

**August 2009**

***Recent Vocations to Religious Life:***

***A Report for the  
National Religious Vocation Conference***

**Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate  
Georgetown University  
Washington, DC**

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**Recent Vocations to Religious Life:  
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**Executive Summary**

This report presents findings from a study of recent vocations to religious life in the United States that was conducted by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) for the National Religious Vocation Conference (NRVC). The study is based on surveys of religious institutes, surveys and focus groups with recent vocations to religious life, and an examination of selected religious institutes that have been successful in attracting and retaining new members. The study was designed to identify and understand the characteristics, attitudes, and experiences of the men and women who are coming to religious life today as well as the characteristics and practices of the religious institutes that are successfully attracting new candidates and retaining new members.

The study is based on four major research components:

- A single informant survey of religious institutes and societies of apostolic life
- A survey of those in initial formation or in final vows/commitment since 1993
- Focus groups with those in initial formation or in final vows/commitment since 1993
- Examination of the characteristics and practices of selected religious institutes

For the first phase of the study, CARA surveyed religious institutes and societies of apostolic life. Using mailing lists provided by the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM), the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious (CMSWR), and the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), CARA sent a questionnaire to each major superior with a cover letter from Brother Paul Bednarczyk, CSC, Executive Director of NRVC, and a return envelope addressed to CARA. The cover letter and survey included instructions to respond only for the governance unit (e.g., congregation or province) for which the superior was responsible and, for international institutes or societies, to respond only for members who

previous research. The list of emerging communities included some that are public associations of the faithful that are in the process of seeking canonical status as a religious institute or society of apostolic life.

Throughout the report, the term “religious institute” is used for religious institutes, societies of apostolic life, and public associations of the faithful that are seeking canonical status as a religious institute or society of apostolic life.

CARA mailed surveys to a total of 976 entities in spring 2008 and then conducted extensive follow-up by mail, e-mail, telephone, and FAX throughout summer and fall 2008 to achieve a high response rate. CARA received completed responses from 591 religious institutes for a response rate of 60 percent. However, closer examination of the lists and the non-respondents revealed that some of the congregations and provinces on the original lists had merged with others during the course of the research. Other entities on the lists are neither provinces nor congregations, but regions or houses that do not have formation/incorporation in the United States and should not have been included in the survey. Still others, particularly among the contemplative monasteries and the emerging communities, had apparently ceased to exist.<sup>1</sup>

CARA estimates that the total number of units (congregations, provinces, monasteries) in the United States is fewer than 900, which would result in a response rate of approximately 66 percent. However, the responding entities account for 62,250 men and women religious, or well over 80 percent of all women and men religious in the United States. Many of the institutes or other entities that did not respond appear to be either small, mostly contemplative, communities that may not have had anyone in initial formation for some time, or those who are still in the process of becoming institutes of consecrated life.

This initial survey was designed to gather statistics about the membership in the institute, including the numbers in initial formation or incorporation; basic information about vocation promotion and formation in the institute; and basic data about the institute’s ministry, community life, community prayer, and practice regarding the wearing of a religious habit. In addition, respondents were asked to provide the names and contact information for those in initial formation as well as those who had professed final or perpetual vows or commitment since 1993. This list served as the mailing list for the survey of new members described below.

The second phase of the research consisted of a survey of “new members,” that is, current candidates/postulants, novices, and those in temporary vows or commitment as well as those who had professed final vows or commitment since 1993. The questionnaires were mailed in fall

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<sup>1</sup> “Reconfiguration” among religious institutes proved to be one of the most challenging issues for calculating a response rate as well as for obtaining historical information about new membership. Responses to questions about reconfiguration in the survey revealed that 19 percent of the respondents were in the process of reconfiguring at the time the survey was conducted in 2008 and another 16 percent had reconfigured since 1990. The number of “units” changed while the survey was being conducted.

2008 and winter 2009 to 3,965 new members, again with a cover letter from Brother Paul Bednarczyk, CSC, and a return envelope addressed to CARA. Some 40 surveys were returned as undeliverable. In addition, closer examination of both responses and non-responses revealed that at least 45 returned surveys are from transfers rather than new members as defined by the study and at least 26 other respondents were formed and are based outside the United States and thus beyond the parameters of the study. When these are removed from the sample, CARA received a total of 1,568 usable responses from new members for a response rate of least 40 percent.

The survey of new members was designed to identify what attracted these candidates and new members to religious life and to their particular religious institute or society; what they found helpful in their discernment process; what their attitudes and preferences are regarding community life, prayer, ministry, and the wearing of a religious habit; and what sustains and challenges them in religious life. The survey also asked about their background characteristics as well as their experience before entering religious life. In addition, the survey included a question asking the respondent if he or she would be willing to participate in a focus group.

The third and fourth phases of the research, which included focus groups with new members and closer examination of selected institutes, were conducted during spring and summer 2009. CARA conducted three focus groups with new members in Chicago, San Antonio, and Washington, DC. These sites were selected because of the relatively large concentration of new members in each of these areas. Participants were selected from among the survey respondents who indicated that they would be willing to participate in a focus group.

The focus groups explored issues similar to those examined in the survey. Specifically, they were designed to gather insights from newer members about what attracts, sustains, and challenges them in religious life. The discussions were also directed toward understanding the attitudes and experiences of new members and especially toward identifying “best practices” for vocation and formation ministry that would assist men and women in discerning and responding to a call to religious life. A list of the religious institutes of the new members who participated in the focus groups is included in the introduction to the report.

During the final phase of the research, CARA examined selected institutes that have experienced some success in attracting and retaining new members in recent years. At a minimum, this examination included an interview with the vocation director and a review of vocation promotion materials and practices. In most cases, the examination also ini2t0t5tiousi Tw-15 Ts eet/015



- According to the survey of new members, the average age of entrance is 30 for men (median 27) and 32 for women (median 29). However, there is a ten-year gap in average and median entrance age between women in LCWR institutes and women in CMSWR institutes. According to the survey of religious institutes, more than half of the women in initial formation in LCWR institutes (56 percent) are age 40 and older, compared to 15 percent in CMSWR institutes.
- Compared to finally professed members, those in initial formation are more likely to



their down to earth nature, and their commitment and zeal. Some 85 percent say the example of members attracted them “very much.”

- To only a slightly lesser degree, most new members also say they were attracted to *religious life* by a desire to be of service and a desire to be part of a community.

institute and its members through “Come and See” experiences, discernment retreats, and other opportunities to spend time with members are especially important for this age group.

### ***Vocation Promotion and Discernment Programs***

- Many religious institutes offer a variety of vocation promotion and discernment programs. Most responding institutes report that they use print materials, websites, and or/advertising for vocation promotion, and many report that they target specific age groups, most typically high school, college, and young adults, in their vocation promotion and discernment programs.
- The most common discernment programs are “Come and See” experiences (offered by three-fourths of the responding institutes), live-in experiences and discernment retreats (each offered by a little more than half), and mission or ministry experiences (offered by about a third). New members who participated in these and other programs for vocation discernment generally found them to be very helpful in their discernment process.
- Findings from the survey of religious institutes suggest that using various media (especially websites) for vocation promotion, offering programs (especially discernment retreats, “Come and See” experiences, discernment groups, and ministry/mission experiences) for vocation discernment, and targeting certain age groups (especially college-age and young adults) in vocation promotion and discernment efforts are positively correlated with attracting and retaining new members.
- The data also suggest that having a vocation director, especially one who is engaged in vocation ministry on a full-time basis, and a vocation team are positively correlated with attracting and retaining new members. Although most religious institutes (88 percent) report that they have a vocation director, he or she is full-time in less than half of these institutes (46 percent). Findings from the survey of new members and especially the reflections of participants in the interviews and focus groups suggest that the vocation director and other team members can play a critical role in the discernment process.
- The survey of new members found that the age of the respondent is negatively correlated with how helpful they found most of vocation promotion and discernment resources and programs. Thus, the younger the person, the *more* likely he or she is to say that these resources or programs were helpful in the discernment process. This is especially the case with various types of websites; CDs, DVDs, and videos; and print and online promotional materials. Compared to older respondents, younger respondents are much more likely to report that websites, especially the websites of religious institutes, were helpful to them. They are also considerably more likely to report that discernment retreats and “Come and See” experiences were helpful.

- Although various vocation promotion and discernment programs can play an important role in informing potential candidates about religious life, especially in a particular religious institute, the findings suggest that members themselves play the most important role. New members report that it was the example of members that most attracted them to their institute and that meetings with members and communities were the most helpful when they were discerning. Comments from interview and focus group participants provide further support that it was their experience of members and the way they are living religious life that was most influential in the decision to enter their institute.

### ***Encouragement and Support in Discernment and in Religious Life***

- Many new members did not experience a great deal of encouragement from parents, siblings, and other family members when they were first considering a vocation to religious life. Many also did not receive much encouragement from diocesan priests, people in their parish, or people in their school or workplace. Many report that their parents are now much more supportive.
- Most new members report that they received a great deal of encouragement from members of their institute during their discernment process and that members of their institute continue to be their greatest source of encouragement and support in religious life. Most also report high levels of encouragement from those to whom and with whom they minister.
- Compared to older new members, younger new members are more likely to report that they were encouraged by diocesan priests when they were first considering religious life. They are also more likely to report receiving encouragement from diocesan priests in their life and ministry now. Among other respondents, diocesan priests are *least* likely to be cited as a source of “very much” encouragement.

### ***Prayer and Spirituality***

- Many new members identify common prayer as one of the aspects of religious life that most attracted them and that most sustains them now. When asked about the importance of various types of communal prayer, respondents are most likely to name daily Eucharist and Liturgy of the Hours as the prayer types that are most important to them.
- Millennial Generation respondents are much more likely than other respondents – especially those from the Vatican II Generation – to say that daily Eucharist, Liturgy of the Hours, Eucharistic Adoration, and other devotional prayers are “very” important to

them. Compared to younger respondents,

- Compared to new members from other generations, those from the Vatican II Generation tend to give their institutes lower ratings on most of the aspects of religious life about which they were asked. Those from the Millennial Generation tend to be the most positive in their assessment of their religious institutes.

### *Practices Regarding the Religious Habit*

- The responses to the open-ended question about what attracted them to their religious institute reveal that having a religious habit was an important factor for a significant number of new members. Interviews with vocation directors also suggest that many who are inquiring into religious life are looking for the possibility of wearing a habit even in those institutes in which few, if any, members regularly do so.
- About two-thirds of the responding new members are in institutes that wear a religious habit. For a little more than half of those new members (55 percent), the habit is required in all or most circumstances and for another 16 percent it is required only at certain times, such as for ministry or prayer. In the focus group discussions, a few of the participants were either strongly in favor or strongly opposed to requiring habits, while some saw the value of wearing a habit or clerical dress in at least some circumstances.
- Among those who report that the habit is optional, 90 percent of men and 27 percent of women say they wear it at least once in a while, with 14 percent of men and 15 percent of women saying they wear it in all or most circumstances. Among those who report that their institute does *not* have a habit, almost half of the men (48 percent) and almost a quarter of the women (23 percent) say they would wear a habit if they had that option.

### *Most Rewarding and Satisfying Aspects of Religious Life*

- When asked what they find most rewarding or satisfying about religious life, new members offered a range of comments about various aspects of religious life. The most frequent responses were about the communal dimension of religious life. Some mention living, praying, and working together while others focus more on the sense of common purpose and being part of something larger than themselves. The frequency of mentions of community life suggests that this is a particularly important aspect of religious life to most new members.
- Many new members also identify some aspect of the spiritual dimension of religious life, such as the sense of following God's call, deepening their relationship with God and with Christ, and/or personal and communal prayer, as providing the greatest sense of reward or satisfaction. In their responses, many new members specifically mention daily

Eucharist, Eucharistic Adoration, the Divine Office, Marian devotion, and other devotional practices as especially meaningful to them.

- Some new members cite the service or outreach dimension of religious life as most rewarding or satisfying for them. Many of these respondents mention ministry, service,

### ***Best Practices in Vocation Ministry***

- The findings from the study suggest a number of “best practices” for vocation promotion. These include instilling a “culture of vocations” and involving membership and leadership in concerted vocation promotion efforts; having a full-time vocation director who is supported by a team and resources; using new media, especially websites and other online presence; offering discernment programs and other opportunities for potential candidates to meet members and learn about the institute; and targeting college students and young adults as well as elementary and high school students to expose them to the possibility of religious life and inform them about the institute.
- Although these practices can have a positive impact on attracting and retaining new members, the research suggests that it is the example of members and the characteristics of the institute that have the most influence on the decision to enter a particular institute. The most successful institutes in terms of attracting and retaining new members at this time are those that follow a more traditional style of religious life in which members live together in community and participate in daily Eucharist, pray the Divine Office, and engage in devotional practices together. They also wear a religious habit, work together in common apostolates, and are explicit about their fidelity to the Church and the teachings of the Magisterium. All of these characteristics are especially attractive to the young people who are entering religious life today.

## **Introduction**

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CARA estimates that the total number of units (congregations, provinces, monasteries) in the United States is fewer than 900, which would result in a response rate of approximately 66 percent. However, the responding entities account for 62,250 men and women religious, or well over 80 percent of all women and men religious in the United States. Many of the institutes or other entities that did not respond appear to be either small, mostly contemplative, communities that may not have had anyone in initial formation for some time, or those who are still in the process of becoming institutes of consecrated life.

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- Sisters of Mercy (Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, South Central Community)
- Sisters of St. Francis of the Martyr St. George
- Xaverian Brothers (Congregation of the Brothers of St. Francis Xavier)

During the final phase of the research, CARA examined selected institutes that have experienced some success in attracting and retaining new members in recent years. At a minimum, this examination included an interview with the vocation director and a review of vocation promotion materials and practices. In most cases, the examination also included interviews with the novice director and/or other formation directors. In a few cases, it included interviews with leadership and interviews or focus groups with new members.

The religious institutes that CARA examined more closely included (again, with both their popular and formal names as well as the province, where applicable):

- Adrian Dominicans (Dominican Sisters of the Congregation of the Most Holy Rosary)
- Divine Word Missionaries (Society of the Divine Word, Chicago Province)
- Ferdinand Benedictines (Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana)
- Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration
- Holy Cross Fathers (Congregation of Holy Cross, Indiana Province)
- Marianists (Society of Mary, Province of the United States)
- Nashville Dominicans (Dominican Sisters of the Congregation of St. Cecilia)
- Sisters of Christian Charity (Eastern Province)

It is important to note that although each of these institutes has enjoyed some success in attracting and retaining vocations, these institutes do not necessarily have the highest numbers of new members. They were selected to represent different types of institutes and to help identify best practices in vocation promotion and retention.

## **Organization of this Report**

The report is divided into three main parts:

- Part I provides an overview of religious life in the United States based primarily on the survey of religious institutes and societies of apostolic life.
- Part II presents the results of the survey of new members. It also draws on findings from the focus groups and interviews with new members as well as information gleaned from the study of institutes that have been successful in attracting and retaining new members..



## **PART I: Findings about Religious Institutes**

This part of the report presents findings from the survey of religious institutes and societies of apostolic life. As noted in the introduction, the survey was also sent to public associations of the faithful that are in the process of seeking canonical status as religious institutes. Throughout the remainder of this report, the term “religious institute” includes these public associations of the faithful as well as the societies of apostolic life that were included in the survey.

### **Types of Institutes and Societies**

The survey included a series of questions to identify the type of religious institute being surveyed. These questions asked about the gender of members, its canonical status, and its character or lifestyle.

#### **Gender of Members**

About one-fourth of the survey responses are from institutes, societies, or associations of men (27 percent) and three-fourths are from institutes, societies, or associations of women (73 percent). Among the men’s groups, 15 percent include only brothers, 3 percent only priests, and 82 percent both brothers and priests.

#### **Canonical Status**

## Character or Lifestyle

Respondents were asked to indicate their character or lifestyle, that is, whether they are apostolic, contemplative, monastic, etc. As the table below shows, about seven in ten responding institutes categorize themselves as apostolic, one-fourth as contemplative, and one-fifth as monastic. Evangelical, conventual, and eremitic groups make up much smaller percentages of the respondents.

<b>Character or Lifestyle</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Apostolic	419	71%
Contemplative	156	26
Monastic	120	20
Evangelical	65	11
Conventual	33	6
Eremitic	14	2

It is important to note that these categories are not mutually exclusive. For example, some Benedictine monasteries are monastic and apostolic, while others are monastic and contemplative. Some Franciscans identify themselves evangelical, apostolic, and/or conventual while others use only one of these descriptors. Many of the newer groups describe themselves as both apostolic and contemplative and some use three or four of these terms.

When the respondents are categorized into what is conventionally understood as “active” and “contemplative” communities, about 85 percent are active and 15 percent are contemplative.

## Number of Members

A total of 589 of the 591 responding institutes reported their current number of finally professed members as well as the number in each stage of initial formation (candidates or postulants, novices, and temporary professed). The table below shows the mean, median, and modal number and range in each category as well as the total numbers reported by the responding institutes.

Note that the survey used both “vows” and “commitment” as well as both “formation” and “incorporation” to account for differences in terminology among respondents as well as for differences between religious institutes and societies of apostolic life. In the rest of this report, the terms “final” or “perpetual” “profession” or “vows” includes definitive incorporation into a society. “Initial formation” includes candidates or postulants, novices, and those in temporary vows or commitment. It does not include pre-candidates or aspirants who have not yet entered. (The number of pre-candidates and/or aspirants was asked in the survey but is not reported here.)

The table below illustrates that there are considerable variations in the numbers in initial formation and perpetual profession in the responding institutes.

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- The survey identified at least 2,630 candidates/postulants, novices, and temporary professed members of religious institutes. Note that some institutes did not respond to the survey, so the actual number in initial formation is likely even higher. The mean, median, and modal numbers reflect the fact that a few institutes have relatively large numbers in initial formation while many institutes have none or just a few. Among the responding institutes, 70 percent have no candidates/postulants, 65 percent have no novices, and 43 percent have no one in temporary vows.

The tables below compare the mean, median, modal, and total numbers in initial formation and final vows for men’s institutes and women’s institutes. These figures, which include only those for institutes that responded to the survey, suggest that there are currently more men than women in initial formation, even though women greatly outnumber men among the finally professed.

**Numbers in Initial Formation and Perpetual Vows, Men’s Institutes**

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Mode</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Total</b>
Candidates/postulants	1.8	0	0	0 – 65	291
Novices	1.7	0	0	0 – 70	276
Temporary vows/commitment	5.2	2	0	0 – 197	829
Final/perpetual vows/commitment	77	51	7	0 – 410	<u>12,472</u>
					13,868

**Numbers in Initial Formation and Perpetual Vows, Women’s Institutes**

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Mode</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Total</b>
Candidates/postulants	.4	0	0	0 - 11	179
Novices	.8	0	0	0 - 29	319
Temporary vows/commitment	1.7	1	0	0 - 51	708
Final/perpetual vows/commitment	110	55	7	0 - 1,111	<u>47,114</u>
					48,320



The tables below show the numbers in initial formation per institute when the categories are collapsed, that is, when candidates or postulants, novices, and temporary professed are combined into a single category of those in initial formation. The first table compares men and women. The second table compares LCWR and CMSWR.

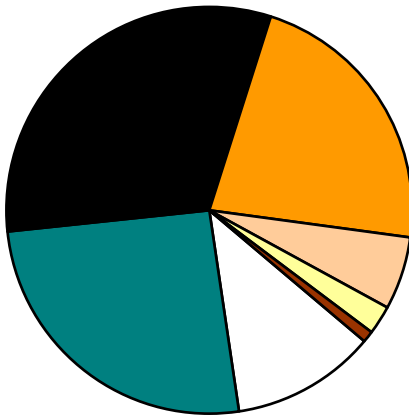
*Seven in ten responding institutes have at least one person in initial formation. Having someone in formation and having more than one or two is more common in institutes of men than in institutes of women.*

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## **Age Distribution**

The charts and tables below show the decade of birth and age distribution of the perpetually professed members of the responding institutes, first for all religious and then comparing men and women. Later charts and tables show the same information for those in initial formation. The survey asked the number of finally/perpetually professed members born in each decade, e.g., 1920-1929, 1930-1939, 1940-1949, and so forth. The charts show the decade of birth; the tables show the ages in 2009.

**Decade of Birth: Perpetual Vows, Women**



The table below shows the same information converted into age ranges in the year 2009. In addition, the table shows the average, median, and modal median age of perpetually professed members reported by the responding religious institutes.<sup>4</sup> This table shows this information for all respondents and then compares men and women religious. The table on the following page compares LCWR and CMSWR.

