

**April 2025**

***The Class of 2025:  
Survey of Ordinands to the Priesthood***



Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate  
Georgetown University  
Washington, D.C.

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Survey of Ordinands to the Priesthood***

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

**April 2025**



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## Executive Summary

This report presents findings from a national survey of seminarians scheduled for ordination to the priesthood in 2025. The report is a part of collaboration between the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Secretariat of Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations and the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA). The purpose of this report is to compile information regarding men who are ordained to priesthood in the United States, within a particular year.

The survey was administered between January 10 and March 20, 2025. Out of 405 ordinands invited to participate, 309 ordinands responded to the survey. The response rate is 76%.

### ***Type of Priesthood***

- Four in five responding ordinands (80%) are preparing for ordination to a diocese or eparchy. Responding ordinands in religious institutes comprise 20%. The largest group of responding ordinands (37%) is completing studies at one of the seminaries in the Midwest. Relatively few (5%) are completing studies at a seminary abroad.
- On average, responding diocesan ordinands lived in the diocese or eparchy for which they will be ordained for 17 years before they entered the seminary. Responding ordinands in religious institutes knew the members of their religious institute for 6 years, on average, before entering.

### ***Age***

- On average, responding ordinands first considered priesthood when they were 16 years old. Responding ordinands were scheduled for ordination, on average, 18 years later (at the age of 34).

### ***Race/Ethnicity and Culture***

- Seven in ten responding ordinands (69%) are Caucasian. One in ten (12%) is Hispanic/Latino. One in ten (12%) is Asian/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian. One in twenty (6%) is African/African American/Black.
- One-quarter of responding ordinands (26%) is foreign-born. The three most common countries of birth among the foreign-born are Mexico (5% of all responding ordinands), Vietnam (4%), and Philippines (3%). On average, foreign-born responding ordinands came to live in the United States 15 years ago, at the age of 21.

### ***Education***

- More than one in ten responding ordinands (15%) reported being home schooled. Among those who were home schooled, the average length of home schooling was 9 years.
- Between 36% and 46% of all responding ordinands attended a Catholic school at the K-12 and/or college level. Three in five responding ordinands (58%) participated in a religious education program in their parish, for 6 years on average.

- Three in five responding ordinands (63%) completed an undergraduate degree or a graduate degree before entering the seminary.
- Among those who attended an undergraduate or graduate college before entering the seminary, the most common fields of study included philosophy, engineering, business, and science or math.
- About a quarter of responding ordinands (27%) carried educational debt at the time they entered the seminary (or religious institute), which was \$37,092 on average. Between entering seminary and ordination, the average amount of debt carried by responding ordinands in religious institutes decreased by 58% and the average amount of debt carried by responding diocesan ordinands decreased by 3% since entering the seminary (unadjusted for inflation).

### ***Work***

- Two in three in ten responding ordinands (66%) reported having full-time work experience prior to entering the seminary.
- One in twenty (6%) served in the U.S. Armed Forces.

### ***Family Background***

- Nine in ten responding ordinands (92%) reported being baptized Catholic as an infant. Among those who became Catholic later in life, the average age of conversion was 22.
- Nearly nine in ten responding ordinands (85%) reported that both their parents were Catholic when they were children. The vast majority of responding ordinands (95%) were raised during the most formative part of their childhood by their biological parents.
- Three in ten responding ordinands (31%) have or had a relative who is a priest or religious.

### ***Vocational Discernment***

- In regard to prayer practices, three-quarters of responding ordinands participated in Eucharistic Adoration (78%) on a regular basis before entering the seminary, as compared to 72% who prayed rosary, 48% who participated in a prayer/Bible group, and 41% who engaged in Lectio Divina.
- In regard to group activities, half of responding ordinands (51%) participated in a parish youth group before entering the seminary, as compared to 35% who participated in Catholic campus ministry, 23% who participated in Knights of Columbus/ Knights of Peter Claver, 22% who participated in a parish young adult group, and 21% who participated in Boy Scouts.

- In regard to participation in parish ministries, nearly three in four responding ordinands (73%) served as altar servers before entering the seminary, as compared to 46% who served as lectors, 34% who served as EMHC, and 32% who served as catechists.
- Nine in ten responding ordinands (89%) reported being encouraged to consider the priesthood by someone in their life [most frequently by parish priest (60%), friend (52%), or parishioner (42%)].
- Two in five responding ordinands (43%) indicated that they were discouraged from considering the priesthood by one or more persons. Most often, this person was a friend or school classmate, mother, father, or other family member.

### ***Formation***

- In regard to participation in formation activities in seminary, seven in ten responding ordinands (68%) reported that pastoral year internship contributed at least “somewhat” to their vocation.
- More than half say these formation activities contributed to their vocations: clinical pastoral education (56%), a thirty-day retreat (56%), spirituality year (52%), and a priestly fraternity group (51%).

## Introduction

In December 2005, the Secretariat for Vocations and Priestly Formation (now the Secretariat of Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations) of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) commissioned the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University to conduct an annual survey of responding ordinands to the priesthood. The survey was initially developed by the Secretariat in 1998 and has been administered online since 2005. CARA assumed responsibility for the project in 2006, using the online survey developed by the Secretariat. CARA worked with the Secretariat to improve the online survey and to incorporate it into the data collection process for CARA's annual survey of priestly formation programs.

To obtain the names and contact information for participants, CARA contacted and asked all vocation directors of (arch)dioceses and major superiors of men in the United States to provide contact information for every member who was scheduled for ordination to priesthood in 2025. Among the dioceses responding, a total of 36 (arch)dioceses reported that they did not have any men scheduled for priestly ordination this year.

CARA then contacted 405 ordinands to participate in the survey. The survey was distributed between January 10 and March 20, 2025. Follow-up emails were regularly sent to the ordinands who has not responded. Out of 405 ordinands invited, 309 ordinands responded to the survey, representing 76% response rate.

The questionnaire asked responding ordinands about their demographic and religious background, education, previous ministry and work experience, as well as various aspects of vocation discernment (e.g., people encouraging and discouraging them from considering priesthood, experience with vocation programs). This report describes responses to the questions from all responding ordinands combined as well as separately for diocesan ordinands and ordinands in religious institutes. The report also contains selected trend data going as far back as 1999, the first year for which comparable data on both diocesan and responding ordinands in religious institutes are available.

The report is organized into eight parts:

- Part I of the report provides a description of what type of priesthood ordinands are preparing for and where they study.
- Part II focuses on the age of ordinands when they first considered priesthood and their current age (in the year when they are scheduled for ordination).
- Part III describes selected demographics about the responding ordinands, including information about race and ethnicity, and information pertaining to immigration to the United States (for ordinands born abroad).
- Part IV explores the educational experience of responding ordinands. This includes information about the highest level of education completed before entering the seminary, attained Catholic education, and information pertaining to educational debt.
- Part V focuses on the prior work experience, including full-time employment and military experience, of responding ordinands prior to entering the seminary.
- Part VI provides information about ordinands' family background.
- Part VII describes various factors that might have influenced the process of vocational discernment.

- Part VIII provides an assessment of formation activities.

Notes about interpreting the results:

- Tests for difference in proportions are only reported, if significance level is 0.05 or less.
- For the purpose of forecasting, confidence intervals are estimated using a confidence level of 0.95. Forecasts are only included, if a confidence interval is equal to or smaller than 5% of the forecasted amount.

# Part I: Type of Priesthood

## Type of Priesthood - Part 1

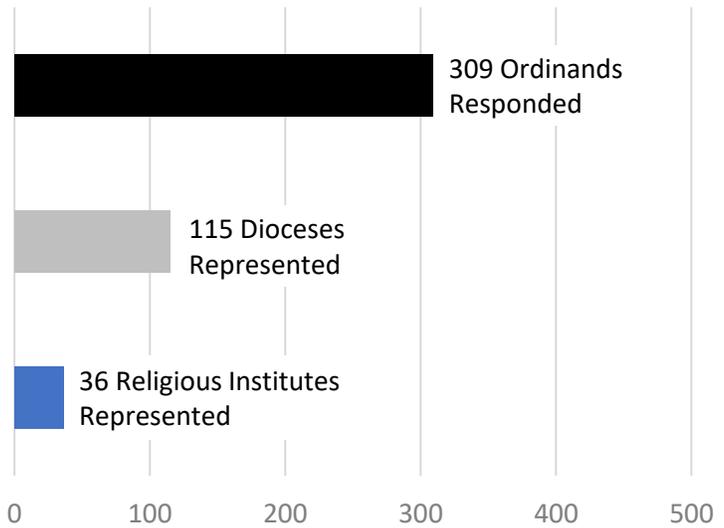
Overall, 309 ordinands completed the Ordination Class of 2025 Survey. Those ordinands represent 115 U.S. dioceses and eparchies and 36 distinct religious institutes.

Four in five respondents (80%) were diocesan ordinands in 2025 (and 83% a year before). Since 2006, the percentage of those ordinands averaged 79% and ranged between 70% and 88%. In 2025, the greatest number of responses from diocesan ordinands came from the Dioceses of Arlington (10 ordinands) and Cleveland (7 ordinands).

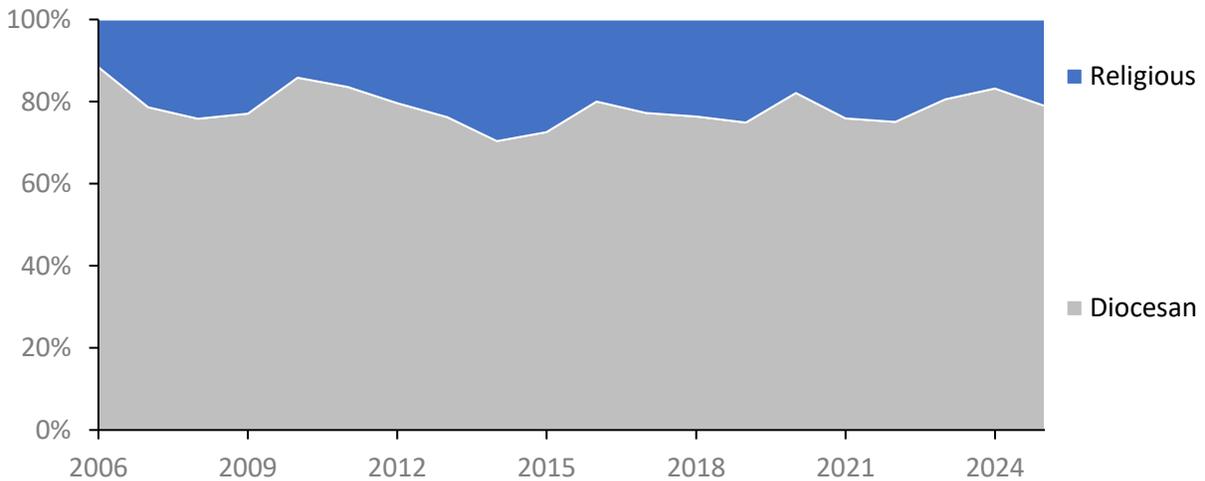
One in five respondents (20%) were religious ordinands in 2025 (and 17% a year before). Since 2006, the percentage of those ordinands has averaged 21% and ranged between 12% and 30%. In 2025, the greatest number of responses from ordinands to the religious priesthood came from the Society of Jesus (12 ordinands) and the Order of Preachers (9 ordinands).

Notably, these numbers refer only to responding ordinands and do not necessarily mean that these dioceses and religious institutes will ordain the largest number of priests in 2025.

**Survey Respondents  
Ordination Class of 2025**



**Types of Ordinands, 2006-2025**



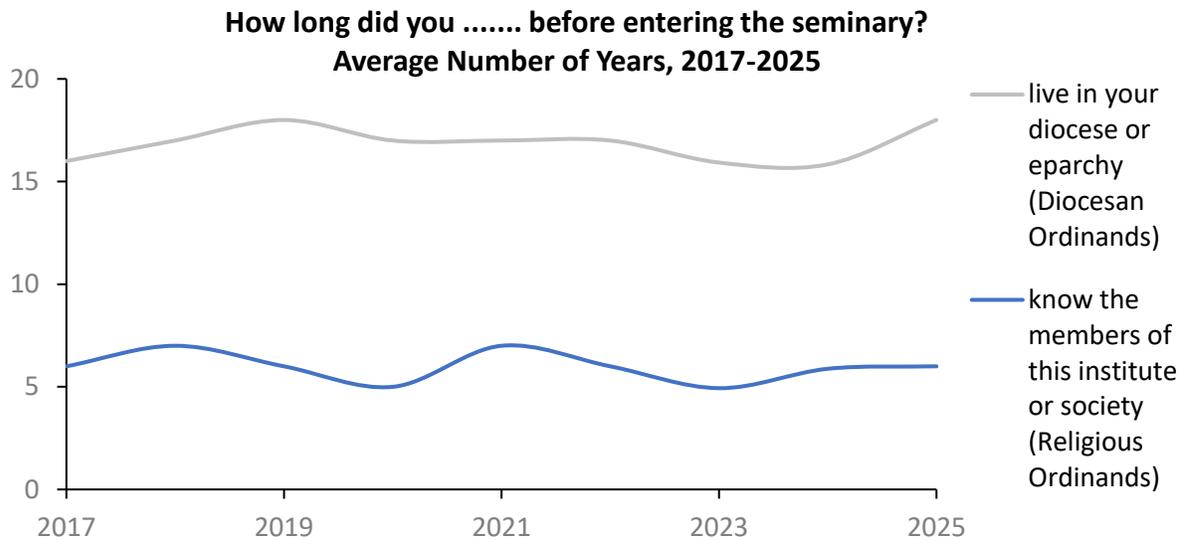
## Type of Priesthood - Part 2

On average, 2025 responding diocesan ordinands lived in their dioceses for 17 years before entering seminary (a median of 18 years). Since 2017, this number has averaged 17 years (a range between 16 and 18 years).

On average, 2025 responding religious ordinands knew the

members of their religious institute for 6 years before entering seminary (a median of 3 years). Since 2017, this number averaged 6 years (a range between 5 and 7 years).

| How long did you ..... before entering the seminary?<br>Ordination Class of 2025 |  |   |
|--|--|---|
|  | know the members of<br>this institute or society<br>(Religious Ordinands)<br>[years] | live in your diocese<br>or eparchy<br>(Diocesan Ordinands)<br>[years] |
| Average  | 6  | 17  |
| Median   | 3  | 18  |
| Range  | 0 - 38   | 0 - 71  |



## Seminary Location

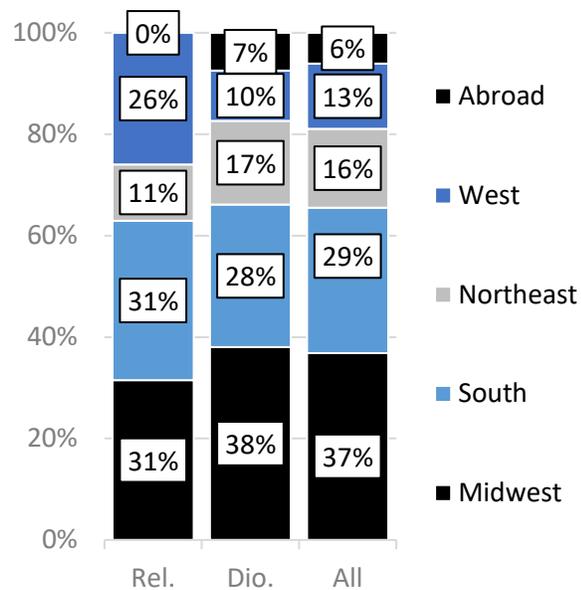
Ordinands who received formation at a seminary in the Midwest constituted 37% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 31% of ordinands in religious institutes and 38% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2017 and 2025, their share has averaged 34% and ranged between 24% and 38%.

Ordinands who received formation at a seminary in the South constituted 29% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 31% of ordinands in religious institutes and 28% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2017 and 2025, their share has averaged 25% and ranged between 18% and 31%.

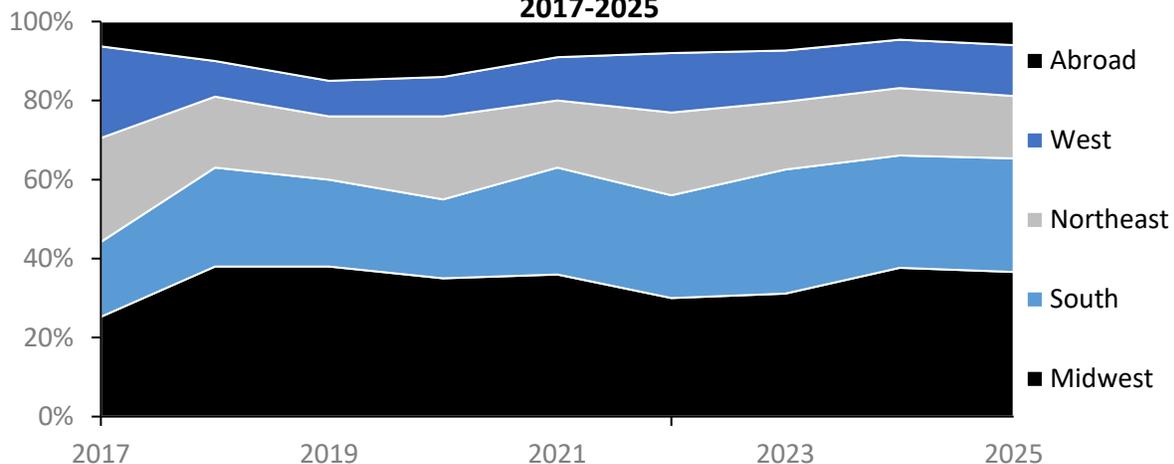
Ordinands who received formation at a seminary in the Northeast constituted 16% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 26% of ordinands in religious institutes and 10% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2017 and 2025, their share has averaged 19% and ranged between 16% and 25%.

Ordinands who received formation at a seminary in the West constituted 13% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 11% of ordinands in religious institutes and 17% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2017 and 2025, their share has averaged 13% and ranged between 9% and 22%.

**Distribution of Ordinands by the Location of Their Seminary in 2025**



**Distribution of Ordinands by the Location of Their Seminary, 2017-2025**



## Part II: Age

### Age When First Considered Priesthood - Part 1

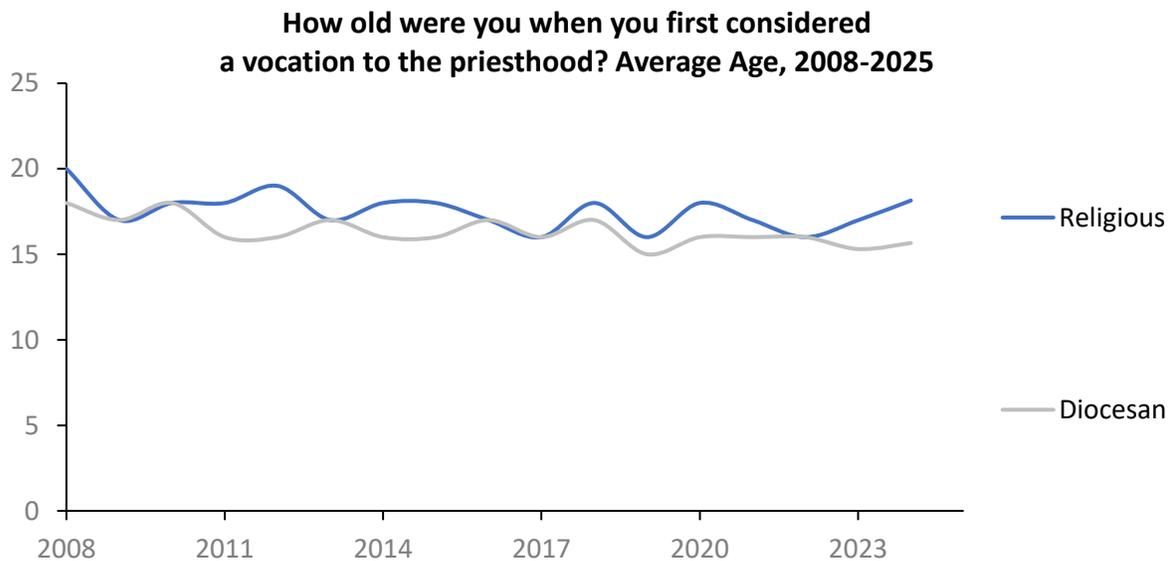
Altogether, responding ordinands in 2025 were, on average, 16 years old when they first considered a vocation to the priesthood (half were between 3 and 16 years old and the other half between 16 and 70 years old). Since 2008, the average age was 17 and ranged between 16 and 18.

| How old were you when you first considered a vocation to the priesthood?<br>Ordination Class of 2025 |                      |                     |                |
|--|----------------------|---------------------|----------------|
|  | Religious<br>[years] | Diocesan<br>[years] | All<br>[years] |
| Average  | 15                   | 17                  | 16             |
| Median   | 16                   | 15                  | 16             |
| Range  | 3 - 35               | 3 - 70              | 3 - 70         |

In 2025, on average, responding ordinands in religious institutes were 2 years older than responding diocesan ordinands when they first considered a vocation to the priesthood:

Responding ordinands in religious institutes in 2025 were, on average, 15 years old when they first considered a vocation to the priesthood (half were between 3 and 16 years old and the other half between 16 and 35 years old). Since 2008, the average age was 18 and ranged between 16 and 20.

Responding ordinands to diocesan priesthood in 2025 were, on average, 17 years old when they first considered a vocation to the priesthood (half were between 3 and 15 years old and the other half between 15 and 70 years old). Since 2008, the average age was 16 and ranged between 15 and 18.



