

LATINO/A CATHOLIC LEADERS IN THE UNITED STATES

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Introduction

The focus on Catholics continues in this chapter, but with a somewhat different methodology from the previous ones. Because the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) has forty years of experience in social science research on the Catholic Church, we can analyze data gathered previously (see appendix D) but specifically prepared for this chapter.

For this chapter, we analyzed data from a series of CARA Catholic Polls (CCP), a national random sample telephone survey of the adult Catholic population, data from its two priest polls (2001 and 2002), its deacon poll (2001), and its lay ecclesial minister poll (2002) with respect to Latino/as in leadership positions in the Church.¹

We also incorporated data from our *Catholic Ministry Formation Directory* to describe characteristics of Latino/as in formation for leadership in the Catholic Church.

To develop an understanding of the challenges facing Hispanic leadership in the Catholic Church, we identified characteristics of Latino Catholic parish life today, as reported in CARA's national database of parish life, the National Parish Inventory (NPI).

This chapter presents the results of this data as a portrait of the current

¹ In spring 2003, the Center for the Study of Latino Religion at the Institute for Latino Studies of the University of Notre Dame commissioned the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) to conduct a study of Hispanic leadership, leadership formation, and ministry challenges in the Catholic Church in the United States as baseline research for the Latino/a Religious Leadership Inventory.

state of Latino leadership and leadership formation in the Catholic Church. It begins with a look at the general Hispanic Catholic population, and then details the current estimated proportions of lay ministers, deacons and priests who self-identify as Latino/a.

However, since one indication of how these figures may change in the near future is to calculate the percentage of Latino/as among those men and women who are currently in formation programs, the chapter next looks at lay ministry, deaconate, and priesthood training programs. We end with the broader context for all of this data, namely, a look at Latino parish life.

The Latino/a Catholic Population

CARA's most recent national survey of the Catholic population, the CARA Catholic Poll (CCP) 2003, estimates that 28 percent of the adult Catholic population self identifies as Hispanic, Latino/a or Spanish (margin of error ± 3.5 percentage points).² Of these respondents, 85 percent say they speak at least some Spanish at home, and half of them (51 percent) preferred to be interviewed in Spanish.

As is widely recognized, the Latino segment of the U.S. Catholic population has grown in the last decade. A Gallup national telephone poll of Catholics conducted in 1992 estimated that 19 percent of Catholics self-identified as Hispanic.³ However, some of the increases in the estimated number of Catholics who are Latino over the years could also reflect greater efforts by survey researchers to reach the Hispanic population. A combination of factors

² The American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS) 2001 conducted by the Graduate Center of the City University of New York estimates that 29 percent of adult Catholics are Latino/a or Hispanic. However, this study was conducted with English interviews only.

³ Other national surveys specific to the Catholic population conducted since 1992 have estimated a somewhat smaller Latino segment.

including interview language preferences, mobility, and general unwillingness to participate in surveys among Hispanics may have systematically led to lower estimates by survey researchers in the past. CARA has placed strong emphasis in its telephone polls in reaching respondents who self-identify as Latino and those who prefer to be interviewed in Spanish. CARA's survey weights are also designed to provide the most accurate population estimates possible.

CARA survey questions provide multiple terms for racial and ethnic identification, thereby supplying a variety of ways in which a respondent may identify himself or herself. For this study the question, "are you of Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino descent?" is most important. For simplicity, from this point forward in the chapter we will use the term "Latino/a" to refer to any respondent who said they were of Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino/a descent. The 28 percent Latino/a share of the adult Catholic population will also be used throughout this to measure the degree to which Latino/as are underrepresented in leadership positions relative to their presence in the Catholic population. The CARA Catholic Poll (CCP) 2001 (margin of error ± 2.3 percentage points) asked respondents if they had ever considered becoming a lay ecclesial minister, priest, or religious sister or brother.

