

**CARA Working Paper Series**



**Number 4**

***Ongoing Formation Among  
Priests in the United States***

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

*Ongoing Formation Among  
Priests in the United States*

**A Report Originally Prepared for the  
National Organization for the Continuing Education  
of Roman Catholic Priests (NOCERCC)**

**September 2002**

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*CARA first released this work as a report commissioned by NOCERCC, the National Organization for the Continuing Education of Roman Catholic Clergy, in June 2002. The research was funded in part by a grant from the Louisville Institute. In September 2002 NOCERCC permitted CARA to release the report as a CARA Working Paper in order to provide for a wider distribution of the findings. CARA gratefully acknowledges the support of NOCERCC for this study and the close relationship CARA has enjoyed with NOCERCC for many years. CARA particularly acknowledges the insights and collaboration of the Rev. Francis Tebbe, OFM, former president of NOCERCC; the Rev. Mark Hession, current NOCERCC president; and Rev. Stephen DeLeers, current NOCERCC vice-president. CARA is also grateful for the leadership of the Rev. Michael Cronin, who served as the organization's Executive Director throughout this period. Questionnaire design for the 2002 survey benefitted especially from the collaboration of the Rev. Paul Philibert, O.P., former president of the Institute for Church Life at the University of Notre Dame, and the Rev. Stephen DeLeers.*



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CARA was founded by Catholic leaders in 1964 to put social science research tools at the service of the Catholic Church in the United States.

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# Executive Summary

In November 2001, the National Organization for Continuing Education of Roman Catholic Clergy (NOCERCC) engaged CARA, the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University, to survey Catholic priests about their levels of involvement in ongoing formation and continuing education and other activities for priestly life and human development. CARA included questions on these topics in the CARA Priest Poll 2002, a telephone poll of 1,212 priests residing in the United States. The poll was conducted in February and March 2002 and included a general sample of 920 priests randomly selected from a database compiled by *The Official Catholic Directory* and an over-sample of 292 priests randomly selected from among those ordained in 1992 or after.

## Major Findings

### Participation in Ongoing Formation

- Nearly nine in ten priests report having taken part in activities of ongoing formation related to theological updating in the past two years.
- About three-quarters report having taken part in activities related to counseling and pastoral ministry, physical well-being, preaching and presiding, and emotional well-being.
- About half say they have taken part in ongoing formation regarding management and administration.

### Reasons for Participation and Non-Participation

- Nearly all priests say that a sense of responsibility to themselves and a sense of responsibility to the people of God are reasons they have participated in activities of ongoing priestly and human formation.
- The two most frequently cited reasons for not participating are being “too busy” and being “uninterested” in some areas of ongoing formation.

### Accountability for Participation

- About three in ten priests say they have participated in ongoing formation or continuing education because the activities are required.
- More than half of priests say they are held accountable to at least “some” extent for their participation in ongoing formation or continuing education.

## Introduction

In November 2001, the National Organization for Continuing Education of Roman Catholic Clergy (NOCERCC) engaged CARA, the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University, to survey Catholic priests about the extent of their participation in ongoing formation and other activities related to priestly life and human development. CARA wrote survey questions on these topics with the collaboration of NOCERCC. They were included in the CARA Priest Poll 2002, a telephone poll of over 1,200 priests residing in the United States.

### The CARA Priest Poll 2002

The CARA Priest Poll 2002 is the second random sample telephone poll conducted by CARA of priests in the United States. The first was conducted in 2001. The CARA Priest Poll 2002 was conducted during February and March 2002. CARA obtained a database of 42,605 priests residing in the United States and their phone numbers from *The Official Catholic Directory (OCD)*.<sup>1</sup> The study consisted of two parts: a random sample of all priests in the database and an additional over-sample of recently ordained priests, defined as those ordained after 1991. First, priests were randomly sampled from the list and called up to ten times. After the tenth call or a refusal, another priest was randomly sampled as a replacement. Occasionally, calls reached a parish where another priest had recently replaced the one sampled from the list. In those cases, interviews were not conducted with the new priest and, when possible, attempts were made to reach the original priest at his new location. Often, priests were busy or unavailable when calls reached the rectory, parish office, or religious community. Priests were given the option of calling back to an 800 number to complete the interview at a time of their choosing.

Interviews were completed with a total of 920 priests in the first part of the study. The second part of the study was an over-sample of priests ordained within the previous ten years (1992-2001). Using information on ordination year from the *OCD* database, priests who had not yet been sampled and who had been ordained after 1991 were randomly sampled and contacted using the same procedure of up to ten calls. Completed interviews were thus obtained from 292 additional priests ordained in the previous ten years.<sup>2</sup> Including those sampled in the first part of the study, a total of 394 priests ordained after 1991 are included in the CARA Priest Poll 2002.

Following standard assumptions of statistical inference, a sample size of 920 provides a margin of error of approximately  $\pm 3.2$  percent. In other words, assuming true random sampling,

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<sup>1</sup>No calls were made to any of the few priests in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

<sup>2</sup>A total of 301 over-sampled priests were interviewed. However, during the interviews, nine indicated that they were actually ordained prior to 1992. They are excluded from analyses in this report.

the characteristics of priests sampled in the first part of the CARA Priest Poll 2002 can be assumed to be within 3.2 percentage points of the characteristics of all U.S. priests. The margin of error for the 394 recently ordained priests is approximately  $\pm 4.9$  percent. However, there are at least two ways in which the sampling of priests from *OCD* deviate from a truly random sample. First, as will be shown below, religious priests in the poll are slightly more likely than all religious priests in the United States to serve in parish ministry. Second, both the CARA Priest Poll 2001 and 2002 had some difficulty contacting retired diocesan priests. Using data available from a study conducted by CARA in 1999 for the Committee for Priestly Life and Ministry of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)<sup>3</sup>, it is possible to compare the characteristics of priests in the CARA Priest Poll with those of all priests in the United States.

As the table below shows, approximately 15 percent of all priests currently in the United States are retired diocesan priests. However, only 5 percent of those in the CARA Priest Poll 2002 are retired diocesan priests. As a result, active diocesan and active religious priests are slightly over-represented in the poll.

<b>Composition of Priests in the United States and Priests Sampled in the CARA Priest Poll 2001 and 2002</b>			
	<b>All U.S. Priests*</b>	<b>CARA Priest Poll 2001**</b>	<b>CARA Priest Poll 2002**</b>
Diocesan, Active	48%	54%	55%
Diocesan, Retired	15	5	5
Religious, Active	31	33	35
Religious, Retired	6	8	5
Total	100	100	100

\*1999 CARA study for the USCCB Committee for Priestly Life and Ministry.  
 \*\*General samples only; over-samples are excluded.

Note also that when the over-sampled priests in the CARA Priest Poll 2002 are included with the overall sample of priests, the sample characteristics deviate from those of a true random sample. Recently ordained priests are disproportionately younger, disproportionately diocesan rather than religious, and distinctive on a number of other characteristics. For this reason, most tables in this report have two columns. The first column presents responses from the first part of the study, the general sample of priests. The second column presents responses from the 394 recently ordained priests, both the 102 recently ordained priests in the general sample and the 292 over-sampled priests.

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<sup>3</sup>At the time, the “National Conference of Catholic Bishops” (NCCB).

## Characteristics of Respondents

This section describes several demographic and ministerial characteristics of priests in the CARA Priest Poll 2002: diocesan or religious status, generation, age at ordination, current ministry, parish position, type of non-parish ministry, typical hours worked per week, geographic region, race and ethnicity, and country of birth. Additionally, this section of the report describes two characteristics of pastors' parishes: size (number of registered households) and location (using a rural-urban continuum).

Throughout this report, responses to questions about ongoing formation are compared on the basis of the demographic and ministerial characteristics presented in this section. Such subgroup comparisons are only presented in the text in cases where there are substantial and statistically significant differences among the groups. When comparisons are not presented, it can be inferred that significant differences are non-existent or relatively slight.

### *Diocesan or Religious*

Among priests in general, six in ten are diocesan and four in ten are religious. Among recently ordained priests, three-quarters are diocesan, and one-quarter are religious priests.

<b>Diocesan or Religious Status of Priests</b>		
CARA Priest Poll 2002		
	<b>General Sample</b>	<b>Recently Ordained</b>
Diocesan	60%	75%
Religious	40	25



## Generation

The ages of priests in the CARA Priest Poll 2002 range from 27 to 91. The median age of priests in the general sample is 60 (in other words, half of the priests are 60 or under, and half are 60 or over). CARA has adapted common secular generational analysis to U.S. Catholics by categorizing them into four generations based on year of birth:

- The *World War II Generation* was born between 1901 and 1924, and its members are age 78 or older in 2002. (Nine percent of the general sample).
- The *Silent Generation* was born between 1925 and 1942. Its members, ages 60 to 77 in 2002, came of age primarily in the 1950s. Secular generational research typically labels them “Silent” because they largely conformed to the institutions and organizations of World War II Generation. (44 percent of the general sample).
- The *Vatican II Generation*. Its members were born between 1943 and 1960 and are between the ages of 42 and 59 in 2002. These “baby-boomers” came of age during the time of the Second Vatican Council and their formative years spanned a time of profound changes in the Church. (37 percent of the general sample).
- The *Post-Vatican II Generation*, born between 1961 and 1984, includes adults who are ages 41 and under in 2002. This generation is sometimes called “Generation X” and includes all those who came of age after the Second Vatican Council. (10 percent of the general sample).

