocation, commitment was a motivational problem.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commitment</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most troublesome</td>
<td>4/17</td>
<td>4/18</td>
<td>8/36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No trouble</td>
<td>20/83</td>
<td>19/82</td>
<td>14/64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8

What other obstacle(s) trouble(d) you about becoming a priest?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Obstacle</th>
<th>F/%</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shyness</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choosing rel./dioc.</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>7/29</td>
<td>14/61</td>
<td>11/50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>4/17</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad media image</td>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>1/5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unworthiness</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>1/5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incompetent leaders</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>1/5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachings/sexuality</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rectory life</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>1/5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of social support</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>2/9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work load</td>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of boredom</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>1/5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political correctness</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving up marriage</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>3/14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of mediocrity</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief in the call</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age discrimination</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pride</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disillusionment</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>1/5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When asked about other obstacles or motivational problems, 29% of the priests, 61% of the seminarians and 50% of those considering a vocation said no answer.

Among the priests surveyed, another 17% said that confidence in their ability to perform their work was a problem, 8% said that a bad media image was a problem and another 8% said that the everyday work load was a problem.

Among the seminarians, other problems were limited; however, among those considering a vocation, 9% said a lack of social support was a problem and 14% said that giving up marriage was a problem.
The following are tables of the demographic questions asked of all participants.

Table 9

Were you born Catholic?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>P</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>23/96</td>
<td>21/91</td>
<td>21/95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>2/9</td>
<td>1/5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

96% of the priests, 91% of the seminarians and 95% of those considering a vocation were born Catholic.

Table 10

Did you attend Catholic schools?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>P</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>20/83</td>
<td>19/83</td>
<td>20/91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4/17</td>
<td>4/17</td>
<td>2/9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 20 priests who attended Catholic schools, 17 spent their entire elementary school years in a Catholic school, 16 attended Catholic high schools for four years and 17 spent at least 4 years at a Catholic college.

Of the 19 seminarians who attended Catholic schools, 9 spent their entire elementary school years in a Catholic school, 11
attended Catholic high schools for four years and 9 attended a Catholic college for at least two years.

Of the 20 men considering a vocation who attended Catholic schools, 15 spent their entire elementary school years in a Catholic school, 16 attended Catholic high schools for four years and 5 attended a Catholic college for at least two years. Three others in this group attended a Catholic college for one year and are taken into consideration in this table because they are too young to have spent more time in college.

Table 1.1

At what age did you first begin to consider a vocation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>F/%</th>
<th>F/%</th>
<th>F/%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age 5 - 9</td>
<td>7/29</td>
<td>4/17</td>
<td>3/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 10 - 15</td>
<td>11/46</td>
<td>7/30</td>
<td>13/59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 16 - 20</td>
<td>5/21</td>
<td>6/26</td>
<td>4/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 21 - 25</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>2/9</td>
<td>0/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over age 25</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>4/17</td>
<td>2/9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
29% of the priests, 17% of the seminarians and 14% of those in discernment began considering a vocation between the ages of five and nine.

46% of the priests, 30% of the seminarians and 59% of the men in discernment began considering a vocation between the ages of ten and fifteen.

21% of the priests, 26% of the seminarians and 18% of the men in discernment began considering a vocation between the ages of 16 and 20.

Table 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How old are you now?</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>C</th>
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<tr>
<td>Younger than 20</td>
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<td>0/0</td>
<td>10/45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 20 - 30</td>
<td>3/12</td>
<td>11/48</td>
<td>5/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 31 - 40</td>
<td>10/42</td>
<td>11/48</td>
<td>3/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 41 - 50</td>
<td>6/25</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>2/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over age 50</td>
<td>5/21</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>2/9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of priests surveyed, 42%, were between the ages of 31 and 40. The seminarians were almost evenly divided with 48% between the ages of 20 and 30 and another 48% between the ages of 31 and 40. The majority of those considering a vocation, 45% were younger than 20.
The following pages show the frequencies and percentages of the exact answers participants gave on the questionnaires.

**Question 1**

Are you a priest, seminarian or considering a vocation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>P</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24/35</td>
<td>23/23</td>
<td>22/32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 2**

How long did you or have you been considering the priesthood?

