



Special Report

Serving Dioceses, Parishes, and Religious Communities Since 1964

Fall 2005

The Impact of Catholic Campus Ministry on the Beliefs and Worship Practices of U.S. Catholics

SUMMARY: Among self-identified Catholics who attended a college or university for some period of time, those who participated in campus ministry are more likely than those who did not to:

- Attend Mass at least once a month
- Register in a parish
- Be “very involved” in parish or other religious activities
- Have read a Catholic newspaper or magazine in the last 12 months
- Have read a book about Catholicism in the last 12 months
- Express interest in studying religion or theology at the college-level
- Donate money to a Catholic parish or another Catholic organization in the last year
- Report that helping the needy is “essential” to their faith
- Report that their Catholic faith is “among the most important parts of their lives”
- Have considered serving the Church as a lay minister
- Have considered becoming a priest or brother (among men only)
- Report that they would encourage someone to serve as a priest, sister, or brother

In its November 1985 pastoral letter entitled *Empowered by the Spirit: Campus Ministry Faces the Future*, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops concluded that campus ministry “is vitally important for the future of Church and society,” and that “the diocesan bishop is to be zealous in his pastoral care of students.”

In this special report, both the importance and the current state of campus ministry in the United States are examined. Utilizing research findings from a series of studies conducted by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University, this special report highlights the impact of Catholic campus ministry on beliefs and worship practices of those who participated during their college years. The report also presents an estimate of the extent campus ministry is available to almost five million Catholic students enrolled in colleges and universities in the United States.

The Subcommittee for Campus Ministry of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) commissioned three studies of campus ministry from CARA in 2001-2003. The research included a survey of diocesan directors of campus ministry, a survey of campus ministry sites at colleges and universities in the United States, and a telephone poll of U.S. Catholic adults that asked them about their participation in Catholic campus ministry. This special report highlights findings from those three surveys, as well as some information more widely available about colleges and universities and their students.

The Impact of Catholic Campus Ministry on Religious Beliefs and Behaviors

The CARA Catholic Poll 2001 asked Catholics who had attended college about their participation in campus ministry during their college years. Some 1,309 of the 1,890 self-identified Catholic adults polled, or 69 percent, say they attended a college or university for at least some period of time. Fifteen percent of these (196 respondents) report having participated in campus ministry while in college. The Subcommittee for Campus Ministry asked CARA to examine how those who participated differed from those who did not.

The summary on page 1 presents some important differences in current religious attitudes and behaviors between those who participated in campus ministry in college and those who did not. For each, those who participated in campus ministry during their college years were more likely to express these attitudes or engage in these behaviors.

Findings from the CARA Catholic Poll

In the 1985 pastoral letter on campus ministry, *Empowered by the Spirit*, six central aspects of Catholic campus ministry receive particular focus. These six aspects are shown in the box below and are used as a framework for highlighting research findings in this section of the report.

SIX CENTRAL ASPECTS OF CAMPUS MINISTRY AS DESCRIBED IN *EMPOWERED BY THE SPIRIT*

- Forming the faith community
- Appropriating the faith
- Forming the Christian conscience
- Educating for justice
- Facilitating personal development
- Developing leaders for the future

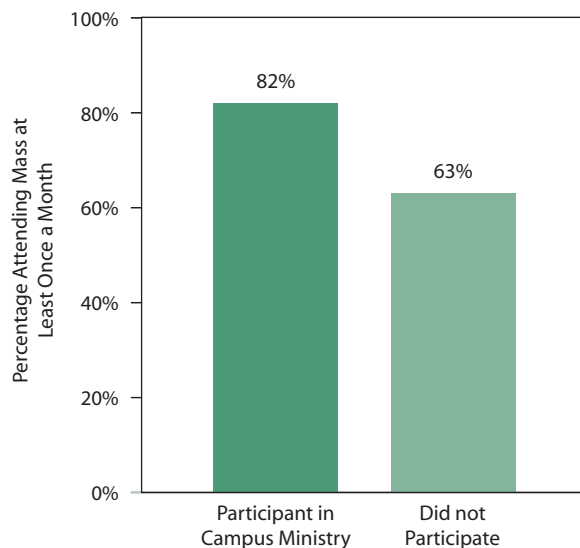
FORMING THE FAITH COMMUNITY

Attending Mass regularly, registering in a parish, and getting involved in parish life and other religious activities are all religious behaviors associated with one who has been formed in the Catholic faith. The results below illustrate the relationship between participating in campus ministry during college and more frequent Mass attendance, higher parish registration, and greater involvement in parish and other religious activities.