*As already noted, the vast majority of men and women religious are in their 60s, 70s, and 80s.*

<b>Age Distribution and Median Age: Final/Perpetual Vows</b>				
<i>Percentage in each category:</i>				
	<b>All</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	
Under 40	1%	3%	1%	
40-49	3	8	2	
50-59	8	14	6	
60-69	23	24	22	
70-79	31	28	32	
80-89	24	19	26	
90 and over	10	4	11	
Average Median Age	69	65	70	
Median Median Age	71	66	73	

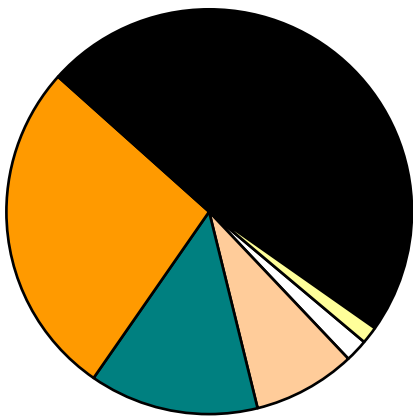
The table below shows the age distribution and the average, median, and modal median age for all responding institutes of women and then compares the responses of LCWR and CMSWR institutes.

*CMSWR institutes have a more even age distribution and are considerably more likely to have younger members in final vows.*

<b>Age Distribution and Median Age: Final/Perpetual Vows</b>			
<i>Percentage in each category:</i>			
	<b>All Women</b>	<b>LCWR</b>	<b>CMSWR</b>
Under 40	1%	<0%	8%
40-49	2	1	15
50-59	6	5	16
60-69	22	22	21
70-79	32	33	18
80-89	26	27	14
90 and over	11	13	8
Average Median Age	70	74	60
Median Median Age	73	74	62.5
Modal Median Age	76	76	63

The most common median age in LCWR institutes is 76, compared to 63 in CMSWR institutes.

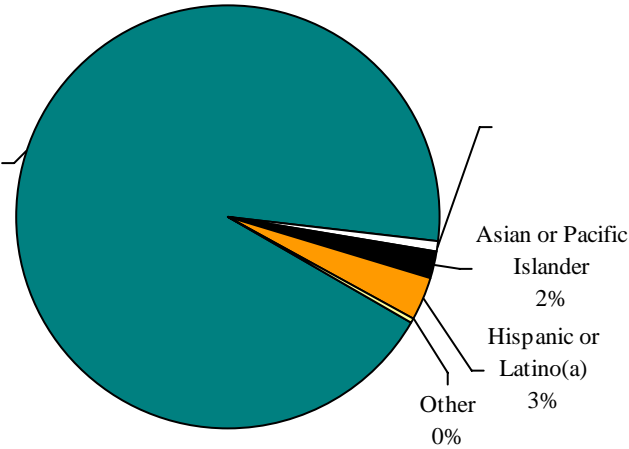




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**Racial/Ethnic Background: Perpetual Vows**



## **Retention Rate and Departures**

The survey asked respondents first to report the total number who had entered their religious institute since 1990 and then to report who remained from that number. These numbers were used to calculate a retention rate. It should be noted, however, that only 76 percent of respondents provided sufficient information to calculate a retention rate. Respondents were also asked to report the stage of formation during which those who had departed had done so.

### **Retention**

*The average retention rate is 48 percent; that is, about half of those who entered since 1990 remain. The median and modal retention rates are also 50 percent.*

- Retention rates are somewhat higher in institutes of women than in institutes of men.
- There are no significant differences in retention rates between men and women.

## Departure

## **Vocation Promotion and Discernment Programs**

Respondents were asked to indicate whether their unit has a vocation director and/or vocation team, sponsors or co-sponsors various discernment programs, has used various media for vocation promotion in the last five years, and/or has targeted certain age groups in its vocation promotion and discernment programs. Part III of the report examines whether there are any relationships between providing these resources or offering these programs and activities and attracting and retaining new members.

### **Vocation Director and/or Team**

Almost nine in ten responding religious institutes (88 percent) report that they have a vocation director. In a little more than half of those institutes (54 percent), the vocation director is engaged in vocation ministry on a part-time basis (in 46 percent he or she does vocation work full-time). In 97 percent of institutes, the vocation director is member of th



## Use of Media for Vocation Promotion

*About nine in ten responding institutes indicate that they have used print materials and/or websites/Internet for vocation promotion within the last five years.*

<i>Please indicate if your <u>unit</u> has used any of the following for vocation promotion in the last five years:</i>	
Percentage checking each response:	
Print materials	91%
Website/Internet	87
Advertising	75
Radio	7
TV	6
Other	16

Advertising is also a relatively common method of vocation promotion. TV and radio are far less common, although they have been used by a few. “Other” responses include DVDs, vocation fairs and vocation talks, conventions and conferences, billboards, and parish bulletins. Some of the respondents also mentioned the importance of personal contact.

## Vocation Promotion and Discernment for Age Groups

*Responding institutes are most likely to report that they target their vocation promotion and discernment programs toward young adults (defined on the questionnaire as people in their 20s and 30s) and, to a slightly lesser degree, toward college-age students.*

***Please indicate if your unit sponsors or co-sponsors vocation promotion or discernment programs specifically targeted toward these age groups:***

Percentage checking each response:

Young adults (20s and 30s)	71%
College	65
High school	56
Elementary school	34
Mature adults (age 40 and over)	27

About two in three responding institutes focus their vocation efforts on college students and/or young adults and a little more than half target high school students. About a third sponsor or co-sponsor programs for elementary schools and about a quarter do so for mature adults (defined on the questionnaire as those age 40 and over). Data presented later in this report indicate that just over half of new members of religious institutes were 18 or younger when they first considered religious life. About a quarter were 13 or younger.

## **Admission Requirements and Initial Formation Practices**

The next sections examine requirements for admission to candidacy/postulancy as well as several practices in initial formation.

### **Admission Requirements**

*Almost all respondents report that their institute requires medical assessment for admission to the institute.*





## Age, Education, and Work Experience Requirements

*Most religious institutes have minimum and maximum age requirements and or minimum education requirement or admission to candidacy/postulancy.*

<i>Does your unit have the following requirements for admission to candidacy/postulancy?</i>	
Percentage responding "Yes"	
Minimum age	89%
Maximum age	76
Minimum education	80
Minimum work experience	49

- The most common minimum age requirement is 18 (reported by 39 percent of respondents). Four percent of respondents would accept a candidate who is younger than 18. Another 48 percent require the potential candidate to be between 19 and 22.
- The most typical maximum age is 45 (reported by 24 percent of respondents). Five percent set the maximum age at 30 or younger and 42 percent set it between 30 and 44. Three in ten (29 percent) have a maximum age higher than 45 (a high as 65). Some institutes noted that they sometimes make exceptions to these age requirements.
- Some 80 percent have a minimum education requirement and half have a minimum work experience requirement. Most institutes require a candidate to have at least a high school education and many require at least one or two years of college and/or work experience. A few require a college degree.

## Length of Initial Formation Periods

The responding institutes were asked to report the typical number of years that are required for each period of initial formation in their institute.

*The most common requirements for initial formation are one year of pre-candidacy or aspirancy, one year of candidacy/postulancy, two years of novitiate, and three years of temporary vows.*

<b>Typical Length of Periods of Initial Formation</b>				
<i>Number of Years</i>				
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Mode</b>	<b>Range</b>
Pre-candidacy/aspirancy (before entrance)	1	1	1	<1 – 4
Candidacy/postulancy (before novitiate)	1	1.1	1	<1 – 4
Novitiate	1.7	2	2	1 – 4
Temporary vows/commitment	4.4	4	3	1 – 12

There are some variations among religious institutes in the length of time they require for each stage of their initial formation programs.

- Many institutes indicate that they do not have a formal pre-candidacy or aspirancy program or that they do not have a typical requirement for its duration. Many specify a range, such as six months to a year or one to two years, as typical in their institute.
- On average, the responding institutes typically require a year of candidacy/postulancy before the novitiate, although many indicate that the period is one to two years and a significant number require two years. There is some correlation between a longer candidacy period and higher retention rates, although the relationship is not very strong.
- About two-thirds of the responding institutes (68 percent) have a two-year novitiate, although more than a quarter (28 percent) require only one year. A few require something between one and two years and very few require more than two years.
- The greatest variation among institutes is in their requirements for temporary vows. While the typical requirement is the same as the minimum required by canon law (three years), many institutes require a longer period (often five or six years). Some also report that the period of temporary vows is typically three to six years.



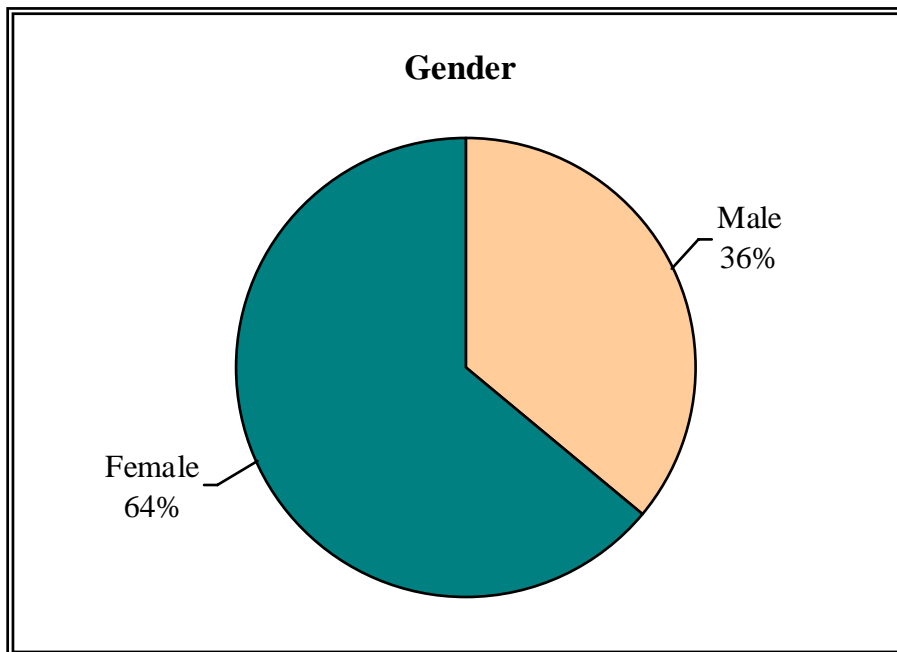
## **PART II: Findings about New Members**

This part of the report presents findings about new members. It is based primarily on responses to the survey of new members (1,568 respondents), but also draws on comments from the focus groups and interviews with new members as well as some of the comments from vocation and formation directors.

### **Background and Characteristics of the Respondents**

This section describes the demographic characteristics and background experiences of the responding new members. These characteristics include their gender, age and generation, racial and ethnic background, previous marriage and children, Catholic upbringing and education, employment and ministry experience, year of entrance and current status in their religious institute, the age at which they first considered religious life, and the age of entrance into religious life. Throughout Part II of the report, comparisons are drawn between male and female respondents and among respondents from different generations.

*Almost two-thirds of the respondents are female (64 percent) and a little more than a third are male (36 percent).*



Data from the *Official Catholic Directory 2009* indicate that women religious outnumber men religious in the United States by more than three to one (59,601 women religious compared to 17,935 men religious).<sup>7</sup> However, data reported in Part I of this study suggest that there are currently more men than women in initial formation (approximately 1,400 men compared to approximately 1,200 women among the institutes that reported these data). This may account for the somewhat higher proportion of men in this sample of new members than in the population of all religious in the United States.

***Age and Generation***

Respondents were born between 1924 and 1989 and thus range in age from 20 to 85 in 2009. The average age of the respondents overall is 43 (40 for men and 44 for women), so “new” members are not necessarily “young” members. Their median age for the entire sample is 42 (40 for men and 44 for women). The modal age is 45 for the sample as well as for both men and women.

*Similar to the findings in Part I about those in initial formation, older respondents are more common among women than among men.*

<b>Age Distribution</b>				
<i>Percentage in each category:</i>				
	<b>All</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	
20-29	17%	19%	16%	
30-39	26	29	25	
40-49	28	33	25	
50-59	18	15	19	
60 and over	11	4	15	

For purposes of analysis of differences among Catholics, CARA typically categorizes respondents into four generations based on their year of birth: the Pre-Vatican II, Vatican II, Post-Vatican II, and Millennial Generations.

- The *Pre-Vatican II Generation* includes those born before 1943. Its members, those over age 66 in 2009, came of age prior to the Second Vatican Council. They were raised in a Church

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<sup>7</sup> These numbers include only those for dioceses whose bishops belong to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

that changed dramatically after their formative years. Members of this generation played a crucial role in creating and sustaining many of the institutions of 20<sup>th</sup> century Catholic life. They tend to exhibit relatively high levels of loyalty to the institutional Church. Four percent of the respondents to this survey are members of the Pre-Vatican II Generation.

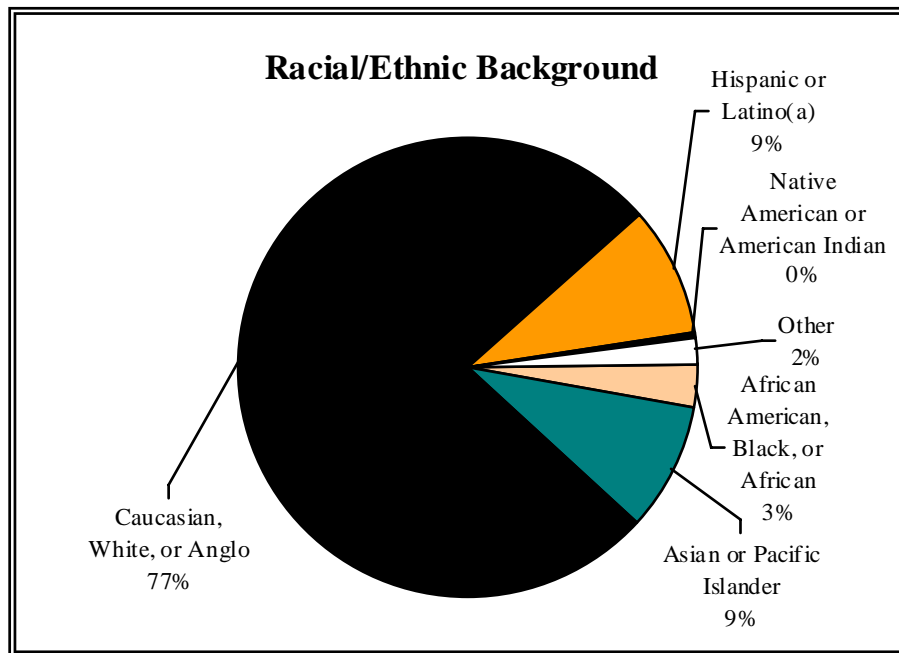
- Members of the *Vatican II Generation* were born between 1943 and 1960 and are between the ages of 49 and 66 in 2009. Members of this generation came of age during the time of the Second Vatican Council and their formative years spanned a period of profound changes in the Church (as well as in society and culture). To a large extent, this generation overlaps with the “Baby Boomers.” In general, members of this generation are more likely to emphasize concerns of individual self-actualization over institutional commitment. A little more than one-fourth of the survey respondents (27 percent) are of the Vatican II Generation.
- The *Post-Vatican II Generation*, born between 1961 and 1981, consists of those who are ages 28 to 48 in 2009. Members of this generation, sometimes called “Generation X” have almost no lived experience of the pre-Vatican II Church. Their religious training occurred primarily during the 1970s and 1980s, a time when religious education patterns and methods were very different from those used up to the late 1960s. Members of this generation are relatively less likely to make long-term commitments, are more pragmatic and less ideological, and are relatively more interested in issues of identity and community than those before them. Close to six in ten survey respondents (58 percent) are of the Post-Vatican II Generation.
- The Millennial Generation, those born in 1982 or later, is the youngest generation of Catholics. The leading edge of this generation is just beginning to reach their late-20s. Members of this generation tend to be community- and service-oriented as well as interested in spirituality and questions of faith. They also tend to be optimistic in their outlook, tolerant of differences among people, and positive in their attitudes toward authority. This generation has come of age under the papacies of John Paul II and Benedict XVI. On the whole, they are less steeped in the Catholic culture of earlier generations of Catholics and less knowledgeable about their faith. Those who are active in their faith tend to be more traditional in their religious beliefs and practices. Millennials make up 11 percent of the survey respondents.

The range of ages among new members as well as the age differences between newer members and older members that are common in many religious institutes present a number of challenges for these newer members as well as for the religious institutes they have entered. These are described in greater detail in the section on challenges below.

### *Racial/Ethnic Background and Country of Origin*

Consistent with the findings reported in Part I, there is greater diversity in the racial and ethnic backgrounds of the new members than in the overall population of finally professed men and women religious.

*About three-fourths of the respondents describe themselves as Caucasian, white, or Anglo.*



Almost one in ten new members is Asian or Pacific Islander and almost another one in ten is Hispanic or Latino(a). About 3 percent describe their background as African American, black, or African. Note that the racial and ethnic composition of new members presented here is different from the racial and ethnic composition of those in initial formation described in Part I of this report. The new members described here include those who have professed perpetual vows since 1993.

One in five new members (19 percent) was born in a country other than the United States. Male respondents are slightly more likely than female respondents to have been born in another country (21 percent compared to 18 percent).

### ***Catholic Upbringing, Faith Formation, and Education***

- About nine in ten respondents were raised Catholic. Among those who became Catholic as adults, a majority did so when they were in their late teens or early 20s.
- A little more than half of the respondents (56 percent) attended a Catholic school for at least some of their elementary or middle school education. A little more than four in ten (44 percent) attended a Catholic high school and about four in ten (42 percent) attended a Catholic college or university. Almost three-fourths (73 percent) attended a Catholic school for at least part of their education. About half (49 percent) attended parish-based religious education, CCD, or RCIA. Only 3 percent were ever home-schooled.
- Compared to other respondents, those from the Millennial Generation are more likely to have attended parish-based religious education, CCD, or RCIA (59 percent) and to have been home-schooled for at least some of their education (14 percent). Vatican II Generation respondents are more likely than others to have attended a Catholic elementary school.
- Seventy percent of respondents had at least a bachelor's degree before they entered their religious institute (46 percent bachelor's, 19 percent Master's, 5 percent doctoral degree). Among those who continued their education after they entered, all but 1 percent have at least some college education and most have at least a Master's degree (14 percent bachelor's, 61 percent Master's, 6 percent doctoral degree).

### ***Marriage and Children***

About 7 percent of respondents were once married and about 5 percent have children.

- Previous marriage and children is more common among female than male respondents. Among female respondents, 10 percent were married and 7 percent have children; among male respondents, 4 percent were married a



### *Year of Entrance and Current Status*

- More than half of the respondents entered since 1999, that is, they have been in their religious institutes for fewer than ten years at the time they completed the survey. Almost a third entered in 2003 or later. Almost 15 percent report that they entered another religious institute before the one to which they currently belong.
- Almost two-thirds of the respondents are finally professed (63 percent) and about a quarter are in temporary vows (26 percent). Only about one in ten is a novice (8 percent) or a candidate/postulant (3 percent).
- Among the male respondents, three-fourths are or expect to become priests and one-fourth are or expect to become brothers.

***Age First Considered Religious Life***

When asked the age at which they first considered religious life, respondents report being as young as two and as old as 65. The average age was 20 and both the median and modal ages were 18.

*Eight in ten newer members (among those who responded to the survey) were age 25 or younger when they first considered religious life.*

**Age First Considered Religious Life**

*Percentage in each category:*

### *Age of Entrance*

The average age of entrance is 30 for men (median 27) and 32 for women (median 29). However, there is a ten year age gap in average and median entrance age between women in LCWR institutes and women in CMSWR institutes. Among respondents from LCWR institutes, the average entrance age is 36 and the median is 34; among respondents from CMSWR institutes, the average entrance age is 26 and the median is 23.5

<b>Age of Entrance</b>			
<i>Percentage in each category:</i>			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
Under 20	7%	4%	9%
20-29	48	56	44
30-39	24	25	23
40-49	12	11	13
50-59	7	3	9
60 and over	2	1	2

<b>Age of Entrance</b>			
<i>Percentage in each category:</i>			
	<b>Women</b>	<b>LCWR</b>	<b>CMSWR</b>
Under 20	9%	3%	16%
20-29	44	32	62
30-39	23	28	16
40-49	13	20	4
50-59	9	14	2
60 and over	2	3	<1

***Previous Employment and Ministry Experience***

Almost nine in ten respondents report that they were employed before they entered, most in a full-time position. About seven in ten report that they were engaged in ministry before they entered, about a third on a full-time basis and about six in ten on a volunteer basis.

*A little more than half of the respondents report that they were involved in liturgical ministry and/or in other volunteer work in a parish or other religious setting before they entered.*

***Were you involved in any of the following before you entered?***

Percentage checking each response:

Involved in liturgical ministry, e.g., lecturing on a full-time basis

## Attraction to Religious Life

*New members are most likely to say they were attracted to religious life by a sense of call and by a desire for prayer and spiritual growth.*

<b><i>How much did the following attract you to <u>religious life</u>?</i></b>		
Percentage responding:		
	<b>“Somewhat” or “Very Much”</b>	<b>“Very Much” Only</b>
A desire for prayer and spiritual growth	96%	73%
A sense of call to religious life	95	78
A desire to be of service	93	67
A desire to be part of a community	89	60
A desire to be more committed to the Church	74	44

When asked how much various factors attracted them *to religious life*, most respondents report that they were attracted “very much” by a sense of call to religious life (78 percent) and a desire for prayer and spiritual growth (73 percent). To only a slightly lesser degree, most also say they were attracted by a desire to be of service and a desire to be part of a community. At least nine in ten respondents say they were attracted at least “somewhat” by each of these. About three-fourths say they were attracted “somewhat” (30 percent) or “very much” (44 percent) by a desire to be more committed to the Church.