<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>No response</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 - 5 years</td>
<td>7/29</td>
<td>6/26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - 10 years</td>
<td>3/12</td>
<td>9/39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more than 10 years</td>
<td>11/46</td>
<td>8/35</td>
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</table>

**Question 3**

Please rank the items according to their influence on your vocation decision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inner Feeling/calling</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>C</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very important</td>
<td>19/79</td>
<td>22/96</td>
<td>13/59</td>
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<td>Somewhat important</td>
<td>4/17</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>5/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of little importance</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>3/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not important at all</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>1/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Desire to help others</strong></td>
<td><strong>P</strong></td>
<td><strong>S</strong></td>
<td><strong>C</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very important</td>
<td>15/62</td>
<td>17/74</td>
<td>18/82</td>
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<tr>
<td>Somewhat important</td>
<td>8/33</td>
<td>6/26</td>
<td>3/14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Of little importance</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>0/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not important at all</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>0/0</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Concern for personal salvation</strong></th>
<th><strong>P</strong></th>
<th><strong>S</strong></th>
<th><strong>C</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very important</td>
<td>5/21</td>
<td>8/35</td>
<td>4/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat important</td>
<td>9/37</td>
<td>6/26</td>
<td>5/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of little importance</td>
<td>6/25</td>
<td>6/26</td>
<td>7/32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not important at all</td>
<td>4/17</td>
<td>3/13</td>
<td>6/27</td>
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<th><strong>S</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>3/12</td>
<td>3/13</td>
<td>3/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat important</td>
<td>8/33</td>
<td>12/52</td>
<td>5/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of little importance</td>
<td>11/46</td>
<td>7/30</td>
<td>11/50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not important at all</td>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>1/5</td>
<td>3/14</td>
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<table>
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<th><strong>C</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very important</td>
<td>9/37</td>
<td>3/13</td>
<td>1/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat important</td>
<td>6/25</td>
<td>10/43</td>
<td>9/41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of little importance</td>
<td>5/21</td>
<td>7/30</td>
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<td>4/17</td>
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<td>2/9</td>
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<table>
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<th><strong>C</strong></th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Very important</td>
<td>6/25</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>1/8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat important</td>
<td>6/25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Of little importance</td>
<td>9/37</td>
<td>9/39</td>
<td>5/42</td>
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Question 3 continued

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<th></th>
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<th>C</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Admiration of priest/religious</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>12/50</td>
<td>11/48</td>
<td>14/64</td>
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<td>10/42</td>
<td>10/43</td>
<td>6/27</td>
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<td>Of little importance</td>
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<td>0/0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Somewhat important</td>
<td>11/46</td>
<td>6/26</td>
<td>7/32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of little importance</td>
<td>5/21</td>
<td>8/35</td>
<td>9/41</td>
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<td>5/21</td>
<td>7/30</td>
<td>6/27</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Lectures/retreats/programs</strong></th>
<th>P</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>C</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>6/25</td>
<td>7/30</td>
<td>8/36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat important</td>
<td>11/46</td>
<td>8/35</td>
<td>8/36</td>
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<tr>
<td>Of little importance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not important at all</td>
<td>4/17</td>
<td>3/13</td>
<td>4/18</td>
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</table>

<table>
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<th>S</th>
<th>C</th>
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<td>5/21</td>
<td>5/22</td>
<td>5/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat important</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>0/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of little importance</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>0/0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not important at all</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>0/0</td>
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<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
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<td>18/73</td>
<td>17/77</td>
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Question 4

Rank importance of activities on vocation decision

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<th>F/% P</th>
<th>F/% S</th>
<th>F/% C</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Altar server</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very important</td>
<td>12/50</td>
<td>7/30</td>
<td>9/41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat important</td>
<td>8/33</td>
<td>6/26</td>
<td>4/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of little importance</td>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>2/9</td>
<td>6/27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not important at all</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>4/17</td>
<td>1/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>4/17</td>
<td>2/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lector</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very important</td>
<td>3/12</td>
<td>4/17</td>
<td>6/27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat important</td>
<td>10/42</td>
<td>8/35</td>
<td>6/27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of little importance</td>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>4/17</td>
<td>3/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not important at all</td>
<td>3/12</td>
<td>4/17</td>
<td>3/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>6/25</td>
<td>3/13</td>
<td>4/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eucharistic minister</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very important</td>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>6/26</td>
<td>8/36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat important</td>
<td>6/25</td>
<td>4/17</td>
<td>2/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of little importance</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>3/13</td>
<td>1/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not important at all</td>
<td>6/25</td>
<td>5/22</td>
<td>4/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>9/37</td>
<td>5/22</td>
<td>7/32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religious ed. teacher</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4/17</td>
<td>4/17</td>
<td>4/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>9/37</td>
<td>4/17</td>
<td>3/14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Of little importance</td>
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<td>2/9</td>
<td>1/5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not important at all</td>
<td>4/17</td>
<td>7/30</td>
<td>9/41</td>
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<tr>
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### Question 4 continued