Frequency of Mass Attendance

Among those reporting they have attended college at some time during their lives, those who participated in campus ministry currently attend Mass more frequently than those who did not participate.

MASS ATTENDANCE AT LEAST MONTHLY, BY PAST PARTICIPATION IN CAMPUS MINISTRY



As the graphic above shows, more than eight in ten who participated in campus ministry currently attend Mass at least once a month. In comparison, just over six in ten who did not participate in campus ministry attend as frequently.

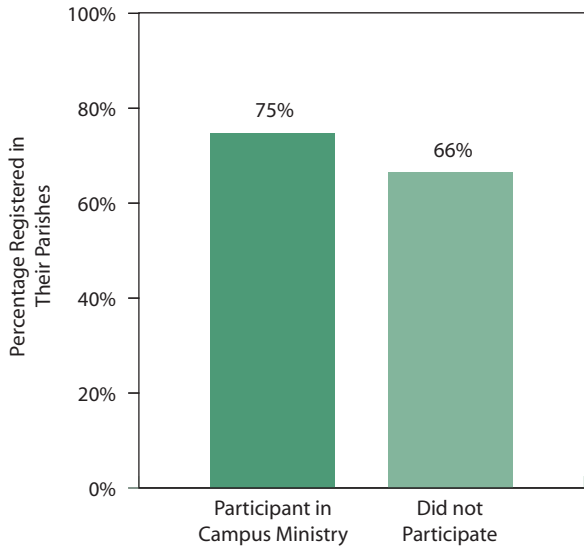
Moreover, this pattern persists among those who report attending Mass at least weekly. More than four in ten (44 percent) of those who participated in campus ministry in college say they currently attend Mass at least once a week, compared to a third (33 percent) of those who did not participate."

More than four in ten of those who participated in campus ministry in colleges say they currently attend Mass at least once a week, compared to a third of those who did not participate.

Parish Registration

Parish registration is another indicator of the importance given to one's faith community. Three-quarters of those who participated in campus ministry are currently registered in a parish, compared to two-thirds of those who did not participate.

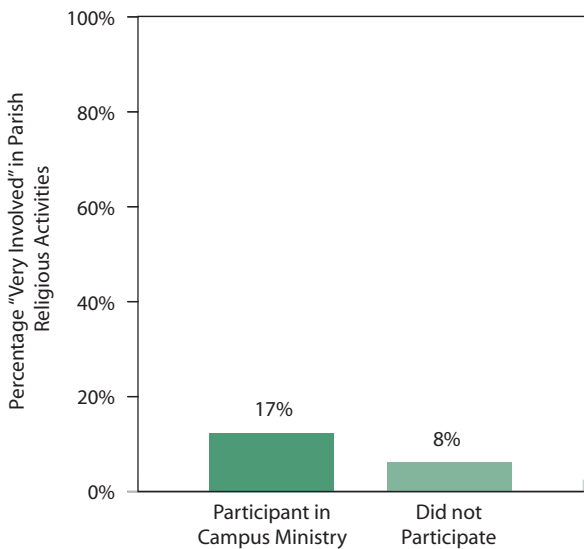
CURRENT PARISH REGISTRATION,
BY PAST PARTICIPATION IN CAMPUS MINISTRY



Involvement in Parish or Other Religious Activities

Another indicator of integration into a faith community is one's involvement in parish and other religious activities. One in six respondents who participated in campus ministry describe themselves as "very involved" in their parish or other religious activities now, compared to fewer than one in ten of those who did not participate.