<b>Generation</b> CARA Priest Poll 2002		
	<b>General Sample</b>	<b>Recently Ordained</b>
World War II (Born prior to 1925)	9%	<1%
Silent (Born 1925 to 1942)	44	4
Vatican II (Born 1943 to 1960)	37	32
Post-Vatican II (Born after 1960)	10	64

Among priests in general, one-tenth are members of the oldest generation (World War II) and another tenth are members of the youngest generation (Post-Vatican II). Forty-four percent are members of the Silent Generation. Slightly fewer, 37 percent, are members of the Vatican II Generation. In comparison, 64 percent of priests ordained in the past ten years are members of the Post-Vatican II Generation, 32 percent are members of the Vatican II Generation, with just a few from the Silent and World War II Generations.

The average ages of priests in the general sample are 57 for diocesan priests and 62 for religious priests. The average ages of all priests in the United States according to CARA’s 1999

study for the USCCB Committee for Priestly Life and Ministry, are closely similar: 59 for diocesan and 63 for religious priests. That study was based on demographic information on every priest in the United States, not a sample survey.

The table below shows the generational distribution separately for diocesan and religious priests. Differences reflect the older average age of religious priests.

<b>Generation By Diocesan and Religious Status</b>		
CARA Priest Poll 2002		
	<b>General Sample</b>	<b>Recently Ordained</b>
<b>Diocesan</b>		
World War II (Born prior to 1925)	6%	1%
Silent (Born 1925 to 1942)	40	3
Vatican II (Born 1943 to 1960)	42	30
Post-Vatican II (Born after 1960)	12	66
<b>Religious</b>		
World War II (Born prior to 1925)	13%	0%
Silent (Born 1925 to 1942)	49	6
Vatican II (Born 1943 to 1960)	30	36
Post-Vatican II (Born after 1960)	8	58

**Age at Ordination**

Age at ordination ranges from 22 to 76. For sake of simplicity, it is summarized in four categories. The table below breaks down the distribution separately for each of the four generations described above.

<b>Age at Ordination By Generation</b> CARA Priest Poll 2002		
	<b>General Sample</b>	<b>Recently Ordained</b>
<b>World War II (Born before 1925)</b>		
Ordained at age 22 to 26	43%	--*
Ordained at age 27 to 30	35	
Ordained at age 31 to 40	21	
Ordained at age 40 or over	1	
<b>Silent (Born 1925 to 1942)</b>		
Ordained at age 22 to 26	45%	--*
Ordained at age 27 to 30	34	
Ordained at age 31 to 40	16	
Ordained at age 40 or over	5	
<b>Vatican II (Born 1943 to 1960)</b>		
Ordained at age 22 to 26	30%	0%
Ordained at age 27 to 30	43	0
Ordained at age 31 to 40	22	51
Ordained at age 40 or over	5	49
<b>Post-Vatican II (Born after 1960)</b>		
Ordained at age 22 to 26	15%	10%
Ordained at age 27 to 30	52	52
Ordained at age 31 to 40	32	38
Ordained at age 40 or over	1	0

\*Too few cases for meaningful generalization.

***Current Ministry***

Forty-nine percent of priests in the general sample and 56 percent of recently ordained priests currently work in parish ministry only. An additional 31 percent and 34 percent, respectively, are assigned to parish ministry but also serve in non-parish ministry. One-fifth of priests in general and one-tenth of recently ordained priests serve only in ministry outside of parishes. Note that these figures exclude retired priests.<sup>4</sup>

<b>Current Ministry</b> CARA Priest Poll 2002 Retired Priests Excluded		
	<b>General Sample</b>	<b>Recently Ordained</b>
Parish Ministry Only	49%	56%
Parish and Non-Parish Ministry	31	34
Non-Parish Ministry Only	20	10
Temporarily Not Working	<1	<1

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<sup>4</sup>Eighty-four percent of retired priests say they are involved in ministry or working in some way. These priests disproportionately serve as supply and substitute priests in parishes. Most also do some non-parish work. Retired priests still in ministry typically report working six hours a day, compared to ten hours a day for non-retired priests.

The table below also presents current ministry. There are two differences from the previous table. First, diocesan and religious priests have been separated. Second, the ministry categories have been simplified to parish and non-parish in order to correspond to categories used in CARA's 1999 demographic study of priests. This allows examination of how well various ministry areas are represented in the CARA Priest Poll 2002.

<b>Current Ministry by Diocesan and Religious Status</b>		
CARA Priest Poll 2002		
Retired Priests and Those Temporarily Not Working Excluded		
	<b>General Sample</b>	<b>Recently Ordained</b>
<b>Diocesan</b>		
Parish Ministry	84%	93%
Non-Parish Ministry	16	7
<b>Religious</b>		
Parish Ministry	41%	52%
Non-Parish Ministry	59	48

In the general sample of the poll, 84 percent of active diocesan priests and 41 percent of active religious priests serve primarily in parish ministry. The data collected for CARA's 1999 study reveal that 84 percent of active diocesan priests and 32 percent of active religious priests are in parish ministry. Thus, religious priests in parish ministry are slightly over-represented in the CARA Priest Poll 2002.

***Parish Ministry***

Approximately six-tenths of priests in the general sample assigned to parish ministry are pastors. One in five is an associate pastor and one-seventh (14 percent) are supply, substitute, or resident priests.

Among recently ordained priests, about one-third are pastors, and slightly more than half are associate pastors. Fewer than one in ten is a supply, substitute, or resident priest.

<b>Parish Ministry</b>		
CARA Priest Poll 2002		
Only Those Serving in Parish Ministry; Retired Priests Excluded		
	<b>General Sample</b>	<b>Recently Ordained</b>
Pastor	62%	34%
Associate pastor or parochial vicar	20	55
Supply, substitute, or resident priest	14	8
Other (volunteered)	4	3

***Non-Parish Ministry***

Priests serving in non-parish ministry were asked to describe the place where they work outside of the parish or the type of non-parish ministry in which they serve. The most common response for diocesan priests is a diocesan office or chancery. For religious priests, it is a college, university, or seminary.

<b>Non-Parish Ministry</b>		
CARA Priest Poll 2002		
Retired Priests and Those Temporarily Not Working Excluded		
	<b>General Sample</b>	<b>Recently Ordained</b>
<b>Diocesan</b>		
Parish Ministry Only	62%	64%
Diocesan Office or Chancery	16	12
College, University, or Seminary	8	9
Hospital or Health Care Institution	8	8
Elementary or High School	5	7
Retreat Center or Retreat/Spiritual Direction	3	3
Prison or Detention Ministry*	2	2
Social Service, Social Justice, or Advocacy*	2	3
Religious Institute, Office, or Community	<1	0
Other Non-Parish Ministry*	3	3
<b>Religious</b>		
Parish Ministry Only	28%	34%
College, University, or Seminary	22	22
Religious Institute, Office, or Community	19	14
Hospital or Health Care Institution	12	9
Retreat Center or Retreat/Spiritual Direction	10	15
Elementary or High School	5	9
Social Service, Social Justice, or Advocacy*	4	3
Diocesan Office or Chancery	4	2
Prison or Detention Ministry*	2	0
Other Non-Parish Ministry*	11	7
<p>Note: Percentages add to more than 100 because some priests serve in more than one type of non-parish ministry.</p> <p>*Volunteered responses.</p>		

The table below, like that on the previous page, presents information about non-parish ministry. The difference is that in this table priests who do not serve in any type of non-parish ministry have been excluded and the percentages recalculated accordingly.

<b>Non-Parish Ministry</b>		
CARA Priest Poll 2002		
Only Those Serving in Non-Parish Ministry; Retired Priests Excluded		
	<b>General Sample</b>	<b>Recently Ordained</b>
<b>Diocesan</b>		
Diocesan Office or Chancery	41%	32%
College, University, or Seminary	22	25
Hospital or Health Care Institution	22	22
Elementary or High School	12	20
Retreat Center or Retreat/Spiritual Direction	7	8
Prison or Detention Ministry*	6	5
Social Service, Social Justice, or Advocacy*	4	9
Religious Institute, Office, or Community	1	0
Other Non-Parish Ministry*	8	9
<b>Religious</b>		
College, University, or Seminary	31%	46%
Religious Institute, Office, or Community	26	21
Hospital or Health Care Institution	16	13
Retreat Center or Retreat/Spiritual Direction	14	22
Elementary or High School	7	14
Social Service, Social Justice, or Advocacy*	5	5
Diocesan Office or Chancery	5	3
Prison or Detention Ministry*	3	0
Other Non-Parish Ministry*	15	11
<p>Note: Percentages add to more than 100 because some priests serve in more than one type of non-parish ministry.</p> <p>*Volunteered responses.</p>		



***Typical Hours Worked per Week***

Priests serving in ministry were asked how many days they work during a typical week and how many hours they work during a typical day. This information is used to create a rough estimate of hours worked per week. For sake of simplicity, it is summarized in five categories.

<b>Typical Hours Worked Per Week</b>		
CARA Priest Poll 2002		
Retired priests excluded		
	<b>General Sample</b>	<b>Recently Ordained</b>
40 Hours or Less per Week	9%	5%
41 to 50 Hours	21	15
51 to 60 Hours	30	36
61 to 80 Hours	22	26
Over 80 Hours	18	18

About seven-tenths of priests in general work over 50 hours in a typical week. This compares to eight-tenths of recently ordained priests.

**Geographic Region**

In the table below, respondents are grouped into four geographic regions based on major U.S. Census categories.<sup>5</sup> Slightly more than one-third of priests in the general sample of the poll reside in the Northeast, and another third are in the Midwest. About one in six (16 percent) live in the South, and 12 percent live in the West. These proportions generally resemble those for all priests in the *OCD* database.