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<th>P</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>C</th>
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<tr>
<td>Very important</td>
<td>4/17</td>
<td>10/43</td>
<td>5/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat important</td>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>2/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of little importance</td>
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### Question 5

What contributes most to the growth and development of your vocation decision?

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<th>F/% C</th>
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<td>Retreat</td>
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<td>0/0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>4/18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sacraments</td>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>5/22</td>
<td>2/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conviction of God's call</td>
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<td>0/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support of others</td>
<td>7/29</td>
<td>6/26</td>
<td>3/14</td>
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<td>1/4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support of priests</td>
<td>9/37</td>
<td>6/26</td>
<td>9/41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>4/18</td>
</tr>
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<td>2/9</td>
<td>2/9</td>
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<td>Patience</td>
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<td>Grace</td>
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<td>1/5</td>
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Question 6

What would make or might have made the decision easier?

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<th>F/%</th>
<th>F/%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>0/0</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>2/9</td>
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<tr>
<td>No celibacy</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>3/14</td>
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<td>Apostolic activities</td>
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<td>1/5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal discernment</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>3/13</td>
<td>1/5</td>
</tr>
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<td>Orthodox seminary training</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1/4</td>
<td>6/27</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2/9</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1/5</td>
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<td>0/0</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0/0</td>
<td>1/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An act of God</td>
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<td>1/5</td>
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</table>
**Question 7**

Rank effect of obstacles/motivation problems on vocation decision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>P</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>C</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vow of chastity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most troublesome</td>
<td>5/21</td>
<td>4/17</td>
<td>9/41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat troublesome</td>
<td>10/42</td>
<td>9/39</td>
<td>6/27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of little trouble</td>
<td>7/29</td>
<td>5/22</td>
<td>3/14</td>
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<tr>
<td>No trouble at all</td>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>5/22</td>
<td>4/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vow of obedience</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most troublesome</td>
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<td>3/13</td>
<td>2/9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Somewhat troublesome</td>
<td>6/25</td>
<td>7/30</td>
<td>5/23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Of little trouble</td>
<td>15/62</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>4/18</td>
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<tr>
<td>No trouble at all</td>
<td>3/12</td>
<td>12/52</td>
<td>11/50</td>
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<td><strong>Loneliness</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most troublesome</td>
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<td>3/13</td>
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<td>4/17</td>
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<td>9/41</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Commitment</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Most troublesome</td>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>2/9</td>
<td>4/18</td>
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Question 8

What other obstacle(s) trouble(d) you about becoming a priest?

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<td>11/50</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Bad media image</td>
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<td>Unworthiness</td>
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<td>1/5</td>
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<td>0/0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work load</td>
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<td>Fear of mediocrity</td>
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<td>0/0</td>
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<td>Pride</td>
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Demographic Questions

Were you born Catholic?

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<tr>
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<td>1/4</td>
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Did you attend Catholic schools?

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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4/17</td>
<td>4/17</td>
<td>1/5</td>
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At what age did you first begin to consider a vocation?

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<th>F/%</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age 5 - 9</td>
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<td>Age 10 - 15</td>
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<td>7/30</td>
<td>13/59</td>
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<td>Age 16 - 20</td>
<td>5/21</td>
<td>6/26</td>
<td>4/18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age 21 - 25</td>
<td>0/0</td>
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<td>0/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over age 25</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>4/17</td>
<td>2/9</td>
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How old are you now?