CURRENT LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT IN PARISH
OR OTHER RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES,
BY PAST PARTICIPATION IN CAMPUS MINISTRY



APPROPRIATING THE FAITH

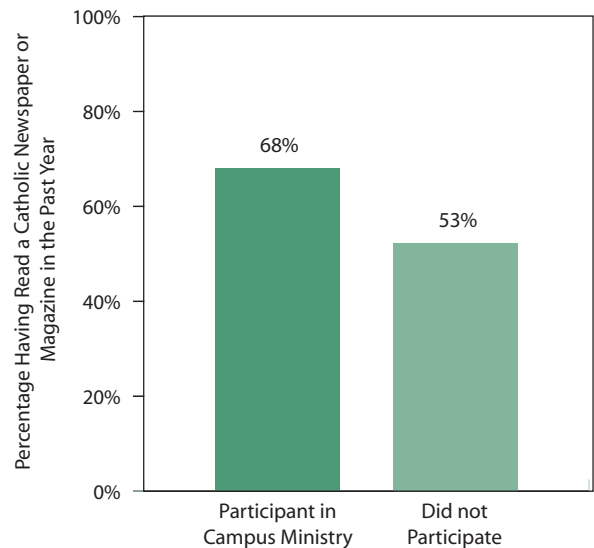
Past participation in campus ministry is also related to how well Catholics appropriate their faith. Specifically, prior campus ministry participation is shown to be related to recently having learned about the faith and to being interested in learning more.

Past participation in campus ministry is also related to how well Catholics appropriate their faith.

Having Read a Catholic Newspaper, Magazine or a Catholic Book in the Past Year

Two in three of those who participated in campus ministry report having read a Catholic newspaper or magazine in the past year, compared to slightly more than half of those who did not participate.

HAVING READ A CATHOLIC NEWSPAPER OR MAGAZINE IN
THE PAST YEAR, BY PAST PARTICIPATION IN CAMPUS MINISTRY

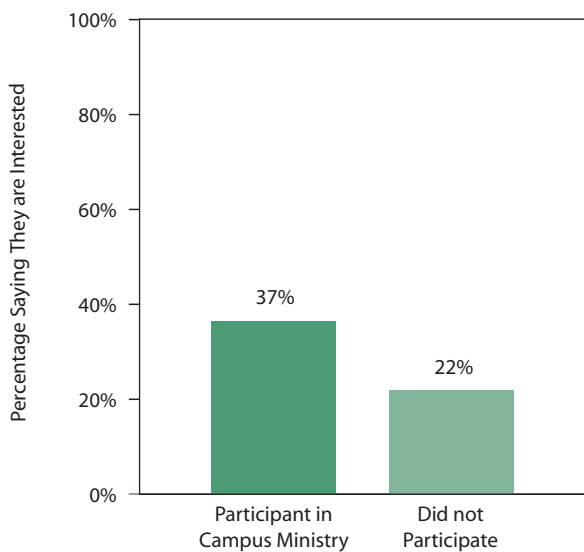


Moreover, slightly more than a third (36 percent) of those who participated in campus ministry have read a book about Catholicism in the past year, compared to just over a quarter (27 percent) of those who did not participate.

Interest in Studying Religion or Theology at a College or University

Interest in further faith formation is another indicator of how well one has appropriated the faith. Nearly four in ten of those who have participated in campus ministry say they would be interested in studying religion or theology at the college level. In comparison, just over two in ten of those who did not participate in campus ministry while in college are interested in studying religion or theology at that level.