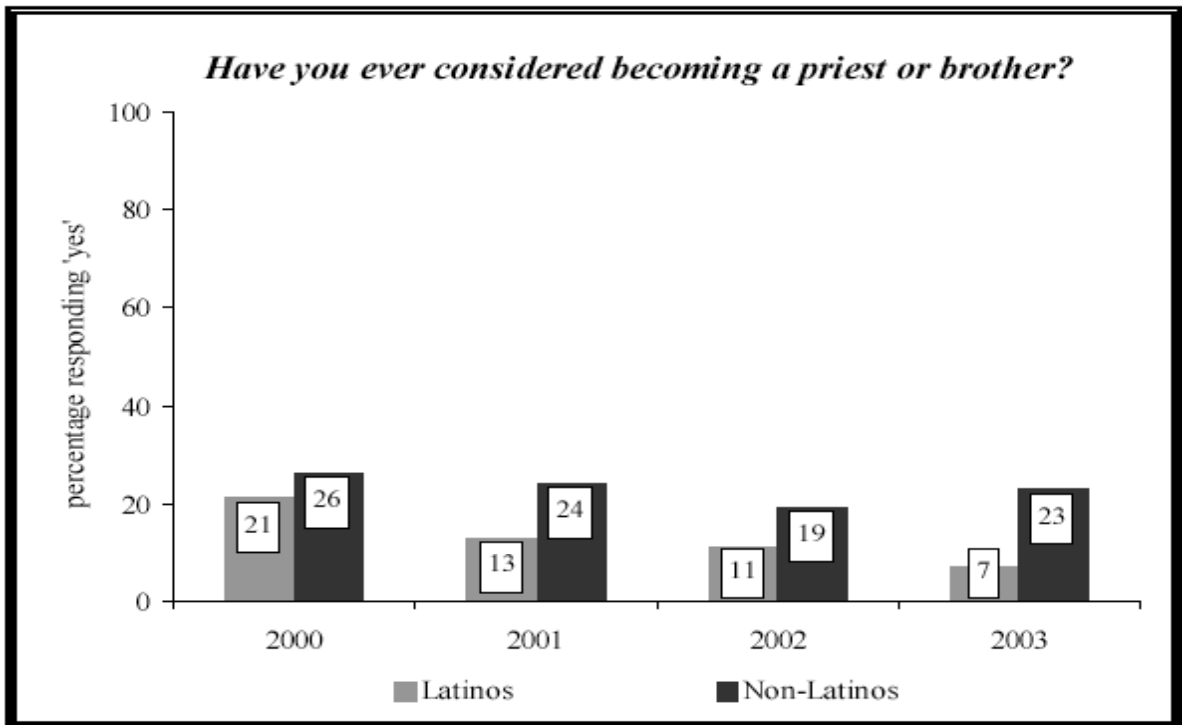
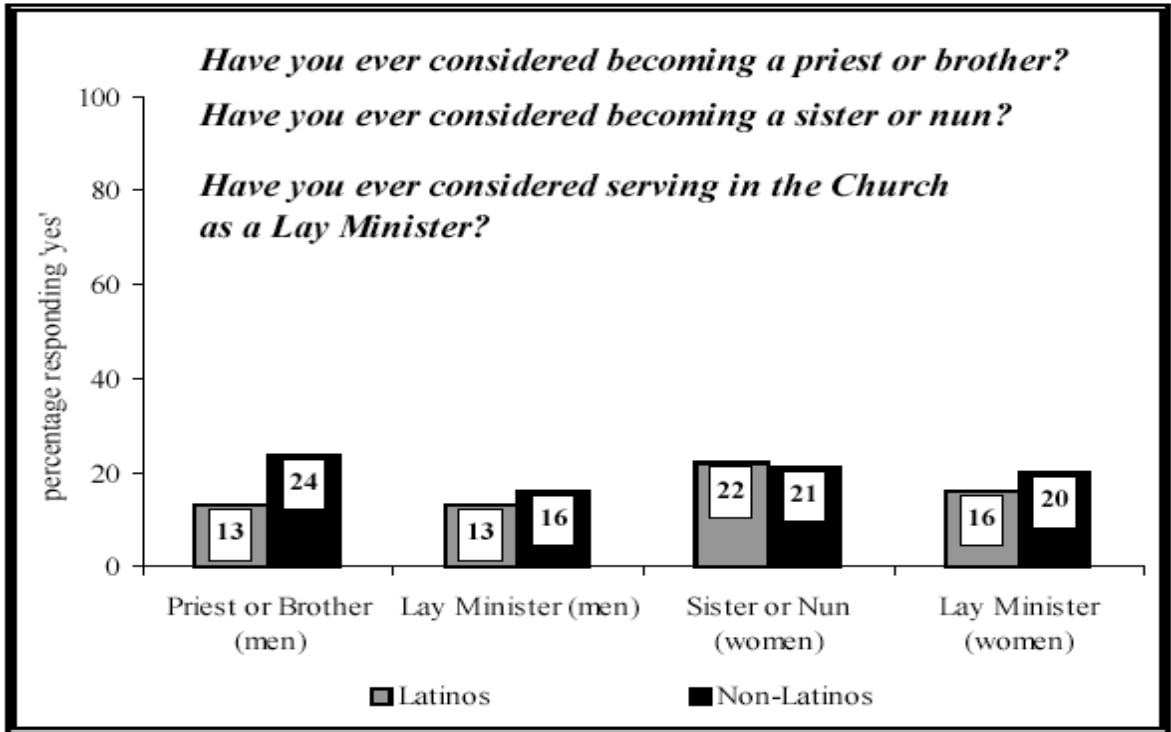
There are no significant differences between Latino/as and non-Latino/as who say they have considered becoming a lay ecclesial minister or between Latina and non-Latina women who say they have considered becoming a sister or nun. However, male Latino Catholics are much less likely than male non-Latino Catholics to say they have considered becoming a priest or brother (13 percent compared to 24 percent).

These results indicate that any under-representation of Hispanics among

lay ministers or religious sisters cannot be attributed to differences in interest.

However, disproportionately low numbers of Latinos serving as Catholic priests or religious brothers may be in part due to a lower likelihood among male Latino Catholics to have considered these vocations to the same degree that male non-Latino Catholics have.

Tables 1 and 2



The comparatively lower levels of interest in becoming a priest or brother among Latino Catholic men are not limited to one observation. Since CARA

started asking the question, “Have you ever considered becoming a priest or a brother?” in the CCP, male Latino respondents have always been less likely to say that they have ever considered becoming a priest or a brother.

However, one apparent trend is that the percentage of male Latino Catholics who say they have considered becoming a priest or brother has declined. In 2000, some 21 percent responded that they had considered becoming a priest or brother, but by 2003 only 7 percent agreed with this statement. The question is open-ended in regard to time frame in that it asks the respondent whether they have “ever considered,” so dramatic changes in this relatively short span of time are unusual. Thus, what these data more likely indicate is a growing reluctance among Latino men to say they have considered becoming a priest or brother that may not reflect the actual levels of consideration.⁴ Regardless, male Latino Catholics are less likely than male non-Latino Catholics to *say* they have ever considered becoming a priest or brother, and in the past four years they seem to have become even less likely to do so.

At the same time, this reluctance appears not to be based on some growing negative assessment of priestly vocations. Instead it seems to be more grounded in their personal view that they themselves would not consider being a priest. Evidence of this can be found in their willingness to encourage other men to become priests.

In CCP 2003, male Latino Catholics were just as likely as male non-Latino Catholics to agree that they have “ever encouraged someone to pursue a vocation as a priest” (15 percent). Moreover, those Latino/as that have

⁴ The variance in samples also contributes to the differences. Each survey has its own margin of error and each is based on a different group of respondents.

encouraged others are slightly more likely than non-Latino/as to say they would do so again now (63 percent compared to 55 percent). Doing so “now” is significant in that it measures their willingness to encourage priestly vocations after cases of Catholic priests sexually abusing children and adolescents became widely reported in the media in 2002. This question, following the “have you ever” inquiry, was designed to gauge the impact on encouragement of any diminishing evaluations of priesthood in light of the scandals.

Other factors may also be important in explaining why male Latino Catholics are less likely to say they have ever considered becoming a priest or brother. Male Latino Catholics are less likely than male non-Latino Catholics to agree that they have “ever known a Catholic priest on a personal basis, that is, outside formal interactions at church or school” (47 percent compared to 61 percent). To the degree that they have had less personal exposure to priest role models, they may be less aware of the vocation as a personal option.

Another factor may be differing cultural responses to the requirement of celibacy. There is no significant difference between male Latino Catholics and male non-Latino Catholics in their level of agreement with the statement, “Have you ever considered serving in the Church as a lay minister?” In this case, celibacy is not a requirement for lay persons (who are not vowed religious). However, this does not imply that male Latino Catholics would more seriously consider priestly vocations if celibacy were not a requirement. In fact, male Latino Catholics are much *less* likely than male non-Latino Catholics to agree that “married men should be ordained as priests” (47 percent compared to 73 percent).

Latino/a Lay Ecclesial Ministers

In the wake of the Second Vatican Council's call for the laity to become more active in Church life, lay persons⁵ and vowed religious – including many Latino/as – responded by becoming lectors, Eucharistic ministers, pastoral council members, religious educators, music ministers, youth ministers, pastoral associates, and in some cases parish directors.