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F/%</th>
<th>F/%</th>
<th>F/%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>P</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>C</td>
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<td>Age 20 - 30</td>
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<td>11/48</td>
<td>5/23</td>
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<td>Age 31 - 40</td>
<td>10/42</td>
<td>11/48</td>
<td>3/14</td>
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<td>Age 41 - 50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Over age 50</td>
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Chapter 5
Summary, Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary

This study investigated the best messages, channels and audiences to increase vocations to the Catholic diocesan priesthood. Most, if not all, of the studies conducted have involved newly ordained priests and/or seminarians, leaving out a crucial group: those considering a vocation. In conducting this study, the author included that group in an effort to compare their answers with those of priests and seminarians.

The author used a random method to choose the sample population for this study because of the difficulty of determining who comprised the third group of the survey. The sample consisted of 30 priests, 30 seminarians and 30 men considering a vocation. Vocation directors in Los Angeles, Chicago and Camden, New Jersey agreed to distribute 10 questionnaires to each group in their diocese. The recipients of the questionnaires were determined by the vocation directors in each target city.

The 90 surveys were mailed on April 26, 1995 and 69 were
returned by the deadline. It was a non-probability study. The author hand-recorded the individual responses and analyzed the resulting information according to the purpose of the study.

To begin his secondary research, the author searched three electronic databases at Camden County Community College and found scant information relative to his study. He then conducted telephone interviews with Catholic vocation communications and research experts in both Washington, D.C. and Chicago to determine what work had been done on the subject and to obtain copies of their materials.

The author composed the original survey questionnaire himself and revised it with the expert assistance of his thesis advisor.

Findings
1. 46% of the priests considered a vocation for more than 10 years compared to 39% of the seminarians and only 9% of those considering a vocation.
2. 100% of the priests, 100% of the seminarians and 82% of those considering a vocation said inner feeling/calling was an important influence on their vocation decision.
3. 100% of the priests, 100% of the seminarians and 95% of those considering a vocation said that the desire to help others was an important influence on their vocation decision.
4. 92% of the priests, 91% of the seminarians and 92% of those
considering a vocation said that admiration of a priest was an important influence on their vocation decision.

5. 87% of the priests, 65% of the seminarians and 73% of those considering a vocation said that lectures/retreats/programs were an important influence to their vocation decision.

6. 96% of the priests, 65% of the seminarians and 77% of those considering a vocation said that being an altar server was an important influence on their vocation decision.

7. 50% of the priests, 52% of the seminarians and 55% of those considering a vocation said that being a lector was an important influence on their vocation decision.

8. 33% of the priests, 43% of the seminarians and 45% of those considering a vocation said that being a Eucharistic minister was an important influence on their vocation decision.

9. 25% of the priests, 48% of the seminarians and 32% of those considering a vocation said that prayer was an important contribution to the growth and development of their vocation decision.

10. 29% of the priests, 26% of the seminarians and 14% of those considering a vocation said that support of others was an important contribution to the growth and development of their vocation decision.

11. 37% of the priests, 26% of the seminarians and 41% of those considering a vocation said that the support and example of priests was an important contribution to the growth and
development of their vocation decision.
12. 18% of those considering a vocation also said that service
and study were important influences on the growth and development
of their vocation decision.
13. 17% of the priests, 18% of the seminarians and 36% of those
considering a vocation said that commitment was troublesome to
their vocation decision.
14. 62% of the priests, 56% of the seminarians and 68% of those
considering a vocation said that the vow of chastity was
troublesome to their vocation decision.
15. 50% of the priests said loneliness was troublesome and 43% of
the seminarians said that the vow of obedience was a problem.
16. 17% of the priests said that confidence in their ability to
perform their work troubled them.
17. 9% of those considering a vocation said that a lack of social
support was a problem and 14% of the same group said that giving
up marriage was a problem.
18. Over 90% of each group were born Catholic and over 60% of
each group attended Catholic schools.
19. The majority of each group began to consider a vocation
between the ages of 10 and 15.

After priests and seminarians answered the demographic
questions on the questionnaire, they were given the opportunity
to respond to three additional questions which those considering
a vocation were not asked to answer.
When asked what the most effective messages to persuade men to consider the priesthood were, priests said that their life was a happy and fulfilling one and that the Church needs more priests.

Seminarians who responded to this same question replied that men considering a vocation should listen to and trust God; that they have been specially chosen and will be given the grace to fulfill their mission.

When asked what the most effective means of sending that message, priests responded that example and working with priests in apostolic ministries was best.

Seminarians who responded to this question replied that individual and group talks about vocations, homilies, the example of priests and seminarians and working with them as well as the support of family and community members were the best channels.