CURRENT INTEREST IN STUDYING RELIGION OR THEOLOGY AT THE COLLEGE LEVEL, BY PAST PARTICIPATION IN CAMPUS MINISTRY



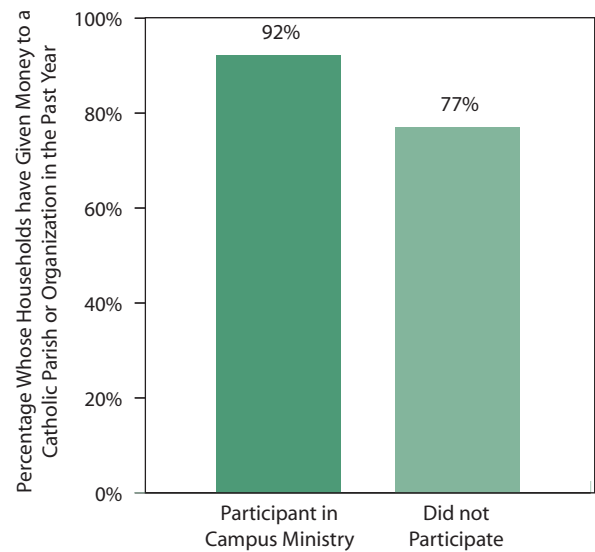
FORMING THE CHRISTIAN CONSCIENCE

Forming a Christian conscience is another central aspect of the Catholic faith that is related to campus ministry participation. Catholic stewardship, the Christian obligation to share one's gifts with others, is a behavior associated with a formed Christian conscience. This research measures respondents' willingness to donate to a Catholic parish or other organization to see whether participation in campus ministry affects willingness to donate to others. It can be argued that those that donate are demonstrating a formed Christian conscience.

Donating to a Catholic Parish or Organization

More than nine in ten respondents who participated in campus ministry report having given to a Catholic parish or another Catholic organization in the past year, compared to just over three-quarters of those who did not participate.

HAVING GIVEN TO A CATHOLIC PARISH OR ORGANIZATION IN THE PAST YEAR, BY PAST PARTICIPATION IN CAMPUS MINISTRY



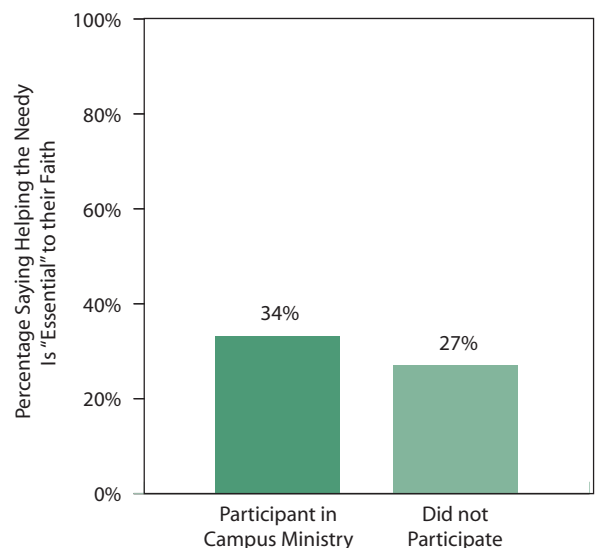
EDUCATING FOR JUSTICE

Educating the university community about justice and peace is another important aspect of campus ministry that can have an important lasting effect. One measure of how well Catholics are educated about justice is how much importance they give to helping the needy.

Importance of Helping the Needy

About a third of those who participated in campus ministry say that helping the needy is "essential" to their faith, compared to just over a quarter of those who did not participate in campus ministry.

CURRENT IMPORTANCE GIVEN TO HELPING THE NEEDY, BY PAST PARTICIPATION IN CAMPUS MINISTRY



FACILITATING PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

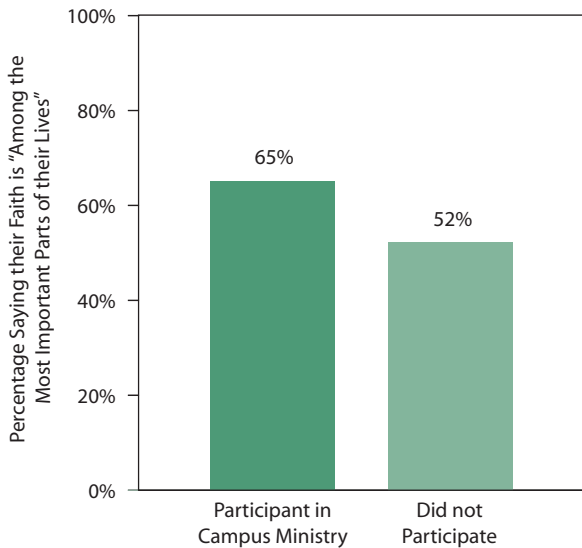
One way to measure the effect that participation in campus ministry may have had on facilitating one's personal development is by comparing those who participated in campus ministry to those who did not in the relative importance they place on their faith.