### ***Gender Differences***

Compared to male respondents, female respondents are more likely to say they were attracted to religious life by a sense of call and by a desire for prayer and spiritual growth. Although the difference is not statistically significant, male respondents are a little more likely than female respondents to report that they were attracted to religious life by a desire to be of service.

### ***Generational Differences***

Younger respondents are more like than older respondents to say that they were attracted to religious life by a desire to be more committed to the Church. The largest generational differences are between the Vatican II and the Millennial Generations (54 percent compared to 39 percent “very much”).

## ***Responses to Open-ended Questions***

In response to one of the open-ended questions at the end of the survey, which asked respondents what most attracted them to their religious institute, a number of new members described a sense of call and a desire for prayer, community, and ministry that preceded their attraction to their particular institute. A few examples are presented below. The responses about the attraction to a specific institute are summarized in the next section of the report.

*What most attracted me to religious life was community, prayer, ministry.*

*An unwavering hunger for God. The “more.” A sense of call out of an experience of contemplative prayer.*

*I had a strong sense of a call to cloistered religious life. As I pursued this call, my relationship with Christ deepened, and I soon became ready to throw away everything I had to be with him.*

*First a sense of calling from God. Then the attraction to the sisters’ joy, fidelity to the Church, and religious life. Devotion to Mary and the Eucharist, community life and the wearing of the religious habit also attracted me.*

## ***Comments from Focus Groups and Interviews***

In telling their vocation stories, many of the interview and focus group participants described their sense of call to religious life and particularly their desire to deepen their relationship with God and with Christ. Some also talked about particular elements of religious life such as community life, communal prayer, and service. In response to questions about ministry and service, most indicated that “service,” “ministry,” or the “apostolate” are important to them, but are not the primary reason they felt called to religious life or to their particular religious institute. Several of the men also talked about their call to priesthood. For some, the desire for priesthood preceded a sense of call to religious life. For others, discernment of a vocation to priesthood or brotherhood came later. Some of the men talked about their attraction to community life and the possibility of different ministries that would not be possible in diocesan priesthood.

*I felt the calling and wanted to become closer to God. I do remember talking to one vocation director and she never once mentioned God. I found this strange. I think it’s important for the vocation and formation director to be able to pray and speak openly about building a relationship with God. Many things done by sisters can also be done by lay people, so what’s the difference? Why do it? People are wondering. It’s more than what you do. It’s about what God is calling you to do and how open you are to listening*

*and how closely you are following. Is this addressed when a new member is looking into the community and after she enters?*

*Something about regular prayer...is...as close as I can come to about attracting me to religious life.*

*I think one of the things that attracted me to...religious life was community. I had a very strong experience of it in college in our fraternity...I was kind of looking for a way to continue on with that sense of camaraderie and living together and having a shared history and ideals and all that.*

*The reason religious [instead of diocesan prie*

## Attraction to Their Religious Institute

*New members report that it was the example of members that most attracted them to their religious institute.*

<b><i>How much did the following attract you to <u>your religious institute</u>?</i></b>		
Percentage responding:		
	<b>“Somewhat” or “Very Much”</b>	<b>“Very Much” Only</b>
The spirituality of the institute	91%	66%
The community life of the institute	90	60
The example of members of the institute	89	85
The prayer life of the institute	89	59
The mission of the institute	88	60
Welcome and encouragement by members	85	57
The ministries of the institute	84	51
The institute’s fidelity to the Church	70	47
The life and works of your founder/ess	70	42
A personal invitation by a member	59	35

When asked how much various factors attracted them *to their religious institute*, respondents are most likely to cite the example of members and the spirituality, community life, prayer life, and mission of the institute as the aspects of the institute that most attracted them. More than any other single factor, however, it



- Compared to female respondents, male respondents are more likely to say that they were attracted “very much” by the mission and ministries of the institute as well as by the life and works of its founder.

### *Generational Differences*

- Millennial Generation respondents are more likely than older respondents to report that they were attracted by their institute’s fidelity to the Church and by the example of its members. Fidelity to the Church is much less important among respondents from the Vatican II Generation.

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- The community life of the institute was more likely to be “very” attractive to Millennial and Post-Vatican II Generation respondents than to Vatican II and Pre-Vatican II Generation respondents.

### ***Responses to Open-ended Questions***

One of the open-ended questions at the end of the survey specifically asked new members, “What most attracted you to your religious institute?” The most frequent comments centered on the example of members, especially their sense of joy, their down to earth nature, and their commitment and zeal; community life and a sense of welcome and feeling “at home” with members; the spirituality and prayer life in the institute and especially common prayer and certain devotional practices; the spirituality or charism of the founder; and the mission, ministries, and/or apostolate of the institute. A significant number also mentioned their institute’s fidelity to the Church and the fact that its members wear a religious habit. The responses below represent just a sampling of comments on these themes.

*The members of my religious institute all were very happy and joyous men. They liked what they were doing and they liked being together. That really attracted me to religious life. The community also saw prayer and their commitment to Christ as very important as well and this also attracted me.*

*The charism of our patron, the spirit of the members of the community. Their enthusiasm to ministry and their “down to earth” approach.*

*I was most attracted to the [Religious Institute] because of their common ministry and strong community life, Eucharistic and Marian devotion, and wearing of the habit, signifying commitment to traditional religious life and fidelity to the Church. The joy of the members was also a compelling witness, as well as a feeling of being “at home” here.*

*As I began to know the members, I felt that I could be “at home,” be myself, yet also be challenged to grow. As I learned more about our spirituality, our founder and early documents, I knew why I felt this way: There was a resonance between my own spirituality and my community’s charism of unity and reconciliation. Also, I felt and saw that my community members were “real people,” not artificial.*

*When I first began looking at religious life, all congregations seemed to share some basics – prayer, community living and ministry. In the end what attracted me to my particular congregation was the sense of joy and love I experienced among them. Their clear affection for each other and welcoming those around them. I was also attracted by their internationality, global vision, and commitment to ministering among those who are poor and marginalized.*

*It was the whole package: their apostolates were what first attracted me, but their*



## Acquaintance with the Religious Institute

*The most common way the new members first became acquainted with their religious institute was in an institution, such as a school, where the members served.*

### ***How did you first become acquainted with your religious institute?***

Percentage checking each item:

In an institution where members served, e.g., school	36%
Through the recommendation of a friend or advisor	28
Through working with a member of the institute	19
Through print or online promotional materials	17
Through a friend in the institute	16
Through an event sponsored by the institute	9
Through a vocation fair	5
Through a media story about the institute or member	5
Through a relative in the institute	5
Through a vocation match or placement service	3
Other	22

Newer members in religious life first became acquainted with their religious institutes in many different ways. Besides institutional settings, other relatively common ways of becoming acquainted with the institute were through the recommendation of a friend or advisor, through working with a member of the institute, through a friend in the institute, and through print or online promotional materials. Very few (5 percent or fewer) indicate that they met the institute through a vocation match or placement service, a vocation fair, a media story, or a relative in the institute.

### ***Gender Differences***

- Men are more likely than women to report that they first encountered their religious institute in a school or other institution where the members served (46 percent compared to 30 percent).
- Women are more likely than men to indicate that they learned about their institute through the recommendation of a friend or advisor (31 percent compared to 22 percent).





## Participation in Vocation Promotion and Discernment Activities

*Most newer members (almost two-thirds) participated in spiritual direction before they entered their religious institute.*

***Did you participate in any of the following  
before you entered your religious institute?***

Percentage checking each response:

Spiritual direction	63%
“Come and See” experience	57
Discernment retreat	56
Regular visits to communities	41
Regular meeting with a vocation director	39
Regular meeting with a member(s) of the institute	33
Live in experience with the institute	33
Diocesan vocation programs	24
Ministry or mission experience with the institute	22
Regular meeting with a discernment group	14

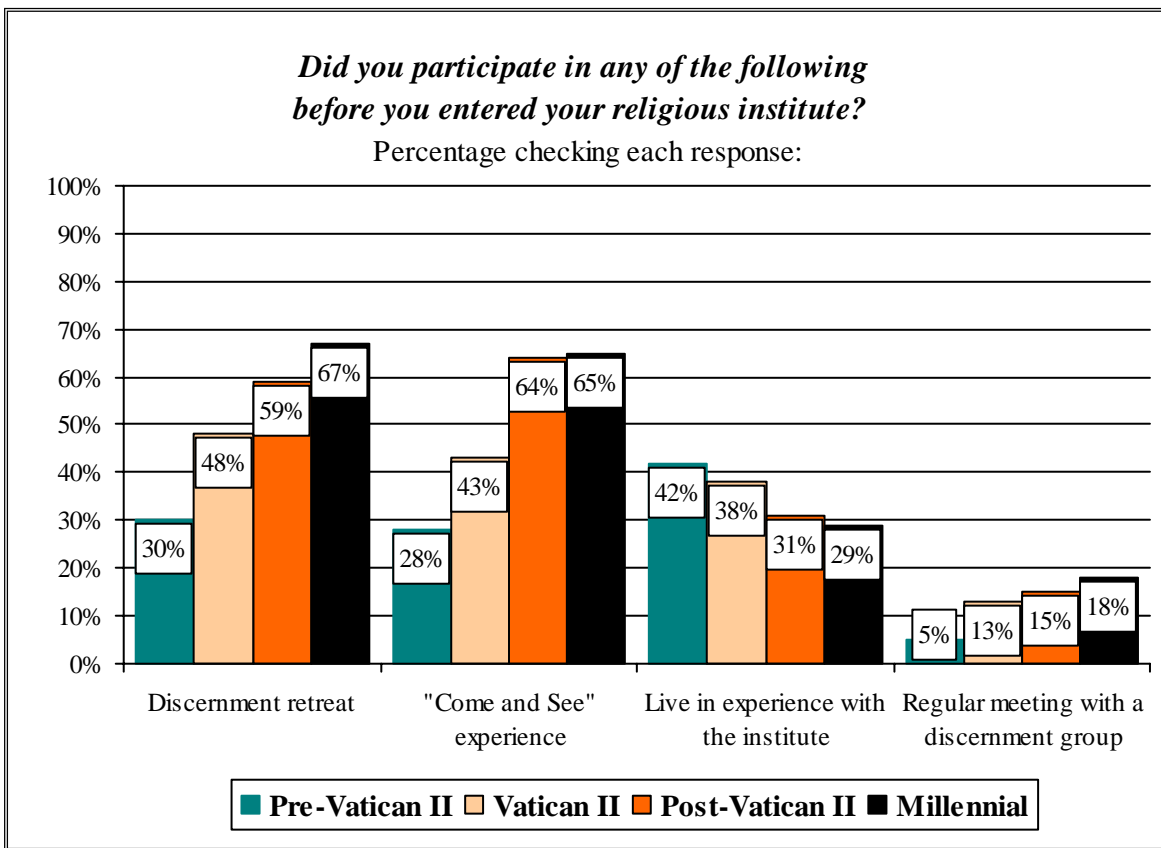
A majority of respondents also report that they participated in a “Come and See” experience and/or a discernment retreat. About four in ten participated in regular meetings with a vocation director and/or regular visits to communities, while about a third participated in regular meetings with members and/or a live in experience with the institute.

### ***Gender Differences***

The men religious were more likely than the women religious to indicate that they participated in diocesan vocation programs (34 percent compared to 18 percent) and in meetings with a vocation director (44 percent compared to 36 percent). Note that the question did not specify “diocesan” or “religious” vocation director.



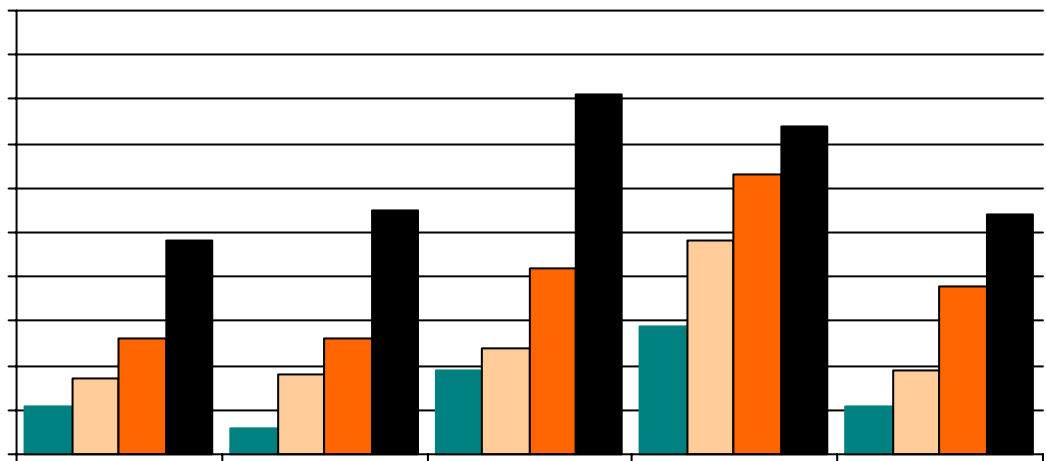
*Generational Differences*

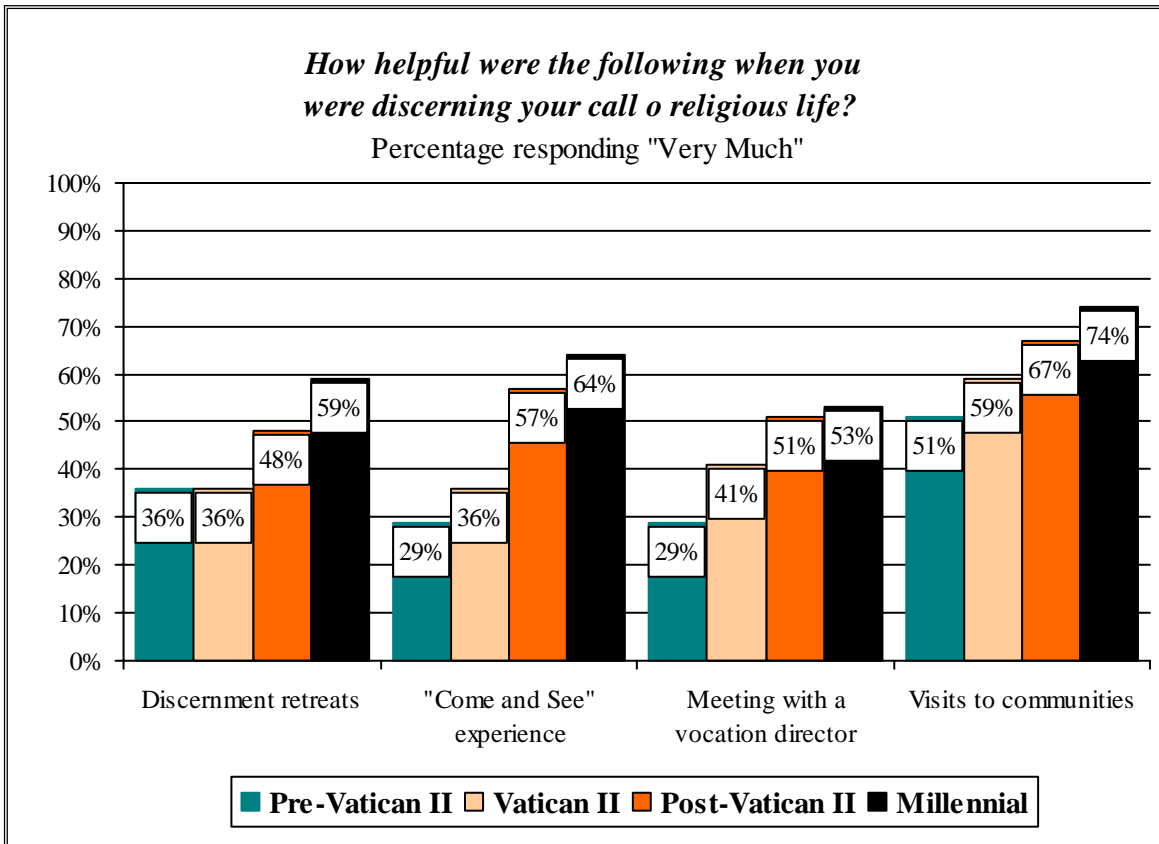


- Younger new members were more likely than older new members to have participated in “Come and See” experiences, discernment retreats, and, to a lesser extent, discernment groups.
- Compared to their younger counterparts, Pre-Vatican II and Vatican II Generation respondents were more likely to have participated in a live in experience.

## **Helpfulness of Vocation Promotion and Discernment Activities**

The table below shows the degree to which respondents found various activities and





- Younger respondents are considerable more likely to say that discernment retreats were “somewhat” or “very” helpful to them when they were discerning their call to religious life (81 percent of the Millennial Generation compared to 47 percent of the Pre-Vatican II Generation; not shown in the chart).
- Younger respondents are also more likely to report that “Come and See” experiences, visits to communities, and, to a lesser extent, meeting with a vocation director were helpfu04 TcnD-0.0002 Tcan II

*sponsored by the [Religious Institute]. I think the other big one is having a vocation director who knows who you are, knows your history, knows about your family, your likes and dislikes – a very personal vocation director. It was never just, “OK, this guy is calling me.” He would actually, “How are your classes going? What are you doing this summer?” Those kinds of personal touches.*

*Having a spiritual director is also very helpful in at least my discernment process.*

*...I think the most important part of my discernment was my mentor... When we signed up to become a contact, we could also pick and choose our mentor and our community and one of the requirements is like at least once a month you go and visit the community and talk with your mentor. I think it was a very, very important part of my discernment because I didn't know him and he doesn't know me but when we meet it was like we knew each other for years....He was just very, very good with you.*

*And then once I entered, having a mentor was absolutely key....To be able to go to someone, a wisdom figure like her, when the going got rough was just absolutely invaluable to my continuing the journey and deepening it....*

*...[S]omething that really helped me discern my vocation to the [Religious Institute] was spending time with our older sisters. They were just the healthiest, happiest, most loving*  
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## Influences on the Decision to Enter Their Religious Institute

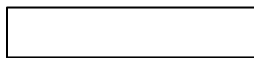
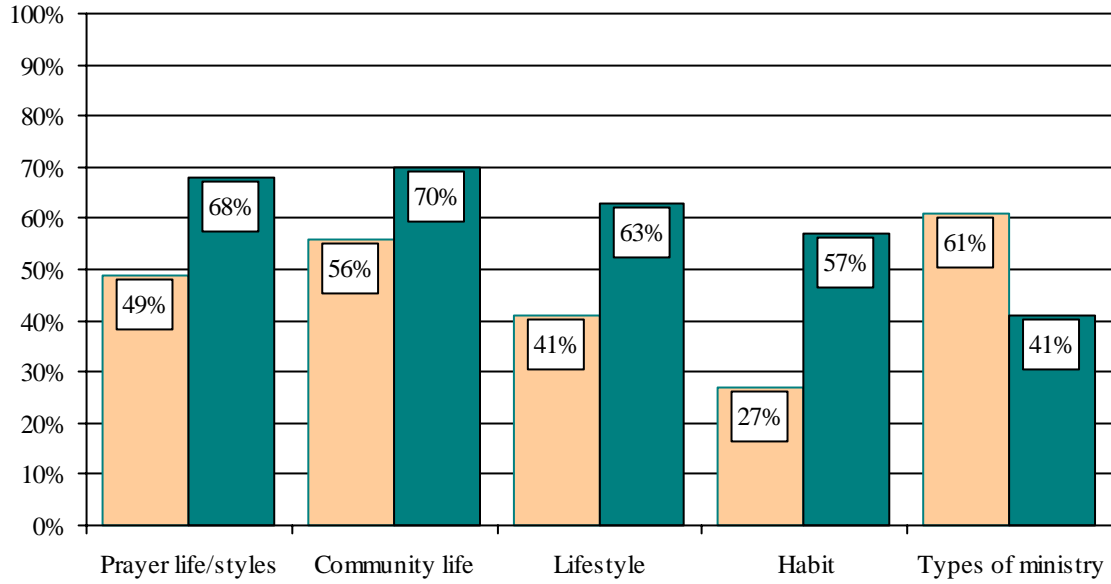
*When asked how much various factors influenced their decision to enter their religious institute, respondents were most likely to name the community life and the prayer life or prayer styles of their institute as the factors that influenced them “very much.”*

<b><i>How much did these influence your decision to enter <u>your</u> religious institute?</i></b>		
Percentage responding:		
	<b>“Somewhat” or “Very Much”</b>	<b>“Very Much” Only</b>
Community life in the institute	91%	65%
Prayer life or prayer styles in the institute	90	61
The lifestyle of members	85	55
The types of ministry of its members	79	48
Its practice regarding a religious habit	61	46
Its geographic location(s)	51	26
Its internationality, if applicable	45	24
The size of the institute	40	13
The ages of members	36	12
The racial/ethnic background of members	15	5

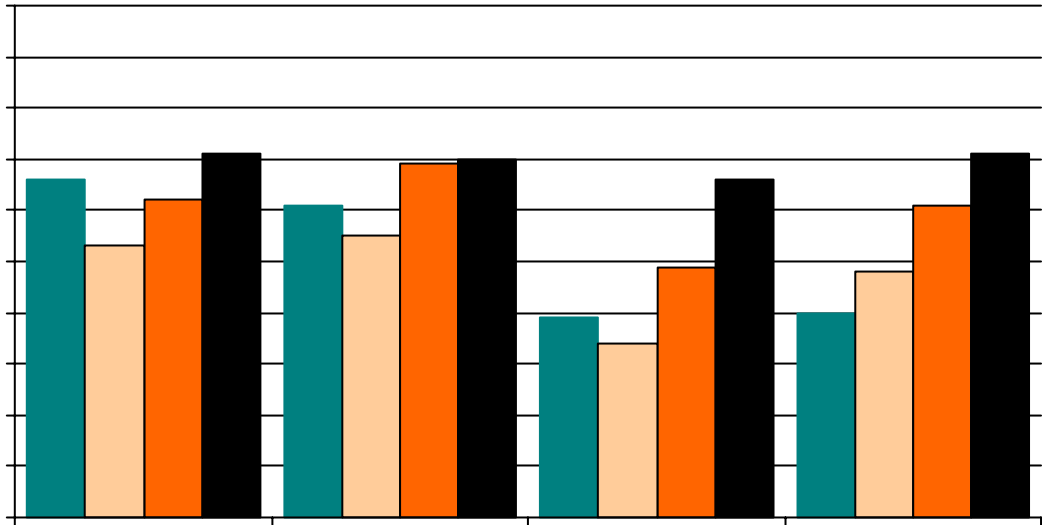
Nine in ten new members say their decision to enter their religious institute was influenced at least “somewhat” by the community life and the prayer life or prayer styles of their institute, weo0.5(er tyhansizxin ten nn)5.95(diatiog )heiyTJ19.188860 TD-0.0007 Tc-0.000 Tw{ Twer in flu5.9(

*How much did these influence your decision to enter your religious institute?*

Percentage responding "Very Much"







## **Encouragement for Religious Life**

Respondents were asked about the level of encouragement they received from various

### *Gender Differences*

- Although both men and women report high levels of encouragement from members of their institute, women were more likely to report that they received “very much” encouragement (68 percent compared to 53 percent). Women were also more likely to experience encouragement from a spiritual director and from friends in the institute.
- Although neither group received strong encouragement from various family members, men were more likely than women to be report at least “a little” encouragement, especially from parents.