When asked what the most serious obstacles were to those considering the priesthood, priests responded that celibacy, desire for financial gain, and negative images of the ordained life in the media and society in general were the biggest problems.

Seminarians responding to this question replied that celibacy, lack of information about the priestly life and negative images in the media and society presented problems.
Conclusions

The greatest number of all three groups surveyed began considering a vocation between the ages of ten and fifteen which means that slightly before and during this time is when they should be exposed to the messages that will help them in discernment.

The best messages appear to be:

a. Not everyone is called by God. Those who are, are special people who should feel honored and answer the call affirmatively.

b. Trust God. If He is calling you to serve Him in this way, He will make sure that you have everything you need to do the job.

c. Pray often and well because this is how we communicate with God to know His will for us.

d. The priesthood is a happy, holy and fulfilling existence as well as vital to the well-being of individuals and society. Priests are greatly needed by people everywhere.

The best channels for these messages are:

a. The family since they are closest to the individual considering a vocation.

b. Teachers because children spend one third of their days in classrooms.

c. Catholic schools because children will be taught Catholic values and have more of an opportunity to interact with those who are guided by these values. This is also where children will be taught how to pray as well as how to listen to God.
d. Homilies, lectures, individual and group meetings are places where these men can understand more about the experience of others as well as exploring and sharing their own feelings.
e. An especially important channel for these messages is the example of and interaction with priests and seminarians. Greater interaction with these two groups will show those considering a vocation that this is not such an uncommon way of life and that it is both happy and fulfilling.

Interaction among the three groups also provides support for all concerned and bolsters their work, faith and belief in their call. This was of great importance to a majority of the three groups surveyed.

Vocation directors could implement these messages and channels by getting more of the laity involved in the secular activities that take up so much of the priests' time. Many of the laity would appreciate the opportunity to become more involved in activities that benefit the Church as a whole, giving them the opportunity to live out their faith as well. This would also allow priests to spend more time interacting with the members of the parish more often and in more ways than celebrating Mass and providing the faithful with the sacraments.

When trying to reach children and teenagers, inspirational stories about the saints and others who have gone before them provide for thought and faith as well as wholesome "entertainment" in a world besieged by scenes of sex, violence
and other immoral situations.

One example of this is a story the author was told in Catholic elementary school of several early martyrs who were forced by Roman soldiers to lie naked on a frozen lake until they froze to death unless they publicly renounced their faith in Christ. One of the martyrs gave in and walked away, but one of the Roman soldiers inspired by the courage and faith of those who chose death instead, disrobed and took his place beside them on the ice.

These are other messages that provide a wealth of inspiration and example, delivered through the channels of priests, parents, seminarians, teachers and books. They would influence children to a greater faith and consideration of how they could best serve both God and society in their consideration of a vocation.

In addition, a group might be formed to share successful messages and channels to inspire people to consider vocations. As it stands, most of this information must be sought by individual vocation directors who have to struggle through the process of implementation alone. A professional group could be used to assist the vocation directors and individual diocesan priests to plan and institute these programs in individual areas. This would relieve some of the burden to individual priests while providing professional and consistent performance of the program over a long period of time.
In considering what he did, the author would have changed several things about his approach to his survey. First, he would have asked those considering a vocation to answer the same three question at the end of the survey that priests and seminarians were asked to answer.

Second, he would have left out some of the open-ended questions both for the sake of simplicity in calculating the results and because they seemed to be redundant.

Third, he would have sampled a greater number of all three groups from three geographic locations to ascertain if there were significant differences among those locations. This might have provided more insight into the question of getting men to consider a vocation as diocesan priests.

As always, there is more room for investigation primarily where those who are considering a vocation are concerned. After all, this is the group that will provide the answer to the problem of a shortage of priests in the future.

As a final thought, there can be no doubt that many of us are influenced by the idea of "political correctness" and thus hesitate to speak out about issues of concern to everyone for fear of being chastised by others. Those who have already accepted the call to a vocation must be bold in summoning those who have been called and are hesitant to accept the invitation. At a time when the media and other influences try to persuade society that everyone is right, what is truly right, the call
from God to live a holy existence and teach others to do the same, must be spoken of without hesitation.

Men considering a vocation should be asked boldly and frankly why they hesitate. They should be encouraged to do what they know is right. Faith in God and the rewards Jesus promised to those who accepted the call must be spoken of often and honestly both in public and private.