The evolving nature of these opportunities and contributions has at times made it complex to distinguish those who are formally appointed to a leadership position within the structure of the institutional church and those working as lay ministers without specific pastoral responsibilities in a formal ecclesial context. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops recognizes that “the boundaries that distinguish ecclesial ministers from other lay ministers and from all the laity are flexible and permeable”(National Conference of Catholic Bishops). However, some generally discussed parameters can help define boundaries.

First, the word *lay* underscores the fact that persons in this group remain first, foremost, and always members of the laity. The word *ecclesial* denotes not only that the ministry of these lay persons has a place within the communion of the Church, but also that it is to be submitted to the judgment and supervision of the hierarchy. It is not simply an activity undertaken on personal initiative.⁶

Social science demands even greater precision. In CARA's 2002 telephone poll of 795 parish-based lay ecclesial ministers (margin of error ± 3.5 percent) those surveyed included any parish staff member besides a priest,

⁵ The term “lay persons” is used here to refer to lay persons who are not vowed religious brothers or sisters. Although vowed religious are technically lay persons under canon law, we exclude them from the term for the purposes of this report.

⁶ *Ibid.*

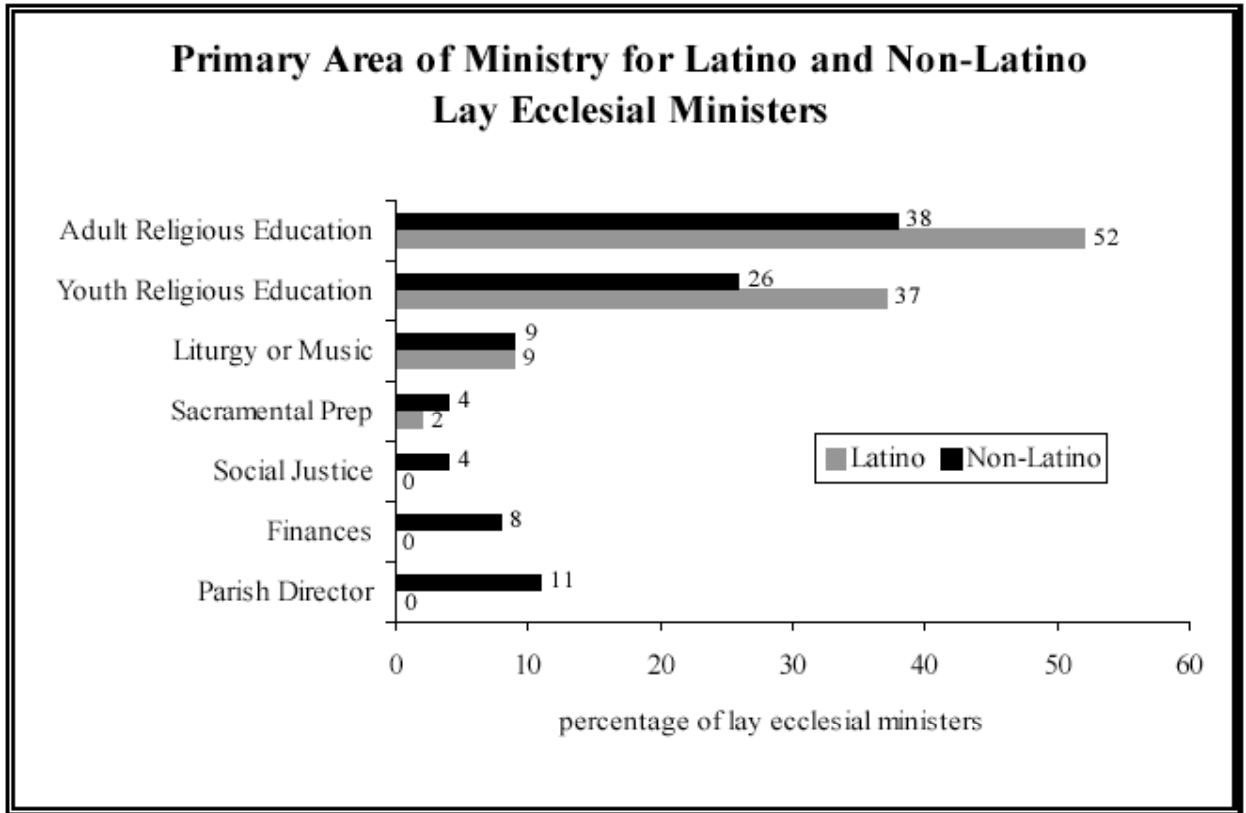
deacon, or seminarian working or volunteering for a parish at least 20 hours in a typical week, excluding secretaries and other clerical workers,⁷ maintenance workers, and school employees. This is very nearly the same definition used by Murnion and DeLambo (1999) in their 1997 survey of lay ministers. One difference is that Murnion and DeLambo limited their study to ministers who are paid for their work. Volunteers (so long as they are considered “staff members” by the parish) were included in CARA’s definition to account for the possibility that some poorer parishes probably have unpaid staff members.

Six percent of lay ecclesial ministers surveyed (49 respondents) in CARA’s Lay Ecclesial Ministers Poll self-identified as Latino/a – well below what would be expected if the number of Latinos in lay ecclesial ministry mirrored the number of Latinos in the Catholic population. The resulting small number of Latinos among respondents makes comparisons to non-Latinos complicated. It is only possible to make very general inferences about differences between Latino/as and non-Latino/as with these data. The findings presented may suggest real differences in the population, but care should be taken not to overstate the significance of these differences.

Respondents were asked about their primary area of ministry. Nine in ten Latino/a lay ecclesial ministers said their primary work was in adult or youth religious education. None of the Latino/a lay ecclesial ministers surveyed said they were parish administrators without a resident priest pastor (canon 517.2), or that their primary work was in ministries related to finances or social justice.

⁷ Business managers are included although their roles are not exclusively pastoral; they are mentioned in some Church documents about lay ministry. In the course of CARA’s survey of lay ecclesial ministers, it became evident how difficult it is to distinguish business managers from other financial and clerical workers. Also some workers whose primary roles are secretarial also do some pastoral ministry for their parishes. Thus parish workers with titles such as “bookkeeper,” “secretary,” and “administrative assistant” were not interviewed as lay ecclesial ministers unless some of their responsibilities are also pastoral. Those with managerial titles such as “business manager,” “office manager,” and “administrator” were generally included even if they had no pastoral responsibilities.

Table 3



There are a number of other notable differences between Latino/a and non-Latino/a lay ecclesial ministers. Although both are similarly likely to be vowed religious, female, and to have earned at least a bachelor's degree, in addition to being younger, Latino/a ministers are proportionately less likely than non-Latino/as to have earned a graduate degree, to be married, to have attended Catholic schools, or to have been enrolled in ministry formation programs that lead to graduate ministry degrees or to certification by a diocese.