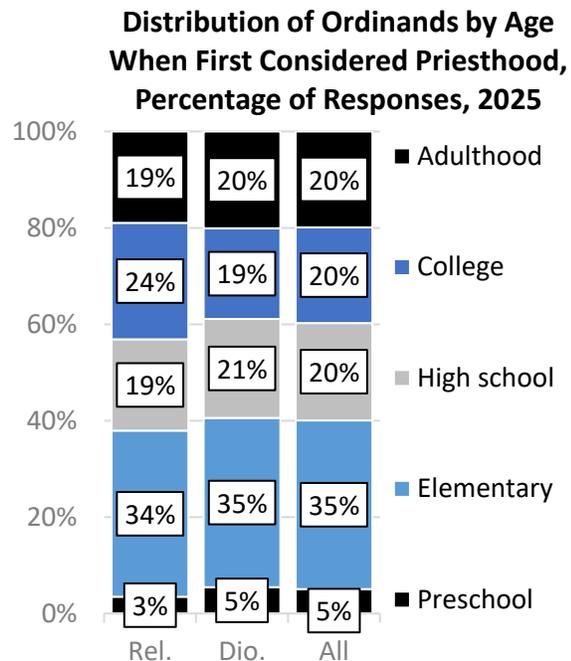
## Age When First Considered Priesthood - Part 2

Ordinands who first considered priesthood in elementary school (ages 6 through 13) constituted 35% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 34% of ordinands in religious institutes and 35% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2014 and 2025, their share has averaged 29% and ranged between 19% and 38%.

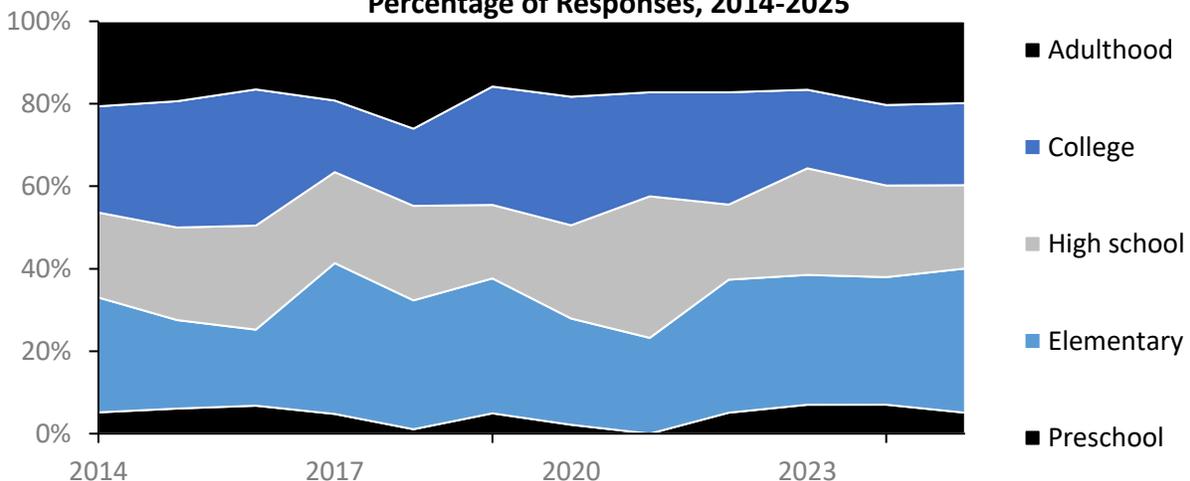
Ordinands who first considered priesthood in high school (ages 14 through 17) constituted 20% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 19% of ordinands in religious institutes and 21% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2014 and 2025, their share has averaged 23% and ranged between 18% and 34%.

Ordinands who first considered priesthood in college (ages 18 through 21) constituted 20% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 24% of ordinands in religious institutes and 19% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2014 and 2025, their share has averaged 24% and ranged between 18% and 34%.

Ordinands who first considered priesthood in adulthood (ages 22 or older) constituted 20% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 19% of ordinands in religious institutes and 20% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2014 and 2025, their share has averaged 19% and ranged between 16% and 25%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 17% ±5pp of ordinands, in 2029.



**Distribution of All Ordinands by Age When First Considered Priesthood, Percentage of Responses, 2014-2025**



## Age When Scheduled for Ordination - Part 1

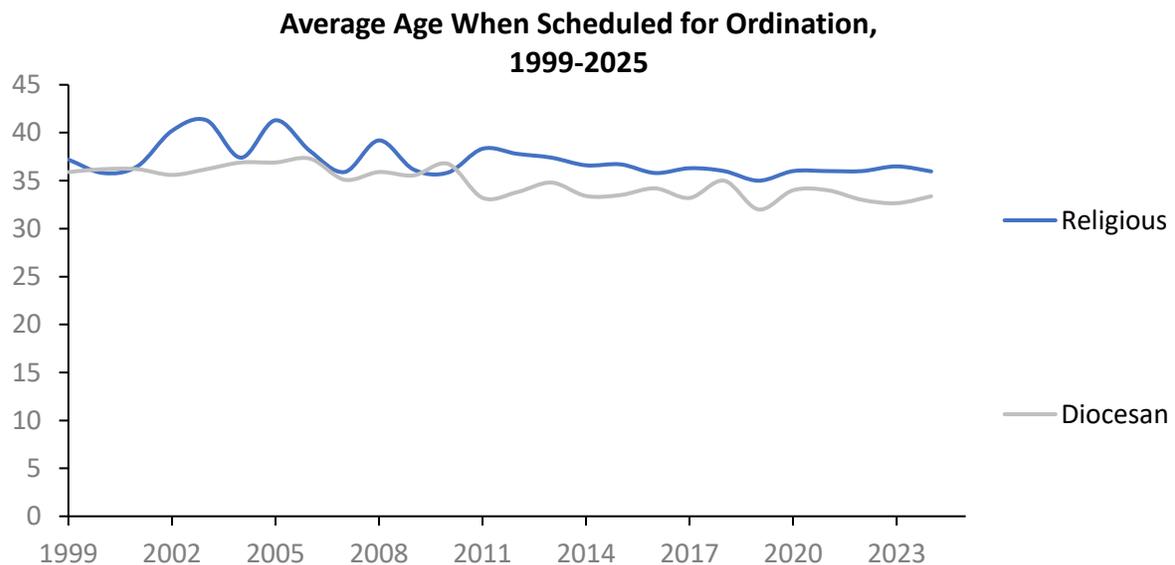
Altogether, responding ordinands in 2025 were, on average, 34 years old at the time of ordination (half were between 24 and 31 years old and the other half between 31 and 74 years old). Since 1999, the average age was 35 and ranged between 33 and 37.

| Age When Scheduled for Ordination<br>Ordination Class of 2025 |                      |                     |                |
|---|----------------------|---------------------|----------------|
|   | Religious<br>[years] | Diocesan<br>[years] | All<br>[years] |
| Average   | 36                   | 34                  | 34             |
| Median  | 34                   | 31                  | 31             |
| Range   | 24 - 57              | 26 - 74             | 24 - 74        |

In 2025, on average, responding ordinands in religious institutes were 2 years older than responding diocesan ordinands at the time of ordination.

Responding ordinands in religious institutes in 2025 were, on average, 36 years old when they were scheduled for ordination to the priesthood (half were between 24 and 34 years old and the other half between 34 and 57 years old). Since 1999, the average age was 37 and ranged between 35 and 41.

Responding ordinands to diocesan priesthood in 2025 were, on average, 34 years old when they were scheduled for ordination to the priesthood (half were between 26 and 31 years old and the other half between 31 and 74 years old). Since 1999, the average age was 35 and ranged between 32 and 37.

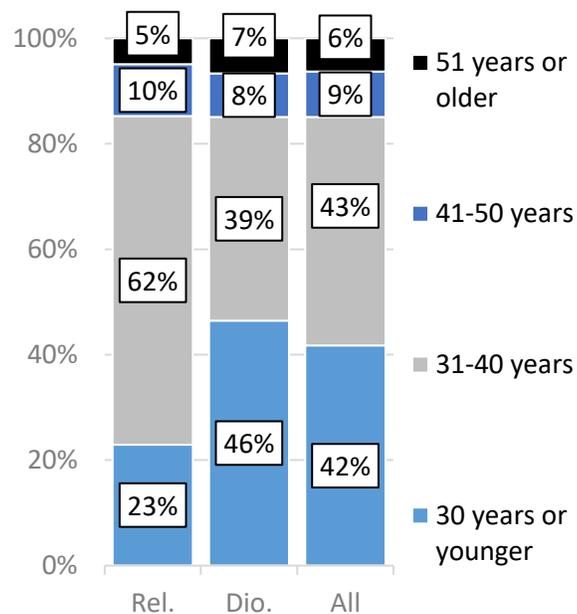


## Age When Scheduled for Ordination - Part 2

Ordinands 31-40 years old constituted 43% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 62% of ordinands in religious institutes and 39% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood (a statistically significant difference). Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 42% and ranged between 36% and 46%.

Ordinands 30 years or younger constituted 42% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 23% of ordinands in religious institutes and 46% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood (a statistically significant difference). Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 38% and ranged between 22% and 50%.

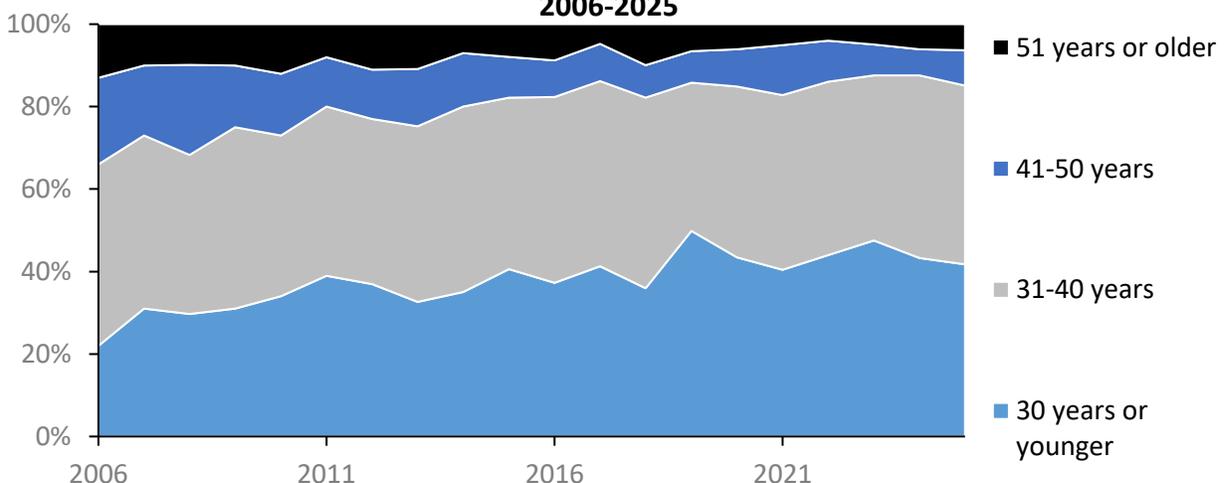
**Distribution of Respondents by Age When Scheduled for Ordination in 2025**



Ordinands 41-50 years old constituted 9% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 10% of ordinands in religious institutes and 8% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 12% and ranged between 6% and 22%.

Ordinands 51 years or older constituted 6% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 5% of ordinands in religious institutes and 7% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 8% and ranged between 4% and 13%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 1% ±3pp of ordinands, in 2029.

**Distribution of All Respondents by Age When Scheduled for Ordination, 2006-2025**



## Part III: Race/Ethnicity and Cultural Background

### Race and Ethnicity

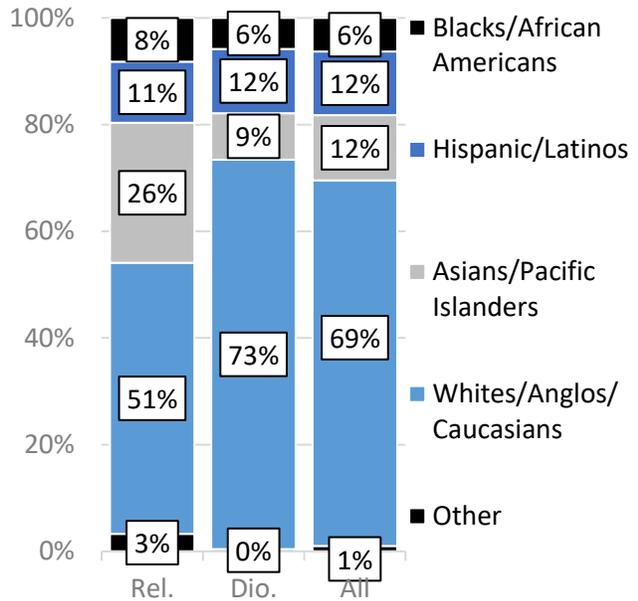
Caucasians constituted 69% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 51% of ordinands in religious institutes and 73% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood (a statistically significant difference). Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 68% and ranged between 60% and 72%.

Hispanics/Latinos constituted 12% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 11% of ordinands in religious institutes and 12% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 15% and ranged between 11% and 22%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 20% ±4pp of ordinands, in 2029.

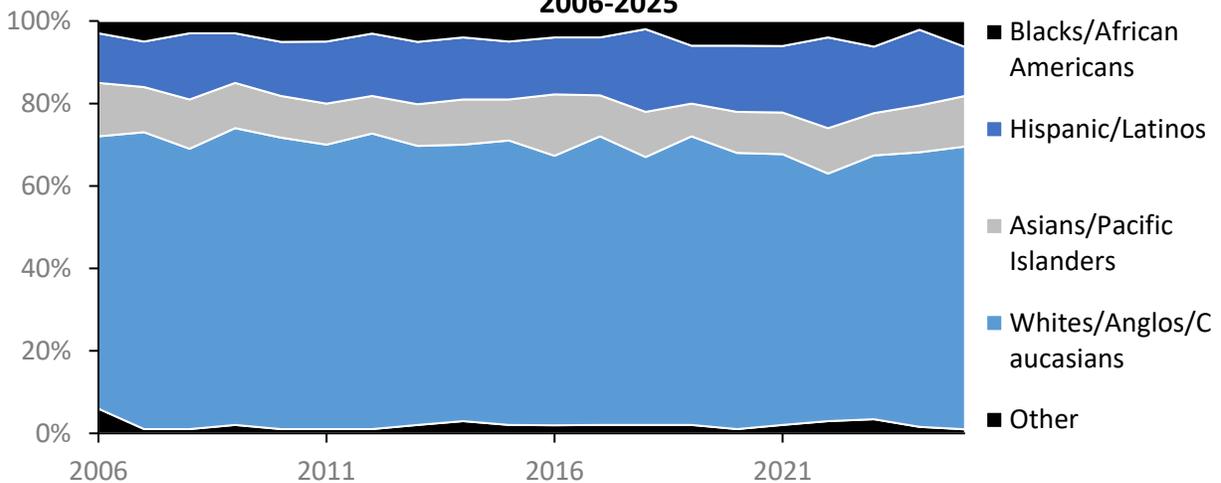
Asians/Pacific Islanders constituted 12% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 26% of ordinands in religious institutes and 9% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood (a statistically significant difference). Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 11% and ranged between 8% and 15%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 10% ±4pp of ordinands, in 2029.

Blacks/African Americans constituted 6% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 8% of ordinands in religious institutes and 6% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 2% and ranged between 2% and 6%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 6% ±2pp of ordinands, in 2029.

**Distribution of Ordinands by Primary Race and Ethnic Background in 2025**



**Distribution of Ordinands by Primary Race and Ethnic Background, 2006-2025**



## Country of Birth

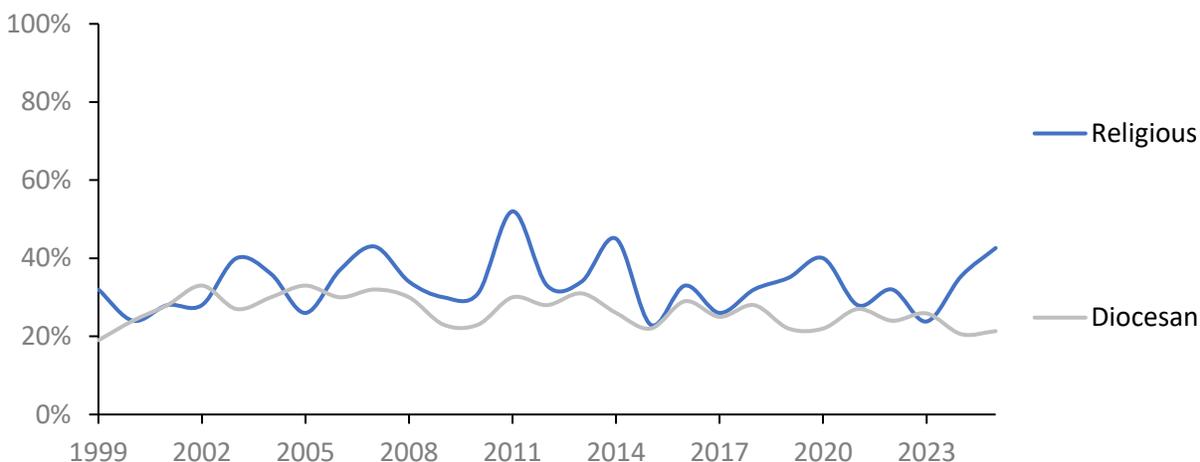
Responding ordinands who were born abroad constituted 26% of all respondents, in 2025 (and 23% in 2024). They represented 43% of ordinands in religious institutes and 21% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 1999 and 2025, their share has averaged 28% and ranged between 22% and 38%.

After United States, the most common countries of birth included: Mexico (5% of all responding ordinands), Vietnam (4%), and Philippines (2%).

|                 | Religious<br>[%] | Diocesan<br>[%] | All<br>[%] |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|------------|
| United States   | 57               | 79              | 74         |
| Mexico          | 5                | 5               | 5          |
| Vietnam         | 8                | 3               | 4          |
| Philippines     | 2                | 3               | 3          |
| Other countries | 28               | 10              | 14         |

Overall, ordinands in 2025 came from 26 different countries.

Percentage of Foreign-born Responding Ordinands,  
1999-2025



## Age When Entered United States - Part 1

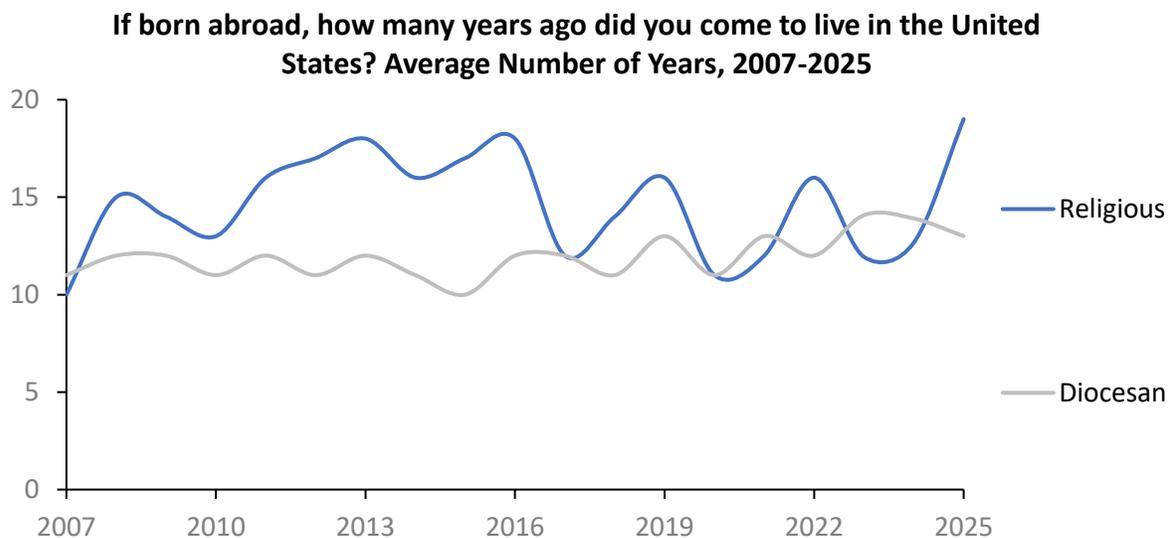
Responding ordinands who were born abroad came to live in the United States, on average, 15 years ago (half came between 1 and 10 years ago and the other half between 10 and 45 years ago). Since 2007, the average number of years was 13 and ranged between 11 and 15.

| If born abroad, how many years ago did you come to live in the United States?<br>Ordination Class of 2025 |                      |                     |                |
|---|----------------------|---------------------|----------------|
|   | Religious<br>[years] | Diocesan<br>[years] | All<br>[years] |
| Average   | 19                   | 13                  | 15             |
| Median  | 16                   | 9                   | 10             |
| Range   | 3 - 35               | 3 - 45              | 3 - 45         |

In 2025, on average, responding ordinands in religious institutes came to live in the United States 6 years later than responding diocesan ordinands.

Responding ordinands in religious institutes in 2025 came to live in the United States, on average, 19 years ago (half came between 3 and 16 years ago and the other half between 16 and 35 years ago). Since 2007, the average number of years was 15 and ranged between 10 and 19.

Responding ordinands to diocesan priesthood in 2025 came to live in the United States, on average, 13 years ago (half came between 3 and 9 years ago and the other half between 9 and 45 years ago). Since 2007, the average number of years was 13 and ranged between 9 and 14.