### *Generational Differences*

indicated that family and friends from an older generation were more understanding and supportive than those from a younger generation. Some also described how early surprise or opposition eventually turned into support. A number of participants commented on the general lack of knowledge about and appreciation for religious life among Catholics today.

*...And of course the support of family, friends, which was surprising. I think I put more pressure on myself when I was trying to break the news to my parents, to friends. I almost felt like people would think, "Why are you doing that? That's weird." But surprisingly more people are a lot more supportive than I thought. So a lot of nice green lights help to support my way to consider it and also to stay.*

*For my grandparents' generation of my family it's still kind of a boon to have a religious in the family. Anyone younger than that it was indifference and then some more distant family members it was the kind of "why are you wasting your life?" reaction.*

*Amongst my friends, even the cousins, in my generation, I think they are more skeptical than family in an older generation just because they weren't, I guess, as rooted in the Church or had much more issues with the Church. And the sexual abuse scandal took a real big toll on the way people viewed the priesthood. So I got a little more hostility, I guess, from peers and people about my age, a lot more questioning of my motives and why I was doing that.*

*Mine was either indifference or anger....Only half of my family is Catholic and the other half is Evangelical. So the common reaction was that I was trying to escape from reality [laughter] and escape responsibility for the real world.*

*Believe me that was like absolutely, I mean,...they thought that I had gone insane....So it was complete opposition. Anyway now they are supportive but I would say at the beginning that was like total surprise to them and total opposition.*

*I encountered a lot of opposition too...When I first entered the seminary was when I got the biggest amount of my heat. My parents were furious....[M]y dad was furious. My mom was just irritated...*

*My family wasn't opposed to religious life, but my mom just expressed it as, "It's not something I had imagined for you." There was almost a grieving process they had to go through. I was the oldest, the first child, and my dad's not going to walk me down the aisle, my mom is not going to help me raise my children. So I had to let them grieve that daughter that they were losing. They supported me, but they didn't quite understand...*

*New members identify friends and other members of their institute as the groups from whom they now receive the most encouragement in their life and ministry.*

***How much encouragement do you currently receive from the following in your life and ministry as a member of your religious institute?***

Percentage responding:

	<b>“Somewhat” or “Very Much”</b>	<b>“Very Much” Only</b>
Friends within the institute	95%	77%
Members of your institute	94	76
The leadership of your institute	91	71
People to whom you minister	91	69
People with whom you minister	91	67
Spiritual director, if applicable	90	73
Friends outside the institute	87	56
Other men and women religious	84	53
Your parents, if applicable	81	62
Novice/formation director/team	79	60
People in your school or workplace	79	54
Your siblings, if applicable	77	48
People in your parish	74	52
Other family members	72	41
Diocesan priests	59	36

Respondents also report high levels of support from the leadership of their institute, their spiritual director, and those to whom and with whom they minister. In contrast to their responses to the previous question, their parents are also among those from whom they now receive the most encouragement. However, siblings and other family members remain relatively low on the list of those from whom they receive encouragement. Diocesan priests are least likely to be cited as a source of “very much” encouragement.

***Gender Differences***

- Female respondents are more likely than male respondents to report that they receive encouragement from leadership, formators, and other members. Compared to male respondents, female respondents are also more likely to say they receive encouragement from diocesan priests.

- There are no significant differences between men and women in the level of encouragement they receive from various family members.

### ***Generational Differences***

Compared to older respondents, younger respondents tend to report higher levels of encouragement from almost every group about which they were asked. They are especially more likely to indicate that they receive encouragement from diocesan priests and from their novice/formation director or team.

### ***Comments from Focus Groups and Interviews***

While some new members initially encountered opposition when they were discerning a vocation to religious life, some also described family members or others eventually “coming around” and being very supportive, even if they did not really understand religious life. Several vocation and formation directors also remarked about parents initially having reservations about their son’s or daughter’s interest in a religious life but coming around once they realized that he or she was happy.

*I think most folks in my family were kind of surprised, kind of startled, didn't see it coming. I was dating a girl and I had just broken up with her so there was speculation that I was gay and was running away to the seminary. [Laughter] My mom was supportive but she just admitted to me recently that she prayed throughout my entire novitiate that I would leave the order. But I think she's come around.*

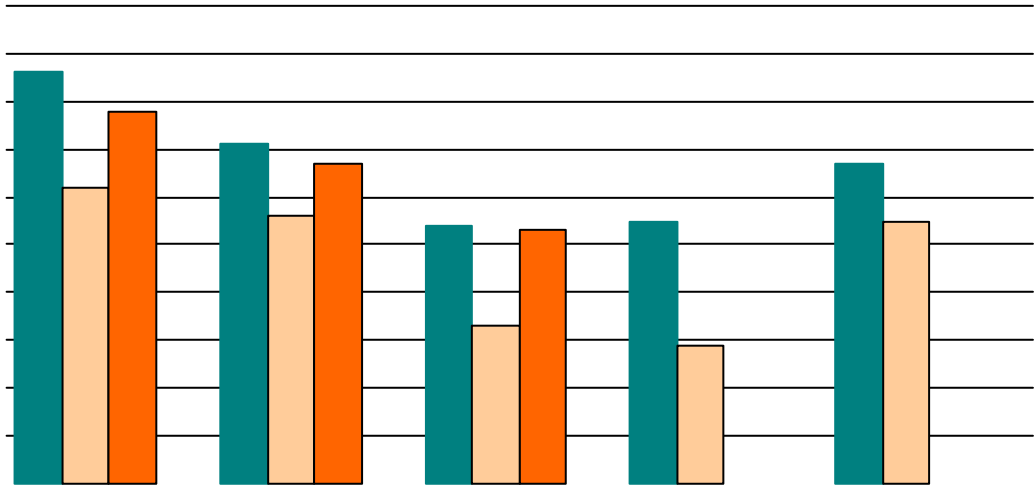
*But then a year after I entered the seminary my grandfather died and the pastor let me take care of the prayers at the wake and some of the prayers at the graveside. That was the moment, I hate to say it, that people in my family started coming around to the idea of a priest in the family....It was a long process of them getting used to it. And there are*

## Importance of Types of Prayer

*Most new members say that daily Eucharist is “very” important to them.*

<i>How important <u>to you</u> are these types of prayer?</i>		
Percentage responding:		
	<b>“Somewhat” or “Very Much”</b>	<b>“Very Much” Only</b>
Daily Eucharist	90%	76%
Liturgy of the Hours	84	66
Faith sharing	80	49
Non-liturgical common prayer	71	38
Eucharistic Adoration	66	50
Other devotional prayer, e.g., rosary	65	42
Common meditation	63	42

When asked about the importance of various types of prayer, respondents are most likely to name daily Eucharist and Liturgy of the Hours as the prayer types that are most important to them. Eucharistic Adoration and faith sharing are also relatively important to many respondents. Non-liturgical common prayer, common meditation, and devotional prayer are somewhat less





## Importance of Aspects of Community Life

*Praying with other members is an especially important aspect of community life to most newer members of religious institutes.*

### *How important to you are these aspects of community life?*

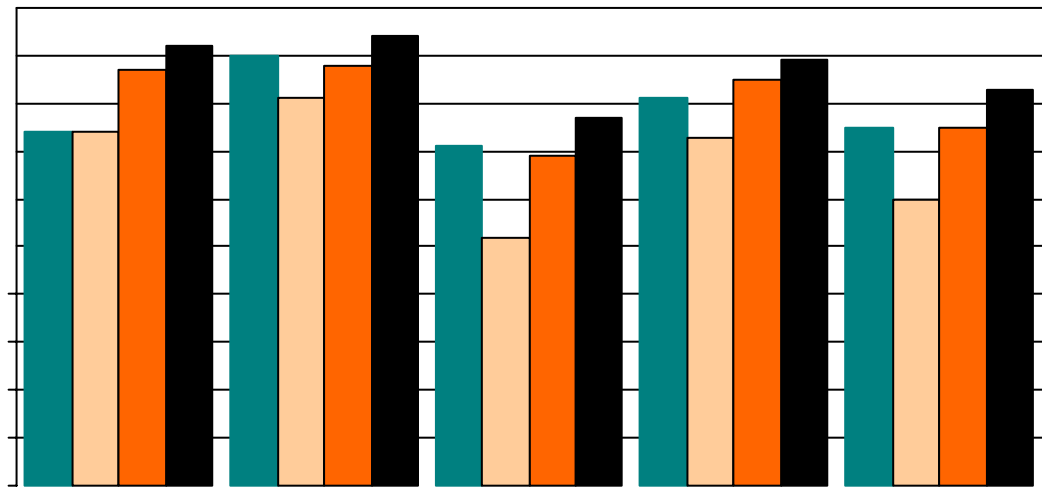
Percentage responding:

	<b>“Somewhat” or “Very Much”</b>	<b>“Very Much” Only</b>
Praying with other members	97%	87%
Sharing meals together	96	82
Living with other members	95	83
Socializing/sharing leisure time together	93	72
Working with other members	88	66

All of the aspects of community life about which they were asked are “very” important to most respondents. However, praying with other members, living with other members, and sharing meals together are a little more likely to be considered “very” important than working with other members or socializing with other members.

### *Gender Differences*

Women are more likely than men to say that praying with other members and, to a lesser degree, living and socializing with other members are “very” important to them.



### ***Responses to Open-ended Questions***

Many of the responses to the open-ended questions – which asked respondents about what attracted them to their religious institute, what they find most rewarding or satisfying about religious life, and what they find most challenging about religious life – mentioned community life or some aspect of community life. See Appendix II for new member comments on community life.

### ***Comments from Focus Groups and Interviews***

## Preferences for Living Arrangements

*Most new members prefer to live in medium (four to seven members) or large (eight or more members) communities rather than alone or in communities of two or three.*

### ***How much do you prefer living in these settings?***

Percentage responding:

	<b>“Somewhat” or “Very Much”</b>	<b>“Very Much” Only</b>
In a large community of 8 or more	79%	50%
In a medium-sized community of 4 to 7	78	45
In a small community of two or three	43	17
Alone	19	7
With members of different ages	93	62
With members of different cultures	87	49
With members in different ministries	78	45
With only members of your institute	81	54

- Women are more likely than men to indicate that they prefer to live with members of different ages. Men, on the other hand, are a little more likely to have some preference for living with members in different ministries.

### *Generational Differences*

- The older a respondent is, the more likely he or she is to have at least some preference for living alone and, to a lesser extent, with one or two others. A little more than half of the respondents from both the Pre-Vatican II and Vatican II Generations (52 percent each), compared to less than a third of those from the Post-Vatican II and Millennial Generations (32 percent and 29 percent, respectively), say they would prefer this option at least “a little.”
- The younger a respondent is the more likely he or she is to prefer to live in a larger community, especially one with at least eight members. Two-thirds of Millennials (65 percent) prefer this “very much.”
- There are no significant differences based on age in preference for living with members of different ages and different cultures. However, compared to younger respondents, older respondents express a greater willingness to live with members in different ministries.
- Compared to older respondents, younger respondents express a stronger preference for living with only members of their own institute and, to a lesser extent, members of their institute from other provinces. Older respondents, on the other hand, are more open to living with members of other institutes as well as with associates. Two-thirds of Millennials (67 percent) “very much” prefer living with only members of their institute.

## Preference for Ministry Settings

*Most new members prefer ministry with other members of their institute and ministry sponsored by their institute.*

<b><i>How much do you prefer ministry in these settings?</i></b>		
Percentage responding:		
	<b>“Somewhat” or “Very Much”</b>	<b>“Very Much” Only</b>
With other members of your institute	91%	69%
With members of other units of your institute, e.g., other provinces	83	47
With members of other institutes	70	24
In a ministry sponsored by your institute	88	62
With an organization that is Catholic but is not sponsored by your institute	65	22
In a parish or diocesan ministry	61	28
With an organization that is religious but is not Catholic	34	8
With an organization that is not religious	25	8

When asked about various ministry settings, most respondents express a rather strong preference for ministry with other members of their institute and ministry sponsored by their institute. Very few would prefer ministry with a non-Catholic or non-religious organization or even one that is Catholic but not sponsored by their institute.

### ***Gender Differences***

Although both male and female newer members would most prefer to work with members of their own institute, the male respondents are a little more likely to say they would also prefer working with members of their institute from other provinces.



## Evaluation of Their Religious Institute

*New members give their religious institutes the highest ratings on their commitment to ministry.*

### ***How would you rate the following in your religious institute?***

Percentage responding:

	<b>“Good” or “Excellent”</b>	<b>“Excellent” Only</b>
Commitment to ministry	96%	69%
Opportunities for spiritual growth	93	62
Faithfulness to prayer and spiritual growth	92	62
Focus on mission	91	59
Opportunities for personal growth	91	59
Sense of identity as institute members	88	59
Fidelity to the Church and its teachings	88	56
Response to the needs of our time	88	56



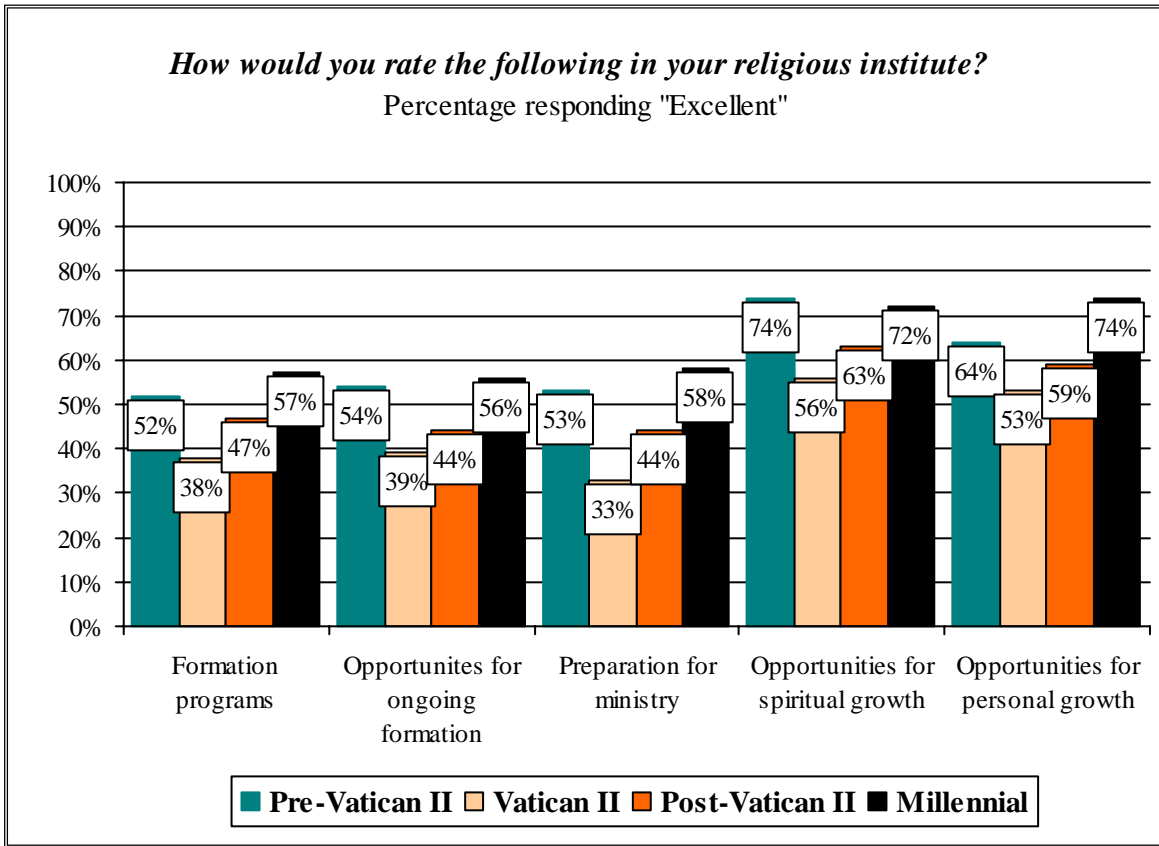
assessment of each of the aspects of life in their institutes about which they were asked, with about eight in ten or more rating each as at least “good.”

### *Gender Differences*

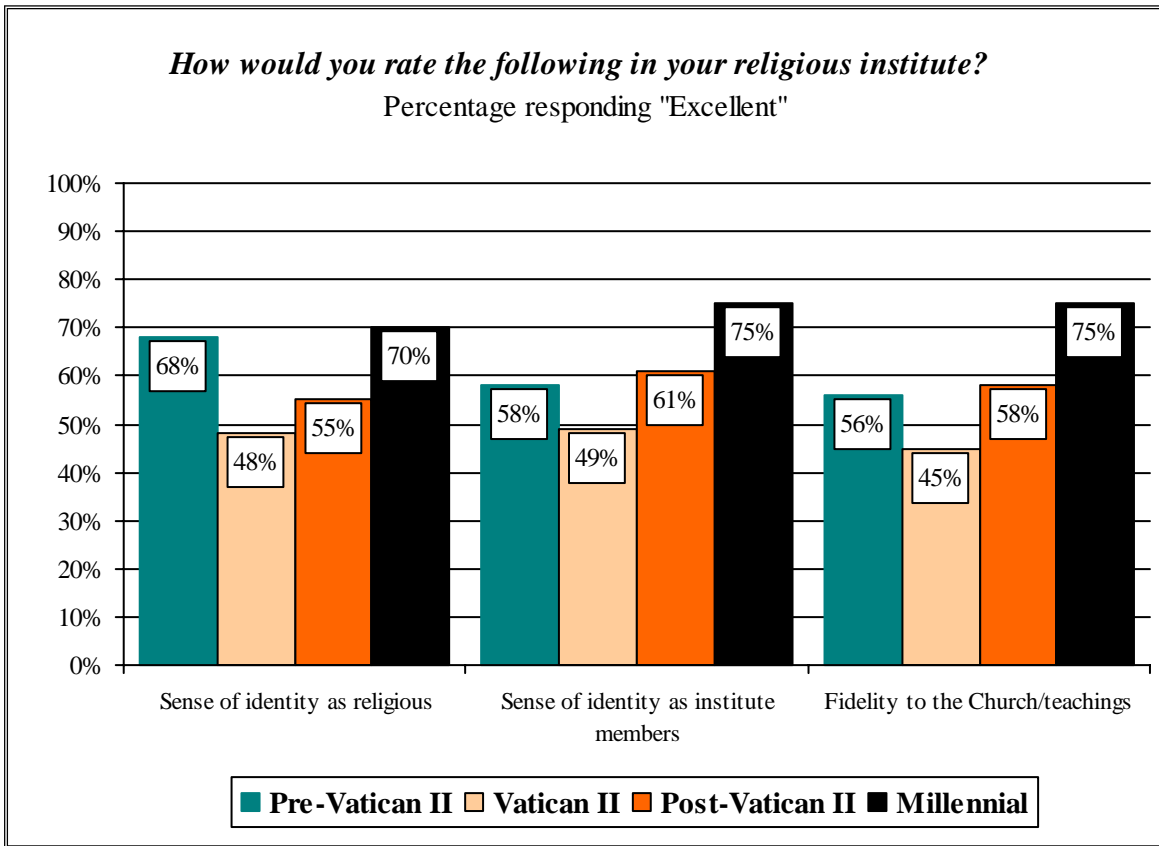
Women tend to be more positive than men in their evaluation of various aspects of life in their religious institutes. The differences between men and women are largest on their assessment the aspects of life related to prayer and spiritual growth – faithfulness to prayer and spiritual growth, communal prayer experiences, and opportunities for spiritual growth – as well as on fidelity to the Church and a sense of identity as religious.