Latino/a lay ecclesial ministers who have been enrolled in a ministry formation program are equally likely as non-Latino/as to have received financial assistance from a parish, but less likely to have received financial assistance from a diocese.

Table 4

Profiles of Latino and Non-Latino Lay Ecclesial Ministers		
	Latino	Non-Latino
Vowed religious	14%	16%
Married (lay persons only)	57	69
Female	82	81
<u>Age</u>		
18 to 29	9	6
30 to 49	51	33
50 or older	40	61
<u>Highest Level of Schooling</u>		
High school degree or less	6	7
Some college	12	15
Bachelor's degree	41	24
Graduate or professional school	41	54
<u>Catholic Schooling</u>		
Elementary/middle school	57	70
High school	37	53
College or university	60	67
<u>Study in Ministry Formation Program</u>		
Attended ministry formation program	76	85
--Received financial assistance from a parish to attend	62	59
--Received financial assistance from a diocese to attend	11	20
Attended before becoming a minister	41	50
Attended after becoming a minister	31	42
Has a graduate degree in ministry	29	36
Certified by a diocese for ministry	31	44

Canon 231.1 requires that “lay people who are pledged to special service of the Church, whether permanently or for a time, have a duty to acquire the appropriate formation which their role demands.”

A 2002 report of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Subcommittee on Lay Ministry of the Committee on the Laity identified a growing trend among dioceses to create standards and a certification process for lay ecclesial ministry positions that reflect the principle of canon 231.1(National

Conference of Catholic Bishops).

To the extent that these processes would require graduate education or enrollment in ministry formation programs that require a college degree, Latinos who wish to serve as lay ecclesial ministers may face higher entry hurdles than non-Latinos. The figures presented above detail the profile of Latino/as *already* serving as lay ecclesial ministers. They do not represent the profile of all Hispanic Catholics who could potentially be interested in a lay ecclesial ministry career.⁸

Nineteen percent of Latino/as in the adult Catholic population that were surveyed in CCP 2003 had attained at least a bachelor's degree and 5 percent had attended a graduate or professional school. By comparison, 40 percent of non-Latino/a Catholics had attained at least a bachelor's degree and 16 percent had attended a graduate or professional school.

Most Latino Catholics do not have educational backgrounds that would meet the requirements for many graduate ministry formation programs whereas at least four in ten non-Latino/a Catholics likely do. Hispanic Catholics may also be less able to assume the financial costs of attending graduate ministry programs that might be required to obtain or advance in a lay ecclesial ministry position. More than six in ten (63 percent) Latino Catholics live in households with a combined annual income of less than \$40,000, compared to three in ten (30 percent) non-Latino Catholics.

Scholars and Church representatives readily admit that Latinos, and ethnic and racial minorities in general, are underrepresented among lay ecclesial

⁸ Ideally, one would try to isolate those in the Catholic population who say they have considered a vocation and then further segment the analysis among men and women and Latino/as and non-Latino/as in this group. However, the share of Latino/as who have considered a vocation creates a total number of respondents that is too small for statistical inference.

ministers.⁹ The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Subcommittee on Lay Ministry of the Committee on the Laity reasons that "some members of these communities are recent arrivals in this country, and many, though not all, are poor" (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops). They also note "within the so-called minority communities, ministry is clearly seen as a service to the community, but rarely is it recognized as a profession or career. The bulk of the work is done by volunteers" (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops). This appears to mirror some of the findings of the previous chapter.

CARA's Lay Ecclesial Ministers Poll shows that Latino/a ministers are disproportionately more likely than non-Latino/a ministers to be working for their parish as a volunteer (25 percent compared to 12 percent) and those Latino/as that are receiving a wage or salary for their ministry work are not compensated as well as non-Latino/as. Nearly eight in ten (78 percent) Latino/a lay ecclesial ministers who receive some form of payment for ministry earn less than \$30,000 per year for that work. By comparison, fewer than six in ten (59 percent) non-Latino/as earn less than \$30,000 per year for their ministry work.

Canon 231.2 ensures that lay persons serving in a ministry position for the Church have a right to "worthy remuneration befitting their condition, whereby, with due regard also to the provisions of the civil law, they can becomingly provide for their own needs and the needs of their families." To the degree that lay ecclesial ministry does not provide Hispanic families with a living

⁹ This has been consistently recognized for more than a decade. Zeni Fox, in *New Ecclesial Ministry* (2002), writes, "The overwhelming majority of the new ministers are white. ... In general, traditional church leaders from minority communities are not being successfully recruited" (p.17). Bryan Froehle and Mary Gautier, in *Catholicism USA* (2000), write, "Hispanics/Latino/as are under-represented among lay ecclesial ministers relative to their proportion in the Catholic population overall" (p.157). Philip Murnion et al., in *New Parish Ministers* (1992), writes, "There is a drastic problem of the very few Hispanic and African American ministers" (p.18).

wage, it may be a job some cannot afford to seek. As further proof, nearly eight in ten (78 percent) non-Latino/a lay ecclesial ministers earning an income as a minister report that their ministry income is smaller than other income sources in their household. Yet only 57 percent of Latino/a lay ecclesial ministers report that their ministry income is smaller than other income sources in their household. Hence although paid Latino/a lay ministers earn less for their ministry than non-Latino/as, they rely on that income more to meet the needs of their households.

Latinos in the Catholic population do not show disproportionately low interest in becoming lay ecclesial ministers. However, they are more likely to have disproportionately lower levels of socio-economic resources from which to draw to meet the professional and educational standards being developed for lay ministry leadership positions. Even Latinos who currently serve as lay ecclesial ministers – primarily as religious educators – are more likely than non-Latinos to lack ministry degrees as well as certification, and they are more likely to earn less for their work or provide it as a volunteer. In sum, the Latino/a disproportionality in lay ecclesial ministry may not be a function of interest but of resources in the context of evolving institutional requirements for service as a lay ecclesial minister in the Catholic Church.

Latino Permanent Deacons

Pope Paul IV restored the permanent diaconate in 1967, creating an ordained leadership position within the Catholic Church that was open to married men. Permanent deacons are distinguished from transitional deacons in that they

are not planning to become ordained priests. Permanent deacons can be married – and most are. More than nine in ten permanent deacons (95 percent) are married or are widowers. In 1975, there were just 898 permanent deacons in the United States. In 2002, 13,277 permanent deacons were serving the Church in a variety of ministries including 117 administering parishes in the absence of a resident priest pastor (canon 517.2).