Nearly two in three of those who participated in campus ministry say their Catholic faith is “among the most important parts” of their lives.

Importance of One's Catholic Faith

Nearly two in three of those who participated in campus ministry say their Catholic faith is “among the most important parts” of their lives, compared to slightly more than half of those who did not participate in campus ministry.

CURRENT IMPORTANCE GIVEN TO ONE'S CATHOLIC FAITH, BY PAST PARTICIPATION IN CAMPUS MINISTRY



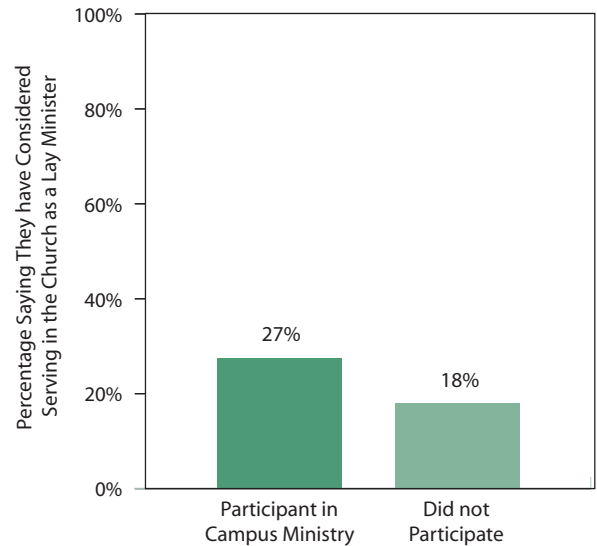
DEVELOPING LEADERS FOR THE FUTURE

A final aspect of campus ministry emphasized in the Bishops' pastoral letter and examined here is its role in developing leaders for the future. The research shows that those who participated in campus ministry are more likely than those who did not participate to report that they have considered becoming a priest, brother, or lay minister. They are also more likely to have encouraged others to serve the Church as a priest, sister, or brother.

Consideration of Lay Ministry

Just over a quarter of those who participated in campus ministry during their college years say they have considered serving the Church as a lay minister. About one in six of those who did not participate have considered such a vocation.

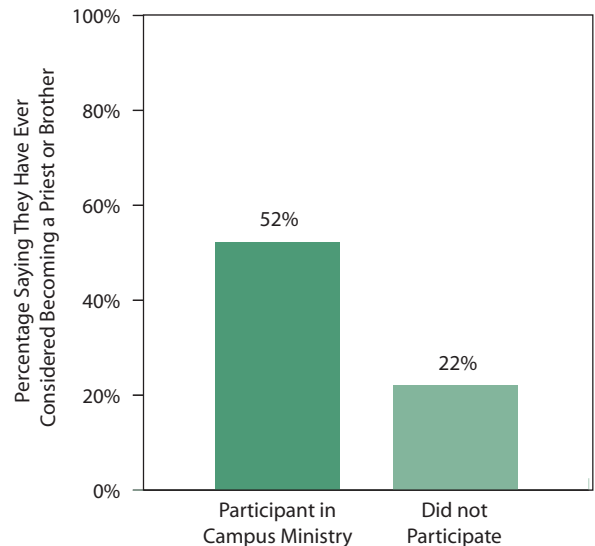
CONSIDERATION OF SERVING AS A LAY MINISTER, BY PAST PARTICIPATION IN CAMPUS MINISTRY



Consideration of Becoming a Priest or Brother

Slightly more than half of men who participated in campus ministry while they were in college say they have considered being a priest or brother. In contrast, just over two in ten men who did not participate in campus ministry have considered these vocations.