<b>Geographic Region</b> CARA Priest Poll 2002			
	<b>All Priests in the <i>OCD</i> Database</b>	<b>General Sample*</b>	<b>Recently Ordained*</b>
Northeast	38%	35%	33%
Midwest	30	37	33
South	17	16	20
West	15	12	14

\*Information on region is taken from *OCD* records, not survey responses.

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<sup>5</sup>The *Northeast* region includes Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

The *Midwest* region includes Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

The *South* region includes Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.

The *West* region includes Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

***Race and Ethnicity***

CARA polls ask questions about race and ethnic identity similar to those used in the U.S. Census. Because people of Hispanic/Latino origin can be of any race, respondents are divided into those who say they are members of each of several racial groups, but answer “no” to Hispanic origin and all those, regardless of race, who answer “yes” to Hispanic origin. Over nine-tenths of priests in the general sample are non-Hispanic white. In comparison, about eight-tenths of recently ordained priests are non-Hispanic white.

<b>Race and Ethnicity</b>		
CARA Priest Poll 2002		
	<b>General Sample</b>	<b>Recently Ordained</b>
White	94%	81%
Asian or Pacific Islander	3	8
Hispanic or Latino	2	8
African American	1	2
Native American	<1	1

**Country of Birth**

About nine-tenths of priests in the general sample and eight-tenths of recently ordained priests in the CARA Priest Poll 2002 were born in the United States. Among priests in general, the only country where more than 1 percent were born is Ireland (2 percent). Among recently ordained priests in the poll, the most common countries of birth other than the United States are Vietnam, the Philippines, and Columbia.

<b>Country of Birth</b> CARA Priest Poll 2002		
	<b>General Sample</b>	<b>Recently Ordained</b>
United States	89%	79%
Vietnam	<1	4
Philippines	<1	2
Columbia	<1	2
Poland	<1	1
India	1	1
Nigeria	<1	1
Mexico	<1	1
Ireland	2	<1
Canada	1	<1
Italy	1	<1
All Other Countries	3	6

Note: Due to rounding error, percentages may not add to 100.

The 1999 CARA study found that approximately 16 percent of active diocesan priests and religious priests active in parish ministry were born outside the United States. The corresponding figure in the CARA Priest Poll 2002 is 11 percent. The slightly lower proportion in the poll may be due in part to the difficulty of tracking recently arrived extern or newly incardinated priests, who may not yet be listed by their bishop or diocese in which they reside or serve.

The table below presents the percentage of priests born outside the United States among each of the four generations. As the figures in the left column show, the proportion of foreign born priests among the Post-Vatican II Generation is about double that of the previous generations.

	<b>General Sample</b>	<b>Recently Ordained</b>
World War II	9%	—*
Silent	9	—
Vatican II	11	20
Post-Vatican II	20	22

\*Too few respondents for generalization

## Parish Characteristics

### *Parish Size*

Pastors and associate pastors were asked how many households are registered in their parishes.<sup>6</sup> There were five response categories, shown in the table below. Slightly more than one-third of all pastors and associate pastors serve in parishes with more than 1,200 registered households. This compares to about half of recently ordained priests.

	<b>General Sample</b>	<b>Recently Ordained</b>
200 Registered Households or Less	17%	13%
201 to 500 Households	21	16
501 to 1,200 Households	27	19
1,201 to 2,000 Households	16	18
Over 2,000 Households	19	34

Note that in surveys of priests there is a natural tendency to slightly over-represent larger parishes. This is because larger parishes are more likely than smaller parishes to have more than one priest assigned to them. Estimates from CARA's National Parish Inventory – a database with information on more than 80 percent of parishes in the United States – indicate that 25 percent of parishes have fewer than 200 registered households, 24 percent have 201 to 500 households, 27 percent have 501 to 1,200 households, 14 percent have 1,201 to 2,000 households, and 10 percent have more than 2,000 households.

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<sup>6</sup>Those working in more than one parish were asked to describe the size and the location of their “primary” parish. If priests said they do not have a “primary” parish, they were asked to respond about the largest parish to which they are assigned.

### ***Parish Location***

Pastors were asked to describe the location of the parish by choosing from among several categories ranging from “inner city” to “rural.” More than half of diocesan pastors describe their parishes as being located in “a town or small city” or “a rural area.” About one in ten describes his parish as being in an inner city, and about one in seven describes it as being in “a large city but not an inner city.” About one in four is in a suburban parish. Religious pastors are slightly more likely to serve in inner city parishes.

<b>Parish Location</b>		
CARA Priest Poll 2002		
Pastors and Associate Pastors Only		
	<b>General Sample</b>	<b>Recently Ordained</b>
<b>Diocesan</b>		
An Inner City	9%	6%
A Large City but not an Inner City	14	11
A Suburb of a Large City	24	28
A Town or Small City	32	36
A Rural Area	21	19
<b>Religious</b>		
An Inner City	19%	23%
A Large City but not an Inner City	15	21
A Suburb of a Large City	19	13
A Town or Small City	24	34
A Rural Area	22	9

Note: Due to rounding error, percentages may not add to 100.

## Responses to NOCERCC Questions

### Participation in Areas of Human and Priestly Development

*Almost all priests, both those in the general sample and the recently ordained, report having participated in some form of “human or priestly development” in the last two years. Theological updating is the area most commonly reported.*

***I am going to read several areas of human and priestly development. For each, please tell me if you have participated in any activities in this area during the past two years. This can include participating in workshops, classes, support groups, personal reading, or any other formal activities that contribute to development.***

Percentage responding that they have participated in each area

	<b>General Sample</b>	<b>Recently Ordained</b>
Theological updating	87%	91%
Counseling and pastoral ministry	77	79
Physical well-being	77	76
Preaching and presiding	76	75
Emotional well-being	73	72
Management or administration	51	53
Any of the above	98	98
All of the above	29	29

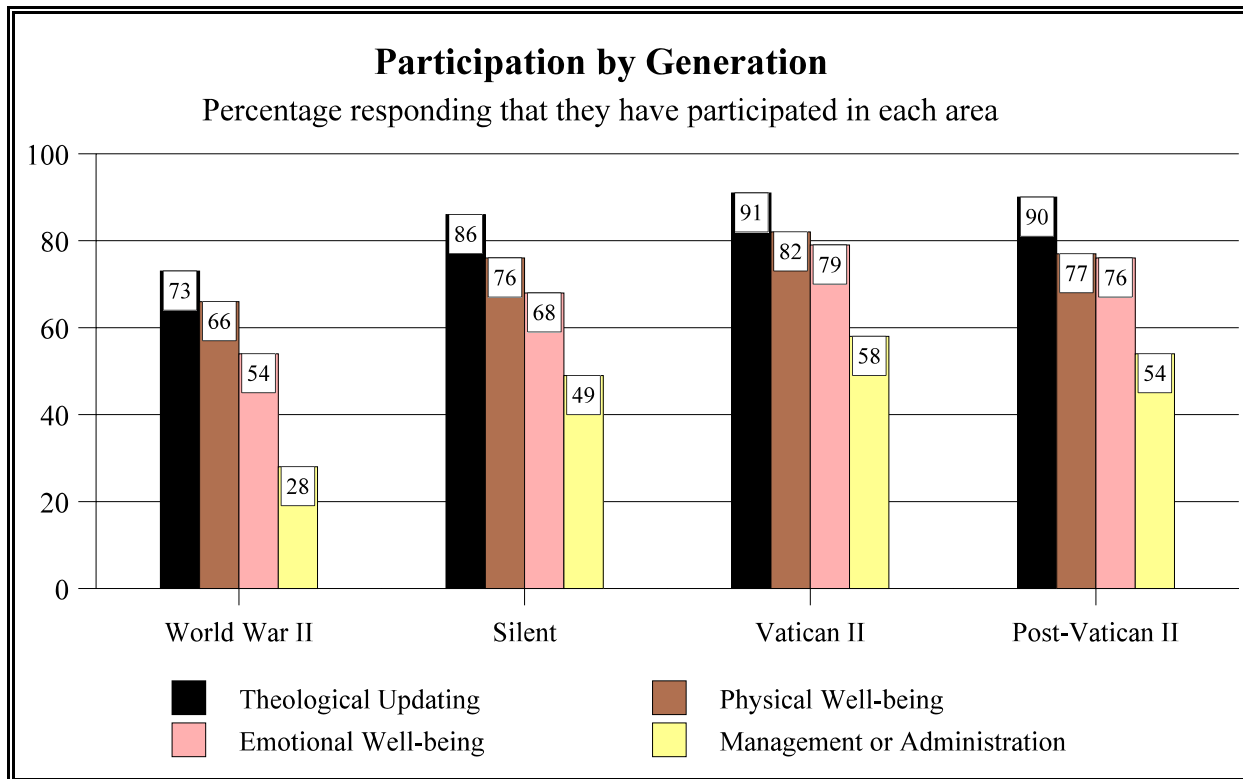
Almost every priest polled reports having participated in at least one of six listed areas of “human or priestly development.” Three-quarters of priests or more have participated in activities related to ongoing formation, counseling and pastoral ministry, physical well-being, preaching and presiding, and emotional well-being. Fewer, about half of priests, have participated in activities for management or administration skills or knowledge during the past two years.

About three in ten priests report having participated in all six areas. These priests are disproportionately active rather than retired and disproportionately pastors rather than associate pastors.