## Age When Entered United States - Part 2

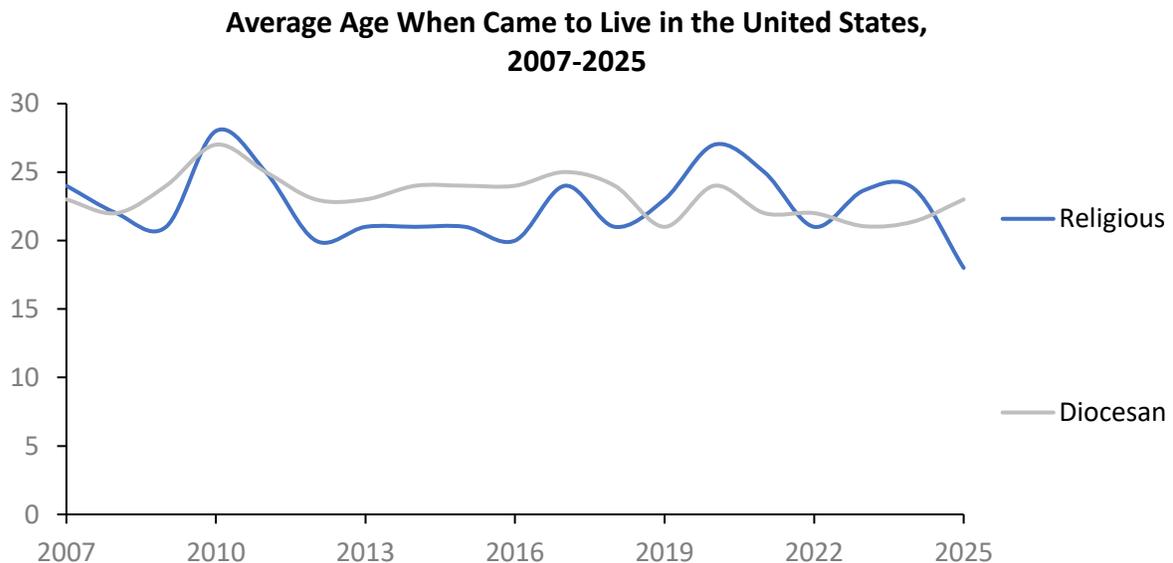
Responding ordinands who were born abroad were, on average, 21 years old when they came to live in the United States (half were between 1 and 23 years old and the other half between 23 and 46 years old). Since 2007, the average age was 23 and ranged between 22 and 27.

| If born abroad, how old were you when you came to live in the United States? |                      |                     |                |
|--|----------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Ordination Class of 2025   |                      |                     |                |
|  | Religious<br>[years] | Diocesan<br>[years] | All<br>[years] |
| Average  | 18                   | 23                  | 21             |
| Median   | 20                   | 25                  | 23             |
| Range  | 2 - 38               | 1 - 46              | 1 - 46         |

In 2025, on average, responding ordinands in religious institutes were 5 years younger than responding diocesan ordinands when they came to live in the United States.

Responding ordinands in religious institutes in 2025 were, on average, 18 years old when they came to live in the United States (half were between 2 and 20 years old and the other half between 20 and 38 years old). Since 2007, the average age was 23 and ranged between 20 and 28.

Responding ordinands to diocesan priesthood in 2025 were, on average, 23 years old when they came to live in the United States (half were between 1 and 25 years old and the other half between 25 and 46 years old). Since 2007, the average age was 23 and ranged between 21 and 27.

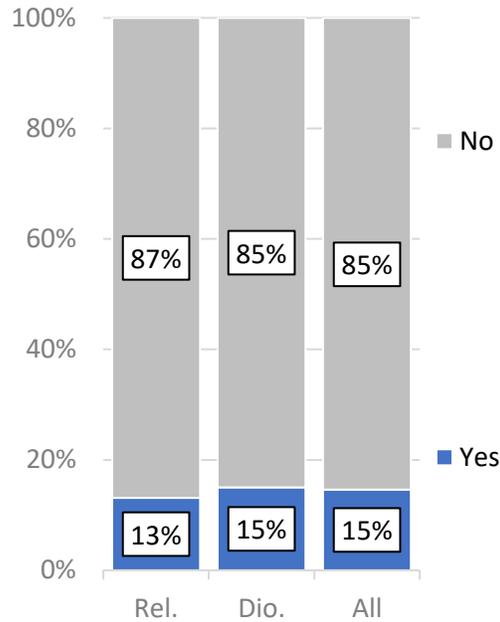


## Part IV: Education

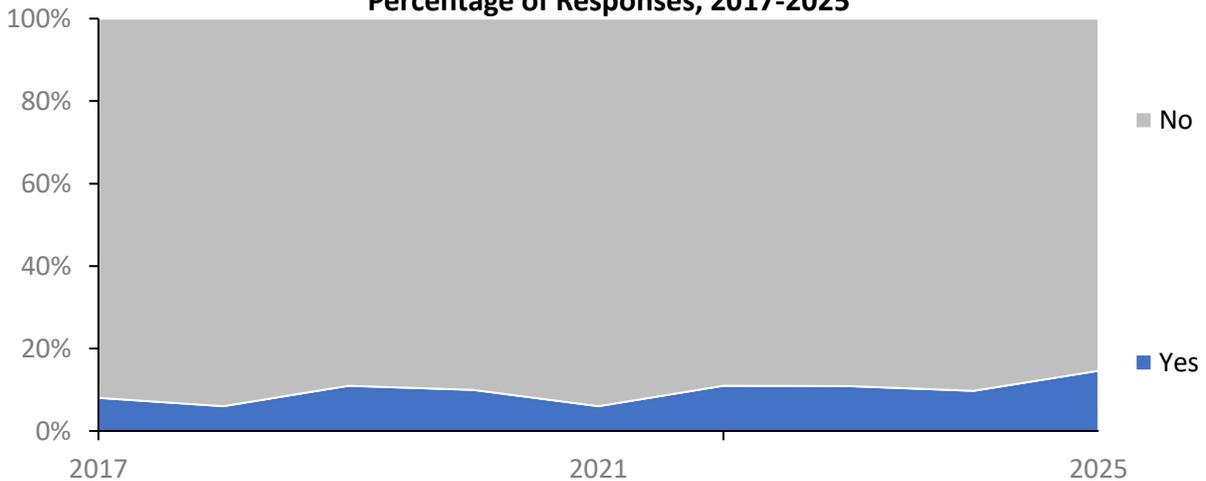
### Home Schooling - Part 1

Responding ordinands who were home schooled constituted 15% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025 (and 10% in 2024). They represented 13% of ordinands in religious institutes and 15% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2017 and 2025, their share has averaged 10% and ranged between 6% and 15%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 13% ±4pp of ordinands, in 2029.

**Were you ever home schooled?  
Percentage of Responses, 2025**



**Were you ever home schooled?  
Percentage of Responses, 2017-2025**



## Home Schooling - Part 2

Altogether, responding ordinands were home schooled, on average, for 9 years (half were home schooled between 1 and 12 years and the other half between 12 and 18 years). Since 2017, the average number of years was 8 and ranged between 7 and 9.

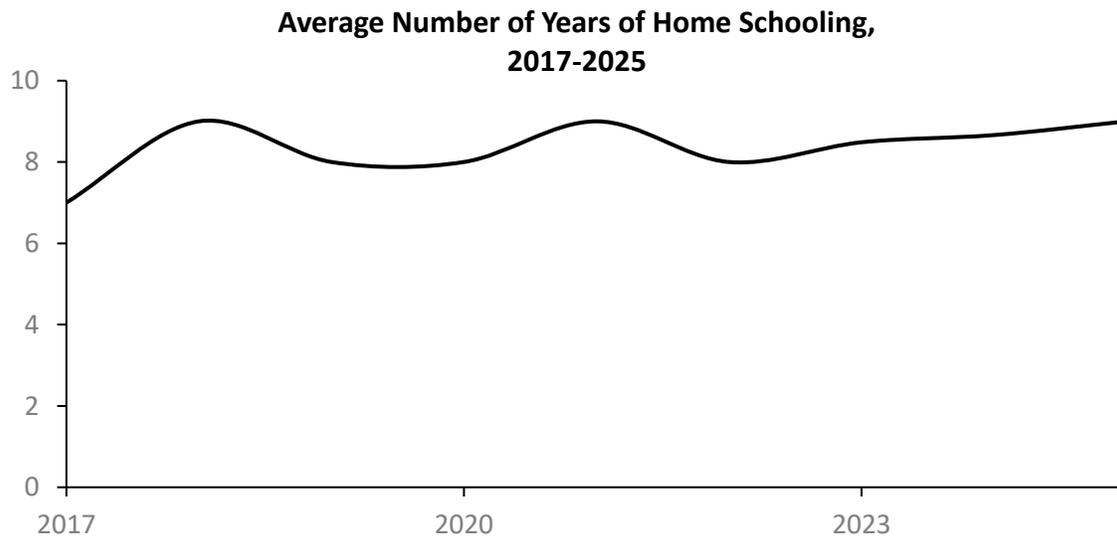
| <b>If you were home schooled, how many years of this education did you receive?</b> |                  |                 |                |
|---|------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| <b>Ordination Class of 2025</b>   |                  |                 |                |
|   | <b>Religious</b> | <b>Diocesan</b> | <b>All</b>     |
|   | <b>[years]</b>   | <b>[years]</b>  | <b>[years]</b> |
| Average   | 8                | 9               | 9              |
| Median  | 9                | 12              | 12             |
| Range   | 1 - 15           | 2 - 18          | 1 - 18         |

In 2025, on average, responding ordinands in religious institutes spent 1 year less than responding diocesan ordinands in home school:

Responding ordinands to diocesan priesthood in 2025 were home schooled, on average, for 9 years (half were home schooled between 2 and 12 years and the other half between 12 and 18 years). Since 2017, the average number of years was 9 and ranged between 8 and 10.

Responding ordinands in religious institutes in 2025 were home schooled, on average, for 8 years (half were home schooled between 1 and 9 years and the other half between 9 and 15 years). Since 2017, the average number of years was 8 and ranged between 6 and 12.

Note: responses over 12 years were recoded to 12.



## Highest Level of Education before Seminary - Part 1

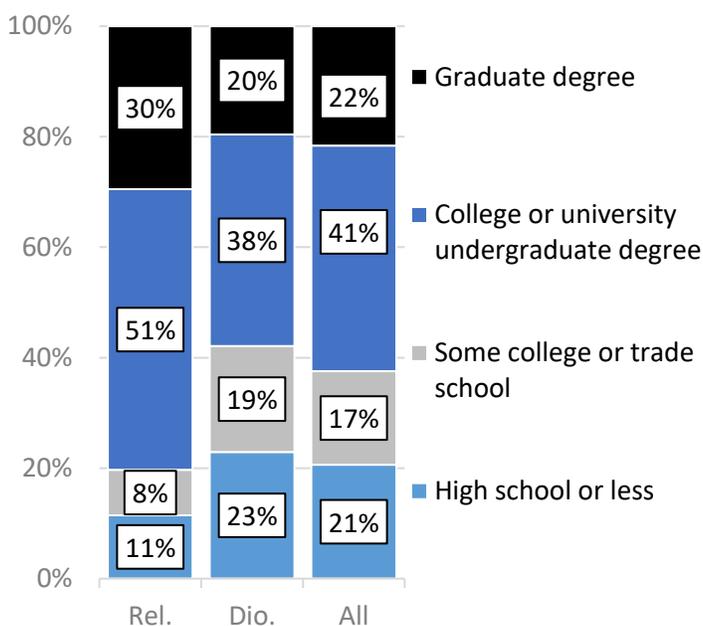
Ordinands who earned graduate degrees constituted 22% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 30% of ordinands in religious institutes and 20% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood (a statistically significant difference). Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 18% and ranged between 14% and 31%.

Ordinands who earned college or university undergraduate degrees constituted 41% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 51% of ordinands in religious institutes and 38% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood (a statistically significant difference). Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 42% and ranged between 38% and 47%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 42% ±3pp of ordinands, in 2029.

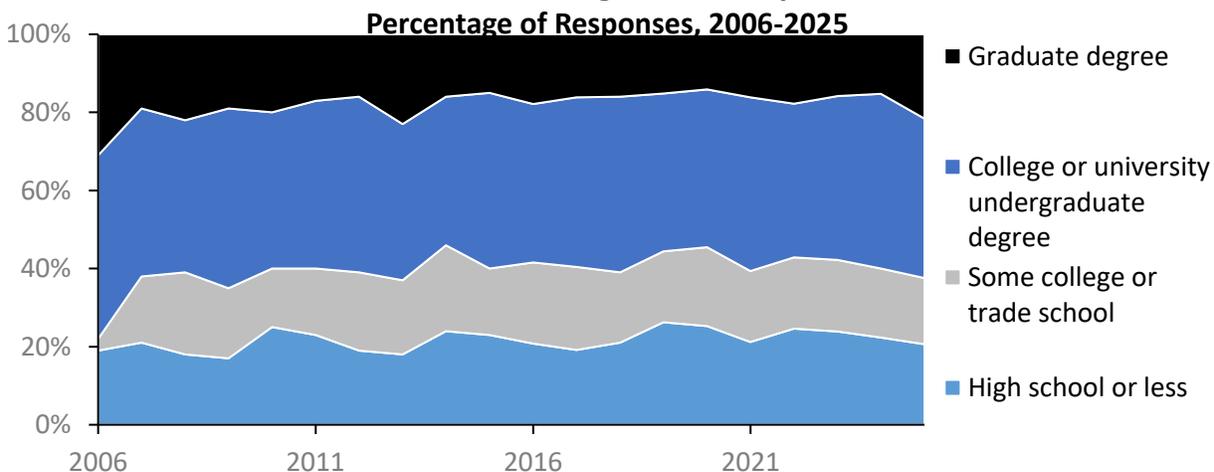
Ordinands who finished some college or trade school constituted 17% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 8% of ordinands in religious institutes and 19% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood (a statistically significant difference). Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 18% and ranged between 3% and 22%.

Ordinands who completed high school or less constituted 21% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 11% of ordinands in religious institutes and 23% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood (a statistically significant difference). Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 22% and ranged between 17% and 26%.

**What is the highest level of education you completed before entering the seminary?  
Percentage of Responses, 2025**



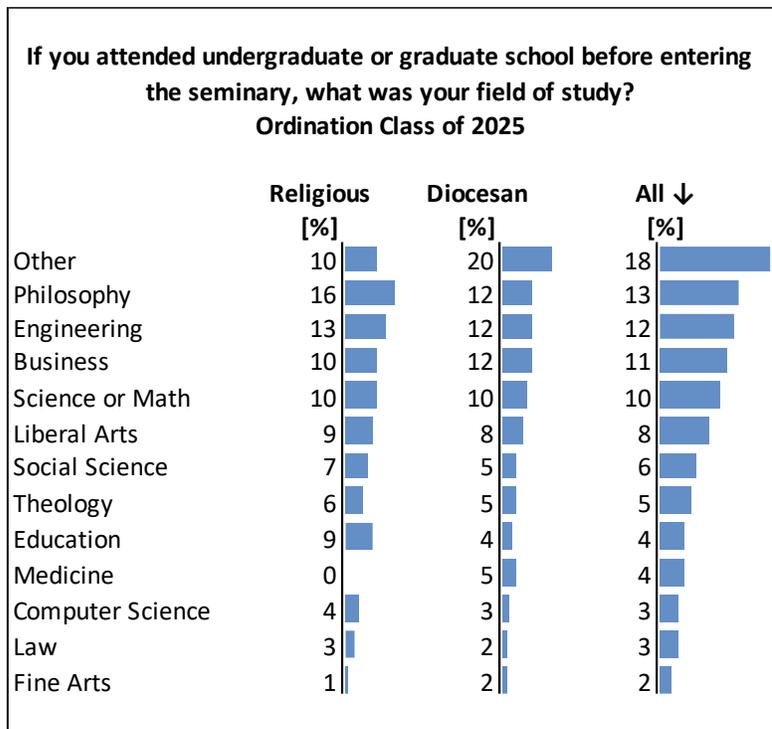
**What is the highest level of education you completed before entering the seminary?**



## Highest Level of Education before Seminary - Part 2

Ordinands who studied theology or philosophy constituted 18% of ordinands who attended undergraduate or graduate school before entering the seminary. They represented 22% of ordinands in religious institutes and 17% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2025, their share has averaged 19% and ranged between 14% and 26%.

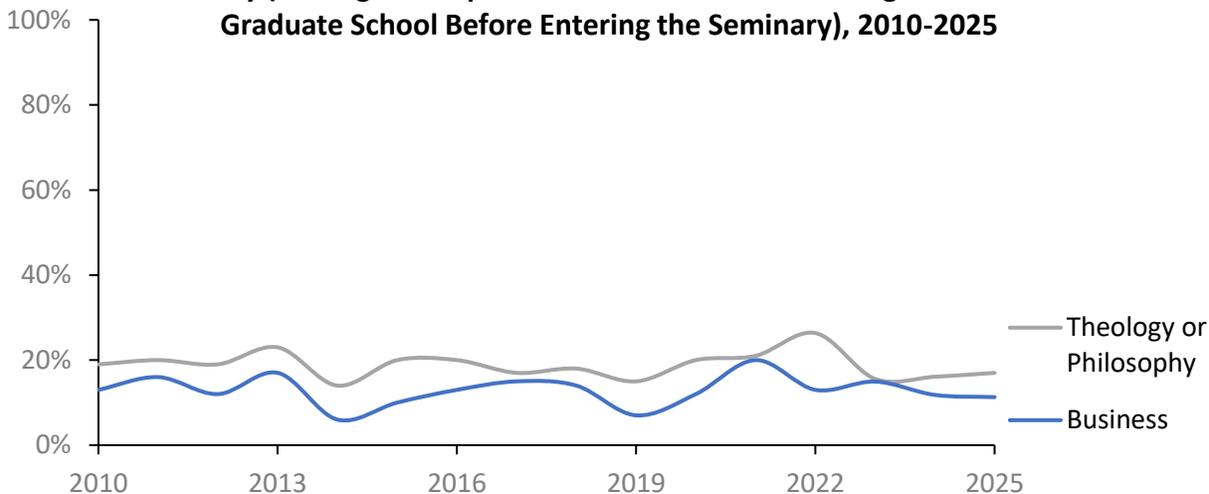
Ordinands who studied engineering constituted 12% of ordinands. They represented 13% of ordinands in religious institutes and 12% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2025, their share has averaged 9% and ranged between 7% and 13%.



Ordinands who studied business constituted 11% of ordinands. They represented 10% of ordinands in religious institutes and 12% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2025, their share has averaged 13% and ranged between 6% and 20%.

Ordinands who studied science or math constituted 10% of ordinands. They represented 10% of ordinands in religious institutes and 10% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2025, their share has averaged 10% and ranged between 7% and 15%.

**Percentage of Ordinands who Received Education in Selected Fields of Study (Among All Respondents Who Attended Undergraduate or Graduate School Before Entering the Seminary), 2010-2025**



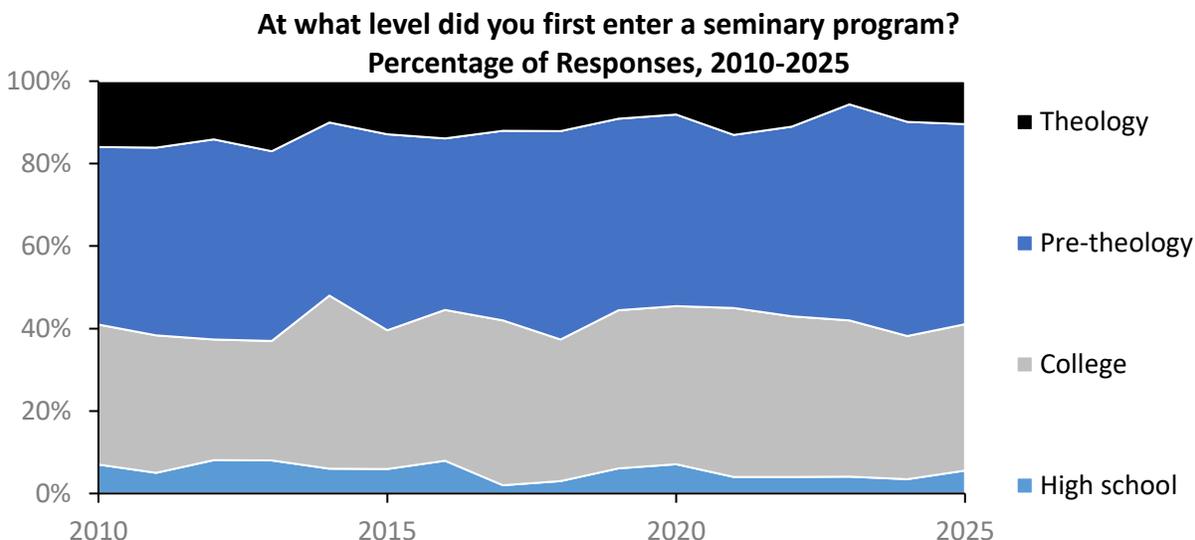
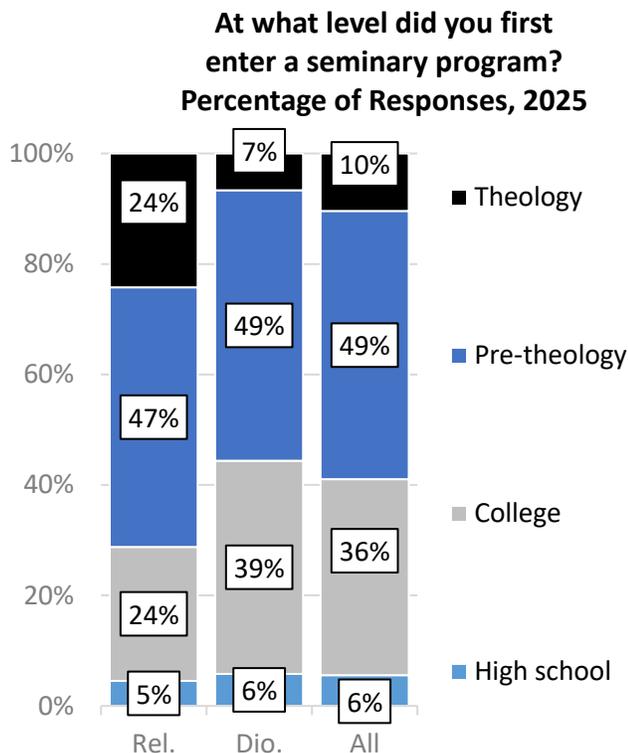
## Level of Seminary Program When First Entered

Ordinands who first entered a seminary program at the pre-theology level constituted 49% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 47% of ordinands in religious institutes and 49% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2025, their share has averaged 46% and ranged between 42% and 52%.

Ordinands who first entered a seminary program at the college level constituted 36% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 24% of ordinands in religious institutes and 39% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood (a statistically significant difference). Between 2010 and 2025, their share has averaged 36% and ranged between 29% and 42%.