Until we can speak with one another frankly, without hesitation or jest, fear of ridicule or rejection, many of those who are called will not realize the happiness and fulfillment to be had by putting their trust in God and obeying His call. Not only will their lives go unfulfilled, but also will many others who might have been influenced by these new priests.

What priests give up for the sake of God is far outweighed by the rewards they receive both now and later. No one can tell that story better than those who are living the promise and no one deserves to hear it more than those who are considering a vocation.

In addition, it appears that the role of the priest could use healthy doses of both advertising and public relations. Jesus’ messages were not told only in the synagogues of His time; people everywhere spread the news. If this is indeed the happy and fulfilling and worthwhile lifestyle choice that those committed to it say that it is, then they should say so in as many ways and as often as possible.
No doubt sacrifices must be made, but that is no different than in any other career choice. Too much emphasis has traditionally been placed on what priests must give up rather than what they gain. When people are exposed to priests only through adverse media reports or attendance at Mass on Sundays, they have little opportunity to interact with these men, to talk with them and see what really motivates them.

Newspapers and television are filled with stories of disaster and despair, often leaving viewers feeling hopeless and despondent. Yet nearly 100% of all three groups surveyed said that the desire to help others was important to their vocation decision. It seems that this message, the idea that men can make a difference as priests, could capitalize on these feelings and help these men overcome their vocation indecision.

Nearly 75% of all three groups surveyed said that lectures, retreats and special programs were also important to their vocation decision. This suggests that more opportunities of this type should be offered on a regular basis. Among other things, vocation directors could sponsor field trips to seminaries and other places where those considering a vocation could take time out of their daily lives to see what life is like as a seminarian and a priest.

Trying to make a lifetime decision based on pamphlets or brochures is akin to being an armchair quarterback during the Superbowl. Activities do more to change opinions than anything
else and reading is not active enough. Men need to see, face to face, what the religious life is like on a daily basis and talk with others who are considering or living the life of a priest right now. Those considering a vocation can see what the commitment is all about, ask questions and make a more informed decision.

Perhaps one of the best reminders of commitment comes from W. H. Murray's "The Scottish Himalayan Expedition," "Until one is committed there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative and creation, there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: That the moment one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the discussion, raising in one's favor all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance, which no man could have dreamt would have come his way.

I have learned a deep respect for one of Goethe's cuplets: Whatever you can do, or dream you can do, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it."
BIBLIOGRAPHY


I am a graduate student at Rowan College of N. J. using this questionnaire to complete my Master's Thesis on vocations to the priesthood. Your time and honesty in completing this questionnaire are deeply appreciated as well as vital to the completion of my degree. Thank you for taking the time to complete this and return it to me as soon as possible. You may use the opposite side of the page for any extended answers or additional comments and make photocopies of this document if necessary.

1. Check the one that applies to you: Considering a vocation O Seminarian O Priest

2. How long did you or have you been considering the priesthood? _______ (years).

3. Please rank the items below according to their influence on your vocation decision. 1=very important, 2= somewhat important, 3= of little importance, 4=not important at all.
   a. Inner feeling or personal calling 1 2 3 4
   b. Desire to help others 1 2 3 4
   c. Concern for personal salvation 1 2 3 4
   d. Reading religious material 1 2 3 4
   e. Influence of parents 1 2 3 4
   f. Influence of friends 1 2 3 4
   g. Admiration of priest or religious person 1 2 3 4
   h. Religious education classes 1 2 3 4
   i. Lectures, retreats or special programs 1 2 3 4
   j. Other (please explain) 1 2 3 4

4. Did you or do you have the opportunity to engage in religious activities? Yes O No O
   If yes, please rank the items below according to their influence on your vocation decision. 1=very important, 2= somewhat important, 3= of little importance, 4=not important at all.
   a. altar server 1 2 3 4
   b. lector 1 2 3 4
   c. Eucharistic minister 1 2 3 4
   d. religious ed. teacher 1 2 3 4
   e. other (please explain) 1 2 3 4

5. What contributes most to the growth and development of your vocation decision?

6. What would make or might have made the decision easier?

7. What obstacles or motivational problems did you or are you encountering in your decision? Please rank the following items using: 1=most troublesome, 2=somewhat troublesome, 3=of little trouble, 4=no trouble at all.
   a. vow of chastity 1 2 3 4
   b. vow of obedience 1 2 3 4
   c. loneliness 1 2 3 4
d. commitment 1 2 3 4