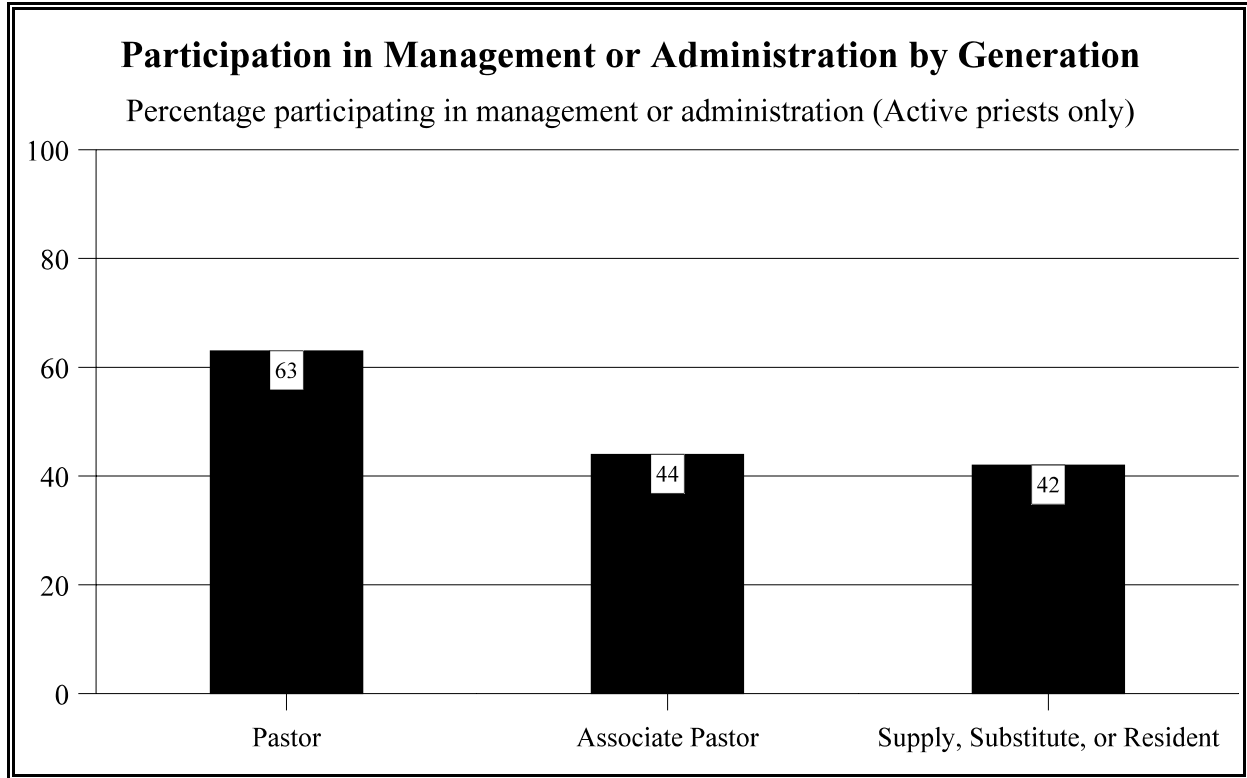
### ***Differences by Generation***

Priests of the World War II Generation are less likely than younger priests to have participated in activities on theological updating, physical well-being, emotional well-being, or management and administration during the previous two years. There are no generational differences in the likelihood of having participated in the areas of preaching and presiding or counseling and pastoral ministry.



***Differences by Parish Position***

Priests who are retired are much less likely than those still active to have participated in the area of management or administration during the previous two years. (This is the case even after taking into account generational differences between retired and active priests.) Among active priests, there is no difference between those serving in parish and non-parish ministries. However, among those assigned to parish ministry, there are significant differences by parish role. As the graph below illustrates, pastors are more likely than associate pastors or supply or substitute priests to have participated in the area of management or administration.



## Reasons for Participation

*Over nine-tenths of priests participate in ongoing formation because they feel a sense of responsibility to the people of God and to themselves.*

<b><i>Please tell me whether any of the following are important reasons why you have participated in activities of ongoing human and priestly development.</i></b>		
Percentage responding that each is an important reason*		
	<b>General Sample</b>	<b>Recently Ordained</b>
I feel a sense of responsibility to the people of God.	96%	97%
I feel a sense of responsibility to myself.	93	93
I feel a ministerial need.	85	86
I am genuinely interested in certain areas of formation.	80	88
It is required.	29	34

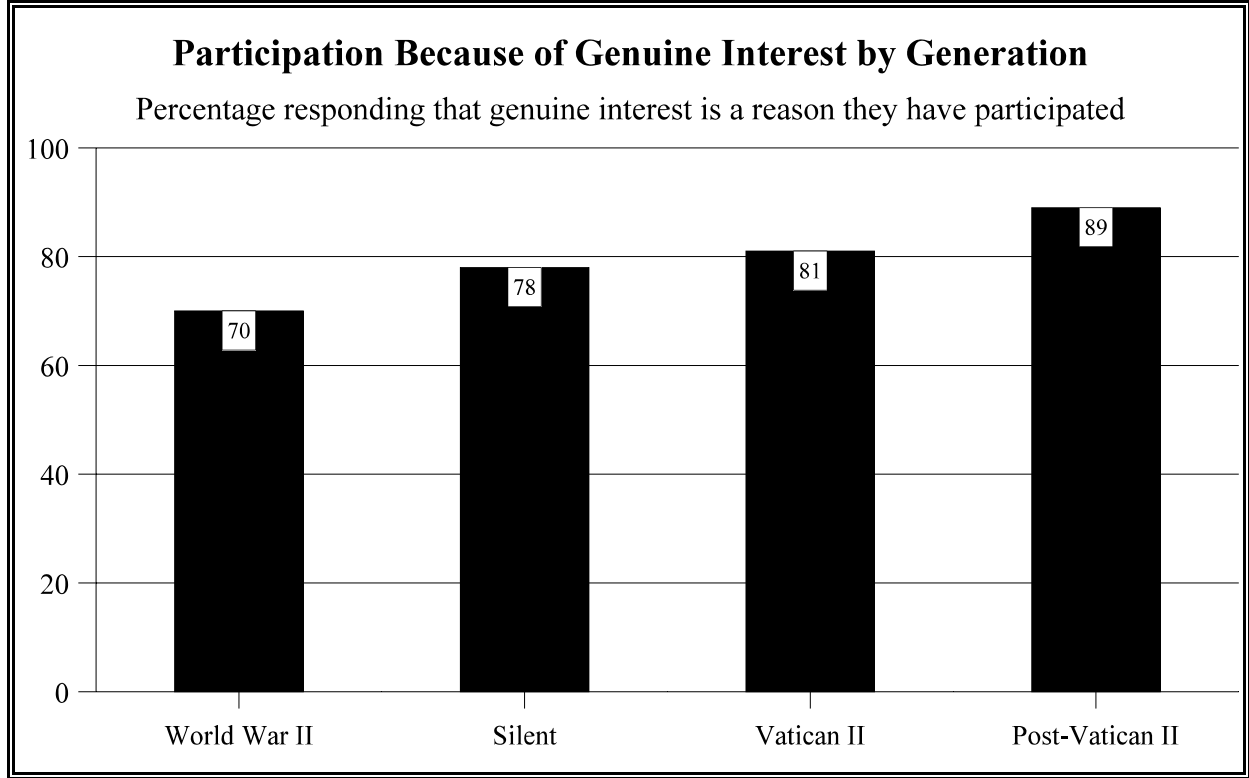
\*The question was asked only to respondents who said they had participated in at least one of the areas of development.

- More than eight in ten priests say they have participated because they feel a ministerial need.
- Recently ordained priests are somewhat more likely to say they have participated because they are genuinely interested in certain areas of formation (88 percent compared to 80 percent of priests in the general sample).

According to the priests polled for this study, requirements are not as strong a motivator for participation as other factors. Priests who do say that requirements are a reason for their participation are no less likely than others to say they have been motivated by sense of responsibility to the people of God or to themselves. However, they are less likely to say they have been motivated by a feeling of ministerial need or a genuine interest.

***Differences by Generation***

Younger priests are more likely to say they participate because they have a genuine interest in the area of formation.



Nearly nine in ten Post-Vatican II priests say they participate because they have a genuine interest in the area of formation, compared to seven in ten World War II priests.

## Reasons for Not Participating

*Being too busy and not being interested in some areas are frequently cited reasons for not participating in some areas of ongoing formation.*

***We are interested in factors that keep priests from participating in activities for ongoing and priestly development. Please tell me whether any of the following are reasons why you have not participated in particular areas of development during the past two years.***

Percentage responding that each is a reason\*

	<b>General Sample</b>	<b>Recently Ordained</b>
I'm too busy.	46%	66%
I'm just not interested in some areas of development.	45	41
Some development opportunities are not available.	38	49
It is not required.	29	24
There is not enough financial support.	13	18