## Generational Differences

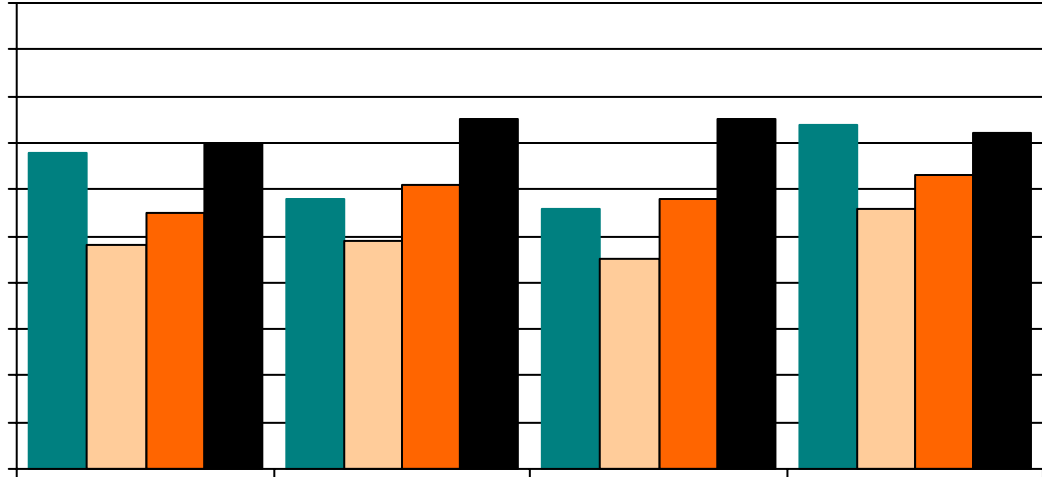
As the following series of charts illustrate, there are significant differences across generations in evaluations of various aspects of life in their religious institutes. With a few exceptions,



- Respondents from the Millennial Generation and, to only a slightly lesser degree, those from the Pre-Vatican II Generation give their institutes high marks for their formation programs as well as for their preparation for ministry and opportunities for ongoing formation, spiritual growth, and personal growth.
- Compared to other new members, those from the Vatican II Generation tend to be less positive about the formation program in their institute as well as about preparation for ministry and opportunities for ongoing formation, spiritual growth, and personal growth.



- In keeping with patterns noted earlier, the Millennials are the most positive in their assessment of their institute's fidelity to the Church and its teaching. The Vatican II Generation is the least positive.
- Millennials are also the most positive in their evaluation of the sense of identity as religious and as members of the institute.



- The oldest and youngest new members (those from the Pre-Vatican II and Millennial Generations) are more likely than those from the two middle generations (Vatican II and Post Vatican II) to rate support for newer members and relationships with one another as “excellent.”
- Millennial respondents are more likely than other respondents, especially those from the Vatican II Generation, to rate communal prayer experiences and the quality of community life as “excellent.”

## **Practices Regarding the Religious Habit**

Respondents were asked several questions regarding the wearing of a religious habit. About two-thirds (69 percent) report that members of their institute wear a habit. Among those who responded affirmatively, a little more than half (55 percent) indicate that the habit is required in all or most circumstances and a quarter

frequent in the responses of women. Only a few respondents cited the fact that their institute does *not* have a habit as something that appealed to them.

*What most attracted me to the religious institute I joined was the community witness in their ministries, that they have a habit, and that they were Franciscan.*

*I was most attracted to the [Religious Institute] because of their common ministry and strong community life, Eucharistic and Marian devotion, and wearing of the habit, signifying commitment to traditional religious life and fidelity to the Church. The joy of the members was also a compelling witness, as well as a feeling of being “at home” here.*

*Our prayer life – our way of praying and our prayers. The visibility and witness shown to others in the wearing of our habit.*

*Strong identity – common prayer, common apostolate, habit, community life. This community knew/knows where it is going.*

*The habit (the fact that they wear one, not the style) and the kindness and joy of its members.*

*I was not originally attracted to community life or to the habit...I consider both of great (very high) value today (16 years later).*

*Although most older friars do not wear habit, those in formation wear it regularly. I consider this a good sign for the future. Fidelity to the Church, especially in younger friars – good sign for the future.*

*I was looking also for a group that did not wear a habit and that allowed members to live in apartments – Basically, I wanted a group that allowed for individuality and personal needs.*

### ***Comments from Focus Groups and Interviews***

Questions about the habit generated lively discussions among some focus group participants. Although most participants were from religious institutes that do not regularly wear habits, many saw some value in them while others were adamantly opposed to requiring them. The women tended to be either strongly in favor or strongly opposed to habits, while the men tended to be more mixed in their views.

*It was designed originally to be what the poor people wore. This was what you bought at J.C. Penney or Sears or what we are wearing. I don't think going back to medieval garb is the way to do it.*



*something that helps identify me with the vows and live them ... What is it that as a culture we are needing to help us in this journey in coming to a closer relationship with Christ... How do we look now at are there some essential aspects to it that also our culture is looking toward... [I]f you're doing your research in terms of the future of religious life, I think there has to be some look at that because that also seems to be where some of the growth is really happening is in communities that have some of those things. I don't think that is the essential reason, I mean I didn't join my community because of the habit. I definitely would have picked a prettier color. [Laughter] But I think that's the reality, what's essentially being lived and then how are there aspects of sacramentals or, I don't know what other word to use, but that are really an extension of that.*

*People treat you differently in a positive way. I can remember making hospital rounds...and it's incredibly humbling because you know you aren't yourself anymore. I'm a representative of the Church and of God for better or worse....I'm just conscious that I'm speaking for the Church. That's an incredibly significant experience, I mean, being able to offer reconciliation to people but at the same time a very humbling experience.*

*We actually had two women who never wore the habit, wear the habit to school one day because it was "dress like it's 1942 day." They put on the habit and both of them said that people, mostly the teachers and less the students, interacted with them completely differently than they did on days when they wore whatever they wore. They got a lot of...anger from people....The interaction was*



## **Rewarding and Satisfying Aspects of Religious Life**

One of the open-ended questions at the end of the survey of new members asked: “What do you find most rewarding or satisfying about religious life?” Almost all of the new members responded and offered a range of comments about various aspects of religious life. The most frequent responses were about some aspect of the communal dimension of religious life. Some mention living, praying, and working together while others focus more on the sense of common

*The most rewarding aspect of religious life is our community living. In community we pray, live, recreate, and minister together. Our cohesiveness and sense of identity as religious serving others as ministers of the Gospel is wonderful.*

*Fraternity, faith sharing, prayer in common and alone. Sharing the fruit of our life together with people outside of the community.*

*The common life of ministry, prayer, and brotherhood. I feel like I am a part of a common endeavor that is holy and fulfilling God's call to service in the Gospel and in the Church.*

*Our community life and prayer gives us the strength to serve those who are poor and in need. My community has encouraged and challenged me to see beyond my personal expectations. Together we work to make a difference in serving others spiritually and corporally. Community life is rewarding as well as the most difficult aspect of this life given to God in service of the poor.*

*Being connected with others who are committed to living the Gospel. We love, support, challenge, collaborate with one another to bring God's love to those in need, and to do our best to live God's love for all of humanity and creation. Together we can be more effective, in responding to needs and discerning God's actions, than we could as lone individuals.*

### **Common Purpose**

Many of the respondents find satisfaction in being part of something larger than themselves and in sharing in a common life and mission with others.

*I find most rewarding our truly deep desire to seek God together and what it is God is calling us to in this time and place. I find deeply satisfying our communal desire to reach out to those in need among us and the joy of having the opportunity to do that together, either actually ministering together or knowing we have the support of the others. I also deeply appreciate our daily life and prayer that sustains us.*

*Feeling grounded with God better because I am with like-minded women who have given themselves to God and the charism of our congregation. I didn't want to do and be for and with God alone – we make a better witness together.*

*Support of other sisters, shared values, goals and desires for the world. Shared desire to grow in relationship with God and to serve the people of God.*

*That we still live in common and share the mission together.*

*We are all in this together. The same vision/mission.*

*Sense of being part of a larger whole dedicated to a common purpose/values/good.*

*Being connected with others who are committed to living the Gospel. We love, support, challenge, collaborate with one another to bring God's love to those in need, and to do our best to live God's love for all of humanity and creation. Together we can be more effective, in responding to needs and discerning God's actions, than we could as lone individuals.*

*I have a sense of belonging to something big – a sense of purpose. I am convinced the Holy Spirit wants us to exist and carry out a particular role in the Church's mission. I love my sisters.*

*A sense of being part of something larger than myself, being called to take risks and being associated with people who are engaged with life struggles and God until death.*

*Being a part of something greater than myself.*

*Being part of something larger than myself – we can do much more together than we can as individuals.*

### ***Following God's Will***

A number of new members mention the sense of satisfaction that comes from knowing they are responding to God's call and following God's will for them.

*I have always felt called and I know I am where I am supposed to be.*

*The sense that this is who I have been called to be before God.*

*Knowing that I am where God has called me to be.*

*Knowing that I am living out of the vocation God called me to.*

*I know this is where God has led me and I am following the radical call of God in my life.*

*The belief that I am living out God's will for me in the state of life.*

*The knowledge that I'm doing God's will and that He's saving souls through me.*

*The “knowing” of doing God’s will with my life and sharing community with my sisters.*

*Having a sense of commitment and fulfilling God’s will for my life.*

*I firmly believe that this is God’s will for me*

*Opportunity to attend daily Eucharist, Liturgy of the Hours, and other exercises as a part of religious life.*

*I love my ministry. It's not something I would have been able to do if I hadn't joined.*

*The freedom I have to give my time to people in need. Whatever the ministry.*

*The opportunity to be supported on my God quest and to engage in ministry with other women who share my values and desires. To be part of ministry that is larger than*

## **Greatest Challenges in and for Religious Life**

The third open-ended question at the end of the survey asked new members: “What do you find most challenging about religious life?” Similarly, the focus groups and many of the interview participants were also asked what they find most challenging both *in* religious life and *for* religious life. Respondents identified many issues and concerns. Some of these are perennial issues in religious life: the challenges of living in community, overcoming personal weaknesses, faithfully living the vows, and balancing personal, communal, and ministerial responsibilities. Some are more unique to this particular time in the history of religious life in the United States: aging and diminishment in their religious institutes, age and experience differences among new members as well as between new members and others in community, the lack of peers in religious life and in their religious institutes, and ideological and theological divisions, often across generational lines. This section highlights some of the comments related to the challenges that are more particular to the present day.

### ***Aging and Diminishment***

Many survey respondents and focus group participants commented on the aging and diminishment in religious life and/or in their religious institutes as a challenge, especially for new members.

*As numbers dwindle, the challenge is to remain alive and vibrant, to be true to our mission regardless of numbers and ages.*

*Dwindling numbers of members, less visibility of religious, religious afraid to envision a new look of religious life.*

*Wondering what direction religious life is heading in the next 5-10 years as the number of professed men and women continues to decline...*

*Being the youngest and uncertainty about how religious life will unfold in the years to come.*

*Living in community where the majority of the other men are much older than me, and knowing that the size of the province is quickly decreasing.*

### ***Future of Ministry***

Some of the respondents express concerns about the future of ministry as their members age and their numbers continue to decline.

*The rapid aging of larger numbers of members; it is eclipsing our ministry and*



*That some members believe religious life is dead and want to see associates as our future. I am yearning for a revival of what vows mean/can be in the future.*

### ***Differences in Age***

*Experiencing the isolation at times in community due to my lived experiences before I entered. Some sisters can't fathom my lived experiences. Different points of view entering at an older age sometimes causes conflict. Many gaps between sisters my age and myself.*

*I was in a religious community when I was younger. I have been involved in various aspects of Church ministry over 35 years. I lived alone for many years. What has been most challenging is the concept of formation/incorporation for someone older, with theology degrees, ministerial experience, and life experience. It all worked out okay but was difficult at the time. Also for a new person coming in older, it is difficult at times to live with the ups and downs of daily community life.*

*Living with others in community when I lived alone for 25 years. Continuing to have hope in light of our declining numbers.*

*Living alone, being a "sister mom" with three grown sons and two grandchildren and not having other "sister moms" to talk with.*

*Re-entering as an older woman I am stretched in my ministry experiences. As a mother and grandmother I am also stretched to find the balance that works for all.*

### ***Lack of Peers in Religious Life***

Both younger and older new members remarked on the difficulty of not having peers in formation, in community, and/or in religious life.

*The transitions and the isolation experienced at times by a young woman going through formation without peers in her community or sisters that can really relate to her experience.*

*Being the youngest in community and not being able to live with anyone my age or in formation.*

*Not having more younger members to share the experience with...perhaps this is only heightened because there are so many that are significantly older....*

*Few (age) peers within the community and a lack of understanding of religious life among those not in religious life.*

### *Integration into the Community*

Some new members – both younger and older – comment on the difficulty of integrating





these differences in generational terms, primarily as a gap between those from the Millennial and/or Past-Vatican II Generations and those from the Vatican II Generation.

*Generational gaps between younger members and middle-aged or older members. On issues of religious identity, dress, community life, etc.*

*Intergenerational issues such as loyalty to the Church, orthodoxy, seriousness about living the vows, commitment to common life...etc. I find this lacking in many members older than 40 in my community.*

*Navigating the deep generational divisions within the Society – particularly the neuralgic pointional dlgi*



*Finding other religious who are committed to living common life in the community I live in/minister in. Many prefer to live alone.*

*Community life. Newer members are looking for community living/communal prayer. Older sisters are looking in some ways for the opposite.*

*Finding others who want to live more radically among those who need us most, and to live with others who want to pray communally daily.*

*The diminshment of age and the scarcity of community living options with vitality or newness (not just moving in with two residents of long-standing).*

*That we no longer emphasize common life, living together, common good, common prayer. That we are not generally passionate about vowed life. It's a challenge to be faithful in face of a death wish.*



## Hope for the Future of Religious Life

Although many of the participants in the focus groups and interviews expressed concerns about the future of religious life and the future of their religious institutes, most remain hopeful. Most acknowledge that the numbers in religious life may continue to decline and that their religious institutes may be different in the future. Nonetheless, they believe religious life will persevere and that the Spirit can and will move in that diminishment. Some already see signs of hope, especially in a younger generation that they believe is bringing a new energy and optimism to religious life. The following excerpts provide examples of the attitudes of new members about the future of religious life.

*I think there is a future for religious life. It's been there a long time and it will continue in whatever shape that God wants it to be. We won't have the numbers that we used to at one point but I think it will persevere. So that is my hope.*

*My sense is, my hope for the future is that we, it's not a numbers game anymore. We have smaller numbers. It's a reality and I think we should just live with that and recognize that the gifts that people bring, that that's OK. Instead of trying to get more people, we stick with what we have and our life as we all said earlier in terms of what got us here were the people living their lives. We were attracted to that. I think if we do that well, it's going to come. And if it doesn't come, then we die and we recreate or what have you. So that's my thing. I think my hope for the future is that we realize who we are and let go of some of the numbers things and say, "Let's just be who we are" and see if maybe we'll transform hearts.*

*I don't pretend to vision the future, but I think my hope would be the ability for a real intensification of what is the vocation to religious life and priesthood and then really the ability to develop as persons, as integrated persons, into psychology and sexuality and spirituality and all of those things so that we can really be whole persons that can then really be a witness in this, as Francis says, without even preaching, without saying*

*right word – “stagnant” – in the old ways of religious life. It*



*there's more lay people and maybe I even envision a house that would be like where there would have a family living here and then a side house that has where the brothers and the sisters live and we are all living in community the way the image, that vision that our founder had. Maybe that's our future, I would hope.*

*...[W]e can talk about how flawed everything is but what I'm hopeful about is the fact that we're all still here as temporary professed. We still can kiss it. We know it's flawed, but we want to be in it because we care a lot about it...But I think for me the way I look at it and here are the two words you talked about earlier, the challenges in religious life and for religious life. One is the integrity piece. How can we still adapt our charism,*

### **PART III: Best Practices in Vocation Promotion**

The findings from the study suggest a number of “best practices” for vocation promotion. These include instilling a “culture of vocations” and involving membership and leadership in concerted vocation promotion efforts; having a full-time vocation director who is supported by a team and resources; using new media, especially websites and other online tools; offering discernment programs and other opportunities for potential candidates to meet members and learn about the institute; and targeting college students and young adults as well as elementary and high school students to expose them to the possibility of religious life and inform them about the institute.

Although these practices can have a positive impact on attracting and retaining new members, the research suggests that it is the example of members and the characteristics of the institute that have the most influence on the decision to enter a particular institute. The most successful institutes in terms of attracting and retaining

## *Creating a Culture of Vocations*

Many of the successful institutes are characterized by a “culture of vocations” within the institute. In these institutes everyone – not just the vocation director – has a sense of responsibility for vocation promotion and is involved in and supportive of vocation efforts. This includes leadership and membership as well as support services such as communications and development. In some cases, the institutions and ministries of the institute are also involved in vocation promotion efforts.

Vocation directors described a number of different ways of nurturing that culture such as regularly informing members of vocation activities through newsletters, e-mail correspondence, and at meetings as well as inviting members to participate in vocation fairs, “Come and See” experiences, discernment retreats, or serving as mentors or contacts for those in discernment. Members can also play an important role by praying for vocations, inviting individuals to consider a religious vocation, and by encouraging vocations in whatever setting they find themselves.

Findings from the survey of new members indicate that regular meeting with members and visits to communities are among the activities that new members found most helpful in their discernment process. Comments from new members further support the value to them of spending time with members, in whatever setting, while they were discerning as well as after they entered.

## *Vocation Director and/or Team*

Findings from the survey of religious institutes reveal that there is a positive correlation between having a vocation director, especially one who is full-time, and having candidates and new members in initial formation. Having a full-time director is also positively correlated with having a higher number of members who have entered and stayed since 1990 as well as with a higher retention rate.

Although the relationship is not as strong, having a vocation team is also positively correlated with having new members. Vocation team was defined on the survey as more than one person directly responsible for vocation ministry. The *number* of team members does not appear to have a statistically significant relationship to attracting or retaining new members. However, the review of practices in some of the more successful institutes found that a few have a full-time director and one or two part-time associate or assistant directors or some other configuration that involves more than one person. At least one institute that was studied has two full-time vocation directors.

Findings from the survey of new members also suggest that the vocation director plays an important role in the discernment process. Most new members (60 percent) report that the

vocation director or team provided “very much” encouragement when they were considering entering their institute (85 percent report that they received at least “some” encouragement from the vocation director) and 70 percent who met regularly with a vo

Several vocation directors as well as some of the new members themselves raised some cautions about websites and other media. Some of the vocation directors commented that young people today tend to be very media savvy and that they do their homework before approaching an institute. Some of the younger members suggested that that websites or other media should be tested with the target audience whose impressions of what “works” may be very different from those of older members. Both vocation directors and new members emphasized the importance of honesty and authenticity in presenting the institute and suggested that websites



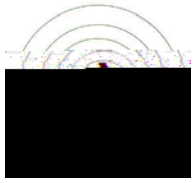
Interviews and focus groups with new members revealed that many learned about their particular religious institute through a friend or advisor at a Newman Center, campus ministry, or other college or university program. Some of the vocation directors also reported being involved to varying degrees in college and high school retreats and other programs as a way to get to know young people and expose them to religious life.

Findings from the survey of new members show that 40 percent of the men and almost 50 percent of the women first considered a vocation to religious life before they were 18 years of age. More than a quarter of the women considered it before they were 14. These findings suggest that vocation directors might want to consider targeting some of their vocation efforts at those in elementary and high school. Anecdotal evidence from vocation directors also suggests a possible trend toward considering religious life at a younger age than was the case even a few years ago.