Ordinands who first entered a seminary program at the theology level constituted 10% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 24% of ordinands in religious institutes and 7% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood (a statistically significant difference). Between 2010 and 2025, their share has averaged 12% and ranged between 6% and 17%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 6% ±4pp of ordinands, in 2029.

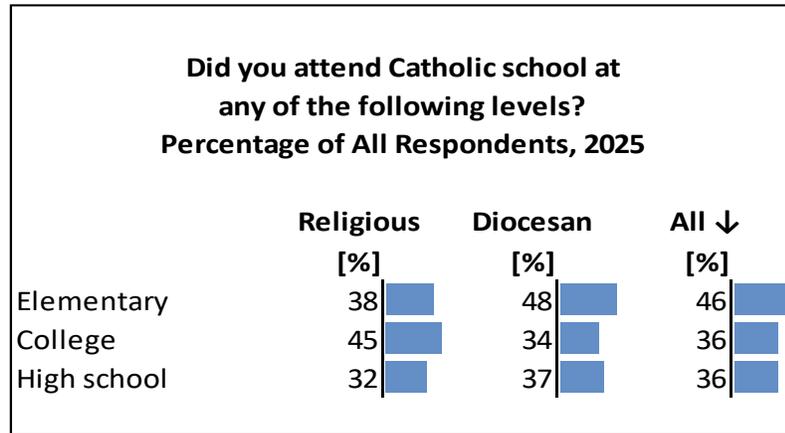
Ordinands who first entered a seminary program at the high school level constituted 6% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 5% of ordinands in religious institutes and 6% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2025, their share has averaged 5% and ranged between 2% and 8%.



## Catholic Education

At least 73% of responding ordinands attended a Catholic school before entering the seminary.

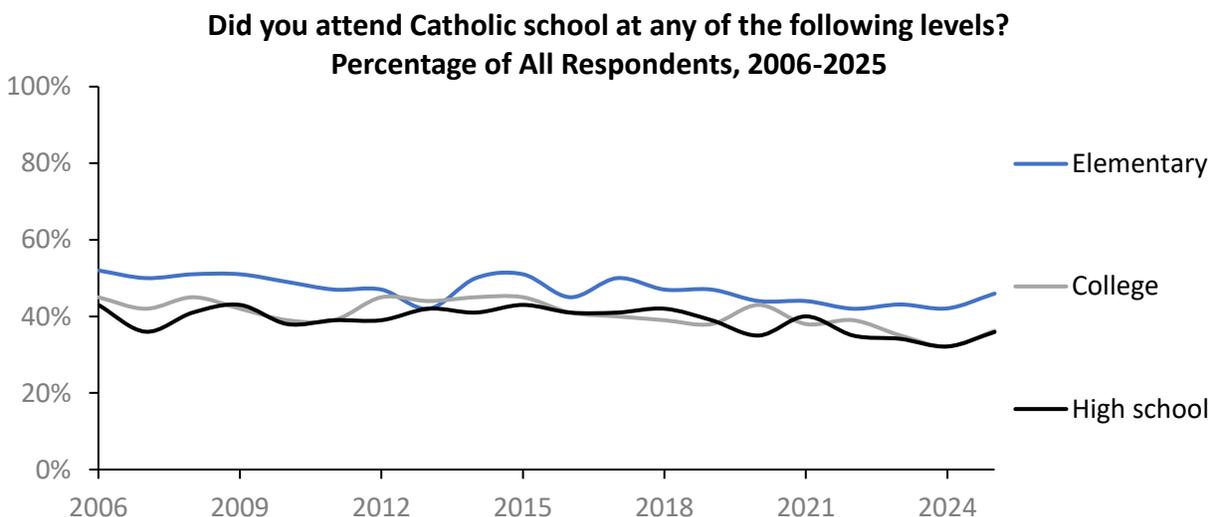
Ordinands who attended a Catholic elementary school (K-8) constituted 46% of all respondents. They represented 38% of ordinands in religious institutes and 48% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 47% and ranged between 42% and 52%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 41% ±5pp of all respondents, in 2029.



Ordinands who attended a Catholic college constituted 36% of all respondents. They represented 45% of ordinands in religious institutes and 34% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 40% and ranged between 32% and 45%.

Colleges attended by ordinands included: Marian University, Catholic University of America, St. John's University, John Carroll University, Benedictine College, Seton Hall University, St. Vincent College, St. Ambrose University, Marquette University, Boston College, University of Notre Dame, and Loyola University Chicago.

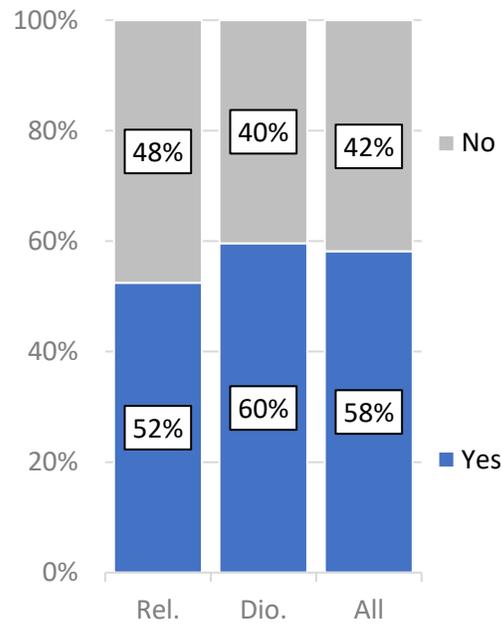
Ordinands who attended a Catholic high school constituted 36% of all respondents. They represented 32% of ordinands in religious institutes and 37% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 40% and ranged between 32% and 43%.



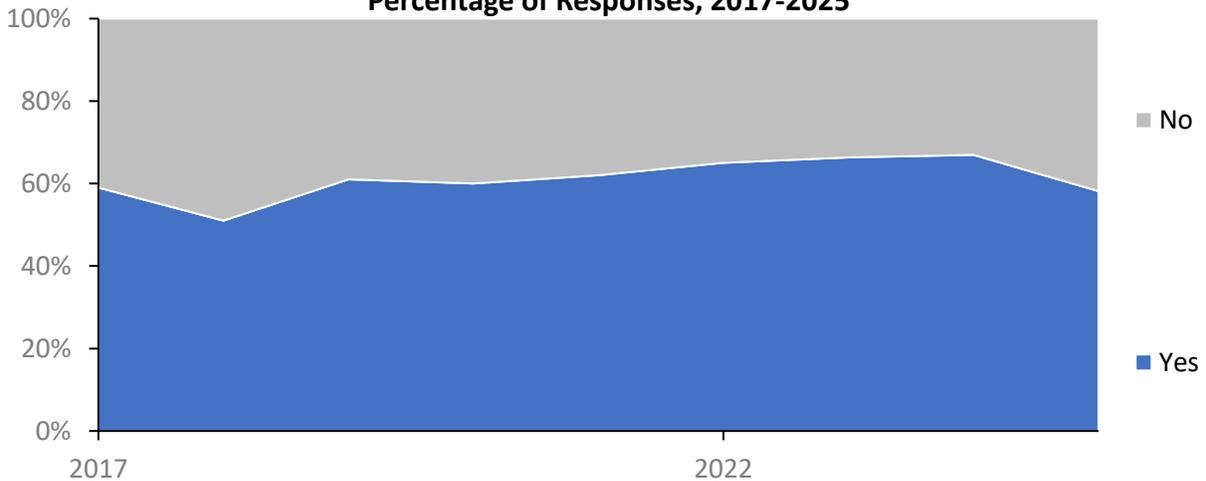
## Catholic Religious Education - Part 1

Responding ordinands who participated in religious education in their parish constituted 58% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025 (and 67% in 2024). They represented 52% of ordinands in religious institutes and 60% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2017 and 2025, their share has averaged 61% and ranged between 51% and 67%.

**Did you participate in the religious education program in your parish?  
Percentage of Responses, 2025**



**Did you participate in the religious education program in your parish?  
Percentage of Responses, 2017-2025**



## Catholic Religious Education - Part 2

Responding ordinands who participated in religious education programs in their parishes spent, on average, 6 years in religious education programs in their parishes (half spent between 1 and 7 years and the other half between 7 and 15 years). Since 2017, the average number of years was 7 and ranged between 6 and 7.

**If you participated in the religious education program in your parish, how many years of this education did you receive?**  
**Ordination Class of 2025**

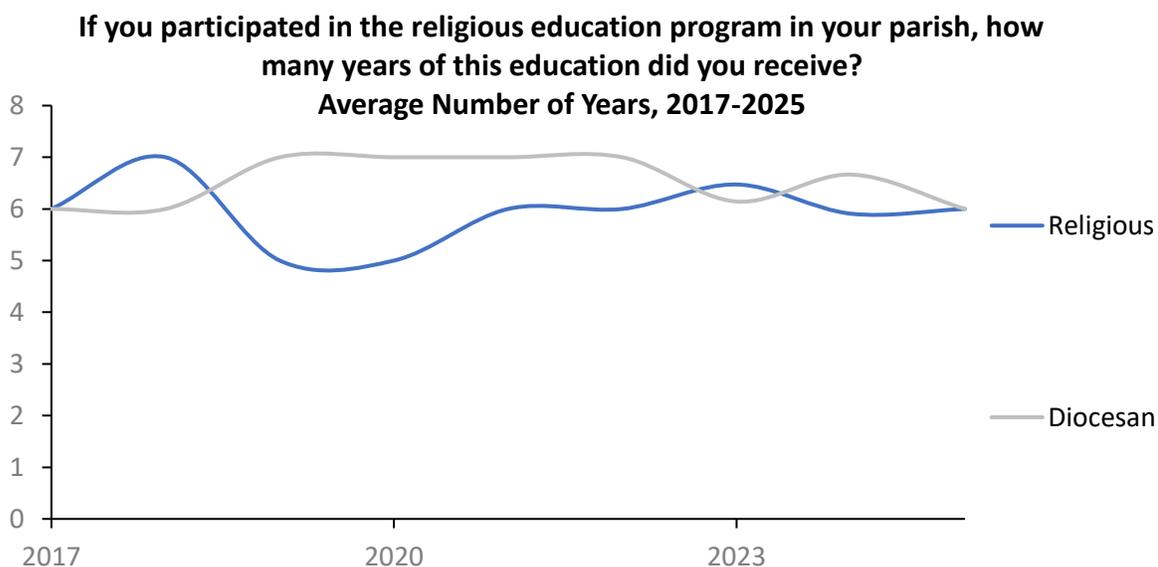
|         | <b>Religious<br/>[years]</b> | <b>Diocesan<br/>[years]</b> | <b>All<br/>[years]</b> |
|---------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Average | 6                            | 6                           | 6                      |
| Median  | 7                            | 6                           | 7                      |
| Range   | 1 - 12                       | 1 - 15                      | 1 - 15                 |

In 2025, on average, responding ordinands in religious institutes spent about the same number of years as responding diocesan ordinands in religious education programs in their parishes.

Responding ordinands to diocesan priesthood in 2025 spent, on average, 6 years in religious education programs in their parishes (half spent between 1 and 6 years and the other half between 6 and 15 years). Since 2017, the average number of years was 7 and ranged between 6 and 7.

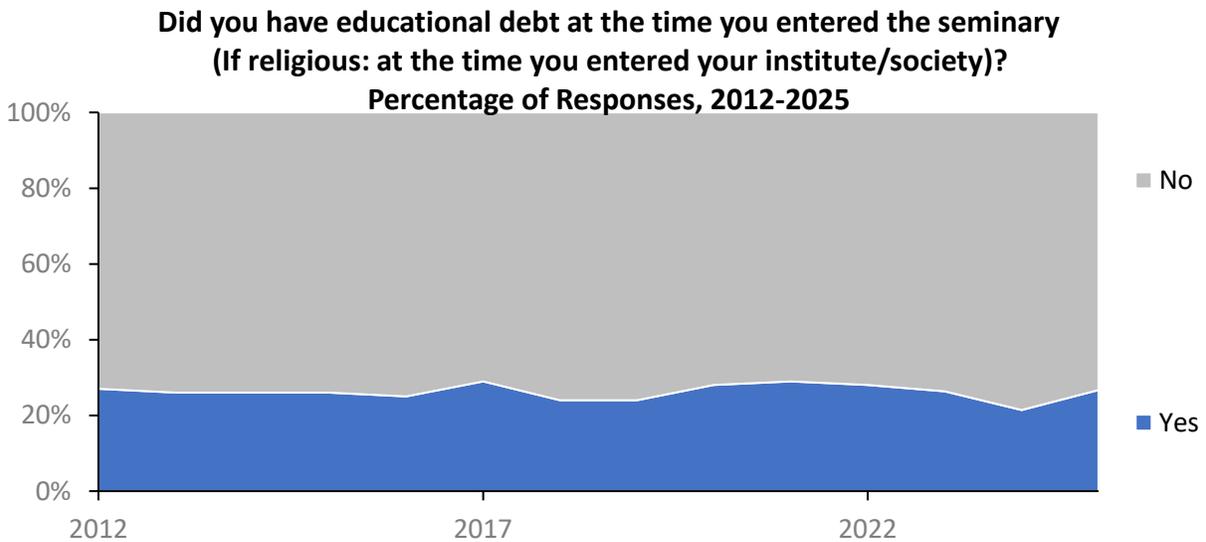
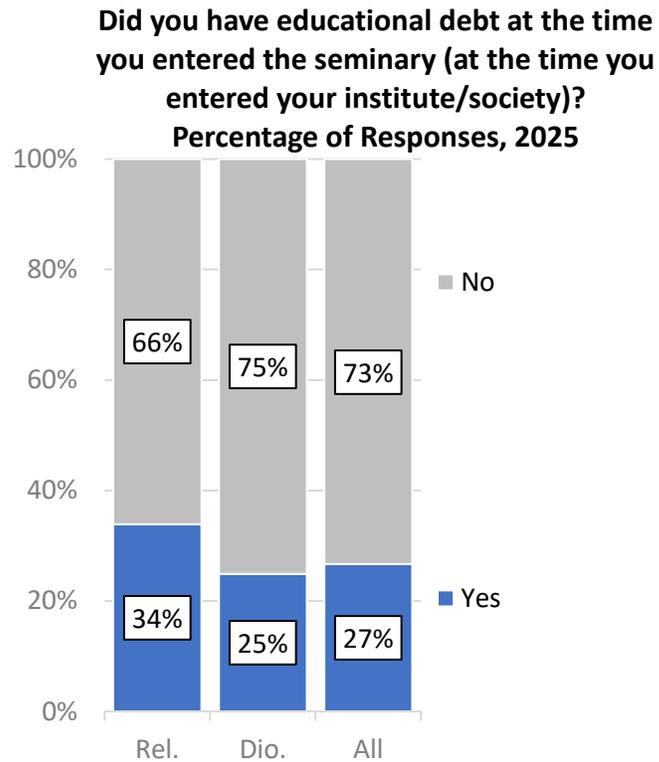
Responding ordinands in religious institutes in 2025 spent, on average, 6 years in religious education programs in their parishes (half spent between 1 and 7 years and the other half between 7 and 12 years). Since 2017, the average number of years was 6 and ranged between 5 and 7.

Notably, responses over 12 years were recoded to 12.



## Educational Debt - Part 1

Responding ordinands who had educational debt at the time they entered the seminary constituted 27% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025 (and 21% in 2024). They represented 34% of ordinands in religious institutes and 25% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2012 and 2025, their share has averaged 27% and ranged between 21% and 29%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 26%  $\pm$ 4pp of ordinands, in 2029.



## Educational Debt - Part 2

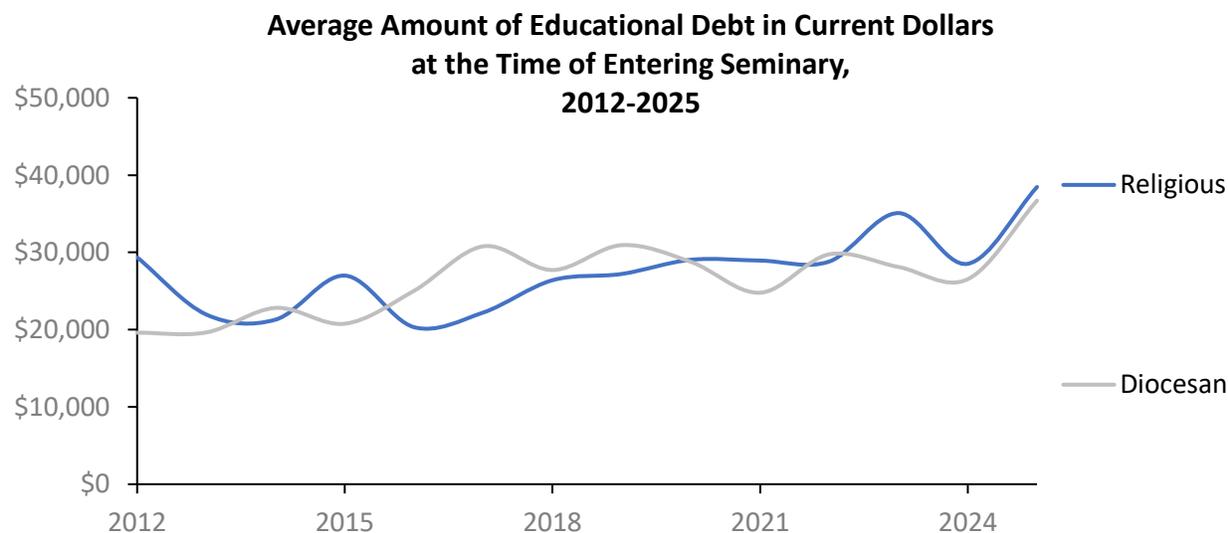
Those responding ordinands who had educational debt had, on average, \$37,092 of educational debt at the time of entering seminary (half had between \$1,750 and \$20,000 and the other half between \$20,000 and \$400,000). Since 2012, the average amount of debt was \$26,721 and ranged between \$20,250 and \$37,092.

| What was the amount of your educational debt at the time you entered seminary (if any)? |                 |                 |                 |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Ordination Class of 2025  |                 |                 |                 |
|   | Religious       | Diocesan        | All             |
|   | [\$]            | [\$]            | [\$]            |
| Average   | 38,462          | 36,701          | 37,092          |
| Median  | 20,000          | 20,000          | 20,000          |
| Range   | 2,200 - 180,000 | 1,750 - 400,000 | 1,750 - 400,000 |

In 2025, on average, responding ordinands in religious institutes who had education debt had \$1,761 more debt than responding diocesan ordinands at the time of entering seminary.

Those responding ordinands in religious institutes in 2025 had, on average, \$38,462 of educational debt at the time of entering seminary (half had between \$2,200 and \$20,000 and the other half between \$20,000 and \$180,000). Since 2012, the average amount of debt was \$27,475 and ranged between \$20,325 and \$35,088.

Those responding ordinands to diocesan priesthood in 2025 had, on average, \$36,701 of educational debt at the time of entering seminary (half had between \$1,750 and \$20,000 and the other half between \$20,000 and \$400,000). Since 2012, the average amount of debt was \$26,569 and ranged between \$19,614 and \$36,701.



### Educational Debt - Part 3

Responding ordinands who had education debt had, on average, \$31,411 of educational debt at the time of ordination (half had between \$0 and \$13,000 and the other half between \$13,000 and \$400,000). Since 2012, the average amount of this debt was \$26,742 and ranged between \$16,031 and \$31,411.

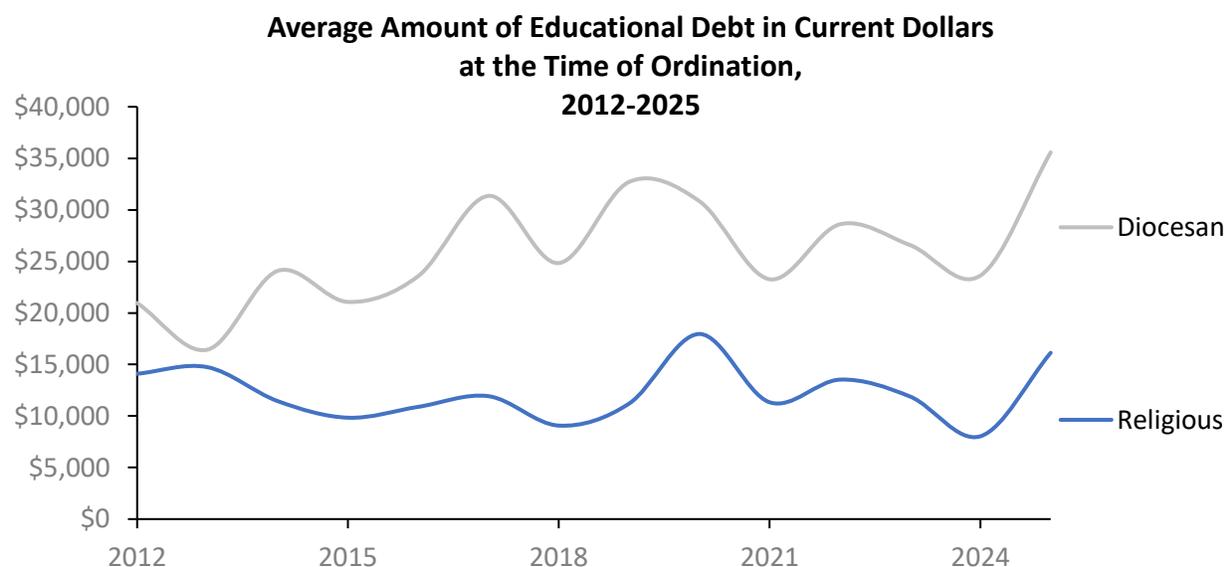
| What was the amount of your educational debt at the time of ordination?<br>Ordination Class of 2025 |                   |                  |             |
|---|-------------------|------------------|-------------|
|   | Religious<br>[\$] | Diocesan<br>[\$] | All<br>[\$] |
| Average   | 16,133            | 35,577           | 31,411      |
| Median  | 0                 | 16,500           | 13,000      |
| Range   | 0 - 120,000       | 0 - 400,000      | 0 - 400,000 |

In 2025, on average, responding ordinands in religious institutes who had educational debt had \$16,133 less debt than responding diocesan ordinands at the time of ordination:

Those responding ordinands to diocesan priesthood had, on average, \$35,577 of educational debt at the time of ordination (half had between \$0 and \$16,500 and the other half between \$16,500 and \$400,000), a 3% reduction in debt from the \$36,701 of debt they entered the seminary with. Since 2012, the average amount of this debt \$30,401 and ranged between \$16,434 and \$35,577.