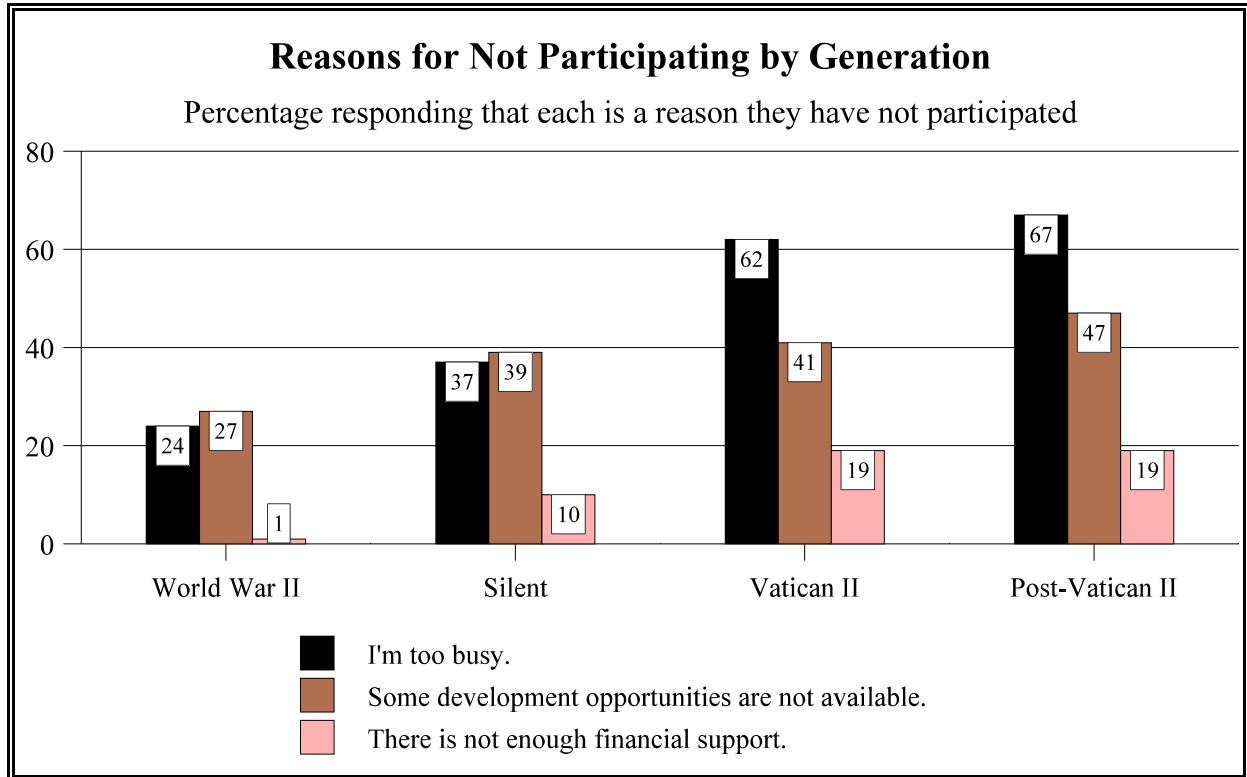
\*Note: The question was asked only to respondents who said they had *not* participated in at least one of the areas of development.

Recently ordained priests are more likely than priests in general to say that being too busy and a lack of availability of some opportunities are reasons they have not participated.

Relatively few priests say that a lack of financial support or the fact that these activities are not required are reasons they have not participated.

### ***Differences by Generation***

Priests in the two younger generations are more likely to say they are too busy to participate.



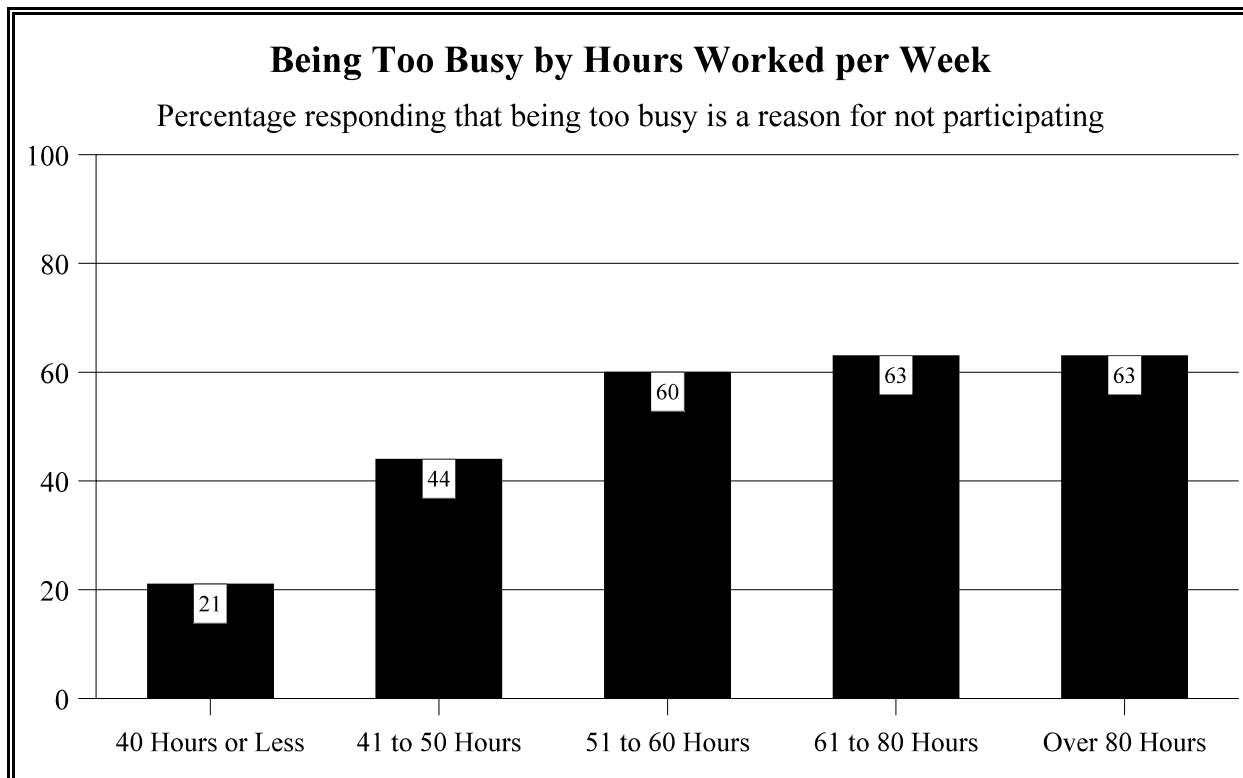
Younger priests are more likely than older priests to say they are too busy to participate.

Post-Vatican II Generation priests are more likely than World War II Generation priests to say some development opportunities are not available.

Younger priests are more likely than older priests to say there is not enough financial support. Nineteen percent of the younger two generations give this reason, compared to 1 percent of the World War II Generation and 10 percent of the Silent Generation.

***Differences by Typical Hours Worked per Week***

Sometimes, saying one is “too busy” to participate in a given activity may be more a way of saving face than a real explanation of why people are not involved. However in this case the data show a relatively strong relationship between the work hours priests report and the likelihood that they say they are too busy to participate. Only one-fifth of priests who work 40 hours or less per week say they have not participated because they are too busy. This compares to slightly more than two-fifths of those who work 41 to 50 hours per week and three-tenths of those working 51 to 60 hours per week. However, it should be noted that increased hours above 60 per week produces little change in the “too busy” response.



***Differences by Type of Ministry***

Priests serving in parish ministry are more likely than those who serve *only* in non-parish ministry to say some opportunities are not available (44 percent compared to 28 percent).

### ***Differences by Country of Birth***

Priests born outside the United States are more likely than those born in the United States to say that a lack of financial support is a reason they have not participated in particular areas of ongoing formation (29 percent compared to 12 percent).

### ***Availability and Location***

Analyses examined whether location is related to reported lack of availability of opportunities for ongoing formation. Conceivably, such a relationship might indicate geographic areas in which availability is a particular concern. However, few differences exist in reported availability among priests residing in different areas of the country. Among pastors and associate pastors, differences by parish location (rural to urban) also tend to be rather small.

### ***Availability and Areas of Participation***

It is also conceivable that those reporting a lack of availability of particular opportunities differ in the areas of ongoing formation in which they have participated during the past two years. Such differences might indicate which types of opportunities are lacking. However, those who report a lack of availability do not differ from others in the areas of ongoing formation in which they report having participated.



## Valuing Lifelong Learning

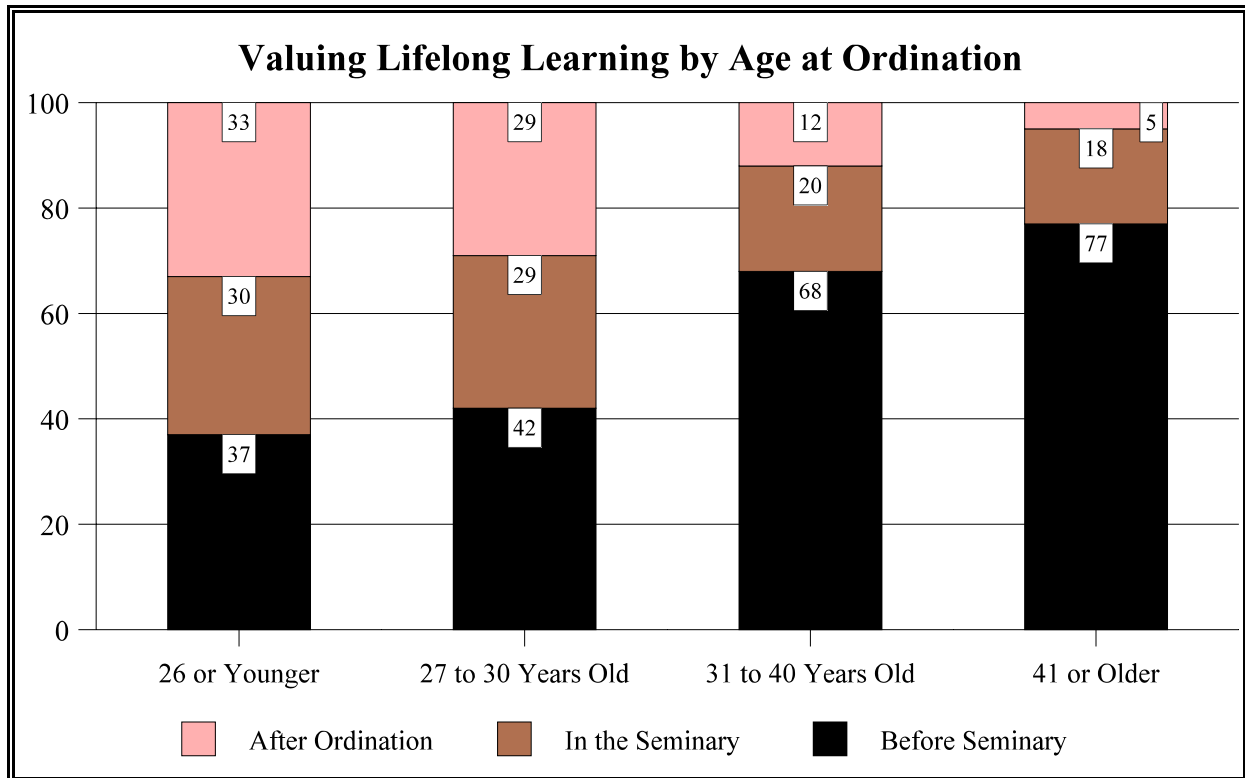
*Virtually all priests value lifelong learning. Nearly half brought this value with them to the seminary.*