8. What other obstacle(s) trouble(d) you about becoming a priest?

Please see other side
Demographics

1. Were you born a Catholic? Yes ☐ No ☐

2. Did you attend Catholic schools? Yes ☐ No ☐

If you answered “yes” to question 2, please tell how many years you spent in each of the following:
   Elementary _____ High School _____ College _____

4. At what age did you first begin to consider a vocation? _____

5. How old are you now? _____

6. Please check your diocese:
   Los Angeles ☐ Chicago ☐ Camden ☐

7. If you are a priest or seminarian, please take another minute to answer these questions based on your experiences.

   What are the most effective messages to persuade young men to consider the priesthood?

   What are the most effective means of sending those messages?

   What are the most serious obstacles to those considering the priesthood?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. All answers will be kept confidential.

Please return your questionnaire as soon as possible to:

Martin R. Coppola
6068 Hoover Drive
Mays Landing, N.J. 08330
(609) 625-4660
APPENDIX A

Vocation Directors Who Received Questionnaires

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<tr>
<th>Name &amp; Address of Director</th>
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<td>April 22, 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845 Haddon Avenue</td>
<td>30 sent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camden, New Jersey 08103</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(609) 756-7955</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Reverend John Kline</td>
<td>April 26, 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103 E. Chestnut Street</td>
<td>1 sent (made copies)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chicago, Illinois 60611</td>
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<tr>
<td>(312) 787-9343</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Reverend Joseph Shea</td>
<td>April 22, 1995</td>
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<tr>
<td>1531 W. Ninth Street</td>
<td>30 sent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Los Angeles, California 90015</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(213) 251-3518</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Dear Father Frey,

Thank you very much for your assistance thus far in completing my master's thesis on vocations to the Catholic church. Your help on this project has been of inestimable value.

The secretary of the Los Angeles vocation office told me to send the questionnaires right away and I hope to solicit the same cooperation from the Chicago office when I call on Monday.

As a reminder of what this part of the project involves and what I am asking you to do for me, I am sending you 30 questionnaires. I would like to have them answered by 10 priests, 10 seminarians and 10 men in discernment. I hope to have all the questionnaires returned by the middle of May, so I can complete my thesis by June.

Please feel free to make photocopies of the questionnaire or phone if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you again for all your help and may God continue to bless you and your work.

Sincerely,

Martin R. Coppola
Dear Father Kline,

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me about my master’s thesis project. As I told you, I am finishing my graduate work in Public Relations at Rowan College of New Jersey.

My thesis is concerned with the best messages, channels and audiences to increase vocations to the diocesan priesthood.

To that end I have constructed the enclosed questionnaire and sent 30 copies each to Los Angeles and Camden, N.J. I would like to have the questionnaires answered by ten people from each of the following groups: 10 priests, 10 seminarians and 10 men in discernment. My deadline for receipt of the finished questionnaires is May 15, so I can finish writing my thesis by June 1.

Father John Frey of the Camden Diocesan Office agreed to be a reference for me in contacting other vocation directors. His number is (609) 755-7966.

Please feel free to call me at your convenience if you have any questions and thank you again for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Martin R. Coppola
Dear Father Shea,

I am a graduate student finishing my degree at Rowan College of New Jersey this June. My master’s thesis involves the best messages, channels and audiences to increase vocations to the Catholic priesthood.

When I phoned last Friday afternoon, I explained to Elizabeth that I am using the enclosed questionnaires as part of my research and that I am trying to enlist the assistance of vocation directors in Los Angeles, Chicago and Camden, N.J.

I would like to have the questionnaires answered by 30 people altogether; 10 priests, 10 seminarians and 10 men who are in discernment. My goal is to finish my thesis by June 1, 1995 and to that end I would appreciate it if you could send the completed forms back to me by the middle of May.

Fr. John Frey, vocation director for the Camden Diocese, was my first contact for this phase of the project. He agreed to help me as well as allowing me to use him for a reference when contacting other vocation directors.

Please feel free to make copies of the questionnaire or call me if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for your assistance and may God continue to bless you and your work.

Sincerely,

Martin R. Coppola