CARA's Deacon Poll 2001 included 804 deacons (margin of error of ± 3.5 percent) randomly selected from a national list of all permanent deacons, active and retired, obtained from *The Official Catholic Directory*. Ten percent of those surveyed (79 respondents) self-identified as Latino.¹⁰ This is half of what would be expected if the number of Latino deacons mirrored the number of Latinos among males 35 years of age or older in the Catholic population (approximately 20 percent).¹¹

More than nine in ten deacons – Latino and non-Latino alike – say they first “seriously considered” the vocation after they turned 30 years of age and nearly half say this occurred after the age of 45. More than nine in ten agree that if they had a chance to “do it all over again” that they would still become a deacon and that they are happy in their ministry. Latino deacons are more likely than non-Latino deacons to become candidates for the priesthood and then be ordained within one year (8 percent compared to 1 percent). Latino deacons – much like Latinos in the general Catholic population – are much less likely than non-Latinos to say they had ever considered becoming a priest or religious

¹⁰ This estimate is similar to the 11.5 percent of deacons who are Latino reported in *The National Study on the Permanent Diaconate of the Catholic Church in the United States*, 1995.

¹¹ Canon 1031.2 allows single men to become a candidate for the permanent diaconate at the age of 25. A married man cannot become a candidate until he is 35, “with the consent of his wife.”

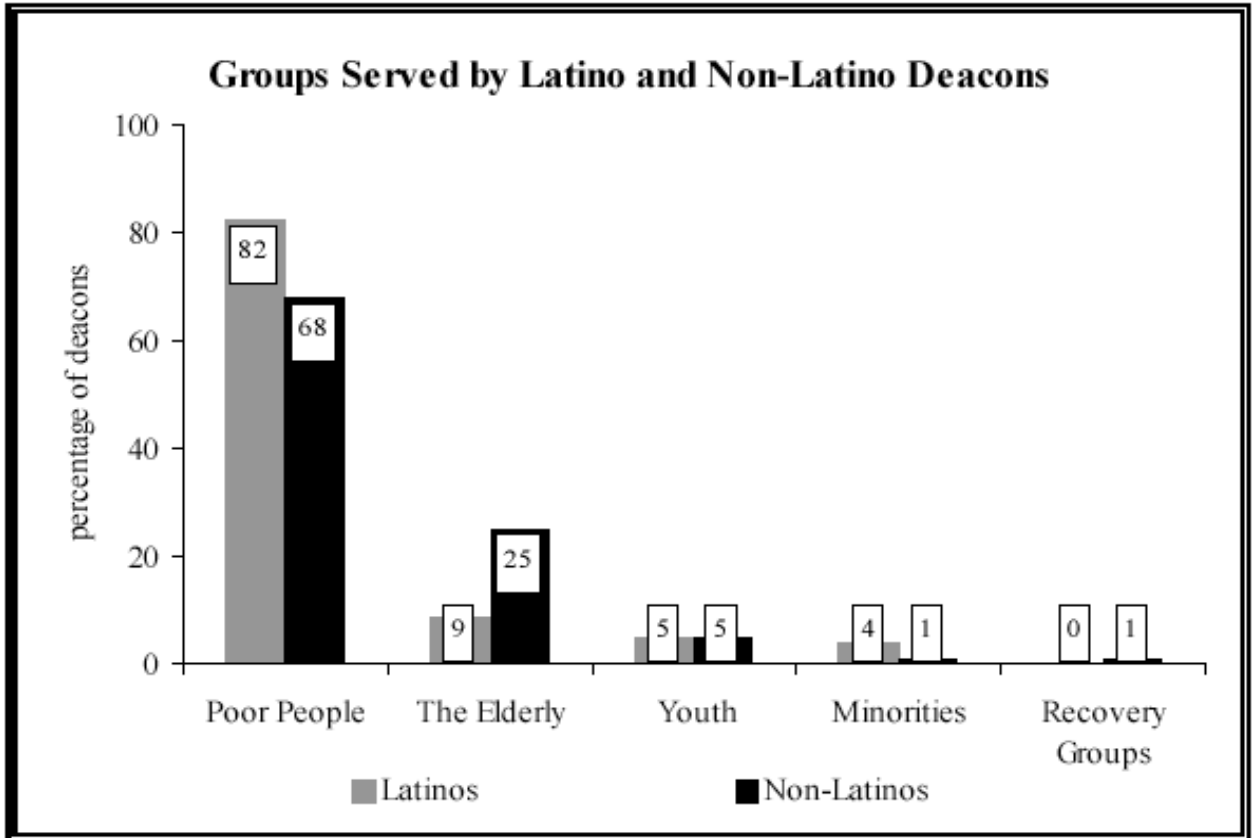
brother. Half of all non-Latino deacons (51 percent) say they had considered a priestly or vowed religious vocation whereas only 35 percent of Latino deacons say they had ever thought of becoming a priest or religious brother.

Many deacons continue to work in other professions in addition to their part-time (bivocational) ministry. A third of Latino deacons work full-time in ministry. Latino deacons are more likely than non-Latino deacons to say they are able to spend as much time in their ministry as they would like (70 percent compared to 57 percent). Latino deacons are also more likely than non-Latino deacons to serve more than one parish (30 percent compared to 16 percent).

There are no significant differences between Latino and non-Latino deacons in the types of ministry they engage in. The most common, in which more than nine in ten deacons are involved, include presiding at funerals, assisting in Masses, celebrating baptisms, and presiding at communion. About eight in ten say they preach homilies, witness marriages, provide ministry to the sick, and provide religious education.

However, there are differences in the types of groups served by Latino deacons and non-Latino deacons. Latino deacons are more likely than non-Latino deacons to serve the poor and non-Latino deacons are more likely to serve the elderly.

Table 5



More than nine in ten Latino and non-Latino deacons agree that their formation and training prepared them for their ministry, although seven in ten say continuing education or ongoing formation would be “very useful.” Nearly nine in ten Latino deacons (88 percent) say they would be willing to serve as a parish administrator in a parish without a resident priest pastor. By comparison, about three in four non-Latino deacons (76 percent) say they would be willing to serve as a parish administrator in the same situation.