<i>When did you come to value lifelong learning?</i>		
	<b>General Sample</b>	<b>Recently Ordained</b>
Before seminary	45%	66%
In the seminary	26	27
After ordination	39	7
Or don't you value lifelong learning?	<1	0

Slightly more than one-quarter of both priests in the general sample and recently ordained priests say they came to value lifelong learning while they were in the seminary. Nearly four-tenths of priests in general say they came to value lifelong learning after ordination, compared to less than one-tenth of recently ordained priests.

### *Differences by Age at Ordination*

Priests who were ordained at an older age are more likely to say that came to value lifelong learning before seminary.<sup>7</sup>



### *Differences by Generation*

Even after taking into account the relationship between generation and age at ordination, priests of the older generations are more likely than younger priests to say they came to value lifelong learning after ordination. Younger priests are somewhat more likely to say they came to value it before seminary.

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<sup>7</sup>In calculating the percentages in the table on this page, the negligible number of respondents who said they do not value lifelong learning have been excluded.

### ***Differences by College Seminary Attendance***

Respondents were asked whether they attended a college seminary. Regardless of age at ordination, those who attended a college seminary are less likely than those who did not to say that they came to value lifelong learning before seminary.

### ***Differences by Satisfaction with Seminary Formation***

Priests were asked whether they agree or disagree with the following statement: “My seminary formation prepared me well for priestly life and ministry.” Those who agree that their seminary formation prepared them well are more likely than those who disagree to say that they came to value lifelong learning in the seminary. Those who disagree are more likely to say they came to value lifelong learning after ordination.

### ***Time of Coming to Value Lifelong Learning and Genuine Interest as a Reason for Participation in Areas of Ongoing Formation***

Earlier in this report, it was reported that 80 percent of priests in general say they have participated in areas of ongoing formation because they are genuinely interested. This varies slightly by the time in their lives that they came to value lifelong learning. Eighty-six percent of those who came to value lifelong learning before seminary say they have participated in ongoing formation out of genuine interest. This compares to 80 percent who came to value lifelong learning in the seminary and 75 percent of those who did so after ordination.

## Additional Issues Related to Ongoing Formation

In addition to questions designed specifically for NOCERCC, the CARA Priest Poll 2002 included several other questions that relate directly or indirectly to ongoing formation. These include the extent to which priests are held accountable for participation in continuing education and whether priests have recently made a retreat, scheduled days of prayer and reflection, participated in a priestly support group, and received spiritual direction.

### Accountability for Participation

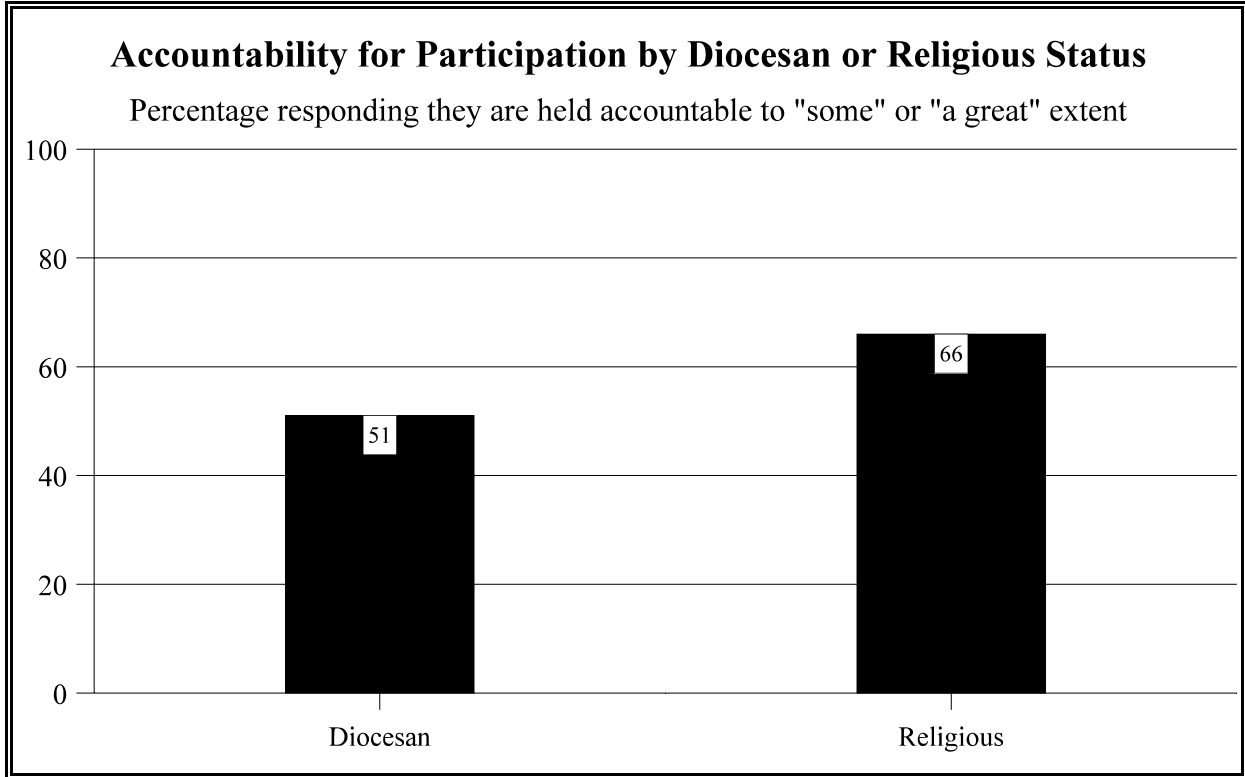
*More than half of priests say they are held accountable to at least “some” extent for their participation in continuing education or ongoing formation activities.*

<i>To what extent are you held accountable for your participation in continuing education or ongoing formation activities?</i>		
	<b>General Sample</b>	<b>Recently Ordained</b>
To a great extent	20%	18%
To some extent	36	40
A little	23	21
Not at all	21	21

About one-fifth of priests say they are held accountable to “a great extent” for their participation, and about an equal proportion report not being held accountable “at all.”

***Differences by Diocesan or Religious Status***

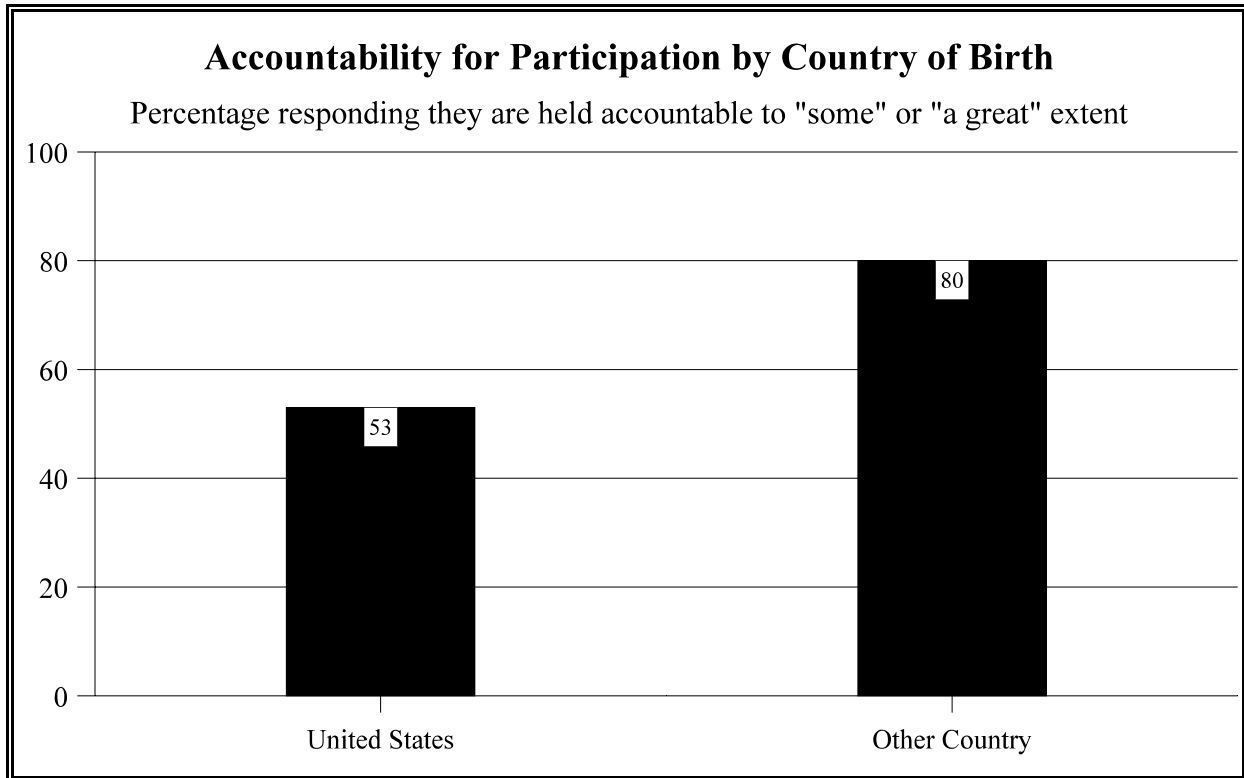
Religious priests are more likely to say they are held accountable to “some” or “a great” extent for participating in continuing education or ongoing formation.