Those responding ordinands in religious institutes had, on average, \$16,133 of educational debt at the time of ordination (half had between \$0 and \$0 and the other half between \$0 and \$120,000), a 58% reduction in debt from the \$38,462 of debt they entered the seminary with. Since 2012, the average amount of this debt \$14,064 and ranged between \$8,034 and \$17,957.

Those responding ordinands who had educational debt in 2025 were delayed entrance, on average, by less than 1 year.



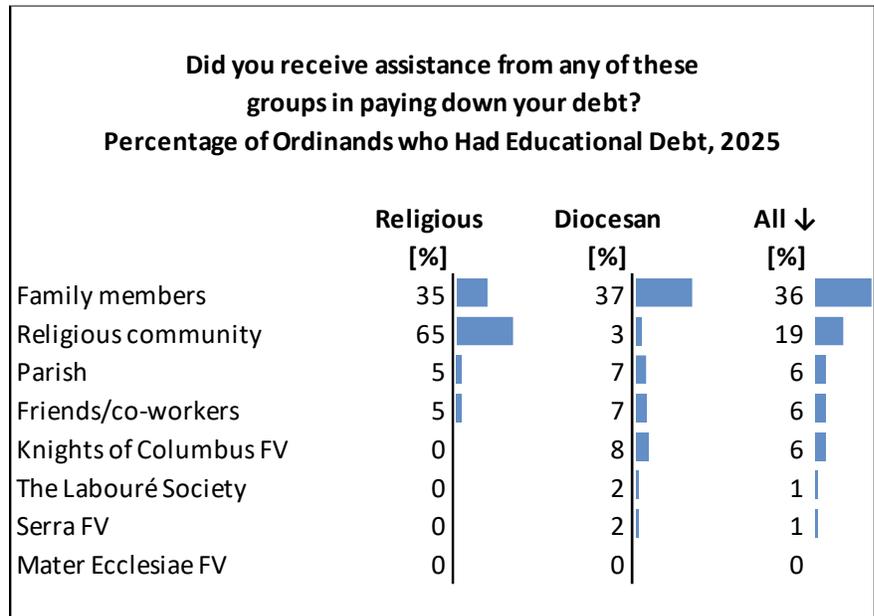
## Educational Debt - Part 4

Ordinands who received financial assistance from their family members constituted 36% of ordinands who had educational debt at the time of entering seminary. They represented 35% of ordinands in religious institutes and 37% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood (a statistically significant difference). Between 2017 and 2025, their share has averaged 32% and ranged between 24% and 48%.

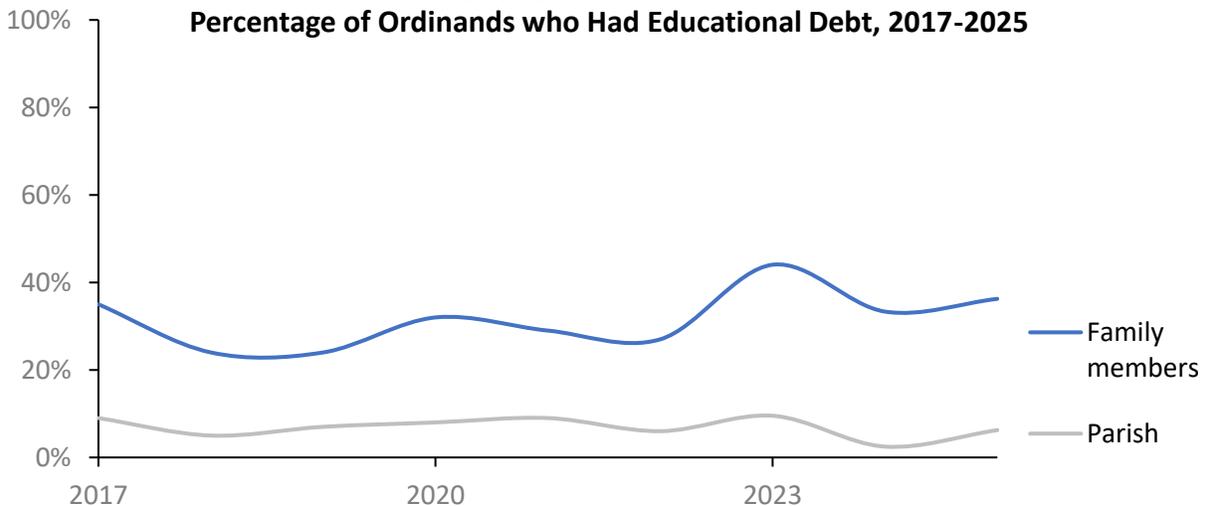
Ordinands who received assistance from a religious

community constituted 19% of ordinands. They represented 65% of ordinands in religious institutes and 3% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood (a statistically significant difference). Between 2017 and 2025, their share has averaged 16% and ranged between 7% and 25%.

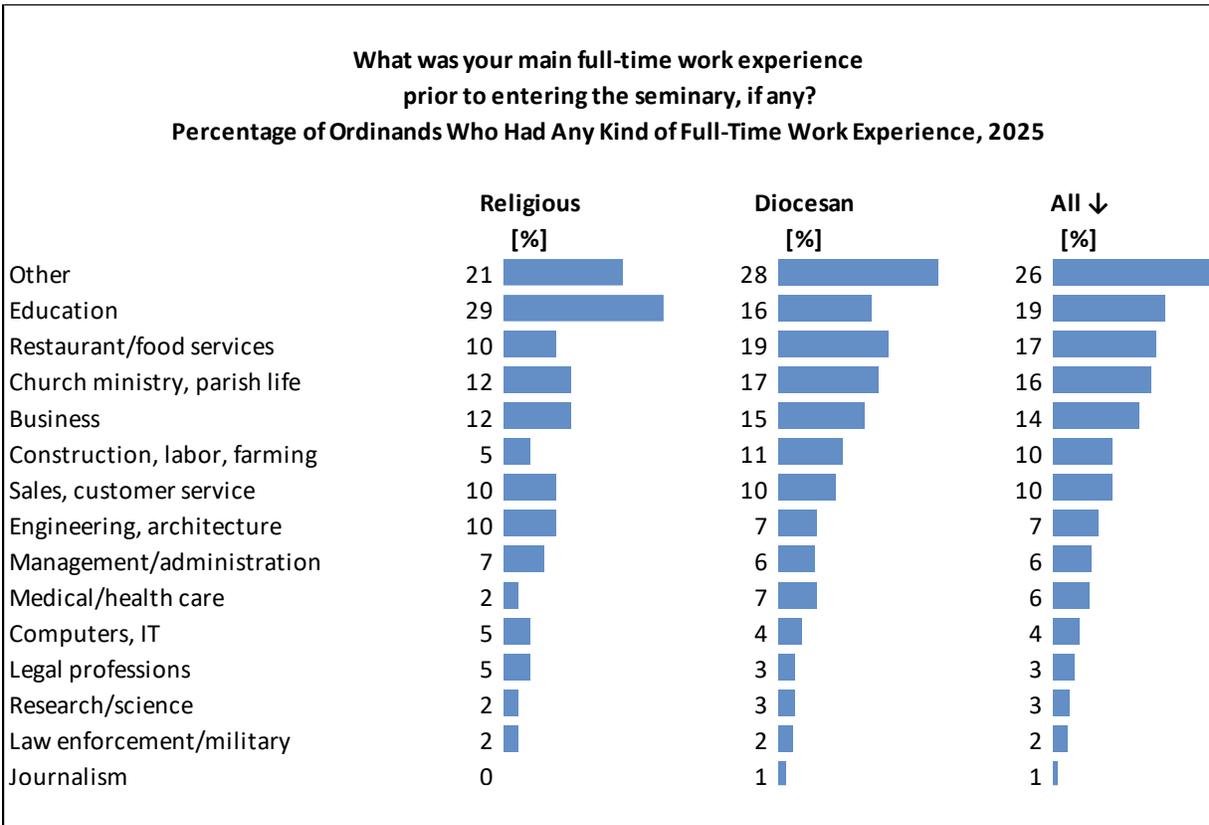
Ordinands who received assistance from a parish constituted 6% of ordinands. They represented 5% of ordinands in religious institutes and 7% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2017 and 2025, their share has averaged 7% and ranged between 2% and 10%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 7% ±3pp of ordinands, in 2029.



**Did you receive assistance from any of these groups in paying down your debt?**  
**Percentage of Ordinands who Had Educational Debt, 2017-2025**



Employment Background



Overall, 66% of ordinands had some kind of full-time work experience prior to entering seminary.

Ordinands who worked in education constituted 19% of ordinands. They represented 29% of ordinands in religious institutes and 16% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 15% and ranged between 7% and 21%.

Ordinands who worked in restaurant/food services constituted 17% of ordinands who had any kind of full-time work experience prior to entering seminary. They represented 10% of ordinands in religious institutes and 19% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood.

Ordinands who worked in church ministry, parish life constituted 16% of ordinands who had any kind of full-time work experience prior to entering seminary. They represented 12% of ordinands in religious institutes and 17% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood.

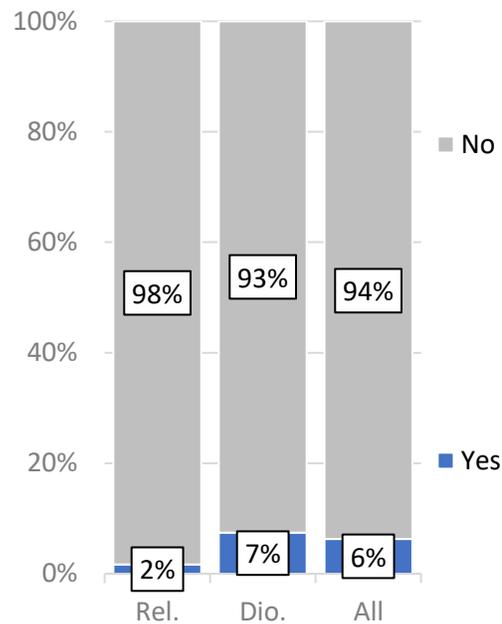
Ordinands who worked in business constituted 14% of ordinands who had any kind of full-time work experience prior to entering seminary. They represented 12% of ordinands in religious institutes and 15% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood.

## Military Background - Part 1

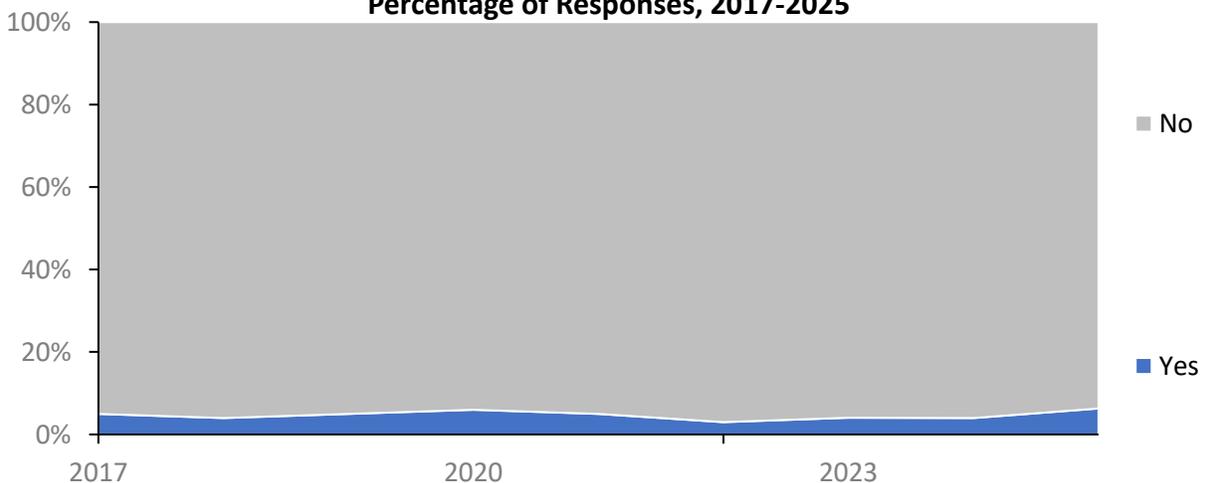
Responding ordinands who served in the U.S. Armed Forces constituted 6% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025 (and 4% in 2024). They represented 2% of ordinands in religious institutes and 7% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2017 and 2025, their share has averaged 4% and ranged between 3% and 6%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 3%  $\pm$ 2pp of ordinands, in 2029.

Among ordinands who served in the U.S. Armed Forces: 8 served in the Navy (as compared to 3 a year before), 5 served in the Army (as compared to 7 a year before), 4 served in the Marines (as compared to 2 a year before), 2 served in the Air Force (as compared to 3 a year before), 2 served in the Reserves (as compared to 2 a year before), 1 served in the National Guard (as compared to 2 a year before), and 0 in the Coast Guard (as compared to 0 a year before).

**Have you ever served in the Armed Forces of the United States?  
Percentage of Responses, 2025**



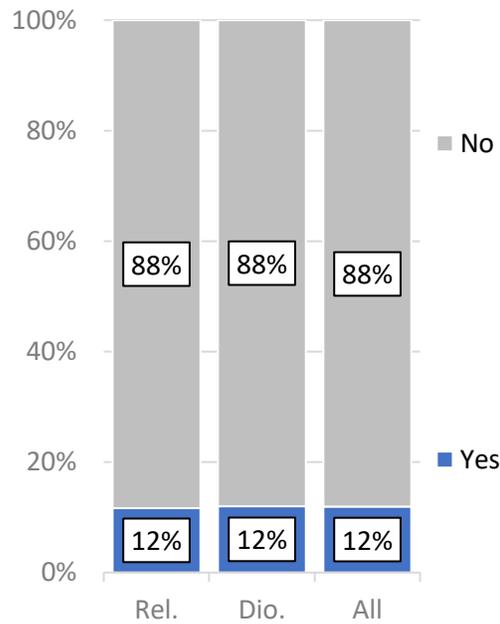
**Have you ever served in the Armed Forces of the United States?  
Percentage of Responses, 2017-2025**



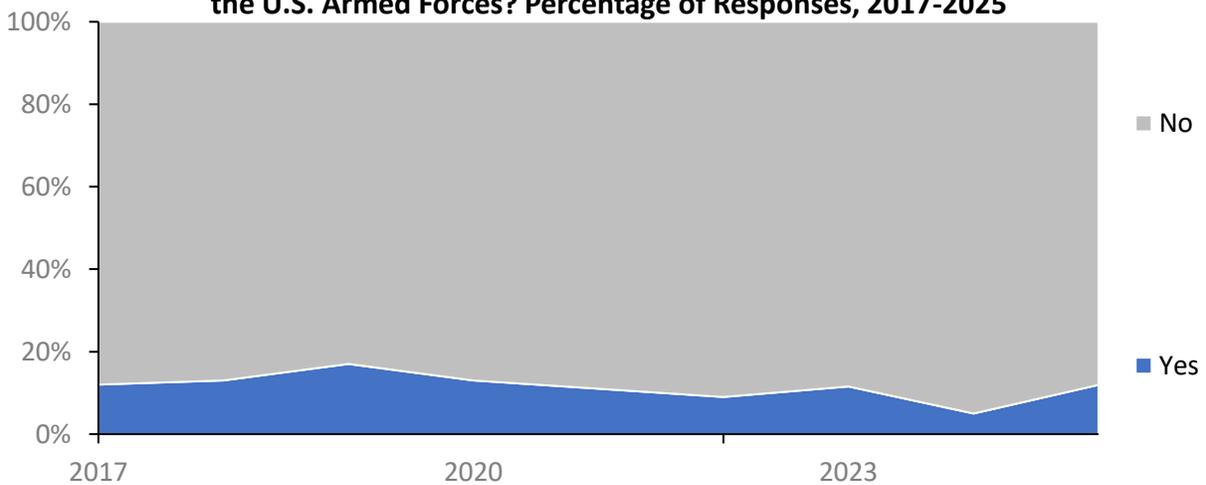
## Military Background - Part 2

Responding ordinands whose parents served in the U.S. Armed Forces constituted 12% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025 (and 5% in 2024). They represented 12% of ordinands in religious institutes and 12% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2017 and 2025, their share has averaged 11% and ranged between 5% and 17%.

**Did either of your parents have a military career in the U.S. Armed Forces?  
Percentage of Responses, 2025**



**Did either of your parents have a military career in  
the U.S. Armed Forces? Percentage of Responses, 2017-2025**



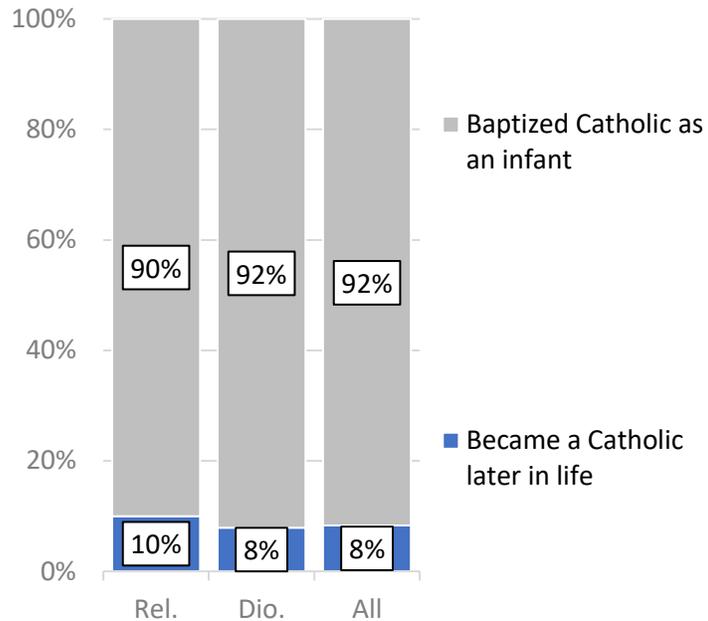
## Part VI: Family Background

### Family Religious Background - Part 1

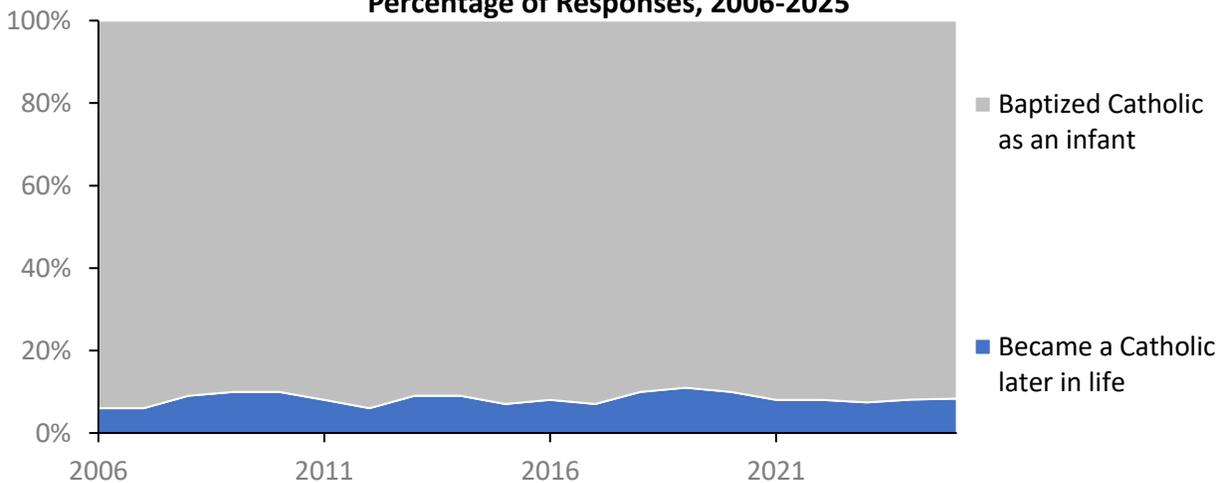
Responding ordinands who became Catholic later in life constituted 8% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025 (and 8% in 2024). They represented 10% of ordinands in religious institutes and 8% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 8% and ranged between 6% and 11%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 9%  $\pm$ 4pp of ordinands, in 2029.

Previous religious affiliations included, for example: Buddhist, Church of Christ, Mennonite, Episcopalian, Evangelical Protestant, Assemblies of God, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Quaker, Southern Baptist, and United Methodist.

**How long have you been a Catholic?  
Percentage of Responses, 2025**



**How long have you been a Catholic?  
Percentage of Responses, 2006-2025**



## Family Religious Background - Part 2

Responding ordinands who converted to Catholicism later in life were, on average, 22 years old when they become Catholic (half were between 7 and 22 years old and the other half between 22 and 50 years old). Since 2006, the average age of conversion was 22 and ranged between 18 and 31.