Table 6

Profiles of Latino and Non-Latino Permanent Deacons

	Latino	Non-Latino
<u>Marital Status</u>		
Married	87%	91%
Widowed	8	4
Never married	5	4
Separated or annulled	0	1
<u>Age</u>		
35 to 44	1	2
45 to 59	32	32
60 or older	67	66
<u>Highest Level of Schooling</u>		
High school degree or less	24	11
Some college	44	29
Bachelor's degree	18	31
Graduate or professional school	14	29
<u>Weekly Hours of Ministry Work</u>		
Less than 24 hours a week	65	62
25 to 49	19	26
50 to 74	12	11
75 or more	4	1
<u>Income</u>		
Paid for ministry	24	27
Has a secular job	34	38
<u>Weekly Hours of Secular Work (of those with a secular job)</u>		
Less than 24 hours a week	7	11
25 to 49	59	57
50 to 74	30	31
75 or more	4	1

Latino deacons are also more likely to agree with the statement, “priests understand and accept the role of deacons.” Nine in ten Latino deacons (90 percent) say priests understand and accept their role, whereas only one in four non-Latino deacons (77 percent) agree with that statement.

Latino and non-Latino deacons are similar in age, marital status, receiving payment for their ministry, in their likelihood of having a secular job, and the hours they work at it. However, Latino deacons are much less likely than non-Latino deacons to have a college degree or to have attended a graduate or professional school.

The United States is home to 135 deaconate formation programs. Admissions requirements generally include recommendations from a pastor, support from the candidate's wife (if married), and letters of reference. Although a small number of dioceses do require an undergraduate or graduate degree, most do not require academic prerequisites, and therefore the greater likelihood among Latinos not to have earned a college degree is not necessarily an impediment to serving.

Latino Priests

The CARA Priest Polls conducted in 2001 and 2002 included a national random sample of Catholic priests (1,234 and 902 respondents, respectively, for margins of error of ± 2.5 percent and ± 3.3 percent). The 2002 survey included an additional random over-sample of priests ordained after 1991 (301 respondents for a margin of error of ± 5.8 percent).

Undoubtedly, the Latino population is more underrepresented in the priesthood than in either lay ministry or the deaconate, but there are indications that this is beginning to change. The CARA Priest Poll in 2001 estimated that 3 percent of Catholic priests were Latino; a year later, the 2002 survey estimated 2

percent.¹² Among priests ordained since 1991, however, 8 percent self-identify as Latino. The current relatively low numbers of Latino priests may be a reflection of the earlier reported finding that Latino males are less likely than non-Latinos to consider priestly vocations (CCP 2001-2003). The small proportion of Catholic priests that self-identify as Latino creates challenges in analyzing survey data, due to the small number of Latino priests interviewed. However, some basic patterns and differences can be identified that may suggest real differences in the population of all priests. Care should be taken, however, in interpreting these differences.

Tentatively there is some indication that Latino priests ordained since 1991 may be more likely than Latino and non-Latino priests overall to at least “somewhat agree” with the statement “I have seriously thought about leaving the priesthood in the last five years” (21 percent compared to 11 percent of non-Latino priests ordained since 1991 and non-Latino priests overall, and 5 percent of Latino priests overall). About seven in ten Latino priests – both newly ordained and overall – are diocesan priests rather than religious priests, such as Jesuits or Franciscans, compared to six in ten non-Latino priests overall and almost eight in ten non-Latino priests who have been ordained since 1991.

Latino priests are less likely to report that they spend a lot of time doing administrative or supervisory work in their parishes. Only about one in ten Latino priests – both newly ordained and overall – say they work more than ten hours a week in parish administrative work or supervisory duties, compared to about four in ten non-Latino priests overall and about one quarter of non-Latino

¹² According to CCP 2003, 28 percent of male adult Catholics self-identify as Latino.

priests who have been ordained since 1991. Latino priests are also slightly less likely than non-Latino priests to agree with the statement, “I would prefer to spend less time on administrative and supervisory work.”

Latino priests also report significant involvement as leaders in the communities where they minister. About six in ten Latino priests – both newly ordained and overall –say they are at least “somewhat involved” in civic or community affairs, compared to six in ten non-Latino priests overall and about four in ten non-Latino priests ordained since 1991. This is a fact worth keeping in mind when reading the following chapters, which look at the community-serving activities of Hispanic religious leaders.

In part because of the limited number of Latino priests surveyed, there is no indication that Latino priests are more likely than non-Latino priests to serve larger or smaller parishes, on average, in terms of registered households. About three in four Latino and non-Latino priests report serving in just one parish. Both Latino and non-Latino priests are most likely to say they celebrate five Masses in an average week.

Latino and non-Latino priests differ somewhat in terms of the location of parishes where they serve. Half of Latino priests overall serve a parish in a large city compared to one in four non-Latino priests, who are more likely to serve a parish in a small town or rural area (51 percent). Among priests ordained since 1991, Latinos are somewhat more likely than non-Latinos to serve in a large city (35 percent compared to 19 percent).

In the overall population of priests, Latinos are younger and more recently ordained than non-Latino priests. More than half of Latino priests are

younger than 45, compared to 15 percent of non-Latinos. Because Latino priests are disproportionately younger, they are also more likely than non-Latino priests to be ordained after 1990 (53 percent compared to 14 percent).

There are not significant differences in the percentage of Latino and non-Latino priests who have attended Catholic schools. More Latino than non-Latino priests report they were involved in a parish youth group (56 percent compared to 37 percent). Latino priests are more likely than non-Latino priests to say they have attended a seminary both overall (95 percent compared to 76 percent) and among those ordained since 1991. Latino priests are less likely to report that they attended college before entering seminary or novitiate.

Table 7

Profiles of Latino and Non-Latino Priests

	Latino	Non-Latino
<i>Age</i>		
18 to 34	16%	2%
35 to 44	37	13
45 to 64	31	44
65 or older	16	41
<i>Time of Ordination</i>		
Before 1950	5	6
1950 to 1969	10	44
1970 to 1989	32	36
1990 or later	53	14
<i>Schooling and Formation</i>		
Attended Catholic elementary	68	79
Participated in a parish youth Group or CYO	56	37
Attended Catholic high school	74	74
Attended college before entering Seminary or novitiate	26	41
Attended college seminary	95	76

While Latino men in the Catholic population are less likely to have considered becoming a priest, Latino priests are no less likely than non-Latino priests to say they would, or have encouraged other men to become a priest. All Latino priests surveyed said they would encourage (compared to 95 percent of non-Latinos) and that they have encouraged others in the past (all non-Latino priests also say they have encouraged others in the past). More than eight in ten Latino and non-Latino priests say they are satisfied with their lives as priests and about nine in ten strongly agree that if they had the chance to do it all over they would become a priest again.

The incongruity between the Latino percentage of the Catholic population and the Latino percentage of Catholic priests cannot be directly attributed to any

institutional or educational factors using the data analyzed here. Other than their age and year of ordination, Latino priests have comparable levels of preparation and satisfaction with their ministries. Other than slight differences in the time spent doing administrative as well as supervisory work, and the urban versus rural location of their parishes, there are not major differences in the profiles of Latino and non-Latino priests as measured by this survey data.