Among religious priests, those serving in parish ministry are more likely than those in non-parish ministry to report being held accountable to “a great extent” for their participation in ongoing formation (this finding is not shown in the table above).

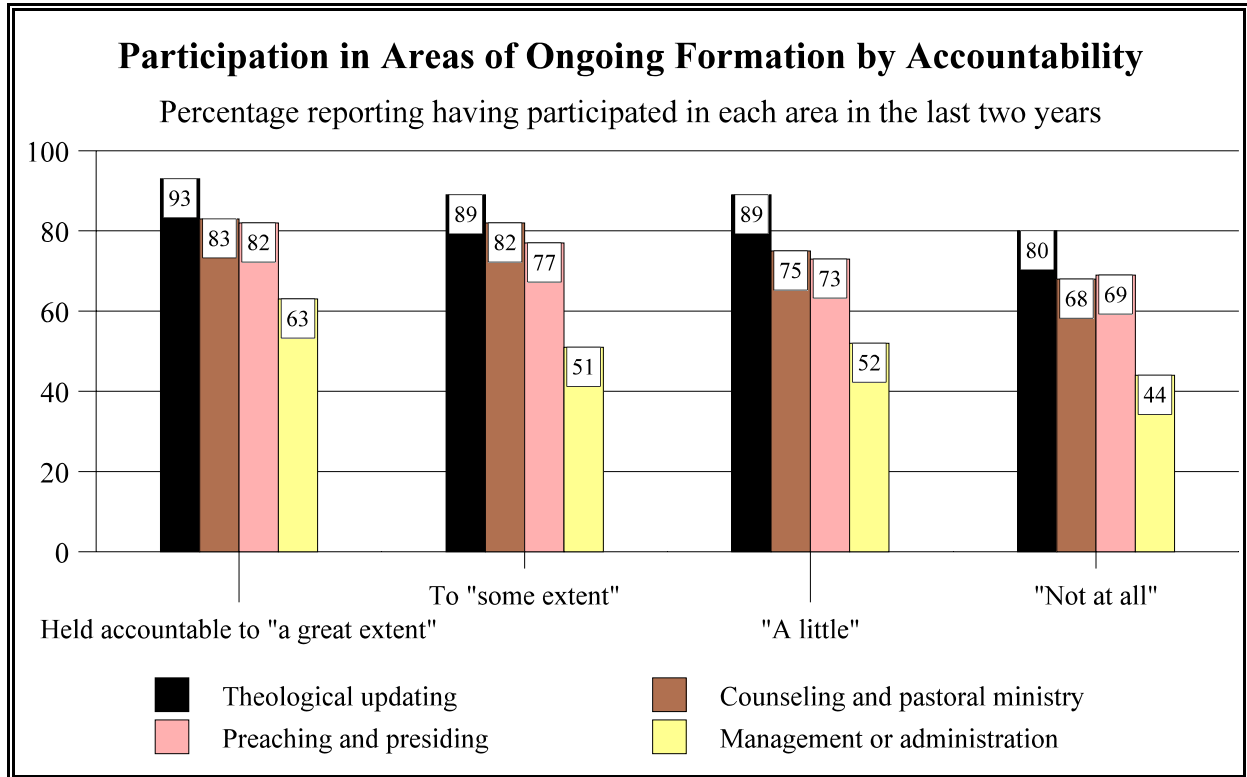
***Differences by Country of Birth***

Priests born outside the United States are more likely than those born in the United States to say they are held accountable to “some” or “a great” extent for their participation.



***Accountability and Participation in Specific Areas of Ongoing Formation***

The greater the extent to which priests report being held accountable for their participation, the more likely they are to report having participated in each of four areas of ongoing formation in the previous two years: theological updating, management or administration, preaching and presiding, and counseling and pastoral ministry. The extent to which priests report being held accountable is unrelated to their participation in activities for physical well-being or emotional well-being.



## Retreats

*Nearly 90 percent of both priests in general and recently ordained priests report that they have made a retreat during the past twelve months.*

<i>Did you make a retreat during the past twelve months?</i>		
	<b>General Sample</b>	<b>Recently Ordained</b>
Yes	86%	86%
No	14	14

## Days of Prayer or Spiritual Reflection

*More than seven in ten priests say they schedule days of prayer and spiritual reflection for themselves.*

<i>Do you schedule days of prayer or spiritual reflection for yourself?</i>		
	<b>General Sample</b>	<b>Recently Ordained</b>
Yes	71%	78%
No	29	22



## Priestly Support Groups

*About half of priests in the general sample and six-tenths of recently ordained priests have participated in a priestly support group during the last two years.*

<i>Have you participated in a priestly support group in the last two years?</i>		
	<b>General Sample</b>	<b>Recently Ordained</b>
Yes	51%	60%
No	49	40

### *Differences by Diocesan or Religious Status*

Diocesan priests are somewhat more likely than religious priests to have participated in a priestly support group in the last two years (57 percent compared to 43 percent).

### *Differences by Type of Ministry*

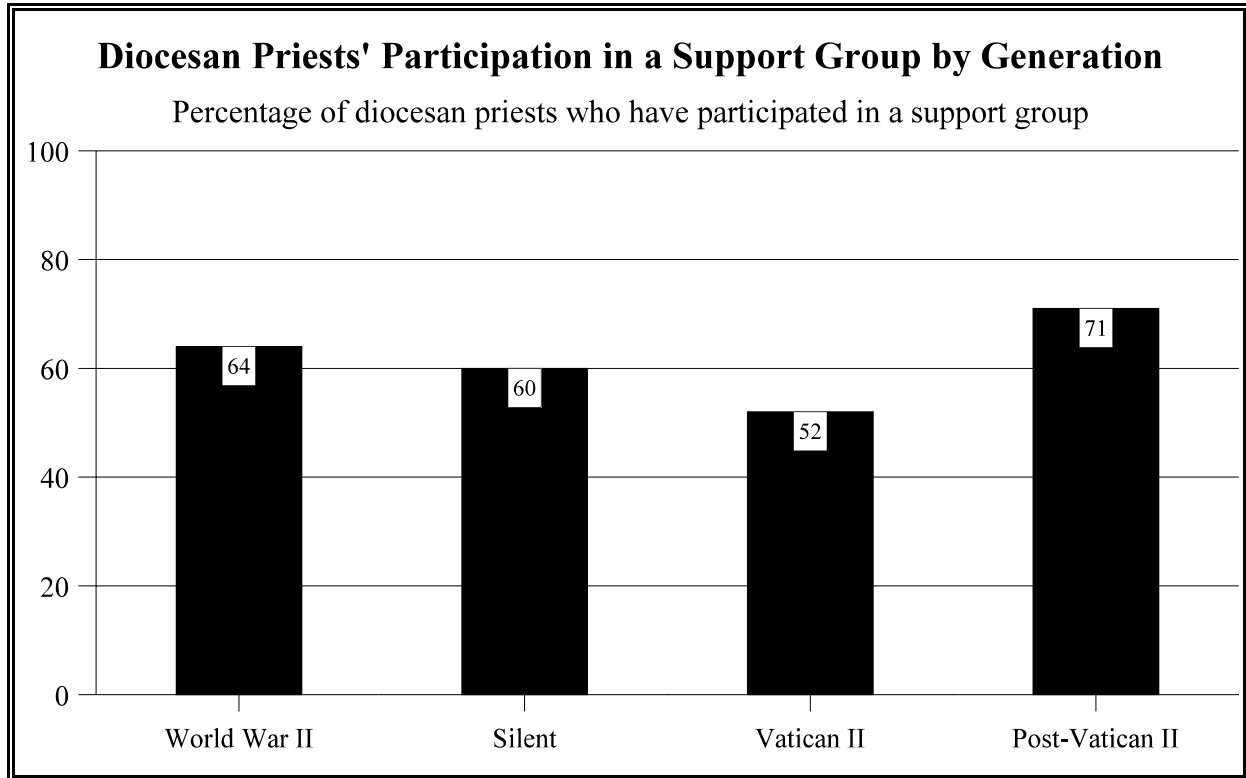
Priests serving in parish ministry are somewhat more likely than those serving *only* in non-parish ministry to have participated in a priestly support group in the last two years<sup>8</sup> (55 percent compared to 40 percent).

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<sup>8</sup>This is the case for both diocesan and religious priests.

***Differences by Generation***

Among diocesan priests, members of the Post-Vatican II Generation are most likely to have participated in a priestly support group in the previous two years. Members of the Vatican II Generation are least likely to have done so. There are no significant generational differences among religious priests.