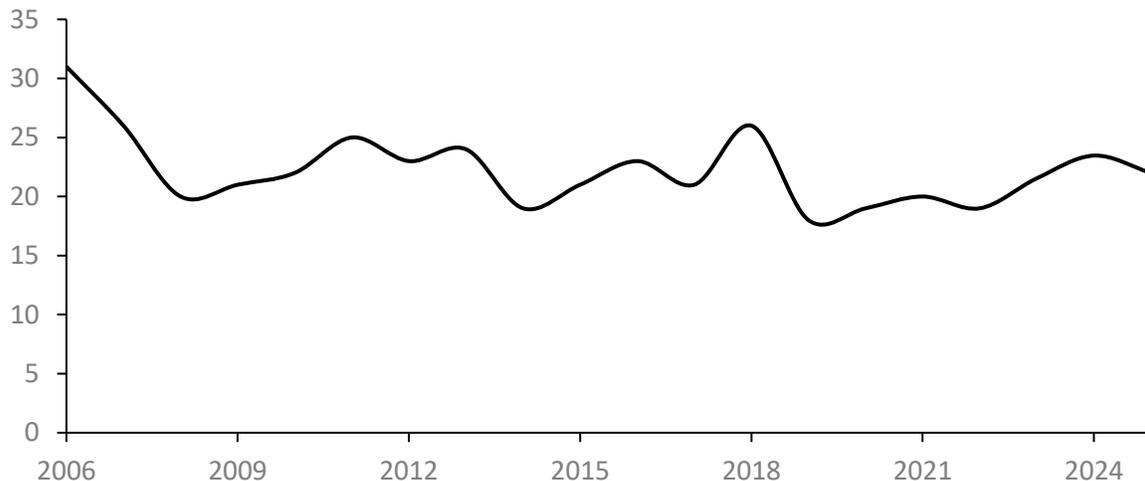
| <b>How old were you when you became a Catholic?</b> |                  |                 |                |
|---|------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| <b>Ordination Class of 2025</b>                     |                  |                 |                |
|   | <b>Religious</b> | <b>Diocesan</b> | <b>All</b>     |
|   | <b>[years]</b>   | <b>[years]</b>  | <b>[years]</b> |
| Average   | 19               | 23              | 22             |
| Median  | 19               | 23              | 22             |
| Range   | 14 - 23          | 7 - 50          | 7 - 50         |

In 2025, on average, responding ordinands in religious institutes were four years younger than responding diocesan ordinands when they become Catholic.

Convert ordinands in religious institutes in 2025 were, on average, 19 years old when they become Catholic (half were between 19 and 23 years old and the other half between 19 and 23 years old). Since 2006, the average age of conversion was 21 and ranged between 15 and 31.

Convert ordinands to diocesan priesthood in 2025 were, on average, 23 years old when they become Catholic (half were between 7 and 23 years old and the other half between 23 and 50 years old). Since 2006, the average age of conversion was 22 and ranged between 17 and 50.

**Average Age When Became a Catholic,  
2006-2025**



### Family Religious Background - Part 3

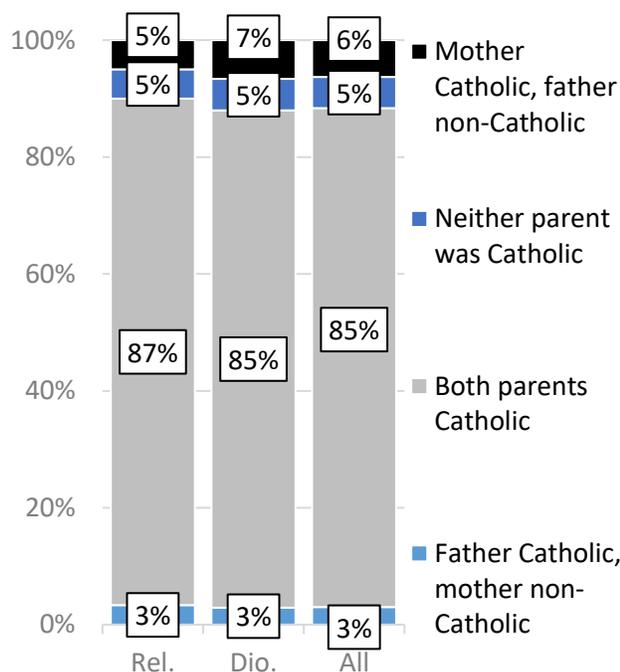
Ordinands whose both parents were both Catholic constituted 85% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 87% of ordinands in religious institutes and 85% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2007 and 2025, their share has averaged 82% and ranged between 77% and 86%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 83% ±4pp of ordinands, in 2029.

Ordinands whose mother was Catholic and father was not constituted 6% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 5% of ordinands in religious institutes and 7% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2007 and 2025, their share has averaged 8% and ranged between 3% and 12%.

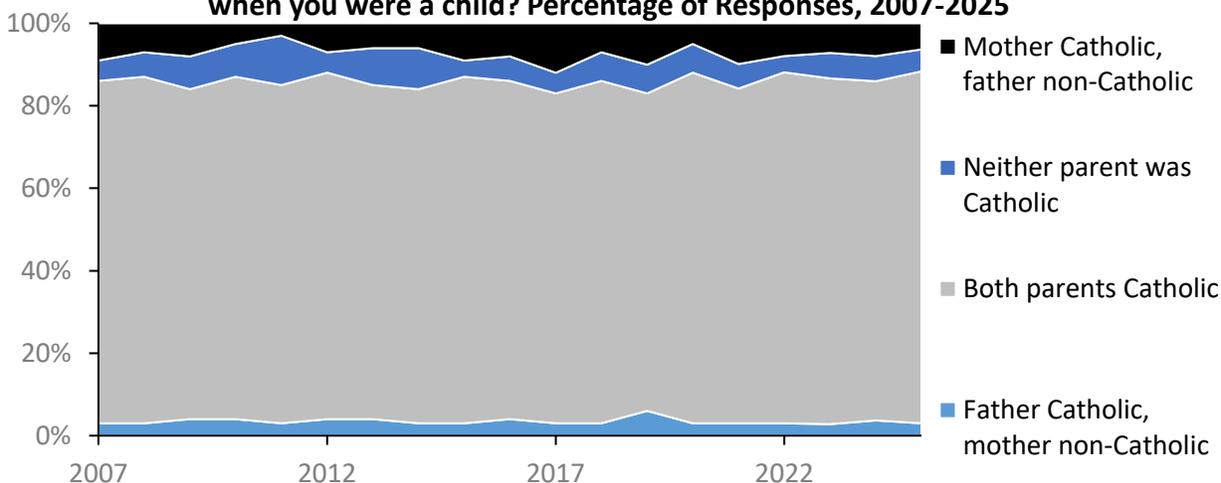
Ordinands whose parents were both not Catholics constituted 5% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 5% of ordinands in religious institutes and 5% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2007 and 2025, their share has averaged 7% and ranged between 4% and 12%.

Ordinands whose father was Catholic and mother was not constituted 3% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 3% of ordinands in religious institutes and 3% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2007 and 2025, their share has averaged 3% and ranged between 3% and 6%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 3% ±3pp of ordinands, in 2029.

**What was the religious background of your parents when you were a child? Percentage of Responses, 2025**



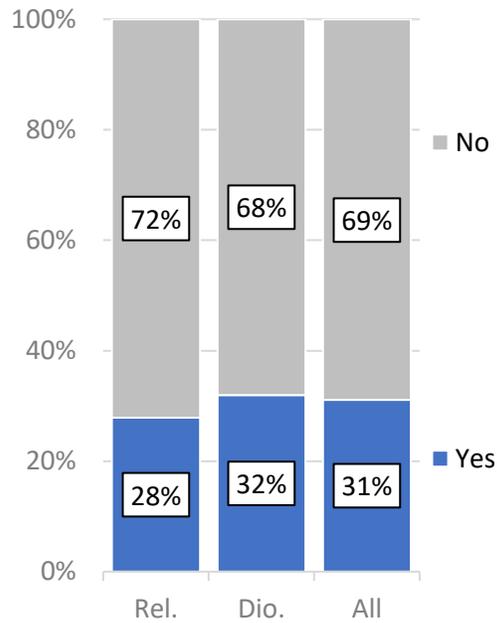
**What was the religious background of your parents when you were a child? Percentage of Responses, 2007-2025**



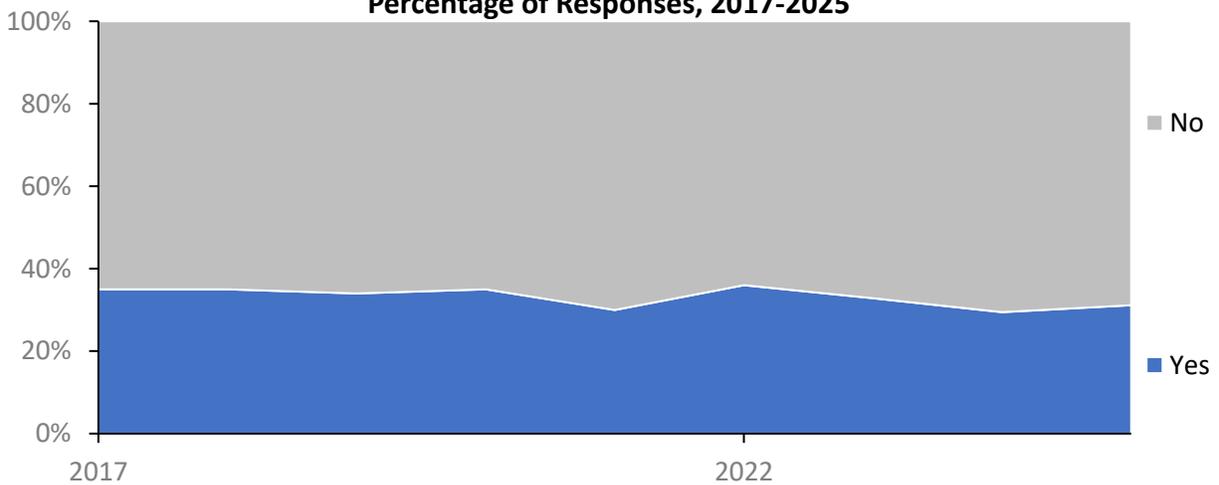
## Family Religious Background - Part 4

Responding ordinands who have/had a relative who is a priest or a religious constituted 31% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025 (and 29% in 2024). They represented 28% of ordinands in religious institutes and 32% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2017 and 2025, their share has averaged 33% and ranged between 29% and 36%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 28%  $\pm$ 4pp of ordinands, in 2029.

**Do (did) you have a relative who is a priest or a religious?**  
**Percentage of Responses, 2025**

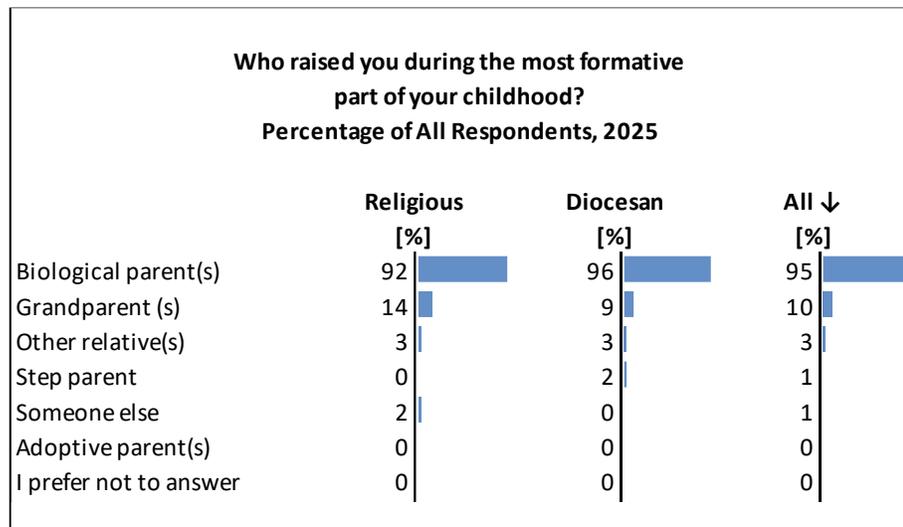


**Do (did) you have a relative who is a priest or a religious?**  
**Percentage of Responses, 2017-2025**



## Parents - Part 1

Ordinands who were raised by biological parent(s) constituted 95% of all respondents in 2025 (as compared to 95% in 2024). They represented 92% of ordinands in religious institutes and 96% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood.



Ordinands who were raised by grandparent(s) constituted 10% of all respondents in 2025 (as compared to 9% in 2024). They represented 14% of ordinands in religious institutes and 9% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood.

Ordinands who were raised by other relative(s) constituted 3% of all respondents in 2025 (as compared to 3% in 2025). They represented 3% of ordinands in religious institutes and 3% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood.

Ordinands who were raised by stepparents constituted 1% of all respondents in 2025 (as compared to 1% in 2024). They represented 0% of ordinands in religious institutes and 2% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood.

Ordinands who were raised by someone else constituted 1% of all respondents in 2025 (as compared to 1% in 2024). They represented 2% of ordinands in religious institutes and 0% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood.

## Parents - Part 2

Ordinands who were raised by a married couple, living together constituted 89% of all respondents in 2025 (as compared to 88% in 2024). They represented 90% of ordinands in religious institutes and 89% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood.

| During the most formative part of your childhood, were you raised by:<br>Percentage of Responses, 2025 |                  |                 |              |
|--|------------------|-----------------|--------------|
|  | Religious<br>[%] | Diocesan<br>[%] | All ↓<br>[%] |
| Married couple, living together  | 90               | 89              | 89           |
| One parent, widowed  | 2                | 4               | 3            |
| One parent, separated/divorced   | 3                | 3               | 3            |
| Unmarried couple, living separately  | 2                | 1               | 1            |
| Unmarried couple, living together  | 3                | 0               | 1            |
| Married couple, living separately  | 0                | 1               | 1            |
| Someone else   | 0                | 1               | 1            |

Ordinands who were raised by one parent, widowed constituted 3% of all respondents in 2025 (as compared to 2% in 2024). They represented 2% of ordinands in religious institutes and 4% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood.

Ordinands who were raised by one parent, separated/divorced constituted 3% of all respondents in 2025 (as compared to 5% in 2024). They represented 3% of ordinands in religious institutes and 3% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood.

Ordinands who were raised by one unmarried couple, living separately constituted 1% of all respondents in 2025 (as compared to less than 1% in 2024). They represented 2% of ordinands in religious institutes and 1% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood.

Ordinands who were raised by an unmarried couple, living together constituted 1% of all respondents in 2025 (as compared to 1% in 2024). They represented 3% of ordinands in religious institutes and 0% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood.

Ordinands who were raised by a married couple, living separately constituted less than 1% of all respondents in 2025 (as compared to 1% in 2024). They represented 0% of ordinands in religious institutes and less than 1% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood.

Ordinands who were raised by someone else constituted less than 1% of all respondents in 2025 (as compared to less than 1% in 2024). They represented 0% of ordinands in religious institutes and less than 1% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood.

## Siblings and Birth Order - Part 1

Altogether, responding ordinands had, on average, 3 brothers and sisters (half had between 0 and 2 siblings and the other half between 2 and 14 siblings). Since 2018, the average number of siblings was 3 and ranged between 3 and 3.

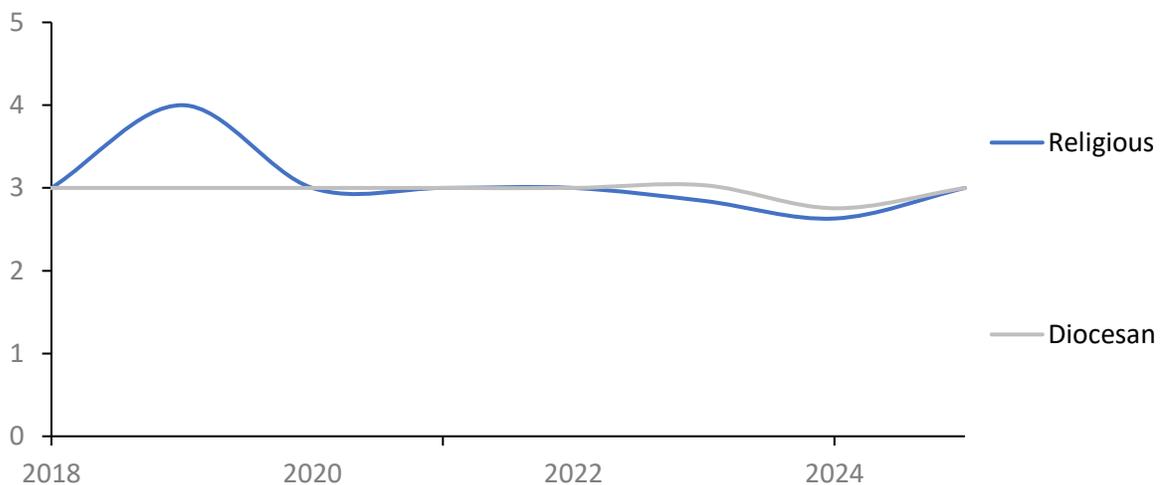
| <b>How many brothers and sisters do you have?</b> |                  |                 |             |
|---|------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| <b>Ordination Class of 2025</b>                   |                  |                 |             |
|   | <b>Religious</b> | <b>Diocesan</b> | <b>All</b>  |
|   | <b> [#]</b>      | <b> [#]</b>     | <b> [#]</b> |
| Average   | 3                | 3               | 3           |
| Median  | 2                | 2               | 2           |
| Range   | 0 - 10           | 0 - 14          | 0 - 14      |

In 2025, on average, responding ordinands in religious institutes had about the same number of siblings as responding diocesan ordinands.

Responding ordinands to diocesan priesthood in 2025 had, on average, 3 brothers and sisters (half had between 0 and 2 siblings and the other half between 2 and 14 siblings). Since 2018, the average number of siblings was 3 and ranged between 3 and 3.

Responding ordinands in religious institutes in 2025 had, on average, 3 brothers and sisters (half had between 0 and 2 siblings and the other half between 2 and 10 siblings). Since 2018, the average number of siblings was 3 and ranged between 3 and 4.

**Average Number of Siblings, 2018-2025**



## Siblings and Birth Order - Part 2

Ordinands who have five siblings or more constituted 21% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 23% of ordinands in religious institutes and 21% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2025, their share has averaged 22% and ranged between 16% and 28%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 18% ±5pp of ordinands, in 2029.

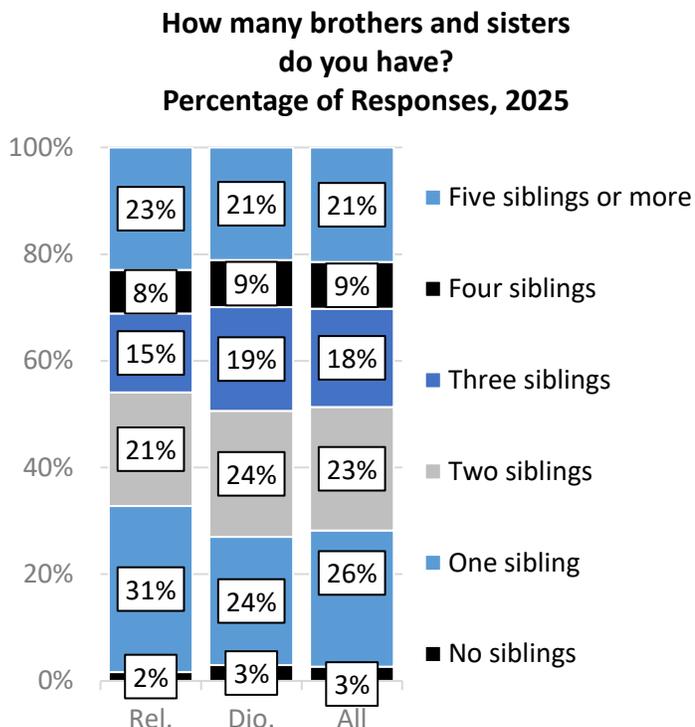
Ordinands who have four siblings constituted 9% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 8% of ordinands in religious institutes and 9% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2025, their share has averaged 10% and ranged between 8% and 13%.

Ordinands who have three siblings constituted 18% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 15% of ordinands in religious institutes and 19% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2025, their share has averaged 19% and ranged between 14% and 24%.

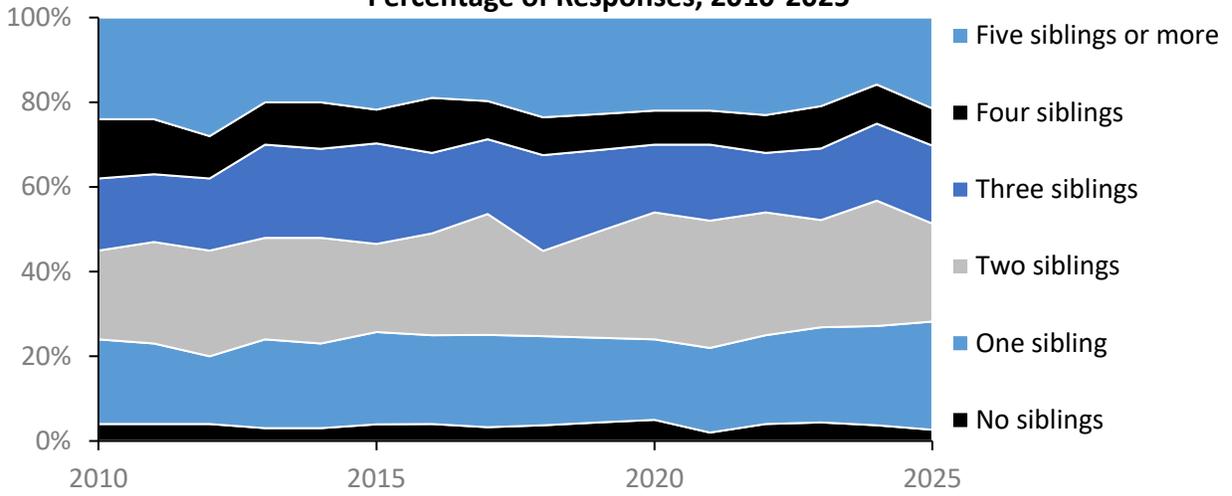
Ordinands who have two siblings constituted 23% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 21% of ordinands in religious institutes and 24% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2025, their share has averaged 25% and ranged between 20% and 30%.

Ordinands who have one sibling constituted 26% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 31% of ordinands in religious institutes and 24% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2025, their share has averaged 21% and ranged between 16% and 23%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 23% ±3pp of ordinands, in 2029.

Ordinands who are only children constituted 3% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 2% of ordinands in religious institutes and 3% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2025, their share has averaged 4% and ranged between 2% and 5%.