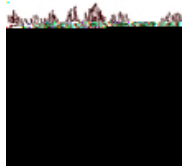


**APPENDIX I:**  
**Questionnaires with Response Frequencies**





**Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate  
and the National Religious Vocations Conference**  
*Survey of Religious Institutes and Societies of Apostolic Life*



*This survey is part of a study to assist NRVC and CARA in understanding religious life and religious vocations in the United States today. Please respond for the unit (congregation, province, monastery) for which you are responsible. If the unit is international, respond for the U.S. only.*

*Please indicate the number of **candidates/postulants, novices, and temporary professed** in your unit who were born in each decade:*

	<b>Candidates/ Postulants</b>	<b>Novices</b>	<b>Temporary Professed</b>
Before 1940	20. _____	27. _____	34. _____
1940-1949	21. _____	28. _____	35. _____
1950-1959	22. _____	29. _____	36. _____
1960-1969	23. _____	30. _____	37. _____
1970-1979	24. _____	31. _____	38. _____
1980-1989	25. _____	32. _____	39. _____
1990 or later	26. _____	33. _____	40. _____

**Type of Institute or Society**

1. Gender of members: 27 1. Men 73 2. Women.

2. Canonical Status:

- 5 1. Public association of the faithful
- 91 2. Religious institute
- 4 3. Society of apostolic life NR=4

3. Status of the institute or society: NR=4

- 12 1. Diocesan right 77 2. Pontifical right

Character or lifestyle of the institute or society (*check all that apply*):

- 71 4. Apostolic 2 7. Eremitic
- 26 5. Contemplative 11 8. Evangelical
- 6 6. Conventual 20 9. Monastic

*Please indicate the number of **finally professed members** in your unit who were born in each decade:*

- \_\_\_\_\_ 41. Before 1920 \_\_\_\_\_ 45. 1950-1959
- \_\_\_\_\_ 42. 1920-1929 \_\_\_\_\_ 46. 1960-1969
- \_\_\_\_\_ 43. 1930-1939 \_\_\_\_\_ 47. 1970-1979
- \_\_\_\_\_ 44. 1940-1949 \_\_\_\_\_ 48. 1980 or later
- \_\_\_\_\_ 49. Average age of **finally professed members**
- \_\_\_\_\_ 50. Median age of **finally professed members**

**Demographic Data**

*Please indicate the number in each category in your unit.*

- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Pre-candidates/aspirants (before entrance)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Candidates/postulants (before novitiate)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Novices
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Temporary vows/commitment
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Final/perpetual vows/commitment

**Men's institutes and societies only:**

- 15. Please indicate if your unit includes:
- 1. Brothers 2. Priests 3. Brothers and priests

*If a mixed clerical institute or society, please indicate the number in each category in your unit.*

- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Brothers in temporary vows/commitment
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Priests/seminarians in temp. vows/commitment
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. Brothers in final/perpetual vows/commitment
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. Priests/seminarians in final/perpetual vows/commitment

*Please indicate the number of **candidates/postulants, novices, and temporary professed** in your unit in each racial or ethnic category.*

- \_\_\_\_\_ 51. African American/Black/African
- \_\_\_\_\_ 52. Asian/Pacific Islander
- \_\_\_\_\_ 53. Caucasian/White/Anglo
- \_\_\_\_\_ 54. Hispanic/Latino(a)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 55. Native American/American Indian
- \_\_\_\_\_ 56. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please indicate the number of **finally professed members** in your unit in each racial or ethnic category.*

- \_\_\_\_\_ 57. African American/Black/African
- \_\_\_\_\_ 58. Asian/Pacific Islander
- \_\_\_\_\_ 59. Caucasian/White/Anglo
- \_\_\_\_\_ 60. Hispanic/Latino(a)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 61. Native American/American Indian
- \_\_\_\_\_ 62. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Vocation Ministry

63. Does your unit have a **vocation director**?  
88 1. Yes                      12 2. No NR=1
64. *If yes*, which best describes the **vocation director**?  
97 1. A member of your unit  
1 2. A member of another unit of your institute, society, or federation  
0 3. A member of another institute or society  
1 4. An associate  
1 5. A lay person who is not a member or associate
65. Is the **vocation director** engaged in vocation ministry:  
46 1. Full-time                      54 2. Part-time                      NR=1
66. Does your unit have a **vocation team**, i.e., more than one person directly responsible for vocation ministry?  
59 1. Yes                      41 2. No                      NR=6

Mean=4 67. Number of members of the **vocation team**

If your unit has a **vocation team**, please indicate if it includes the following (*check all that apply*):

- 91 68. Member(s)  
13 69. Associate(s)  
10 70. Other lay person(s) who is/are not member(s) or associate(s)
71. If your unit has a **vocation director and/or team**, what is the scope of his/her/their responsibilities?  
95 1. Your unit only  
4 2. More than one unit of your institute, society, or federation (e.g., two or more provinces)  
1 3. More than one institute or society                      NR=3

Please indicate if your unit sponsors or co-sponsors the following discernment programs (*check all that apply*):

- 26 72. Discernment groups  
54 73. Discernment retreats  
73 74. "Come and See" experiences  
12 75. Discernment house  
56 76. Live-in experiences  
32 77. Ministry/mission experiences

Please indicate if your unit has used any of the following for vocation promotion in the last five years (*check all that apply*):

- 75 78. Advertising                      6 81. TV  
87 79. Website/Internet                      7 82. Radio  
91 80. Print materials                      16 83. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate if your unit sponsors or co-sponsors vocation promotion or discernment programs specifically targeted toward these age groups (*check all that apply*):

- 34 84. Elementary school  
56 85. High school  
65 86. College  
71 87. Young adults (20s and 30s)  
27 88. Mature adults (over age 40)

Please indicate if your unit requires the following for admission (*check all that apply*):

- 94 89. Medical assessment                      68 91. Behavioral assessment  
84 90. Psychological testing                      75 92. Background check

## Formation/Incorporation Ministry

Please indicate the number of individuals in each category in your unit. If your unit has been reconfigured since 1990, please include the numbers for the units that are now part of your unit.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 93. Total number who entered since Jan.1, 1990  
\_\_\_\_\_ 94. Of the total in #93, number who remain

*Of those who entered and then **departed** since 1990, please indicate the number who departed at each stage:*

- \_\_\_\_\_ 95. During candidacy/postulancy  
\_\_\_\_\_ 96. During novitiate  
\_\_\_\_\_ 97. During temporary vows/commitment  
\_\_\_\_\_ 98. After final/perpetual vows/commitment

*Please indicate the typical number of years that are required for each period of initial formation or incorporation in your unit (if less than a year, please specify the number of months):*

- \_\_\_\_\_ 99. Pre-candidacy/aspirancy (before entrance)  
\_\_\_\_\_ 100. Candidacy/postulancy (before novitiate)  
\_\_\_\_\_ 101. Novitiate  
\_\_\_\_\_ 102. Temporary vows/commitment

*Does the unit have the following requirements for admission to candidacy/postulancy?*

**Yes No**

- 89 11 103. Minimum age (*please specify*): \_\_\_\_\_  
76 24 104. Maximum age (*please specify*): \_\_\_\_\_  
80 20 105. **Minimum education**  
49 51 106. **Minimum work experience**

107. *If yes to #105 and/or #106, please describe:*

Do **candidates/postulants** in your unit spend all or part of their formation with religious others from:

**Yes No**

41 59 108. Other units of your institute, society, federation  
28 72 109. Other institutes or societies

Do **novices** in your unit spend all or part of their formation with others from:

**Yes No**

53 47 110. Other units of your institute, society, federation  
39 61 111. Other institutes or societies

Do those in **temporary vows/commitment** in your unit spend all or part of their formation with others from:

**Yes No**

55 45 112. Other units of your institute, society, federation  
29 71 113. Other institutes or societies

### Reconfiguration

**Yes No**

16 84 114 Has your unit reconfigured since 1990?  
19 81 115. Is your unit in the process of reconfiguring?  
116. *If yes to #114 and/or #115, please describe:*

### Ministry

**Active/apostolic institutes or societies only (#117-127):**

*Please indicate the number of members of your unit who are:*

\_\_\_\_\_ 117. Active in a full-time ministry  
\_\_\_\_\_ 118. Active in a part-time ministry  
\_\_\_\_\_ 119. Retired from active ministry

*Of members who are active (not retired from active ministry), number engaged in the following types of ministry:*

\_\_\_\_\_ 120. Education  
\_\_\_\_\_ 121. Health care  
\_\_\_\_\_ 122. Pastoral ministry (e.g., parish, campus)  
\_\_\_\_\_ 123. Spiritual direction/retreat work  
\_\_\_\_\_ 124. Social work/social service  
\_\_\_\_\_ 125. Social justice/advocacy  
\_\_\_\_\_ 126. Internal ministry  
  
\_\_\_\_\_ 127. Number of members serving in a ministry sponsored or co-sponsored by your unit

### Community Life and Prayer

*Please indicate the number of active members (not retired from active ministry) of your unit who:*

\_\_\_\_\_ 128. Live alone  
\_\_\_\_\_ 129. Live in communities of 2 or 3  
\_\_\_\_\_ 130. Live in communities of 4 to 7  
\_\_\_\_\_ 131. Live in communities of 8 or more

Please indicate which of the following characterize the regular prayer life of a majority of members of your unit (*check all that apply*):

90 132. Daily Eucharist  
85 133. Liturgy of the Hours  
42 134. Non-liturgical common prayer  
28 135. Common meditation  
53 136. Faith sharing

**Contemplative institutes only (#137-139):**

*Please indicate the number of members of your unit who are:*

\_\_\_\_\_ 137. Able to participate fully in prayer life  
\_\_\_\_\_ 138. Able to participate somewhat in prayer life  
\_\_\_\_\_ 139. Unable to participate in prayer life

### Religious Habit

**Yes No**

**NR=3**

66 34 140. Do members of your unit wear a habit?  
141. *If yes, please describe:*

142. *If yes to #140, is wearing the habit:* **NR=4**  
46 1. Required in all or most circumstances  
19 2. Required only at certain times (e.g., ministry, prayer)  
32 3. Optional  
3 4. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

143. *If wearing the habit is optional, how many members wear it all or most of the time?*

8 1. None **NR=1**  
68 2. A few (less than 25%)  
16 3. Some (25-49%)  
6 4. Many (50-74%)  
4 5. Most (75% or more)

144. Please describe any special vocation promotion or recruitment efforts your religious institute or society of apostolic life has undertaken in recent years. Attach additional sheets if necessary.

145. Please describe any special formation/incorporation programs your religious institute or society of apostolic life has undertaken in recent years. Attach additional sheets if necessary.

As part of this study for NRVC, CARA will survey those who have entered religious institutes and societies of apostolic life in the last two decades. Please list the names and contact information (address, city, state, and ZIP) for all those **currently in initial formation** (candidates/postulants, novices, and those in temporary vows/commitment) as well as those who **professed final/perpetual vows/commitment in your unit since 1993**. Please attach additional sheets if necessary.

Please provide the information below for the person completing this survey so we may contact you for clarifications about your responses:

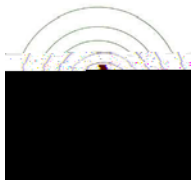
Name and Title:

Institute/Society and Province:

Phone, FAX, and E-mail:

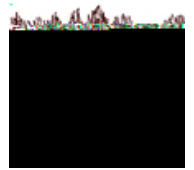
**Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.**  
CARA/Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University  
2300 Wisconsin Ave., NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20007  
Phone: 202-687-8080 Fax: 202-687-8083





# Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate and the National Religious Vocations Conference

## *Survey of New Members*



*This survey is part of a study to assist NRVC and CARA in understanding religious life and religious vocations in the United States today. "Religious institute" refers to the congregation, province, or abbey/monastery to which you belong. **Your responses are very important.** Please respond by marking an "X" in the appropriate boxes. If you do not know how to*

<p><i>1=Not at All</i></p> <p><i>2=Only a Little</i></p>	<p><i>3=Somewhat</i></p> <p><i>4=Very Much</i></p>
--	--

*How much did the following attract you to religious life?*

- |          |          |          |          |           |  |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|--|
| <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>NR</b> |  |
| 2        | 3        | 17       | 78       | 2         | 1. A sense of call to religious life           |
| 0        | 4        | 23       | 73       | 3         | 2. A desire for prayer and spiritual growth    |
| 2        | 9        | 29       | 60       | 3         | 3. A desire to be part of a community          |
| 1        | 7        | 26       | 66       | 3         | 4. A desire to be of service                   |
| 13       | 17       | 28       | 42       | 5         | 5. A desire to be more committed to the Church |

*How much did the following attract you to your religious institute?*

- |          |          |          |          |           |   |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|---|
| <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>NR</b> |   |
| 13       | 17       | 28       | 42       | 5         | 6. The life and works of your founder/ess   |
| 3        | 9        | 28       | 60       | 3         | 7. The mission of the institute             |
| 1        | 7        | 25       | 67       | 3         | 8. The spirituality of the institute        |
| 2        | 9        | 30       | 59       | 3         | 9. The prayer life of the institute         |
| 2        | 8        | 30       | 60       | 3         | 10. The community life of the institute     |
| 4        | 12       | 33       | 51       | 6         | 11. The ministries of the institute         |
| 13       | 17       | 23       | 47       | 4         | 12. The institute's fidelity to the Church  |
| 4        | 7        | 24       | 65       | 4         | 13. The example of members of the institute |
| 25       | 16       | 24       | 35       | 7         | 14. A personal invitation by a member       |
| 6        | 9        | 28       | 57       | 5         | 15. Welcome and encouragement by members    |

*How did you first become acquainted with your religious institute? *Check all that apply.**

- |    |     |  |
|----|-----|--|
| 36 | 16. | In an institution where members served, e.g., school |
| 19 | 17. | Through working with a member of the institute       |
| 5  | 18. | Through a relative in the institute                  |
| 15 | 19. | Through a friend in the institute                    |
| 28 | 20. | Through the recommendation of a friend or advisor    |
| 5  | 21. | Through a vocation fair                              |
| 3  | 22. | Through a vocation match or placement service        |
| 9  | 23. | Through an event sponsored by the institute          |
| 5  | 24. | Through a media story about the institute or member  |
| 18 | 25. | Through print or online promotional materials        |
| 23 | 26. | Other: _____   |

*Did you participate in any of the following before you entered your religious institute? *Check all that apply.**

- |    |     |   |
|----|-----|---|
| 24 | 27. | Diocesan vocation programs                        |
| 63 | 28. | Spiritual direction                               |
| 56 | 29. | Discernment retreat                               |
| 57 | 30. | "Come and See" experience                         |
| 33 | 31. | Live in experience with the institute             |
| 22 | 32. | Ministry or mission experience with the institute |
| 14 | 33. | Regular meeting with a discernment group          |
| 39 | 34. | Regular meeting with a vocation director          |
| 33 | 35. | Regular meeting with a member(s) of the institute |
| 41 | 36. | Regular visits to communities                     |

<p><i>Please use the responses below for questions 37-52.</i></p>	
<p><b>1=Not at All</b></p> <p><b>2=Only a Little</b></p>	<p><b>3=Somewhat</b></p> <p><b>4=Very Much</b></p>

*How helpful were the following when you were discerning your call to religious life?*

- |          |          |          |          |           |  |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|--|
| <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>NR</b> |  |
| 74       | 15       | 7        | 4        | 18        | 37. General Catholic or diocesan websites                                |
| 73       | 13       | 8        | 5        | 19        | 38. Vocation discernment websites  |
| 59       | 12       | 14       | 15       | 17        | 39. Websites of religious institutes                                     |
| 48       | 21       | 22       | 9        | 14        | 40. Newspaper or magazine articles                                       |
| 41       | 20       | 23       | 17       | 12        | 41. Print or online promotional materials, e.g., brochures, posters, ads |
| 66       | 16       | 12       | 6        | 18        | 42. CDs, DVDs, or videos   |
| 68       | 13       | 11       | 8        | 20        | 43. Diocesan vocation programs   |
| 17       | 8        | 21       | 54       | 12        | 44. Spiritual direction  |
| 25       | 7        | 21       | 47       | 15        | 45. Discernment retreat  |
| 27       | 5        | 16       | 52       | 15        | 46. "Come and See" experience  |
| 41       | 5        | 10       | 44       | 24        | 47. Live in experiences  |
| 39       | 11       | 16       | 34       | 25        | 48. Ministry or mission experience                                       |
| 62       | 13       | 13       | 12       | 30        | 49. Meeting with a discernment group                                     |
| 19       | 9        | 25       | 47       | 16        | 50. Meeting with a vocation director                                     |
| 9        | 5        | 23       | 63       | 13        | 51. Meeting with a member(s) of the institute                            |
| 11       | 6        | 18       | 65       | 0         | 52. Visits to communities  |

*How much did these influence your decision to enter your religious institute?*

**1 2 3 4 NR**

- 41 19 27 13 7 53. The size of the institute  
33 16 25 26 5 54. Its geographic location(s)  
42 13 21 24 29 55. Its internationality, if applicable  
2 8 29 61 3 56. Prayer life or prayer styles in the institute  
2 7 26 65 3 57. Community life in the institute  
5 10 30 55 6 58. The lifestyle of members  
69 16 10 5 9 59. The racial/ethnic background of members  
42 22 24 12 7 60. The ages of members  
11 10 31 48 6 61. The types of ministry of its members  
30 9 15 46 5 62. Its practice regarding a religious habit

*How much encouragement did you receive from the following when you first considered entering your religious institute?*

**1 2 3 4 NR**

- 4 7 27 62 5 63. Members of your institute



Please provide the following information:

**APPENDIX II:**



### **188. What most attracted you to your religious institute?**

The responses below are grouped by active men, active women, contemplative men, contemplative women, and those that could not be classified according to these categories.

#### ***Active Men***

A chance to experience agapic love.

A chance to pour myself out in service. A way, not the only one, for me to be on mission with Christ.

A generous and authentic witness to Jesus and St. Francis. The community life was very down to earth yet deeply focused on our life as religious.

A group of men who were trying to put their money where their mouth is in terms of being committed to the gospel and to Jesus and to one another.

A number of things: 1. The charism of the Order. 2. The movement to a greater fidelity to the teachings of the Church. 3. The movement toward a more faithful form of liturgy. 4. The movement toward a more rigorous living of the vows. 5. The intellectual life. 6. The regular wearing of the habit.

A relationship with the Brothers that continued past high school. They were a constant presence and were always welcoming to me. They encouraged me to consider entering but I never felt pressured by them.

A sense that the men were doing useful and fulfilling work that was directed toward a real purpose; admiration for the educational achievements and efforts of the order.

A spirituality.

A strong sense of identity with purpose. No television but a strong community life. Other young men my own age.

A varied apostolate, thorough spiritual and academic formation.

An openness to older vocations.

Apostolate and then the people and area.

Apostolate tradition. Other physicians

Apostolates, community life, its service/connection to the local area.

At first, long years of studies. Now, it is the spirituality.

Authentic life, prayer life Eucharist centered hand on work with the poor evangelization.

Authenticity, prayer, apostolate, habit.

Benedictine spirituality

Breadth of ministries primarily in urban context.

Broad ministerial opportunities.

Carmelite spirituality.

Celebration of the Divine Office (Benedictine).

Certain individuals within the fraternity.

Charism of founder – Francis of Assisi – as manifested in its members. Sense of acceptance and openness. Warmth and encouragement. Emphasis – at least in theory – on community and fraternity.

Charism of the founder. Family spirit. Mission to the young.

Charism of the order.

Charism, life, prayer.

Charism, missions, travelling.

Charism. Diversity of ministry. Interacting with members of religious institute in parish, retreat house, campus. sense of belonging.

1. Charism/spirituality. 2. Work that we do. 3. Men that I had met in the Society.

Clearly defined mission. Community life.

1. Collaborative style of leadership. 2. Vatican II ecclesiology. 3. Down-to-earth and generally happy members. 4. Formation program that was not “cookie-cutter,” was very holistic. 5. Variety of ministries. 6. Priests, brothers, sisters, and laity.

Combination and interaction between an active and contemplative life.

Coming as a live-in and community support consistency in the day.



Commitment to education. Prayer/spirituality.

Commitment to vibrant community life and mission of forming lay leaders for the Church.  
Variety of ministries with focus on education.

Common apostolate, community life, radical life of vows.

Common life and charism.

Common life and ministry.

Common life, common chanted prayer, preaching ministry.

Common life, common prayer, fraternity, habit, traditional

Common life, rhythm at prayer, beautiful simplicity of the offices, beauty of natural surroundings and vibrance at the apostolates.

Common life, visible sign of commitment – habit. Fidelity to magisterium of Church.

Common prayer life and ministry.

Common spirit; inspiring enthusiasm; strong regard for honor of the Order; evident joy.

Communal life, down to earth spirit of men I met.

Community.

Community (fraternity), fidelity to the Magisterium, prayer life, wearing the habit, the youth of the community, the joy of the community.