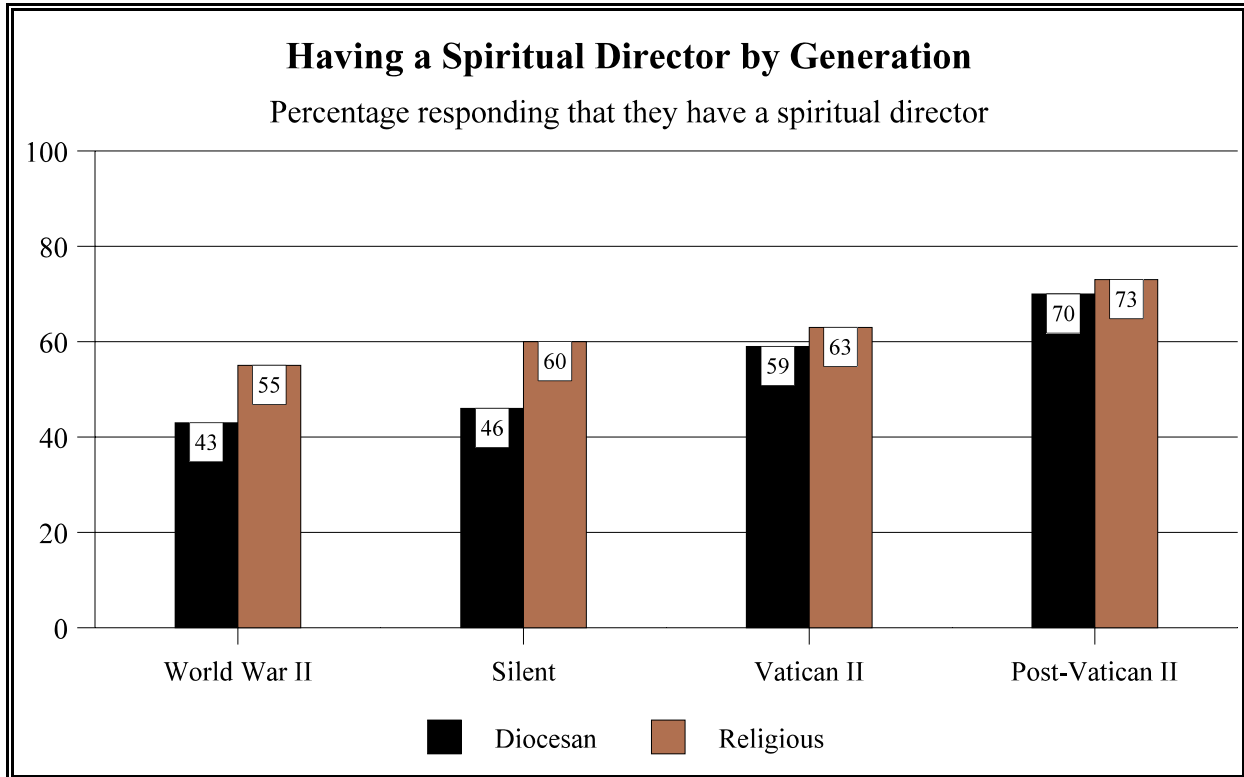
## Spiritual Director

*Slightly more than half of priests in the general sample and about seven-tenths of recently ordained priests currently have a spiritual director.*

<i>Do you have a spiritual director?</i>		
	<b>General Sample</b>	<b>Recently Ordained</b>
Yes	55%	69%
No	45	31

### ***Differences by Generation***

Among both diocesan and religious priests, younger priests tend to be more likely than older priests to have a spiritual director.



### ***Differences by Country of Birth***

Among priests of the Post-Vatican II Generation, those born in countries other than the United States are more likely to have a spiritual director than those born in the United States (85 percent compared to 67 percent). There are no differences on the basis of country of birth among priests of the older generations.

**Appendix**  
**Questions Used in Analysis**

## Questions for NOCERCC

I am going to read several areas of human and priestly development. For each, please tell me if you have participated in any activities in this area during the past two years. This can include participating in workshops, classes, support groups, personal reading, or any other formal activities that contribute to development.

**[Note: The questions in this series were asked in random order]**

The [first/next] area is physical well-being

(PROBE IF NEEDED: Have you participated in any activities in this area of development during the past two years?)

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

The [first/next] area is emotional well-being

(PROBE IF NEEDED: Have you participated in any activities in this area of development during the past two years?)

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

The [first/next] area is theological updating

(PROBE IF NEEDED: Have you participated in any activities in this area of development during the past two years?)

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

The [first/next] area is management or administration

(PROBE IF NEEDED: Have you participated in any activities in this area of development during the past two years?)

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

The [first/next] area is preaching and presiding

(PROBE IF NEEDED: Have you participated in any activities in this area of development during the past two years?)

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

The [first/next] area is counseling and pastoral ministry  
(PROBE IF NEEDED: Have you participated in any activities in this area of development during the past two years?)

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

***Read if respondent replied “Yes” to participation in any of the areas of development:***

Please tell me whether any of the following are important reasons why you have participated in activities of ongoing human and priestly development.

**READ LIST AND RECORD ALL THAT APPLY**

- 1 I feel a sense of responsibility to myself.
- 2 I feel a sense of responsibility to the people of God.
- 3 I feel a ministerial need.
- 4 I am genuinely interested in certain areas of formation.
- 5 It is required.
- 6 (DO NOT READ) Some other reason

***Read if respondent replied “No” to participation in any of the areas of development:***

We are interested in factors that keep priests from participating in activities for ongoing human and priestly development. Please tell me whether any of the following are reasons

why you have NOT participated in particular areas of development during the past two years.

**READ LIST AND RECORD ALL THAT APPLY**

- 1 There is not enough financial support.
- 2 Some development opportunities are not available.
- 3 I’m just not interested in some areas of development.
- 4 I’m too busy.
- 5 It is not required.
- 6 (DO NOT READ) Too old/Sick/Unable to get out
- 7 (DO NOT READ) Some other factor

When did you come to value lifelong learning?

**READ LIST AND RECORD ONE**

- 1 Before seminary
- 2 In the seminary
- 3 After ordination
- 4 Or don’t you value lifelong learning?
- 5 (DO NOT READ) Some other time

## **Additional Questions Related to Ongoing Formation**

To what extent are you held accountable for your participation in continuing education or ongoing formation activities?

### **READ LIST**

- 1 To a great extent
- 2 To some extent
- 3 A little
- 4 Not at all

Did you make a retreat during the past twelve months?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Do you schedule days of prayer or spiritual reflection for yourself?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Have you participated in a priestly support group in the last two years?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Do you have a spiritual director?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No



## Questions About Ministry

Are you a diocesan priest or are you a member of a religious order or institute?

- 1 Diocesan
- 2 Religious order or institute
- 3 (DO NOT READ) Don't know or Refused

Are you retired?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

### *If retired:*

Are you still involved in ministry or working in any way?

- 1 Still working (INCLUDE: senior priest in service, substitute, helping out)
- 2 No longer working

### *Do not read if no longer working:*

Which of these best describes your current work or ministry?

#### **READ LIST**

- 1 Parish work only
- 2 Parish and NON-parish work
- 3 NON-parish work only
- 4 Temporarily not working

### *If involved in parish work:*

In your parish ministry are you a . . .

#### **READ LIST**

- 1 A pastor
- 2 An associate pastor or parochial vicar
- 3 A supply, substitute, or resident priest
- 4 (DO NOT READ) Other

### *If involved in non-parish work:*

In your NON-parish ministry, do you work in these places?

#### **READ LIST AND RECORD ALL THAT APPLY**

- 1 A diocesan office or chancery
- 2 A college, university, or seminary
- 3 An elementary or high school
- 4 A hospital or health care institution
- 5 A religious institute or province office
- 6 A retreat center or house of prayer
- 7 Something else: **ASK TO SPECIFY AND RECORD RESPONSE**

***If a pastor or associate pastor:***

Do you currently serve in more than one parish, for example parishes that are linked, twinned, or clustered? Or do you just serve in one parish?

- 1 More than one parish
- 2 One parish only

***If serves in more than one parish, read:*** The next few questions are about your primary parish. If you do not have a primary parish, please answer about the largest parish.

***If a pastor or associate pastor:***

About how many households are registered in the parish? Would you say there are. . .

**READ LIST**

- 1 200 or less
- 2 201 to 500
- 3 501 to 1,200
- 4 1,201 to 2,000
- 5 Over 2,000

***If a pastor or associate pastor:***

In what type of area is the parish located?

**READ LIST**

- 1 An inner city
- 2 A large city but not an inner city
- 3 A suburb of a large city
- 4 A town or small city
- 5 A rural area

## Questions About Characteristics of Respondents

In what year were you born? **RECORD YEAR:** \_\_\_\_\_

In what year were you ordained? **RECORD YEAR:** \_\_\_\_\_

Were you born in the United States?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

***If born outside the United States:***

In what country were you born?

**DO NOT READ. CODE RESPONSE AS FOLLOWS:**

- 1 United States
- 2 Canada
- 3 India
- 4 Ireland
- 5 Italy
- 6 Nigeria
- 7 Philippines
- 8 Poland
- 9 Spain
- 10 Vietnam
- 11 OTHER: **RECORD RESPONSE:** \_\_\_\_\_

Are you of Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino descent?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

And what is your race? Are you. . .

- 1 White
- 2 Black or African American
- 3 American Indian or Alaskan Native
- 4 Asian
- 5 Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- 6 (DO NOT READ) Hispanic or Latino
- 7 (DO NOT READ) Other: **RECORD RESPONSE:** \_\_\_\_\_