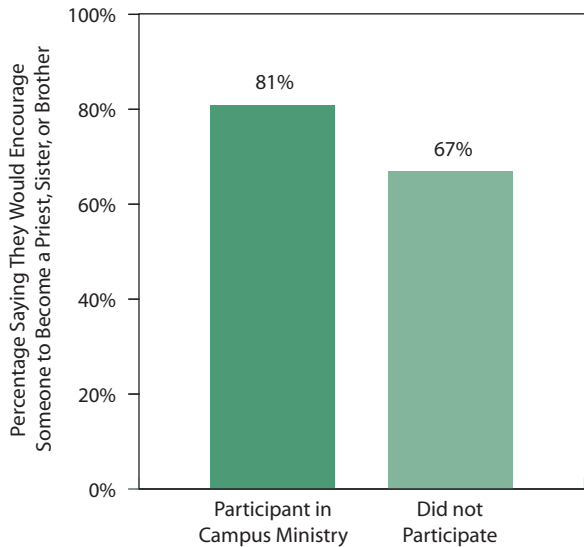
CONSIDERATION OF BECOMING A PRIEST OR BROTHER, BY PAST PARTICIPATION IN CAMPUS MINISTRY



Encouraging Others to Serve the Church

Slightly more than eight in ten Catholics who participated in campus ministry while in college say they would encourage someone to serve the Church as a priest, sister, or brother. Two in three of those who did not participate in campus ministry say they would encourage someone to serve in one of those roles.

ENCOURAGEMENT OF OTHERS TO SERVE AS PRIESTS, SISTERS, OR BROTHERS, BY PAST PARTICIPATION IN CAMPUS MINISTRY



A Note on Methodology

All of the findings presented above describe differences that are statistically significant; that is, they pass standard tests of statistical inference and can be considered to be “real” differences.

It is also important to note, though, that a relationship between participation in campus ministry and later religious behaviors does not “prove” that one caused the other. However, such a relationship does suggest that positive experiences with campus ministry have an influence on Church participation during one’s college years and in later life.

U.S. Colleges and Universities and Their Students

This section of the report investigates the estimated number of Catholic college and university students that have access to campus ministry in the United States. Using estimates of both

the number of Catholic students in colleges and of the number of campus ministry sites, the report examines access to campus ministry in the United States.

NUMBER OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

According to 2005 figures from the National Center for Education Statistics, there are 4,453 degree-granting institutions of higher education in the United States. The Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU) reports that approximately 220 of these institutions are Catholic colleges and universities. This means that only about 5 percent of all higher education institutions are Catholic, with the other 95 percent being non-Catholic institutions.

COLLEGE STUDENTS AND RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

The *Chronicle of Higher Education* estimates that there were 16.6 million students enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities in 2004, the latest year for which statistics are available.

According to a survey of incoming first year students for 2004, some 28 percent of all students entering college identified themselves as Catholic. Assuming that the percentage identifying as Catholic remains fairly constant for each year in college, that percentage translates into approximately 4.6 million Catholic students in 2005.

TABLE 1: RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE OF INCOMING FIRST YEAR STUDENTS FOR 2004

Christian	
Roman Catholic	27.8%
Other Christian	45.2%
Other Faith Traditions	
Jewish	2.5%
Latter-Day Saints	1.6%
Buddhist	1.1%
Islamic	0.9%
Hindu	0.8%
Other Religions	2.6%
No religious preference	17.5%

CATHOLIC COLLEGE STUDENTS

ACCU estimates that there are about 720,000 students enrolled at the approximately 220 Catholic institutions in the U.S. and Puerto Rico, and that on average, 65 percent of these students, or 468,000, are

Catholic. That means that only about 10 percent of the 4.6 million Catholic students in the U.S. attend a Catholic college or university, leaving 4.1 million, or 90 percent, at non-Catholic institutions. We next look at campus ministry coverage both at the diocesan level and nationally.

TABLE 2: DISTRIBUTION OF CATHOLIC COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Estimated number of Catholic college and university students	4.6 million
At non-Catholic institutions	4.1 million
At Catholic institutions	0.5 million

Survey of Diocesan Directors of Campus Ministry

At the request of the Subcommittee on Campus Ministry, CARA conducted a survey of all diocesan directors of campus ministry in Fall 2002. In dioceses with no formal director, surveys were mailed to those designated by the diocese as being the person who could best respond. A total of 137 of the 177 dioceses returned completed surveys.