Community life and priesthood.

Community life and various opportunities for ministry. The discipleship of equality between the priest and the brothers.

Community life, intellectual life, service.

Community life, our ministries, and the personalities of the community members.

Community life.

Community life.

(1) Community life; (2) Community prayer; (3) Variety of ministry; (4) Commitment of mission.

Community life. Commitment to prayer and evangelization.

Community spirit. "People I thought I could live with." Mission of the community.

Community, family environment, service.

Community, ministry, mission/vision/values.

Community, prayer, mission to education.

Contemplative prayer life. Reciting the full Office (7x) per day (we are monks). No outside apostolate. Peaceful prayer, rural setting. Simple, manual work.

De La Salle. Location of provincialate. Prayer style.

Decidedly Catholic. Habit. Joyful.

Desire to commit my life to service integrated with spirituality. Internationality/diversity of locations and ministries. Social justice ministries.

Desire to educate young women and men in Catholic doctrine, and to minister to the sacramental and spiritual needs of the Church.

1. Devotion to the Holy Eucharist. 2. Wearing the Holy Habit of St. Francis. 3. Community life in Friary. 4. Evangelization and serving the poor.

Direct service to poor.

Diverse and contemporary applications of spirituality

Diversity in all the sense of the word (ministries, members, places, etc.). Promotion of freedom and integration in self and others.

Diversity of ministries: education, parish, direct service to people who are poor, overseas missions, strong community life.

Diversity of ministry, members, locations.

Diversity of ministry. Community life.

Dominican sisters

Don Bosco, youth ministry, mission.

Earthy (down to earth) members. Attractive spirituality. Life-giving apostolates.

Educational ministry.

Eucharistic Adoration and deep prayer life – community life – social justice concerns.

Eucharistic spirituality. Multiple types of ministry. Hospitality of members.

Evidence of commitment to regular prayer and community life. Examples of friars.

Encouragement of friars.

Example and life of founder, mission of institute, ministries engaged in, formation seemed

optimism and joy, etc.). And third was the fraternity and community life. Salesian Family spirit is very contagious and a wonderful service of light and strength.

Focus on fraternity; very pleasant spirit among the guys – they were kind to one another and humble. Love of St. Francis and common prayer.

Focus on individual developing potential to the fullest and using it – whatever it is – to the fullest and God's greater glory.

Getting closer to God and sharing God to others like St. Francis of Assisi.

Getting to know members of the institute at University.

God's call. Our prayer life: daily Mass, daily Eucharistic Holy Hour, daily Rosary. Zeal for evangelization and for service to the poor and living in poor neighborhoods. Wearing a religious habit.

Growing up in a close knit family I found the religious members to be close knit and loving.

Down to earth and made me feel welcomed.

HABIT, number of vocations, centralized ministry, fidelity to Magisterium.

Happiness of the members.

History, members, works.

1. Holy Cross as educators in the faith. 2. Community life.

Holy Cross is a group of ordinary men doing extraordinary work – middle of the road on most issues, with both exciting corporate ministries and a vibrant community life. It makes me a better man to be a CSC.

Honestly attempting to live a radical, gospel centered Franciscan life.

1. How the friars interacted with people. 2. How they lived their life.

I felt God was leading me here through different circumstances. I met some of the guys in the order and I liked their character. Location – close to home. The charism.

I felt more comfortable/at home with them than with other groups I visited. It was an intangible “gut instinct” thing.

I first found it because I was searching for a religious order that deals with education. The order's focus on living in community and building community as ministry drew me in and led me to consider religious life more seriously.

I found Holy Cross through my desire to be a priest. I find the congregation a joyful way of being a priest.

I grew up as a child around members of the group. They always treated me with respect. I was ordained a diocesan priest and 18 years later joined the institute.

I liked how the friars lived. I liked their lifestyle.

I lived in New Orleans and the Redemptorists have maintained a presence in this city since 1847. I have a devotion to Bl. Francis Seelos who ministered in the city in the mid 19th century. I have always felt drawn to the Redemptorists because of the congregation's commitment to the poor.

I met my community during my first year in grad school because the house of formation was close to my school. I was impressed by the formation team and the men in formation. The prayer and community life in the house were the most attractive aspects of the community. When I learned about the institute's diverse ministries, this was also attractive.

I really appreciated their variety of ministries, international apostolates, and presence in the area where I grew up.

I wanted a strong intellectual formation coupled with a concern for justice in the world and in the Church. I wanted to live Matthew 25:31-46 and to love God in my neighbors.

I wanted to integrate my spiritual and intellectual life, and my work and prayer. The Society of Jesus seemed the best approach. In addition, the overall spirituality resonated with me.

I wanted to teach high school and I looked at religious communities that were involved in education. When I was discerning the prospect of returning to religious life, I knew I would be welcome because of the openness of the men to my re-entering.

I was attracted by the charism of preaching. I felt that I was called to be a preacher.

I was attracted by their "ordinariness."

I was attracted to the Salesians after having spent a year with them as a lay missionary in Africa. It was there that I learned that the work I had been doing was very much like theirs along with the mentality and philosophy. After having spent some time with them I learned of my love for God and prayer.

I was inspired by positive examples of my institute's members in the apostolate. I also distinctly heard a call to enter the institute on an eight-day silent discernment retreat sponsored by the institute. Finally, I long desired to be a priest and to profess evangelical poverty, well before I met my institute.

I was most attracted by the vibrant, energetic, and youthfulness of the ministry and work done at our universities in particular. Later I was attracted by the hospitality and welcome of the members and the tremendous communal support offered in our lives.

I was most attracted to the healthy, engaged membaeo4oi53{atheTTJmw[10.0002 Tco7(sTJTă. h t(.0006 Toi5ne

I went and lived at our boarding high school. Most all my teachers and deans were monks and I liked them and wanted to be like them.

Its approach to spirituality and its history, mission, and reputation.

Its charism and mission – the spirituality of the Cross – our founders. Eucharistic Adoration.

Community lifestyle.

Its charism and willing to serve wherever it's needed.

Its commitment to and solidarity with the poor.

Its commitment to prayer mission, community. Later, after I had entered, the founder attracted me greatly.

Its down to earth nature and strong community life/prayer life.

Its faithfulness to the Church and to the Pope. Authentic in striving to live out the vows made to



Its mission, especially the variety of apostolates. The joy and zeal of the members. My relationship with some of the members.

Its mission, flexibility, opportunities for growth, spiritually and personally, equality and humility, big hearts.

Its mission.

Its prayer life.

Its simplicity and sincerity attracted me.

Its spirituality!

Its spirituality: the Eucharist.

Its work and ministries, especially its reputation for educational excellence.

Jesuit or Ignatian spirituality and the myriad of possibilities of ministries.

Jesuit spirituality, faith development, retreat work. Educational ministry.

Jesuit works and mission, especially its commitment to education and work with the underserved. Creative fidelity to the Church, especially at the boundary of religion and secular society.

Jesuits who I met and were living out their call. Spirituality of St. Ignatius, plethora of mission opportunities. The spiritual potential of community life, vows of obedience and poverty – witness value.

Jesus – Eucharistic Adoration/Daily Mass and Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Jesus would be my last name.

Joy of members in community.

Joyful community life, fidelity to Church teaching, common prayer, commitment to study.

Joyful fraternal life and the “down-to-earthiness” of the brothers.

Kind and diversity of ministries. Members were comparatively healthy.

Life of my community’s founder/his values and example of intimacy with God; common life and prayer of communities I visited during my discernment.

Life of prayer. I also like the community life.

Life of prayer. Joyful spirit. Example of the friars.

Lifestyle.

Living and working with ordinary people whom I saw doing extraordinary things.

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Ministry, lifestyle of members, opportunities.

Mission (ministry). Spirituality. Community life.

Mission and charism.

Mission and spirituality.

Mission of community. Spirituality of founder. Example of community members.

Mission of our religious institute is to serve the people, especially the deaf people. It accepts the eligible deaf and hearing vocations from the whole world. I am deaf.

Mission of preaching for salvation of souls. Common liturgical prayer (especially chanting the Divine Office). Community life and strong sense of brotherhood. Although most older friars do not wear habit, those in formation wear it regularly. I consider this a good sign for the future.

Fidelity to the Church, especially in younger friars – good sign for the future.

Mission of the institute. Apostolates. Spiritual tradition.

Mission stories. Feeling at home when visiting. Vocation Director's regular and personal accompaniment.

Mission, spirituality, heritage, global presence.

Mission, spirituality, history.

Mission.

Mission. Quality of preaching. Ministry settings.

Mission/community life.

Mixed composition – brothers and priests living and working together as equals. Ministry opportunities.

Mobility and diversity of ministry. Intellectual charism.

My experience at their high school as a student.

My pastor's 21st century ministry and performance of his duties. He is brilliant, healthy, polite, helpful and following his own spiritual path. Most illuminating pastor. Also he and I both attended the University of Notre Dame.

On my first visit to the college community, the men were very hospitable and friendly. They related to one another as brothers. This appealed to me very much.

Openness, welcome, simplicity of life, value of community, social justice, diversity.

Our founder, St. Francis, and that it is made up of lay and clerical brothers.

Our mission, charism and the spirituality of the cross.

Our spirituality, the emphasis on education and justice, the members I knew and their example, feeling at home here, being surrounded by real people, such a solid and human formation.

People and ministry.

People, ministry (higher ed.)ross. -9unity, soc,421 Twlu

Principles of the order, habit, sense of fidelity to Church and Marian devotion, especially of the student brothers/up-and-coming generation.

Progressive change. Dynamic ministries.

1. Progressive, faith-filled normal people striving for a similar vision as mine. 2. International reach. 3. Variety of ministries. 4. Social justice emphasis.

Quality of education at University of Notre Dame, the lingering effects of institute on high school, even though my institute was no longer there. The institute's ability to form a strong sense of family and belonging.

Radical fidelity to and love for God and the Church, especially the Eucharist (daily Mass and Holy Hour), Our Lady (daily Rosary) and the Pope. Also the personal joy and love of the members, the spirituality, and prayer life, their youth and enthusiasm, and their lifestyle and work/ministry.

Radical love of God and the faithfulness to the Church of its members.

Radical poverty, prayer (contemplative), living among the poor.

Radical way of living the Gospel.

Reading the accounts of the founder (St. Francis) as a teenager and doing a report on him for religion class in high school.

Relationships with members. Normalcy of members. Higher education apostolates.

Religious life.

Reputation, kind of ministry (education), and camaraderie among members I met at novitiate.

Rhythm of the life, people living together, clear focus of ministry, large community, people my age living there.

Scholastic tradition of St. Thomas, devotion to the Rosary, the common life.

Seeing a family of consecrated men who were striving to become like Christ.

Seeing the work being done by the members, especially in the area of education.

Sense of brotherhood, commitment to justice.

1. Sense of call. 2. Community life. 3. Franciscan spirituality.

Sense of community, its ministry (education).

Sense of community, shared mission and ministry, opportunities to serve in diverse ministries (especially international missions), emotional health of community, diversity of ages, healthy formation program, respected in the Church, balanced theological perspective.

Service to the Church.

Simple lifestyle of the Brothers. I could see and feel the oneness of each brother whether he is superior or not. The brothers have good brothering to the younger people under their care.

Simple/prayerful lifestyle.

Size, habit, fidelity to Church, variety of apostolates.

Small community. Variety of apostolates. Historical age of community (1198).

Spirituality. Commitment to social justice and integration of creation. Location of the formation community and members whom I had met.

Spirituality. The ministries that focused on education/justice. Excellence.

Spirituality and ministry.

Strong prayer life, fidelity to church teachings, work with the poor, visible religious habit.

That it was an alternative to a life lived in the world, even one which included ministry, and that this could be seen in community members.

That my community invited me and they felt that I did have a religious calling.

That we pray before the Blessed Sacrament. That we pray for the sanctification of the priests. Our spirituality and the lives of our Founder and Foundress who is a mystic in process of canonization.

The “down-to-earthness” of the members. None of them seemed to be “on the pedestal.” They are very relatable and focused on the ministry.

The “Four Pillars” of the Order: Community, Study, Preaching and Prayer.

The ability to maintain an individual identity while working as a whole to serve God. A main charism and mission with the acceptance of each at the stage of life, skill and understanding that they are at and support, love and education offered to improve those gifts and abilities.

The apostolic fruits of their mission, particularly the University which I attended founded by them. Contact with priests in the residence halls and in the classroom. Their accessibility and pastoral care of students.

The aspect that attracted me most to my religious institute was the community life.

The attitudes of the younger members of the institute, in that they showed commitment and focus.

The authenticity of one of our members. Our ministry, my opportunity for ministry in this setting.

The brothers themselves and ministry.

The brothers’ common life, charismatic prayer, religious “family life.”

The charism and faithfulness to the Church. Prayer life, and the wearing of the habit.

The charism and spirituality of the Jesuits.

The charism of our Fr. Founder Thomas Agustin Judge. His vision and mission to make every Catholic an apostle. This vision is for real beautiful. That's one of my most things that attracted me to join our Trinity Missionaries.

The charism of our patron, the spirit of the members of the community. Their enthusiasm to ministry and their "down to earth" approach.

The charism of preaching and the lives of the saints of the Dominican Order.

The charism of preaching the Good News.

The charism of the institute to educate poor urban youth.

The charism of the order. Its commitment to prayer, study, community and ministry.

The charism of the Order; the ability to reach and preach to a wide variety of people; the quality of the members in the Order and in formation.

The charism, community life.

The charism, life of prayer and fraternity.

The charism, ministries and internationality of the institute.

The charism, the faith of the members, the life of poverty, the tradition of the order, and my own gifts.

The charism, the witness of the men, the community, and the opportunities to work in high school ministry.

The charism.

The charisms of higher education (colleges and universities) and mission work in Africa and Asia.

The clear passion for the academic area of the priest and a profound love of God that shined through each of their classes and their homilies.

The commitment of the brothers, their regularity, their prayer and community life (38 brothers in the community when I was a senior in high school – 1967.) The habit and the brothers wearing it whenever we were with them in school or at a function.

The commitment to the ministry of education and the non-clerical composition of the Institute. We are Brothers. Our educational spirituality.



The common life centered around prayer.

The communal brotherhood that is seen when we gather together as the entire congregation on a yearly basis. The variety of different ministries that we are involved in. The members themselves and the common spirituality that we all share in. The mere fact that we are spread throughout the world and not just in one setting.

The community cohesiveness and prayerful aspect of the community life. The genuine friendliness of the community.

The community life and its members.

The community life of the members and the life of our founder.

The community life.

The community was very nice and welcoming. I felt at home when I came to stay for a weekend.

The conviction that Jesus called me to this life and the example of fervent religious life of our friars.

The daily opportunity to share a common goal of spiritual growth, prayer and faith sharing, and mutual support in a community setting. The opportunity to witness to the Gospel in a way that a vowed religious in today's world is able to do.

The desire to serve Christ and his poor with other people who have the same passions.

The desire to serve Jesus in the poorest of the poor by living the contemplative life among them; the call to console His Heart in them.

The desire to teach made parish priest uninviting. Seeing the Brothers teach in college. Also I recalled the sisters in elementary school had a great spirit.

The developed prayer life – Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, Liturgy of the Hours, the reverent fraternal support and interaction, the “hands on” ministry to the poor and evangelization.

The dichotomies in the life and spirituality of St. Francis (e.g., God has high demands/profound invitation but is also merciful) The the fact that 3(n) do 7(n) ministry as Byzantine Catholic open to the fact tha0 TD

The diversity of mission.

The down-to-earth personalities of its members and the simplicity of its prayer life. To religious life in general, the motivation was to live counter-culturally.

The example and charism of the founder.

The example of the Franciscans I knew growing up, the prospect of a life of prayer and community, and the inspiration of St. Francis.

The fact that I had the brothers in high school and worked in their mission as a college intern.

The fact that there were a good number of brothers in high school and worked in their mission as a college intern.

The fraternal community life.

The fraternal life and the life of prayer.

The friendliness of the members and the ability to travel the world and receive Eucharist daily.

The great health and maturity of the members and in the variety of ministries one could be involved in. I also found the spirituality very helpful and engaging.

The history and mission of the community, and the ideal set before

1. The Jesuits I met. 2. The history of the Society of Jesus. 3. The apostolates (diversity) Jesuits work in. 4. The spirituality.

The Jesuits' commitment to education and to priestly ministry. In the midst of discernment the Salvadoran assassination took place and this event persuaded me to consider an order with an orientation toward serving the poor.

The joy and charism of working for young and poor people.

The joy and family commitment of the friars.

The joy of the brothers, their faithfulness to Church teaching/Magisterium, love of the Eucharist and our Lady, the energy and enthusiasm of the brothers and their fraternity and their love for one another, the simple, authentic living of the life, wearing the habit/public witness.

The joy of the Jesuits I knew in high school and

The members of my religious institute all were very happy and joyous men. They liked what they were doing and they liked being together. That really attracted me to religious life. The community also saw prayer and their commitment to Christ as very important as well and this also attracted me.

The members of the Abbey. The seminary college. Silence and solitude plus time for community interaction. Community living. The prayer (sung office in choir). The retreat programs. General pursuit of holiness.

The members of the community, the life and work of the founder. Prayer life, community living.

The members of the order. They were inspiring, holy, and most welcoming.

The members were and are down to earth, i.e., not overly pious or fake.

The members, their faith, preaching, excitement about who they are.

The men I met who were of the institute already – their kindness, their intelligence and their sense of humor. Also, the possibility of doing service to others.

The men I personally know.

The ministry of teaching and living in community.

The ministry of working with poor young people and the missions.

The ministry or charism-mission.

The ministry, prayer life and members of the community I had met while visiting.

The mission and charism of our order. Our focus and the fidelity to our founder and the constitutions. Our worldwide apostolate.

The mission of St. Francis of Assisi. I read a popular history in one day and was hooked! I had met friars from another province but was not attracted to them – too “Polish.”

The mission of the institution: to preserve the Catholic faith among the immigrants.

The mission of the Order and the witness of our members.

The mission, ideals and identity of the Order, the human sanity of its members, its liturgical and intellectual heritage.

The mission. The Paulist Fathers do their best to stay grounded in the “real” world, so that they can reach out to those outside the church walls – the alienated, the unchurched, those of other denominations and faiths.

The mission/charism “PREACHERS.” I was not originally attracted to community life or to the habit...I consider both of great (very high) value today (16 years later).

The mix of apostolates resonated with my life experience, and the focus on putting God first in everything – prayer and work – appealed to me.

The mixture of the active and contemplative life.

The people who were involved.

The perceived friendly and down-to-earth spirit.

The person and charism of the founder. The institute's spirit and spirituality, its type and style of ministry, and the people at the focus of its ministry (young people).

The person of St Augustine, his spirituality. The order's sense of community, common mission.

The pioneering spirit, the diversity of ministry, the spirituality of the institute.

The prayer and community life of the institute and the dedication and commitment of its members attracted me.

The prayer life and liturgies. The men in the institute. The charism of the order as appropriated by this institute.

The quality of and commitment to prayer and community life.

The quality of this community life, attention to the spiritual and emotional growth and maturity of members and the quality and ethos of their liturgy and prayer. They are fully post-Vatican II, not neo-traditional or rigidly conservative.

The range of ministries (colleges, parishes, chaplains) and the "down to earth" attitude of the members.

The religious who I lived among (in residence hall) and those I studied (professors) under at the University.

The reputation of its apostolates AND the favorable public perception of the corps (FROM THE OUTSIDE LOOKING IN). The fraternal interactions among very human members is sincere (FROM WITHIN).

The sense of being a Franciscan reform.

The sense of brotherhood, the joy of its members, and the variety of ministries available.

The sense of community, and regular prayer life, plus the interaction between members.

The sense that I could be the person God is calling me to be in this religious institute.

1. The size and stability of the community. 2. The type and variety of community apostolates. 3. The quality and variety of community members. 4. The overall faithfulness to Rule of St. Benedict.

The Spiritual Exercises.

The spirituality and charism of St. Ignatius, our founder. Though I wished Jesuits were more faithful to Church teaching, that they would wear clerics more often, that they would pray together more, I felt drawn to try to be faithful to those things and to love in the midst of the Jesuits and Church as it is now. The international character and engagement in the world also attracted me.

The spirituality and charism.

The spirituality and faith traditions.

The spirituality and founders.

The spirituality and the charism. Helping Catholics to become apostles.

The spirituality of St. Francis lived out by Capuchins.

The spirituality of St. Francis of Assisi and





The witness of the monks in my high school and parish. The desire for union with God – to love God and neighbor.

The work and charisms of the community. I was really attracted to the Capuchins' work with the homeless and poor people.

The work and life of missionary brothers and priests. Internationality.

The work done with the needy/poor.

The work in social justice and the commitment of my spiritual director to his ministry.

The works and mission.

The works of the Society of Jesus; their spirituality; community life; "finding God in all things"; intellectual apostolate; international recognition.

The zeal with which the members lived their vows.

Their ability to preach the Gospel.