Thus, understanding the roots of the disparity between the size of the Latino population and the number of Latino priests appears to be more a question of the differences in the consideration of the vocation as has been noted in the analysis of CARA's polls of the Catholic population (CCP). This is an important trend to understand, as the data presented here suggest that the already low likelihood of consideration of priestly vocations by Latinos could be declining even further.

Latino/as in Ministry Formation Programs

The previous sections of this chapter detailed the current estimated proportions of lay ministers, deacons and priests who self-identify as Latino/a. Next we calculate the percentage of Latino/as among those men and women who are currently in formation programs for leadership roles. Data collected for CARA's *Catholic Ministry Formation Directory* is used in this section to detail current levels of Latino/a enrollment in the more than 600 priesthood, diaconate, and lay ecclesial ministry formation programs sponsored by the Church in the United States.

Lay Ecclesial Ministry Programs

Lay ecclesial ministry formation programs currently exist in 147 of 194 (76 percent) Catholic dioceses and eparchies (a total of 312 programs). According to the 275 lay ecclesial ministry formation programs that have enrollments and provided CARA with information about the racial and ethnic composition of their participants, there are 3,558 Latino/as currently attending lay ecclesial ministry formation programs in the United States. This represents about 12 percent of all participants enrolled in these programs in 2003. That percentage is lower than what would be expected if participant enrollments mirrored the proportion of Latino/as among all adult Catholics, yet it is significantly higher than the 6 percent of lay ecclesial ministers who self-identify as Latino/a. The dioceses with the programs that, on average, have majority Latino/a enrollments are Lubbock, Texas (92 percent), Miami, Florida (67 percent), Galveston-Houston, Texas (66 percent), San Bernardino, California (60 percent) and Austin, Texas (52 percent). A total of 57 lay ecclesial ministry formation programs (18 percent) report that they are able to provide instruction in Spanish.

Deaconate Programs

Deaconate formation programs currently exist in 128 of 194 (66 percent) Catholic dioceses and eparchies (a total of 135 programs). According to the 112 deaconate formation programs that have enrollments and provided CARA with information about the racial and ethnic composition of their participants, there are 465 Latinos currently attending a deaconate formation program in the United States. This represents about 18 percent of all deacon candidates enrolled in these

programs in 2003. This percentage is very near what would be expected if Latino deaconate enrollments mirrored the proportion of Latinos, among Catholic males, 35 years of age or older (20 percent), and it is significantly higher than the 10 percent of deacons currently serving the Church whom self-identify as Latino. The dioceses with the programs that, on average, have majority Latino enrollments are Lubbock, Texas (79 percent), Las Cruces, New Mexico (67 percent), Galveston-Houston, Texas (62 percent), San Antonio, Texas (60 percent), Yakima, Washington (57 percent), and Chicago, Illinois (52 percent). Thirty-six deaconate programs (27 percent) report that they are able to provide instruction in Spanish.

Priestly Formation Programs

Priestly formation programs at the high school, college, and post-graduate level, currently exist in 69 of 194 (36 percent) Catholic dioceses and eparchies (a total of 196 programs and houses of formation). According to the 176 priestly formation programs that have enrollments and provided CARA with information about the racial and ethnic composition of their seminarians, there are 919 Latinos currently attending priestly formation programs in the United States.¹³ This represents about 17 percent of all students enrolled in these programs in 2003. This percentage is below what would be expected if Latino priestly formation enrollments mirrored the proportion of Latinos, among adult Catholic males (28 percent), yet it is significantly higher than the 2 to 3 percent of priests currently serving the Church who self-identify as Latino. The dioceses with the

¹³ There are an additional 31 U.S. Latino seminarians attending priestly formation programs in Mexico, Belgium, Rome and the U.S. Virgin Islands that are sponsored by, or especially for, U.S. seminarians.

programs that, on average, have majority Latino enrollments are Brownsville, Texas (100 percent), El Paso, Texas (100 percent), Miami, Florida (77 percent), San Bernardino, California (63 percent), and Los Angeles, California (59 percent).

These formation program statistics reveal that the proportion of Latinos preparing to serve the Church is much higher than the proportion of Latinos among those currently in ministry. As CARA's survey data show, Hispanics serving the Church as lay ministers and priests are proportionately younger than non-Hispanics in those ministry positions.¹⁴ It is evident that there is an emerging younger Latino segment of those preparing for or already serving in ministry in the Catholic Church.

The formation program data also provide a wider context in which to evaluate the finding that adult Latino men in the Catholic population are less likely than adult non-Latino Catholic men to say they have considered becoming a priest. The CCP results reflect the percentage of men in the Catholic population who considered becoming a priest, but did not follow through with that idea. The formation program data show Latinos are not under-represented to the same degree among those who consider becoming a priest and then actually enter a formation program.¹⁵

Latino/a Parish Life

To understand the development of Latino leadership in the Catholic

¹⁴ There is no significant age difference between Latinos and non-Latinos who serve as deacons. This may be in part due to the minimum age restrictions associated with this vocation.

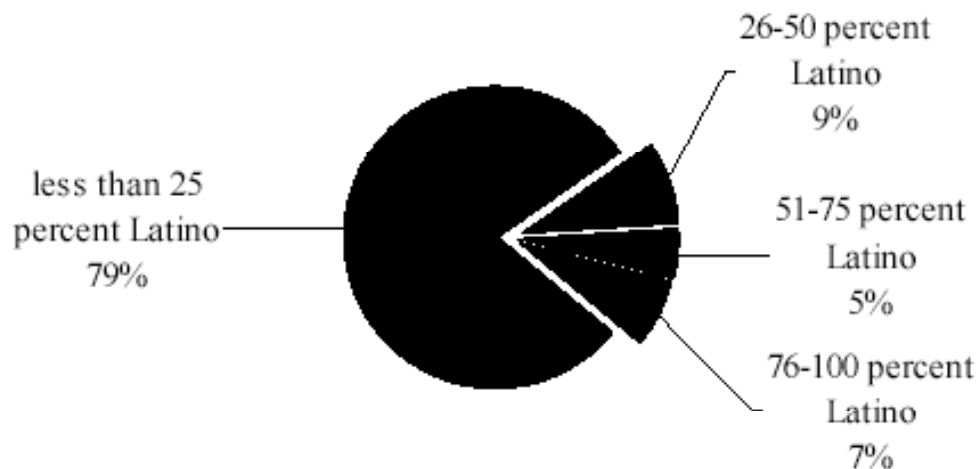
¹⁵ It is possible that some of the men surveyed in the CCP actually did at one time enter a priestly formation program but did not go on to become priests. Yet, this share is likely to be extremely small. In some surveys CARA has asked a follow up question probing how seriously the respondent considered becoming a priest. In CCP 2001 about 2 percent of adult Catholic men say they had considered becoming a priest "very seriously."