**How many brothers and sisters do you have?  
Percentage of Responses, 2010-2025**



\* Data for Ordination Class of 2019 is interpolated.

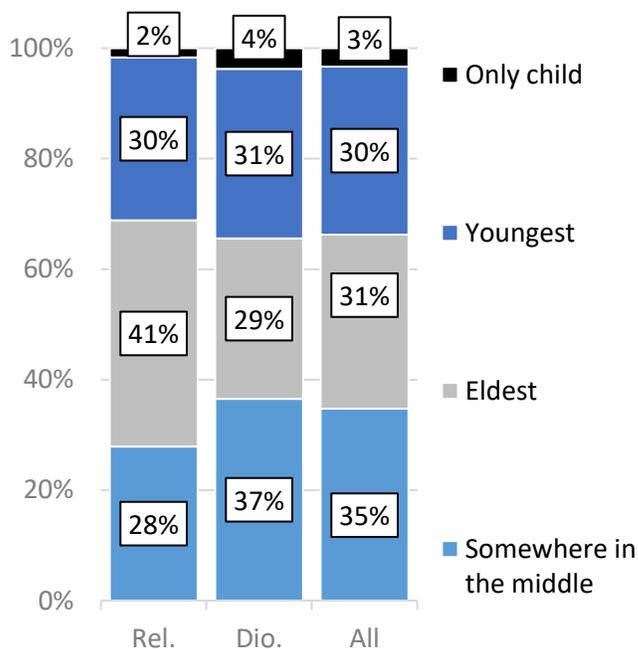
### Siblings and Birth Order - Part 3

Ordinands who were born somewhere in the middle constituted 35% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 28% of ordinands in religious institutes and 37% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2025, their share has averaged 35% and ranged between 30% and 40%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 33% ±4pp of ordinands, in 2029.

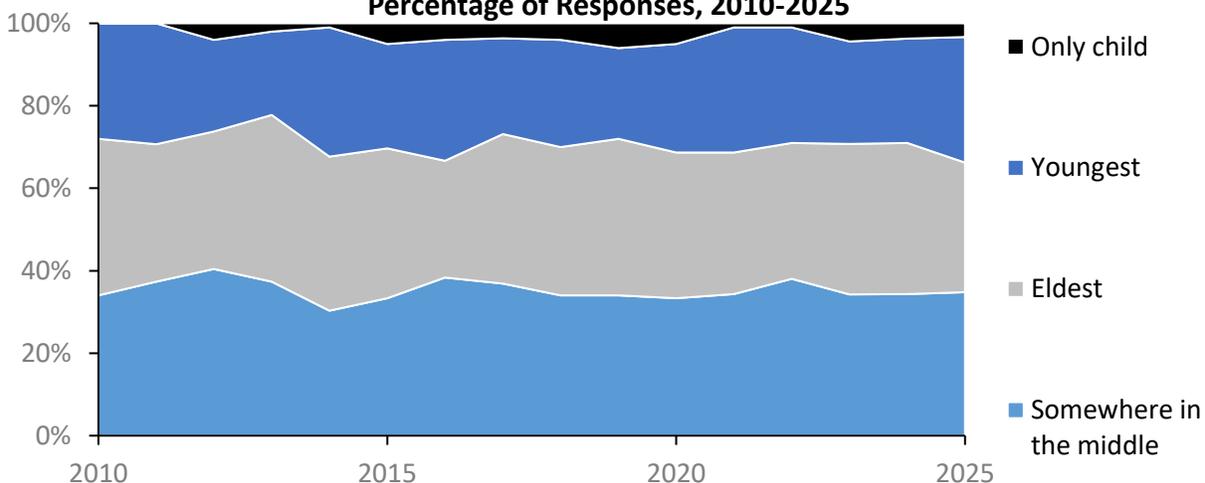
Ordinands who were the oldest among siblings constituted 31% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 41% of ordinands in religious institutes and 29% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2025, their share has averaged 35% and ranged between 28% and 40%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 36% ±4pp of ordinands, in 2029.

Ordinands who were the youngest among siblings constituted 30% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025. They represented 30% of ordinands in religious institutes and 31% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2025, their share has averaged 26% and ranged between 20% and 31%.

**What is your birth order?  
Percentage of Responses, 2025**



**What is your birth order?  
Percentage of Responses, 2010-2025**

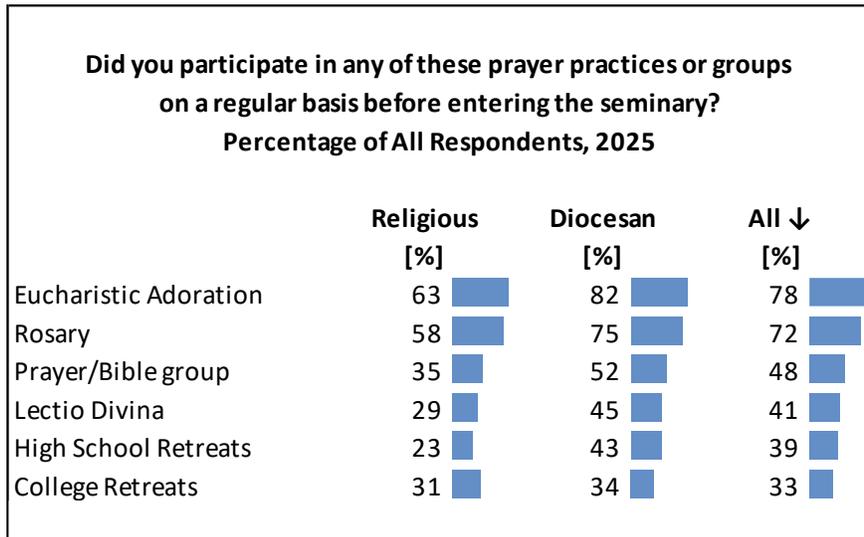


## Part VII: Vocational Discernment

### Prayer Practices

Overall, 91% of responding ordinands participated in at least a prayer practice before entering the seminary.

Ordinands who regularly participated in Eucharistic Adoration constituted 78% of all respondents. They represented 63% of ordinands in religious institutes and 82% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2025, their share has averaged 71% and ranged between 62% and 86%.



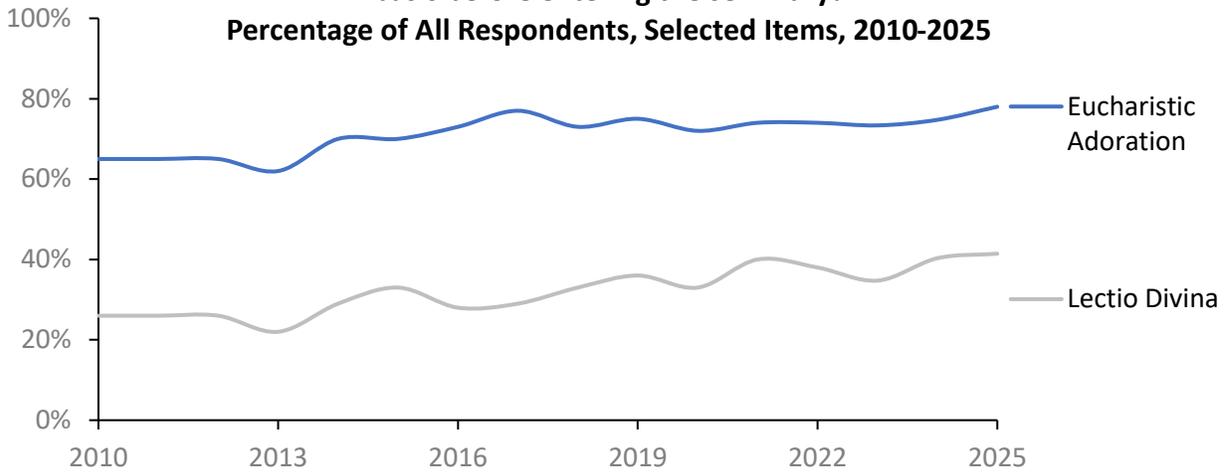
Ordinands who regularly prayed Rosary constituted 72% of all respondents. They represented 58% of ordinands in religious institutes and 75% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2025, their share has averaged 70% and ranged between 66% and 79%.

Ordinands who regularly participated in prayer group/Bible study constituted 48% of all respondents. They represented 35% of ordinands in religious institutes and 52% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2025, their share has averaged 47% and ranged between 41% and 53%.

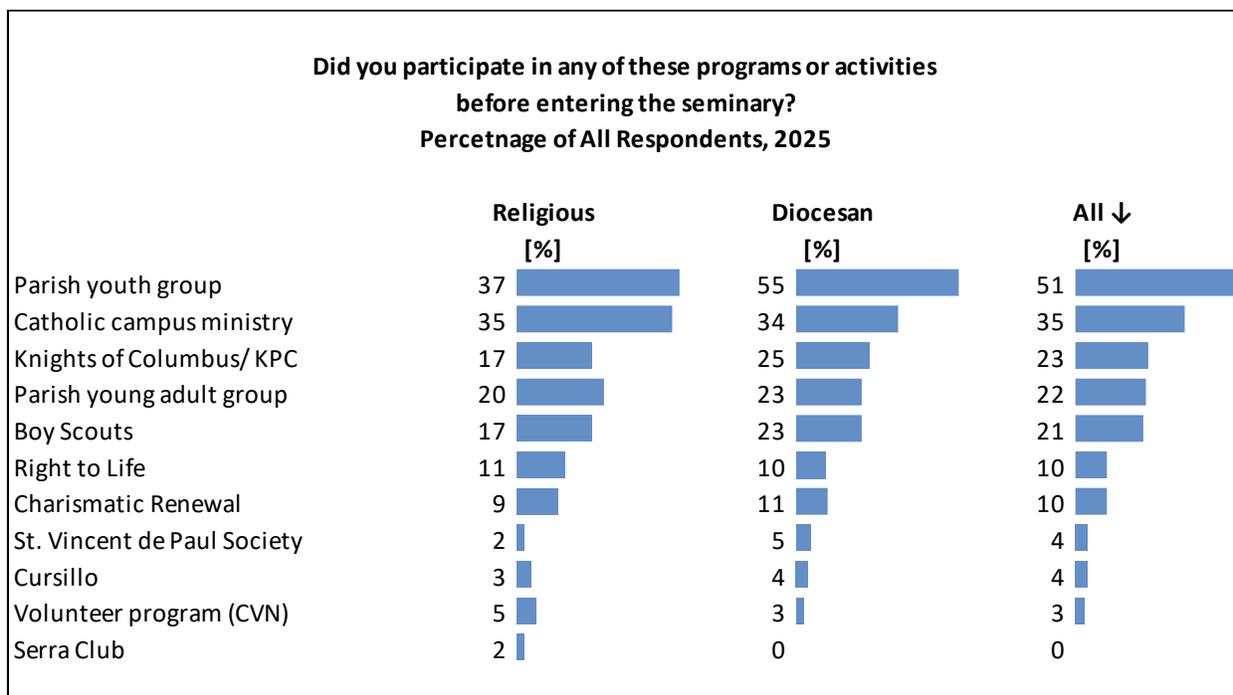
Ordinands who regularly practiced Lectio Divina constituted 41% of all respondents. They represented 29% of ordinands in religious institutes and 45% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2025, their share has averaged 32% and ranged between 22% and 43%.

**Did you participate in any of these prayer practices or groups on a regular basis before entering the seminary?**

**Percentage of All Respondents, Selected Items, 2010-2025**



## Programs and Activities



Overall, 82% of responding ordinands participated in at least a program or activity before entering the seminary.

Ordinands who belonged to parish youth group constituted 51% of all respondents. They represented 37% of ordinands in religious institutes and 55% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood (a statistically significant difference). Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 28% and ranged between 18% and 63%.

Ordinands who participated in Catholic campus ministry constituted 35% of all respondents. They represented 35% of ordinands in religious institutes and 34% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 27% and ranged between 22% and 42%.

Ordinands who belonged to the Knights of Columbus/ Knights of Peter Claver constituted 23% of all respondents. They represented 17% of ordinands in religious institutes and 25% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 25% and ranged between 17% and 45%.

Ordinands who belonged to a parish young adult group constituted 22% of all respondents. They represented 20% of ordinands in religious institutes and 23% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 44% and ranged between 23% and 54%.

Ordinands who belonged to the Boy Scouts constituted 21% of all respondents. They represented 17% of ordinands in religious institutes and 23% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 29% and ranged between 21% and 46%.

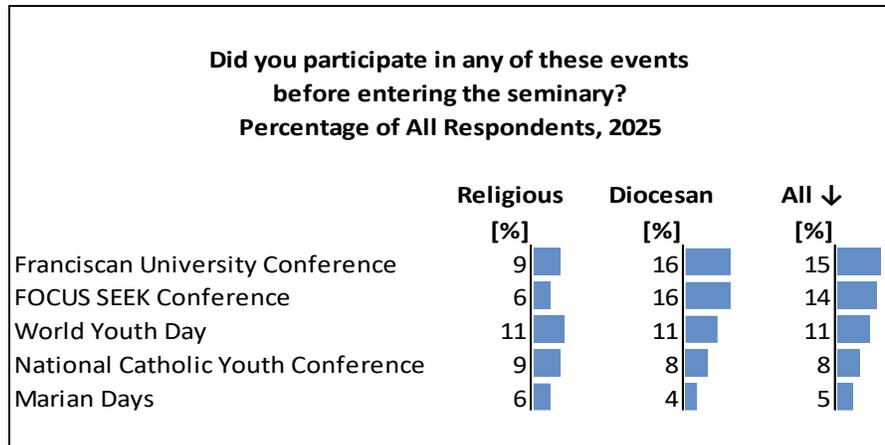
Ordinands who were involved with Right to Life constituted 10% of all respondents. They represented 11% of ordinands in religious institutes and 10% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 17% and ranged between 13% and 22%.

Ordinands who belonged to Charismatic renewal constituted 10% of all respondents. They represented 9% of ordinands in religious institutes and 11% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 12% and ranged between 9% and 15%.

## Events

Overall, 40% of responding ordinands participated in at least one event before entering the seminary.

Ordinands who participated in Franciscan University of Steubenville High School Youth Conference constituted 15% of all respondents.

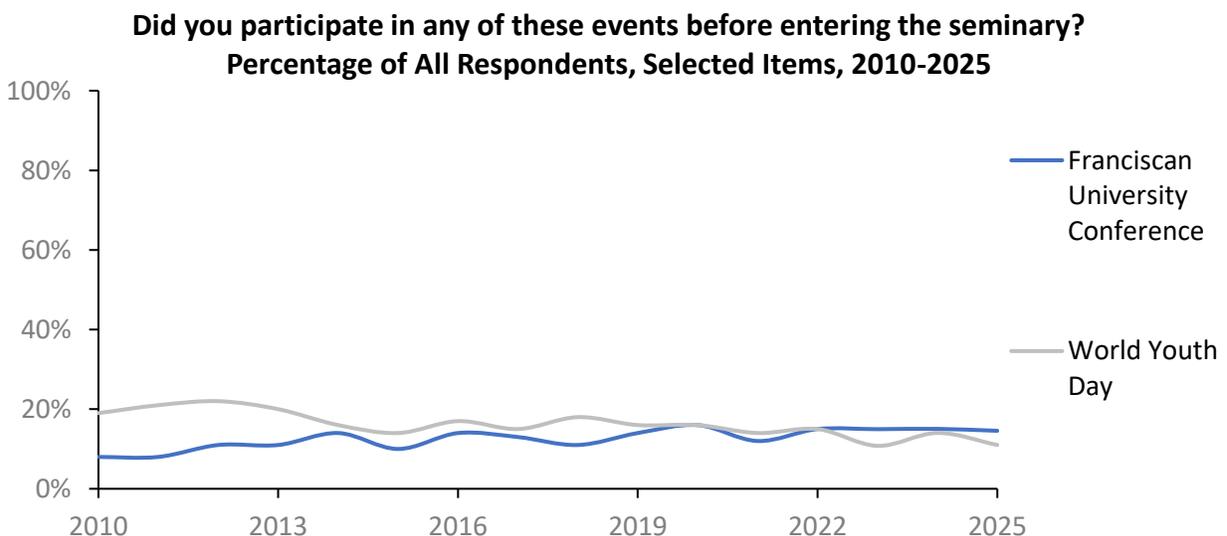


They represented 9% of ordinands in religious institutes and 16% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2025, their share has averaged 13% and ranged between 8% and 16%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 18% ±4pp of all respondents, in 2029.

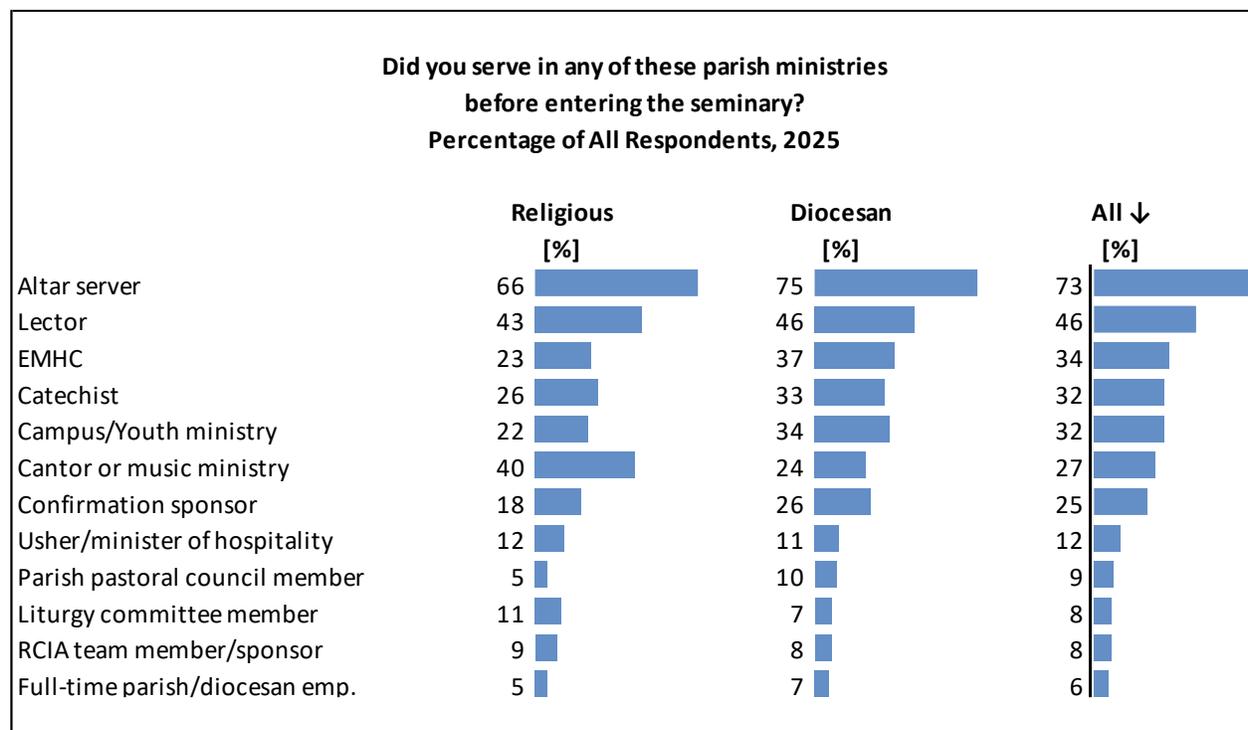
Ordinands who participated in the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS) SEEK Conference constituted 14% of all respondents. They represented 6% of ordinands in religious institutes and 16% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood.

Ordinands who participated in the World Youth Day constituted 11% of all respondents. They represented 11% of ordinands in religious institutes and 11% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2025, their share has averaged 9% and ranged between 6% and 15%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 10% ±4pp of all respondents, in 2029.

Ordinands who participated in the National Catholic Youth Conference constituted 8% of all respondents. They represented 9% of ordinands in religious institutes and 8% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2010 and 2025, their share has averaged 7% and ranged between 4% and 10%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 10% ±3pp of all respondents, in 2029.



## Parish Ministries



Overall, 92% of responding ordinands participated at least a parish ministry before entering the seminary.

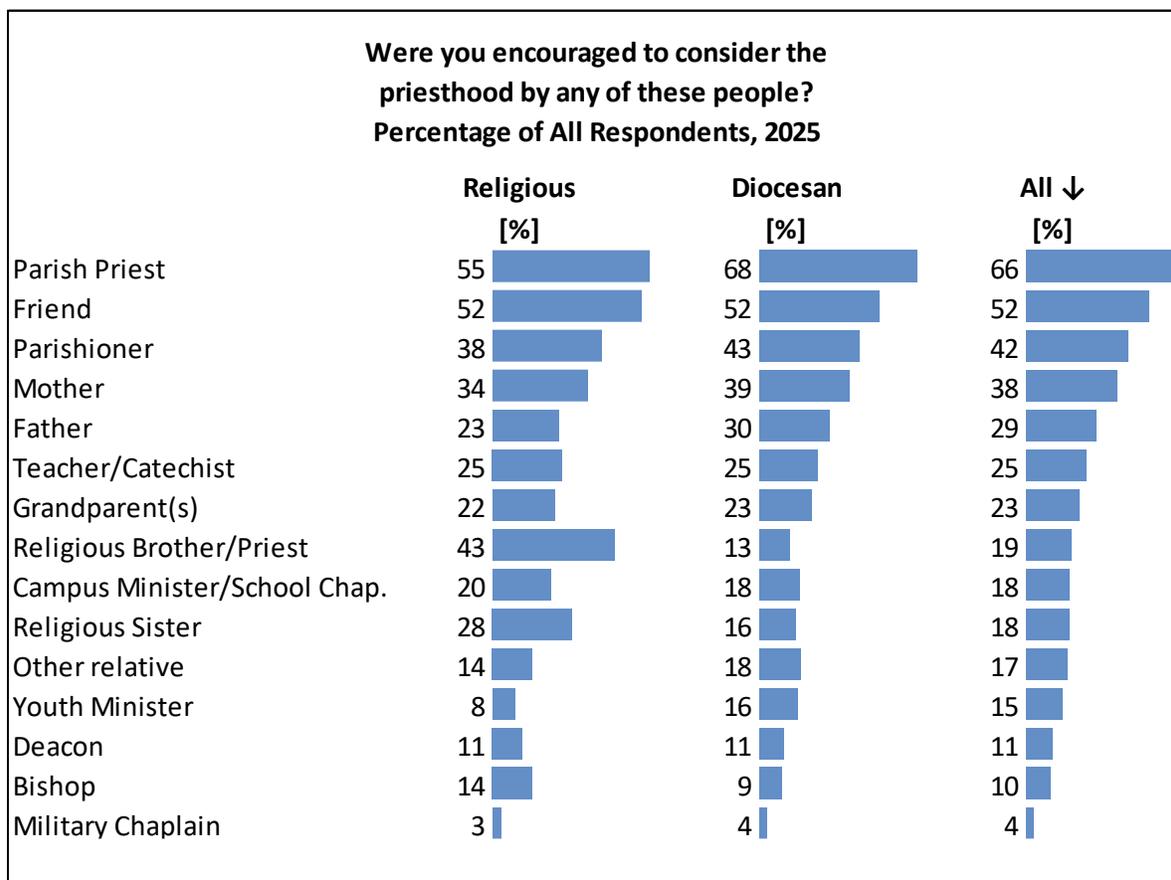
Ordinands who served as an altar server constituted 73% of all respondents. They represented 66% of ordinands in religious institutes and 75% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 73% and ranged between 67% and 80%.