Respondents were asked to identify their roles in their dioceses. Slightly fewer than half identify themselves as diocesan directors, that is as having positions with full authority and responsibility for campus ministry, and 64 percent of these directors and other contact persons also serve as campus ministers.

These respondents were asked to identify their roles in their dioceses. Slightly fewer than half identify themselves as diocesan directors, that is as having positions with full authority and responsibility for campus ministry in the diocese. And 64 percent of all respondents serve as campus ministers in addition to their diocesan responsibilities. Moreover, 78 percent report that at least half of their time is allotted to their work as campus ministers.

As presented in the table below, nearly a quarter of dioceses report that all campus ministry activity in their diocese operates on a total budget of less than \$10,000, and 45 percent have budgets of less than \$100,000.

TABLE 3: TOTAL DIOCESAN BUDGETS FOR CAMPUS MINISTRY

No budget	13%
Less than \$10,000	11%
\$10,000 to \$49,999	7%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	14%
\$100,000 to \$199,999	19%
\$200,000 to \$499,999	24%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	9%
\$1,000,000 or more	3%

These diocesan directors and other contact persons were also asked to estimate the total number of colleges and universities in their diocese, and the percentage of those with a campus minister assigned to that campus. As is seen in the table below, slightly more than half of the dioceses reported having less than 50 percent of their campuses covered.

TABLE 4: PROPORTION OF CAMPUSES IN EACH DIOCESE WITH AN ASSIGNED CAMPUS MINISTER

No campuses have an assigned campus minister	1%
1 to 24 percent of campuses	13%
25 to 49 percent of campuses	31%
50 to 74 percent of campuses	27%
75 to 99 percent of campuses	16%
All campuses	12%

Campus Ministry Coverage of U.S. Colleges and Universities

With both the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) figures and diocesan directors' findings, we can estimate the total number of colleges and universities with campus ministers assigned to them. As was reported earlier, NCES lists 4,453

institutions of higher education in the United States. Through the diocesan directors' survey, CARA was able to identify a total of about 1,200 campus ministry sites. That leaves approximately 3,250 campuses without any Catholic campus ministry coverage. So, approximately 71 percent of all colleges and universities in the United States have little or no access to campus ministry services.

Survey of Catholic Campus Ministry Sites in the U.S.

In March 2003, CARA surveyed the approximately 1,200 Catholic campus ministry sites in the United States identified in the survey of diocesan directors, as well as about 150 other campus ministry-related sites CARA had identified through its National Parish Inventory.

Included in the September 2003 report produced from that survey are the average numbers of sacraments reported by each site per year. These averages give some indication of how active Catholic campus ministry sites are and how important the sites are to the life and mission of the Church. Some of those averages are presented in the table below.

TABLE 5: AVERAGE NUMBER OF SACRAMENTS REPORTED BY CAMPUS MINISTRY SITES PER YEAR

Weekend Masses	2.5
Weekday Masses	4.5
Infant baptisms	7.2
Adult baptisms	2.3
Receptions into full communion	4.6
Confirmations	8.0

That report also presents the average number of students who participated in the programs offered by campus ministries. The table below presents some of these averages.

TABLE 6: AVERAGE NUMBER OF STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN CAMPUS MINISTRY PROGRAMS PER YEAR

RCIA	9
Liturgical ministries	35
Retreats	78
Volunteering to serve the needy	92
Service or justice trips	30
Peer ministry programs	87

A Final Thought from the Bishops' Subcommittee

“What if campus ministries reached an additional 10 percent of the nearly five million Catholic college students across the United States?”

About every four years, dioceses across the United States would see about 500,000 committed Catholic leaders enter their parishes who attend Mass more frequently, who are more involved in parish activities, who give more financially, who consider religious vocations more seriously, and who more frequently encourage others to consider religious vocations.



CENTER FOR APPLIED RESEARCH IN THE APOSTOLATE • GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

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. For information regarding research, analysis, and planning, contact:

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