Church, one must evaluate parish life among Latinos. Parishes are the reservoirs from which future leaders of the Church emerge. Anything that can be identified about parish life more specific to the experience of the Latino population helps explain how Hispanic leadership in the Church could possibly be developed beyond its current levels, and indicate the needs of predominantly Hispanic parishes.

CARA has collected information from Catholic parishes in the United States in its National Parish Inventory (NPI) database since 1998. CARA uses a simple, one-page, mailed questionnaire or Internet-based survey that is given to each parish in the United States periodically. Those parishes that complete the questionnaire have their information recorded. For those parishes that do not return a survey, CARA relies on information supplied by dioceses, *The Official Catholic Directory*, and any existing information from previous NPI data collections where possible.

CARA's NPI questionnaire includes questions regarding the percentage of registered parishioners who are African American/Black, Hispanic/Latino/a, Asian, Anglo/White, or Native American. Currently, CARA has received race and ethnicity data from about four in ten parishes. Those parishes that have not provided race and ethnicity data are, on average, smaller than those that have provided information in terms of the number of registered households, registered parishioners, seating capacity and the number of Masses. Thus, information on race and ethnicity collected from the NPI should be considered in light of the under-representation of smaller parishes.

Parishes by Percentage of Registered Parishioners who are Latino, National Parish Inventory



Among those parishes that have provided CARA with race and ethnicity data, about eight in ten report that 25 percent or less of their registered parishioners are Latino/a. More than one in ten report that a majority of their registered parishioners are Latino/a.

The CCP-based estimate of 28 percent of the adult Catholic population self identifying as Latino/a is used to sort parishes into two categories¹⁶ The first includes all parishes that have provided CARA with race and ethnicity data that also report at least 28 percent of their parishioners are Latino/a. The second

¹⁶ Registered parishioners also include children, and when this is taken into account, the number of Latinos in the total Catholic population, of any age, is larger than 28 percent. However, the exact percentage of Latinos among the total Catholic population, of any age, is more difficult to estimate using survey research studies. To use the estimate of greatest accuracy and to remain consistent with the figure used throughout this report, 28 percent is used here as a cut-point between the two categories.

includes all parishes that have provided CARA with race and ethnicity data that report fewer than 28 percent of their parishioners are Latino/a.

Table 9

	Parishes that are 28% or more Latino	Parishes that are less than 28% Latino
<i>Masses</i>		
Average number of weekend Masses	5	5
Average number of weekday Masses	6	6
Has at least one weekend Spanish language Mass	70%	13%
<i>Size of Parish</i>		
Average seating capacity	519	528
Average number of registered households	1,155	1,083
Average number of registered parishioners	2,959	2,809
Average Attendance at <u>all</u> Masses on a typical October weekend	1,407	1,188
Average number of infant baptisms per year	129	32
Average number of funerals or memorial services per year	32	30
<i>Parish Staff</i>		
Average number of diocesan priests	1.6	1.5
Average number of religious priests	1.7	1.5
Average number of deacons	1.7	1.5
Average number of religious brothers	1.3	1.1
Average number of religious sisters	1.8	1.5
Average number of lay ecclesial ministers	4.8	4.9

Of the parishes in these two groups, those with more Latino/as have a slightly larger average number of registered households, registered parishioners, and Mass attendance. Parishes with more Latino/as are also more likely to offer Mass in Spanish, which requires a priest who is at least somewhat fluent in that

language. Seven in ten parishes with 28 percent or more Latino/as offer at least one Spanish Mass per week, compared to 13 percent of parishes that have fewer than 28 percent Latino/a parishioners. There is no difference between the two groups of parishes in terms of the average number of Masses offered on a weekly basis and average seating capacities; parish staffing patterns are very similar.

One distinct difference between parishes where at least 28 percent of parishioners are Latino/a and those parishes with fewer Latino/as, is the average number of baptisms performed (129 per year compared to 32 per year). This, in relation to the average number of funerals, indicates that parishes with larger numbers of Latino/as are growing at a faster rate than parishes with fewer Latino/as.

Conclusion

This review of CARA survey data reveals that the percentage of Latino/a priests, deacons, and lay ecclesial ministers serving the Catholic Church do not currently mirror the size of the Catholic population that self-identifies as Latino/a.

However, there is also evidence in these surveys and in CARA's ministry formation data to indicate that there are more representative numbers of Latino/as among those who recently entered ministry or who are preparing for leadership positions in the Church in formation programs.

One useful representative example is a comparison of Latino priests and seminarians. CARA estimates that there are approximately 900 Latino priests currently serving the Church in the United States, and CARA ministry formation data indicate that 919 Latino men are currently enrolled in priestly formation

programs in the United States. Thus, there are indications that there are at least as many Latino men currently preparing to be priests as there are Latino men currently serving the Church as priests.

It is difficult to isolate with the data utilized here the historical reasons for Latino/a under-representation in Catholic ministry. However, there are indications that issues related to how Latino men evaluate the vocation of priesthood may have been an important factor in explaining the disproportionality between the Latino population and Latino priests. There are also some issues related to eligibility and affordability of formation programs that are often required for ministry positions. Too often, Latinos in the Catholic population may lack the educational and financial resources to pursue these formation programs, a situation not unlike other denominations as will be seen in the following chapters.

What emerges from the findings in this chapter is a Catholic Church in transition. The Hispanic Catholic population is growing, as is the number of Latino/as preparing for Catholic ministry positions. Whether the proportion of leaders in the Church who are Latino/a grows as fast as the proportion of Catholics who are appears to be partly dependent on issues related to formation requirements, cultural issues regarding the considerations of vocations, and the availability of Latino/a leadership role models.

The next chapters shift the focus to Hispanic Protestant congregations and leadership. Although differing methodologies, definitions, and sampling make comparisons difficult, they present some parallels that the reader may identify and researchers might later explore.

Among all the mainline denominations, sufficient Hispanic religious

leadership poses a challenge. In general this does not appear to be for lack of desire by Hispanics to lead congregations, but rather obstacles such as the cost of education and the lack of resources to meet that cost. One also sees Latino/a ministers whose families are dependent upon their salary (and who sometimes augment that salary with extra-ecclesial work), and ministers quite likely to be engaged in the civic affairs of their communities. As the book's introduction suggests, Hispanic religious leaders may have more in common across denominations than previously thought.

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