Ordinands who served as a lector constituted 46% of all respondents. They represented 43% of ordinands in religious institutes and 46% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 54% and ranged between 48% and 65%.

Ordinands who served as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion constituted 34% of all respondents. They represented 23% of ordinands in religious institutes and 37% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 43% and ranged between 37% and 61%.

Ordinands who served as a catechist constituted 32% of all respondents. They represented 26% of ordinands in religious institutes and 33% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 36% and ranged between 32% and 46%.

## Encouraging Influences



Overall, 89% of ordinands were encouraged by at least one person listed in the table to consider the priesthood.

Ordinands encouraged by their parish priest constituted 66% of all respondents. They represented 55% of ordinands in religious institutes and 68% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood (a statistically significant difference). Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 70% and ranged between 63% and 85%.

Ordinands encouraged by their mother constituted 38% of all respondents. They represented 34% of ordinands in religious institutes and 39% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 37% and ranged between 15% and 42%.

Ordinands encouraged by their friend constituted 52% of all respondents. They represented 52% of ordinands in religious institutes and 52% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 45% and ranged between 24% and 53%.

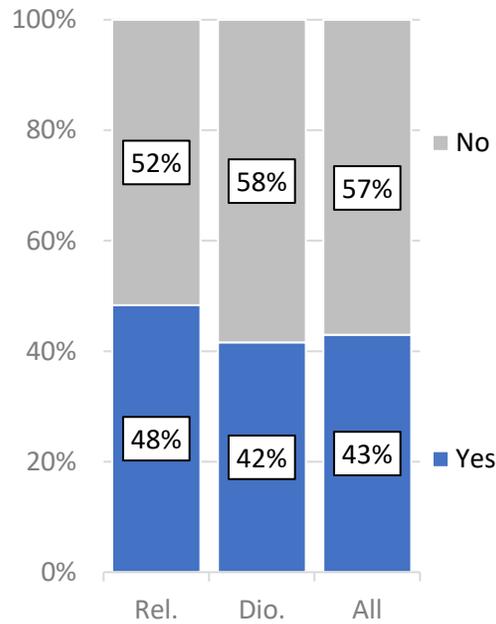
Ordinands encouraged by a parishioner constituted 42% of all respondents. They represented 38% of ordinands in religious institutes and 43% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 41% and ranged between 9% and 47%.

Ordinands encouraged by their teacher/catechist constituted 25% of all respondents. They represented 25% of ordinands in religious institutes and 25% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 25% and ranged between 8% and 31%.

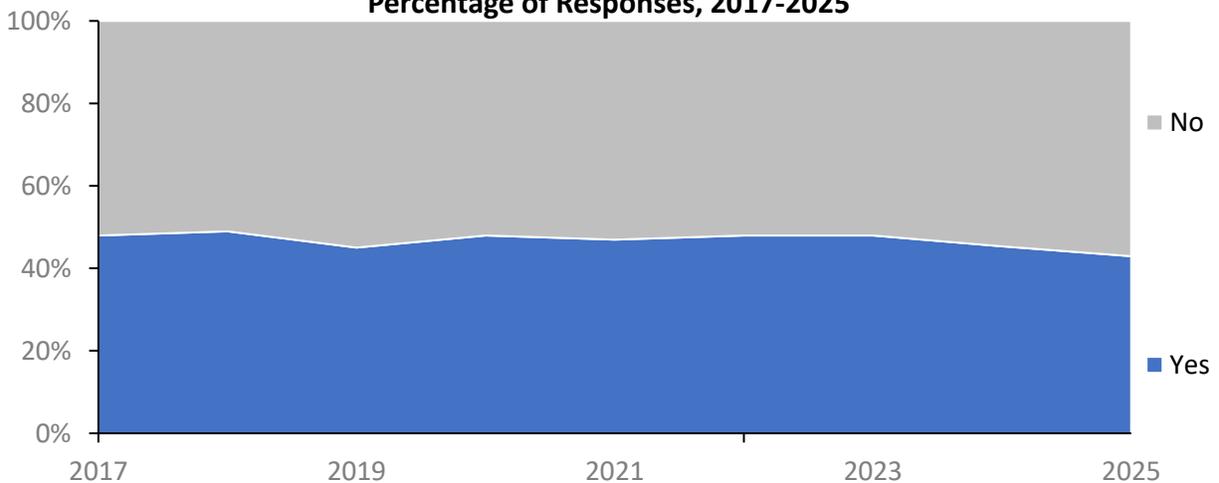
## Discouraging Influences - Part 1

Responding ordinands who were discouraged from considering priesthood as a vocation constituted 43% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025 (and 45% in 2024). They represented 48% of ordinands in religious institutes and 42% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2017 and 2025, their share has averaged 47% and ranged between 45% and 49%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 49%  $\pm$ 3pp of ordinands, in 2029.

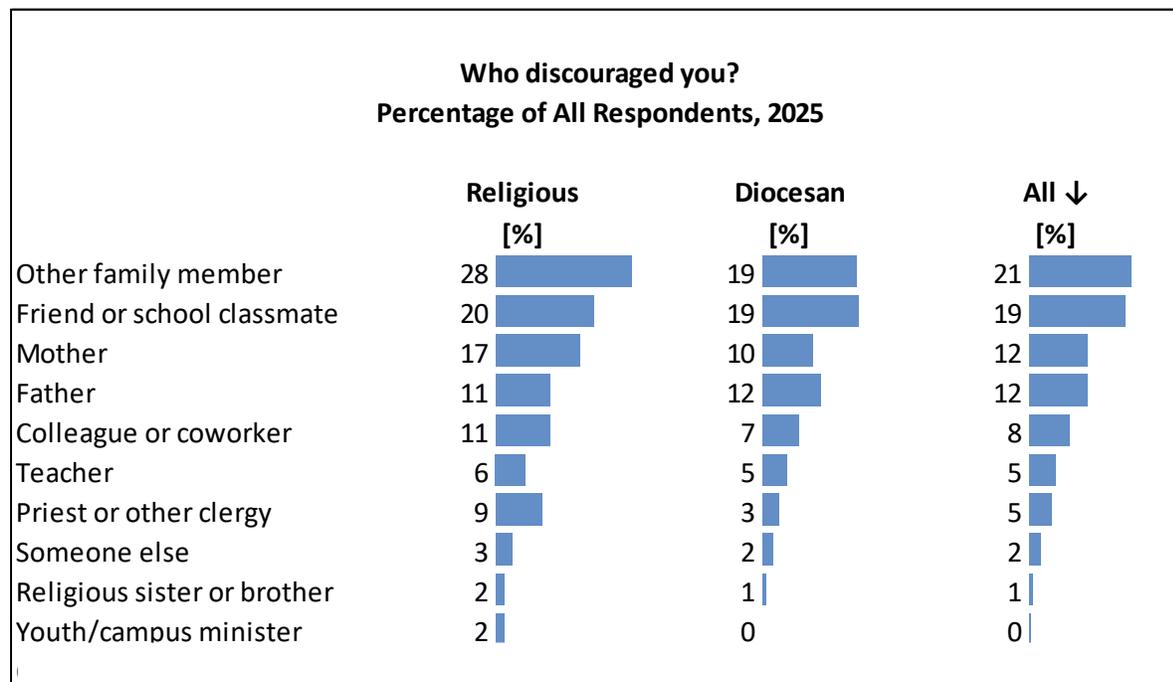
**Did anyone discourage you from considering priesthood as a vocation?  
Percentage of Responses, 2025**



**Did anyone discourage you from considering priesthood as a vocation?  
Percentage of Responses, 2017-2025**



## Discouraging Influences - Part 2



Ordinands discouraged by a family member other than their mother and father constituted 21% of all respondents. They represented 28% of ordinands in religious institutes and 19% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2017 and 2025, their share has averaged 22% and ranged between 20% and 25%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 19% ±3pp of all respondents, in 2029.

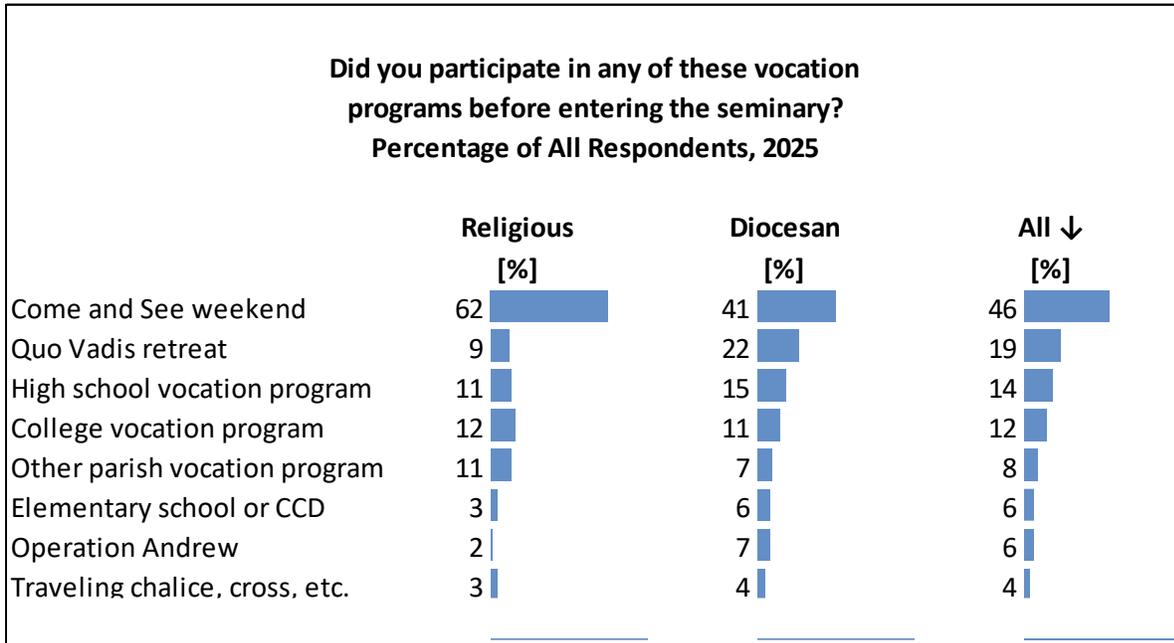
Ordinands discouraged by a friend or school classmate constituted 19% of all respondents. They represented 20% of ordinands in religious institutes and 19% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2017 and 2025, their share has averaged 24% and ranged between 20% and 31%.

Ordinands discouraged by their mother constituted 12% of all respondents. They represented 17% of ordinands in religious institutes and 10% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood (a statistically significant difference). Between 2017 and 2025, their share has averaged 13% and ranged between 10% and 16%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 11% ±3pp of all respondents, in 2029.

Ordinands discouraged by their father constituted 12% of all respondents. They represented 11% of ordinands in religious institutes and 12% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2017 and 2025, their share has averaged 12% and ranged between 10% and 15%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 12% ±5pp of all respondents, in 2029.

Ordinands discouraged by a colleague or coworker constituted 8% of all respondents. They represented 11% of ordinands in religious institutes and 7% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2017 and 2025, their share has averaged 5% and ranged between 4% and 6%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 3% ±2pp of all respondents, in 2029.

## Vocation Programs



Overall, 67% of responding ordinands participated in at least a vocation program before entering the seminary.

Ordinands who participated in a Come and See weekend at the seminary or the religious institute/society constituted 46% of all respondents. They represented 62% of ordinands in religious institutes and 41% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood (a statistically significant difference). Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 45% and ranged between 37% and 52%.

Ordinands who participated in a Quo Vadis retreat constituted 19% of all respondents. They represented 9% of ordinands in religious institutes and 22% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood (a statistically significant difference). Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 13% and ranged between 7% and 19%.

Ordinands who participated in a high school vocation program constituted 14% of all respondents. They represented 11% of ordinands in religious institutes and 15% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 12% and ranged between 10% and 15%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 12% ±4pp of all respondents, in 2029.

Ordinands who participated in a college vocation program constituted 12% of all respondents. They represented 12% of ordinands in religious institutes and 11% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 11% and ranged between 9% and 14%.

Ordinands who participated in some other parish vocation program constituted 8% of all respondents. They represented 11% of ordinands in religious institutes and 7% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 10% and ranged between 7% and 14%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 7% ±4pp of all respondents, in 2029.

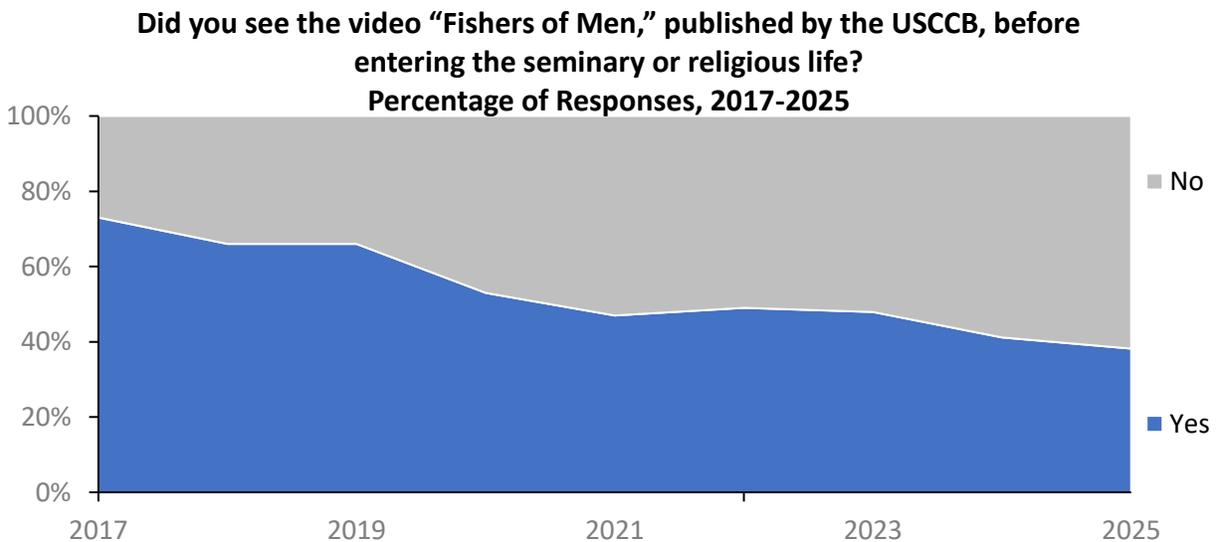
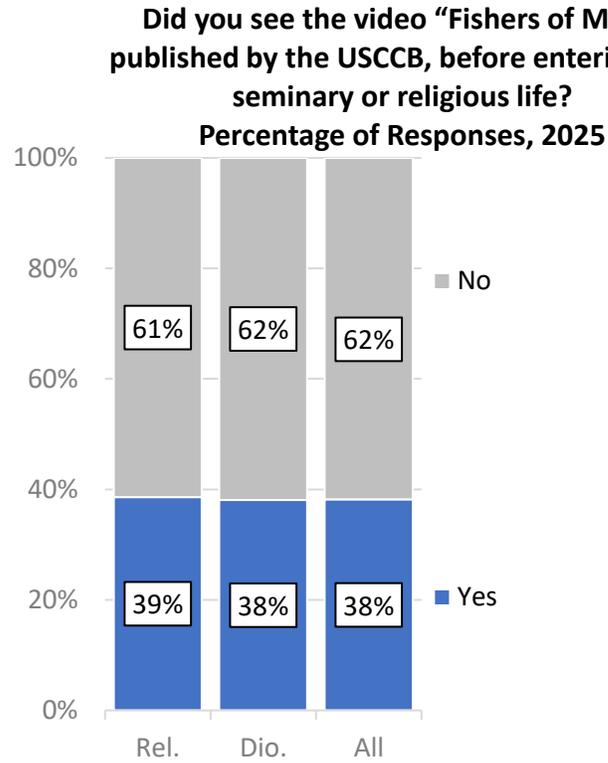
Ordinands who participated in an elementary school or CCD vocation program constituted 6% of all respondents. They represented 3% of ordinands in religious institutes and 6% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 8% and ranged between 4% and 13%.

Ordinands who participated in Operation Andrew constituted 6% of all respondents. They represented 2% of ordinands in religious institutes and 7% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 6% and ranged between 2% and 9%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 5%  $\pm$ 3pp of all respondents, in 2029.

Ordinands who visited a traveling chalice/cross/statue for vocations constituted 4% of all respondents. They represented 3% of ordinands in religious institutes and 4% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2006 and 2025, their share has averaged 3% and ranged between 1% and 5%. If the trend continues, they will constitute 3%  $\pm$ 3pp of all respondents, in 2029.

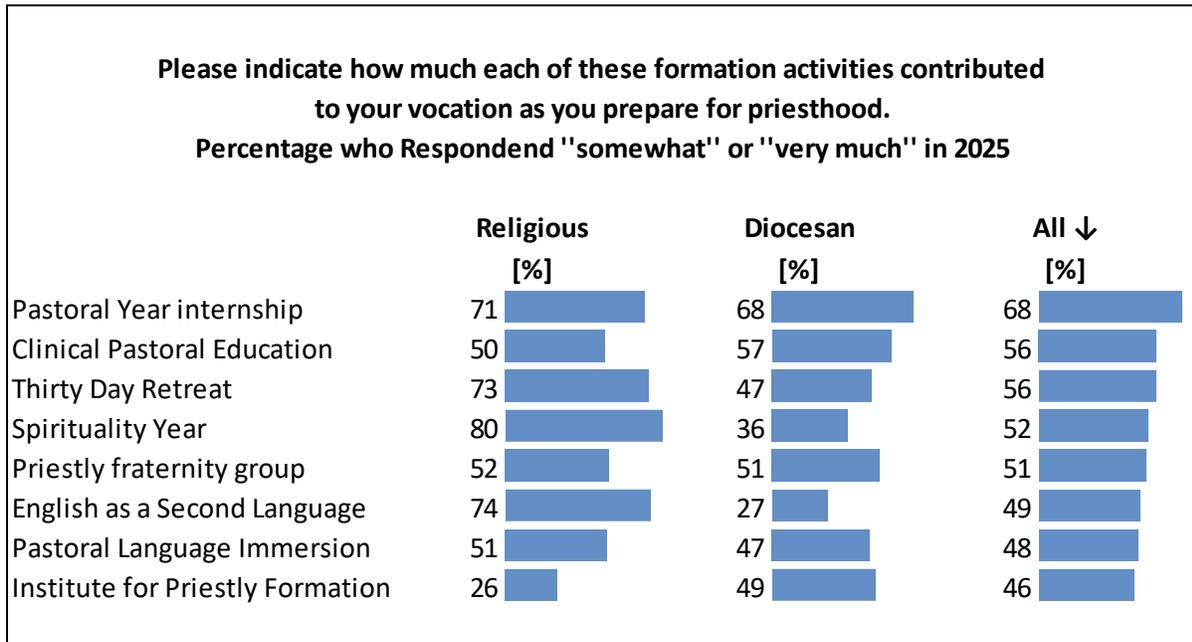
## Video “Fishers of Men”

Responding ordinands who saw the video “Fishers of Men” before entering the seminary or religious life constituted 38% of ordinands who responded to this question, in 2025 (and 41% in 2024). They represented 39% of ordinands in religious institutes and 38% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2017 and 2025, their share has averaged 55% and ranged between 41% and 73%.



## Part VIII: Formation

### Formation Activities



Ordinands who indicated that a pastoral year internship contributed at least “somewhat” to their vocation constituted 68% of ordinands who responded to this question. They represented 71% of ordinands in religious institutes and 68% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2019 and 2025, their share has averaged 84% and ranged between 74% and 90%.

Ordinands who indicated that Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) contributed at least “somewhat” to their vocation constituted 56% of ordinands. They represented 50% of ordinands in religious institutes and 57% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2019 and 2025, their share has averaged 67% and ranged between 57% and 78%.

Ordinands who indicated that a thirty-day retreat contributed at least “somewhat” to their vocation constituted 56% of ordinands. They represented 73% of ordinands in religious institutes and 47% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2019 and 2025, their share has averaged 67% and ranged between 49% and 81%.

Ordinands who indicated that a spirituality year contributed at least “somewhat” to their vocation constituted 52% of ordinands. They represented 80% of ordinands in religious institutes and 36% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood (a statistically significant difference). Between 2019 and 2025, their share has averaged 70% and ranged between 46% and 83%.

Ordinands who indicated that a priestly fraternity group (e.g., Jesus Caritas) contributed at least “somewhat” to their vocation constituted 51% of ordinands. They represented 52% of ordinands in religious institutes and 51% of ordinands to diocesan priesthood. Between 2019 and 2025, their share has averaged 63% and ranged between 49% and 73%.