Their commitment to service, spiritual life, the genuineness of the friars, and the wide range of ministries. Also the commitment to finding one's own ministry that he can excel in, and the many opportunities to grow spiritually and sociologically.

Their family spirit and their charism. I also really admire my confreres' fidelity to the Church and her teachings.

Their increasing orthodoxy and young membership. They also are very close to their founder.

Their ministry – especially education (high schools and colleges).

Their mission to convert America.

Their sense of community, focus on mission (with a commitment to education but at the same time not limited solely to education) and the sense that the members led healthy, balanced lives.

Their understanding of prayer and spirituality, i.e., connecting God to everyday life.

They had more brothers than priests – so, a serious commitment and value of religious brotherhood. The media ministry. Daily Eucharist Adoration.

They shared a vibrant spirituality, reached out to youths through education and ministry, and were realistic and professional re: their needs to accomplish their goals.

They taught me in high school. I didn't explore other institutes. I like that they teach, that they support each other in community.

They were the only ones who were enthusiastic about taking me, despite my age at entry (47).

Three things: 1. Spiritual tradition. 2. Community life. 3. Commitment to social justice.

To live personally with other guys. To also pray with, support, and to stay in one place.

Two individual friars, the life of St. Francis, and the diversity of ministry (visited a mountain retreat and an urban soup kitchen during consecutive weeks).

Varieties of ministries.

Variety of ministries with the poor.

Variety of ministries, spiritual life, community life, history



1. A strong sense of being called. 2. A certain joy that was apparent in the sisters I met. 3. Fidelity to the Church.

Acceptance of diversity of the person and ministry but prayer comes first and the promotion of prayer and relationship to God and others.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, combined with an apostolic outreach – the combination of contemplative prayer plus being “out in the world.”

After meeting members I felt that I could be myself and not change in order to fit in. I felt the sisters were unique and diverse.

After several years of looking at different communities and participating in a discernment retreat I met these sisters through an Advent retreat. I continued attending programs at the retreat house and recognized that Ignatian spirituality appealed to me.

After the first visit I knew I would be back. It is something I can't explain because there was not anything in particular that I loved or that made me think “this is it.” Just a feeling.

Always had the desire for religious life – and after bringing up my children (4) and being a single mom at age 48 – with ages of children, 10, 13, 17, 19, had always worked. So continued to college-educate 3 of the children. Retired at age 70 with bills paid and became an associate of the Sisters of St. Joseph – volunteered for 2 1/2 years before asking if possible to enter at this late age of 75. It was a year of discernment with community.

An authentic sense of “welcome” in the midst of simplicity and joy! The witness of gospel living touching the lives of many – especially the poor and needy!

An internal “call” experienced as restlessness until I felt “home.”

An unwavering hunger for God. The “more.” A sense of call out of an experience of contemplative prayer.

Another Little Sister of the Poor – watching her care for the elderly with Christ's love and respect.

As I began to know the members, I felt that I could be “at home,” be myself, yet also be challenged to grow. As I learned more about our spirituality, our founder and early documents, I knew why I felt this way: There was a resonance between my own spirituality and my community's charism of unity and reconciliation. Also, I felt and saw that my community members were “real people,” not artificial.

At first the intense community life and the joy and love that each sister is able to express. Then the faithfulness to the Church and the teachings of the Magisterium.

At first their way of dressing, then later when I learned more about them, I was attracted with their warm hospitality, then with their varied apostolate and simple lifestyle.

At first, it was our mission. But once I got to know the Sisters, it was their joy and hospitality. When I would look into their eyes, I knew they had something that I wanted.

At first, simply the fact that the sisters were welcoming and inviting and took an interest in me.

As I continued discernment, it was the fact that Holy Cross is an international congregation, and the “family” aspect of the charism. I also found visiting our motherhouse to be very helpful.

At that time the vocation directors were so active to respond to the questions that were being asked. Two other sisters came to contact me in person where I was. They were very interested to know me more and to know them.

At the death of my husband, I drew closer to God and Jesus. I asked God in prayer to invite me if he wanted me to be a sister. I was invited three days later to dinner and knew this was the community, CSFN.

At the time, it was most center-of-the road of this charism in liturgy. It has since changed. I was also attracted by the presence of a cohort of new members, but more than half of these have new life. I would no longer choose to enter this house, in comparison to others of our type.

Authenticity to gospel values, urgency of living a life of sacrifice.

Balance life between the service and prayers. Focus to serve the poorest. When important decisions are made – the commitment of all to participate.

Balance of contemplative/active rhythm of life. Prayer including Charismatic prayer. Faithfulness to Church. The sisters themselves. That they look at religious life as a relationship with God as your spouse and not simply as a job or lifestyle. Community life.

Before I entered my community I was privileged to work as a nurse’s aide, taking care of our sisters at our infirmary. Although I could not have put into words then how they influenced me, now I can say that the faithful witness of their lives – in joy and suffering – communicated our charism and it resonated so deeply in my heart that I knew I was called to be with them.

Before I even knew about Oblate Sisters I felt called to offer myself to God as a victim for priestly holiness – I was delighted to learn that the charism (Oblate Sisters) is the offering of ourselves as victims to the Justice of God for the sanctification of diocesan priests. We offer our lives totally – even the merits we may obtain for our own sanctification.

Being faithful to the Magisterium, daily Adoration and rosary, and most importantly...I felt called here.

Benedictine/in city of residence/family in city/structured prayer life together/meals together.

Black, full habit. Daily Office said in common three times a day.

Blend of prayer and ministry. With an honesty about questioning some Church beliefs and practices.

Both older and younger members. Youth, vitality and wisdom of members. The particular blend of contemplative/active life we strive to live, with an emphasis on renewing the original way of life (cont/act) in the Third Order of St. Francis. Personally I was most attracted to our contemplative life. Our balance of prayer, work and ministry in a communal setting. Our emphasis on a strong communal life.

By God's grace, I visited my community one weekend. I experienced an instant awe for the community. So first and foremost it was the Holy Spirit. In addition I was struck by the beauty of the habit, the joy of the sisters and the grace-filled communal prayers.

Centrality of the Eucharist. Fidelity to the Church/Holy Father. Marian devotion. Religious habit.

Charism.

Charism – although I was not able to articulate it when I was discerning the vocation. Energy and passion for social justice. Openness to the larger Church and engagement in interreligious dialogue and ministry. Community's "oneness" with the poor as well as the well-to-do – in other words, sisters and associates are "one with" the people.

Charism – making Christ's merciful love visible. Fidelity to the Church. Religious habit. Eucharistic and Marian devotion. Prayer life, especially Liturgy of the Hours. Joy of the sisters.

Charism and life-style.

Charism and ministry to poor. Joy of members I interacted with.

they will truly find JESUS in an intimate relationship of love beyond compare. Not just social work or ministry, because you don't have to join the convent to do ministry. Young people are attracted to holiness, to authentic Gospel living, to people in love with Jesus. So if you want to promote vocations and foster them in the Church and in the community, then make holiness and intimacy with Jesus #1, and all else will follow accordingly!!!

Charism of foundress and institute and its history. Down-to-earth mindset of members – openness. Hospitality. Lived witness of members.

Charism of peace through justice. Northeast of US. They were real, and fun, and didn't think they knew it all.

Charism, fidelity to Church, common life of prayer and living common life.

Charism, spirit, mission, individuals.

1. Charism supporting the diocesan priesthood in prayer and ministry. 2. Community life. 3. Considerable distance from home. 4. Religious habit.

Charism. Types of ministry. The sisters.

Charism. Mission.

Charism. Prayer life and community life. Apostolate.

Charism: Eucharistic and Marian. Love for the Church and Holy Father. Fidelity to living authentic religious life according to the heart and mind of the Church. Community life very vibrant and strong. Witness of the members of the institute.

Christ did! To be in an intimate relationship with Him as His consecrated bride was an invitation I could not refuse – though I did run away at first.

Church loyalty, Adoration, community life.

Closeness of its spirituality to my spirituality as I had at the time.

Commitment as a community to cross-cultural mission – service to the Reign of God's love, especially with poor.

Commitment to charism/mission. Community life. Sacramental life.

Commitment to justice.

Commitment to peace and justice and action toward

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Commitment to peace and justice. Ministries. Personalities of sisters. The way we've been able to connect/engage with each other (Novice director and her director =exceptions). Abilities and energy of sisters. Their general openness to questioning the Magisterium/thinking critically.

Commitment to prayer, ministry, one another.

Commitment to social justice. Their joyfulness.

Common way of life: community prayer life; faith sharing through meals, etc. (eating and sharing God's words together as a community).

Communal life and communal Liturgy of the Hours. Joy they found in their ministries and the work they did for others. Joy they found in loving one another even when they disagreed.

Communal living, a sense of a call to religious life. I always admired the priests who were friends of the family when I was growing up. I couldn't be a priest but I could be a sister.

Communal prayer and community life.

Communication, dialoguing, someone to journey with me. The one on one interest.

Community and hospitality.

Community and prayer.

Community life and social justice activities of my congregation.

Community life and the love the members had for each other.

Community life and vibrancy of the members; authenticity of their mission.

Community life, especially the feeling of being "at home" the first time I visited, attracted me the most.

Community life, prayer, ministry.

Community life, prayer.

Community life, relationship among members, balance of community, prayer and ministry, joyful presence.

Community life, religious identity. Charism/mission of the Institute, our spirituality, solid

Contemplative spirit, community life, mission as integrated with each other.

Daily Mass and prayer. Simple lifestyle. The witness to the world of the vowed life.

Dedication to God.

Definitely the spirituality. Also feeling comfortable with the sisters.

Devotion to Eucharist and Mary, habit, fidelity to Church, unified apostolate.

Devotion to the Holy Eucharist and to Our Lady. Fraternal charity. Fidelity to the Magisterium of the Church. Communal and private prayer life. Ministry within the Church (education and nursing) (works of charity).

Dominican charism of study and preaching.

Dominican spirituality – love of the Eucharist and the Blessed Mother.

Dominican spirituality, study, contemplative and active life with monastic base – prayer, silence, community, joy.

Dominican spirituality; focus on social justice; prayer life of the congregation. The women in my congregation are forward looking, attentive to the needs of our day; inclusive of those from other backgrounds.

Elizabeth Ann Seton as wife, mother-foundress, convert. Her attraction to the Eucharist.

Embracing my past with its rich experiences and gifts and being encouraged to use those gifts plus develop my whole self spiritually and creatively/intellectually.

Eucharistic Adoration and Jesus Himself. And our charism for life. Without life – none of the other social justice issues matter.

Eucharistic centering, fidelity to Church and her teachings, recognition and nurturing of each person's gift and charism, intensity of community life, habit.

Eucharistic devotion, fidelity to the Church, devotion to Our Lady, joy of the sisters and desire for holiness obvious in the sisters.

Eucharistic spirituality

Eucharistic. Marian devotion. Fidelity to the Church. Common life. Commitment to the spreading of truth and the salvation of souls. Joy and simplicity. Beautiful, full habit. Young and old sisters. 800 year heritage. Traditiona

Everything I checked in 121-139.

Everything!

Example of sister teachers and priests. Example of sisters in nursing home where I worked as a high schooler and college student.

Faithful to the teachings of the Church. Full habit. Strong religious identity. Common apostolate. Strong community life. Joy. Common prayer life. Unity.

Faithfulness to Church, joy of our members.

Faithfulness to the Church and willingness to work with people where they are at.

Faithfulness to the Church.

(1) Faithfulness to Magisterium of the Church. (2) Sisters wear habits. (3) Spiritual and prayer life of our congregation. (4) Joy of the sisters.

Faithfulness to the Magisterium of the Church, strong community life and commitment to personal and relational development of each sister.

Familiarity with its members and their apostolate.

Fidelity to the Church, joy of sisters, youthfulness of sisters, growing number of vocations, religious habit, shared community life, devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, prayer life in common.

Fidelity to the Church, to the Holy Father, to the Church's teachings. Devotion to our Blessed Mother, daily reception of the Eucharist. Totality, living the life fully with joy as a Bride of Christ.

Fidelity to the Church.

Fidelity to the Church. Joy of the Sisters.

Fidelity to the Church's teachings and authority. Devotion to and community focus on the Eucharist. Devotion to Mary. Common life and religious habit. The joy of the sisters and their deep love for one another.

Fidelity to the Church's teachings, monastic customs, contemplative-apostolic life. Strong community life.

Fidelity to the Magisterium and its teaching on religious life, which means to belong exclusively to Christ in poverty, chastity, obedience.

Fidelity to the Magisterium. Devotion to the Eucharist. The religious habit.

First a sense of calling from God. Then the attraction to the sisters' joy, fidelity to the Church and religious life. Devotion to Mary and the Eucharist, community life and the wearing of the religious habit also attracted me.

First attracted by website. Addressed stereotypes of nuns, was what I was looking for, liked advertisements, slogans, special section for those looking into religious life, website was talking to me, lots of time and interest was given to me.

First of all Jesus. The mission, ministry. Take care of the sick without charging them. The joy the sisters show in their faces. The joy they live, they have and bring to others.

Focus on justice rather than charity. Focus on women's issues. Movement away from hierarchy towards democracy.

Focus on merciful love of Christ. Poverty. Variety of apostolates.

Focus on mission. Compatibility of community with mission.

Following the call – seeing women passionate about life.

Formation program geared to older women those to C005 Tc-aMJJ#ec6 TcyojTwu4 Tc-0.0hose those

Forward thinking attitude.

Foundress and desire for prayer and service

Franciscan evangelical way of life. Simplistic and sustainable living ways that community affords to a greater degree than I could as a single woman.

Franciscan spirituality, Perpetual Adoration, faithfulness to the Church.

Franciscan spirituality, simplicity, scripture study, ministry to the poor, simple habit, communal life, mercy chaplet, Eucharistic holy hours, rosary, youthfulness.

Franciscan spirituality. Community support.

1. Freedom and peace to be myself (who God made me to be). 2. Centrality of prayer in our life.

Freedom of members. Trust members had with one another. Mission/community focused.

Friendliness of the sisters

Friendly group – they were teachers, worked with children, some sisters were working with Cursillo. That's where I met them – their prayer life and study was very attractive.

Full habit. Fidelity to Church. Community life. Apostolate. Young members.

God kept pushing me, directing me here. The sisters "normal-ness," joy and common life opened my heart to entering the community.

God! He made it clear this was my place.

1. God's call. 2. The radiant joy of the sisters. 3. The service of the poor. 4. The accompanying of the dying. The poverty, and the begging. The community life. The spirituality.

Grace! It was purely providential that I met our sisters. I immediately felt at home when I attended a retreat. The charism and apostolate are clear and I felt that God had designed me to match it. The habit, the sisters' joy, their fidelity to Jesus and love of the Church drew me.

Habit and mission to the elderly poor.

Habit, fidelity to the Church and her teachings, the charism and identity of the sisters as Brides of Christ.

Habit, joy, Eucharist and Marian Devotion, daily Mass, apostolate of education.

1. Habit. 2. Prayer life. 3. Community life. 4. Fidelity to the Church (Pope).









I met my congregation when I was 16 years old. When I would visit them I was profoundly touched by their spirit of prayer,

Also, that monasticism has survived many centuries and probably will survive in some form,

I was first attracted to my religious institute by the joy-filled presence of the sisters.

I was first drawn by the life of our sisters whom I met on a mission in El Salvador. I was attracted to their availability, their joy, and their desire to be among the very poor, all obviously through their love for Christ. The universality of the Institute also attracted me greatly. I desired a body of sisters with minds and hearts “universal like the Church,” and that is what I found in the Handmaids.

I was in this community 25 years ago. I grew up with this community in school and relatives. After grade school I attended a high school of a different community. Their charism was foreign to me. The charism of Francis and Clare.

I was looking at a nursing profession, then I discovered my vocation and found a congregation dedicated exclusively to the care of the sick and the dying. Once I joined them, I discovered the beautiful richness of our charism and how we serve the poor and suffering in a more profound way.

I was most attracted by the fidelity of our community to the Church and to the fundamentals of our Dominican religious life, the love of our community for the truth of the Catholic faith and passing the faith on to others through the apostolate of Catholic education.

I was most attracted to my religious institute by the joy filled and the welcome of each sister toward me on the first meeting. The way each sister cared for one another.

I was most attracted to the community’s sense of mission – to serve the poor, sick and ignorant of our time, individual sisters’ sense of self and mission, passion and joy and sense of simplicity.

I was most attracted to the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia because of their common ministry and strong community life, Eucharistic and Marian devotion, and wearing of the habit, signifying commitment to traditional religious life and fidelity to the Church. The joy of the members was also a compelling witness, as well as a feeling of being “at home” here.

I was most attracted to the Institute because of the charism, and its sense of fidelity to the Holy Father and a life of deep prayer.

I was most attracted to the joy that I encountered when I would come on live-ins. All of the Sisters were filled with joy which comes from their love of God.

I was most attracted to this religious institute by the peace and fulfillment I found here when visiting. I took that as a sign from God that this is where I belong and through our ministries how I am to serve Him.

I was so struck by the simplicity of the sisters, and I was very attracted to the apostolate near the elderly.

I was taught by the community K thru 8 and then went on to another Catholic school staffed by another community.

I was very much attracted to the spirituality of the congregation. There was also a sense of at homeness.

I was welcome every time when I came to visit this institute even though I didn't talk about my willingness to enter to an institute. Members of the institute were so simply and friendly.

I would say the joy of the sisters, the life of prayer, and the common life. Probably, it would be more accurate to say that there was an overwhelming sense of peace during vespers – that deep in my heart I knew that this was where God wanted me to be for the rest of my life. That was my sophomore year in high school and the sisters had sponsored a weekend trip to sight see and visit the Motherhouse. Though I went along for fun, not intending it for vocational discernment, the Lord rekindled in my heart the fire to pursue religious life.

Identity as “Bride of Christ.” A long and rich history both of Domini

Internationality of institute. Charism. Members I met. Prayer. Contemplative and apostolic mix of life style and charism.

Initially it was the women I met through various opportunities, what “sold” me in the process was the charism – to make one – and the desire to help others reach their God-given potential.

Invitation, prayer.

It best fit my desire and personality.

It brought out the best in me.

It felt like home.

It just flowed into reality so beautifully that I was always awed by how great was my vocation with this community.

It was Dominican!

It was the fact that it was a missionary institute. Plus the life and works of my founder, St. Frances Xavier Cabrini.

It was the joy that I witnessed within and among the Sisters.

It was the prayer life on how we say the Divine Office

It was work I was already doing. I like taking care of the elderly.

Its apostolic orientation and commitment to prayer. Also the fact that my gifts in higher education would be respected, valued, and put to use. Finally, I really value Holy Cross’ emphasis on family, and the sense of unity between the men’s and women’s congregations. (I knew, sometimes, it’s more ideal than reality, but it’s a value.)

Its charism for the poor and of being international.

Its charism of preaching; knowing them since I was in first grade. My sense of belonging, it fits me. The women who are committed to social justice, recycling (in the community) their activism and their wisdom.

Its commitment to pursuing personal wholeness through service to God and others, guided by the authority of the Church, and its ability to do this while open to a changing world.

Its geographic location and the charism of the community



Joy. Apostolate.

Joy. Flexible apostolate. Personal connection (friend in order).

Joyfilled, intentional women.

Joyful and happy members with what seemed to me to be a clear, corporate sense and purpose.

Joyful service.

Joyful spirit when coming together. History and accomplishments with mission. Diversity of ministries.

Joyful spirit, gospel values, service to all in need.

Joyful welcoming women who accepted me as I was.

Joyful witness of sisters. Sisters interacting with youth. Community and prayer life.

Joyful witness. Community life.

Just as I was called to religious life in general, I was called to my congregation in particular.

Life giving support among members. Commitment to social justice.

Life of prayer and serve the elderly as you serve Christ himself.

Littleness and humility. Service of Jesus and the poor. Poverty and simplicity.

Liturgy of the Hours – God being integrated into my entire day.

Liturgy of the hours – prayer. Living in community.

Liturgy, joy, habit, numbers, orthodoxy.

Lived the gospel the way I understand it, committed to gospel principles. Charismatic, which means they are completely open (or try to be) to the Holy Spirit's workings and frequently call upon Him. Orthodox. Eucharistic. Marian. Pray and eat liturgically. Franciscan.

Location and commitment to community living and diversity of ministry. Care of the sisters and friendships within community. Known to each other.

Love for Christ, joy, fidelity to the Church, common prayer – Eucharist and Marian, strong community life.







Our charism and our educational ministry in the Church.

Our charism of reparation to the Sacred Heart really drew me. I also was attracted by the order's community and prayer life. Our life in common is a lived reality, not simply words on paper. The prayer life is structured, but not rigid with traditional devotions as well as more contemporary theology.

Our charism, commitment to mission of Jesus, balance of prayer and contemplation.

Our fidelity to the Church and to our charism.

Our founder, Cardinal John O'Connor – who preached and worked to protect all human life.

Our foundress Catherine McAuley.

Our hospitaller mission of care to the elderly poor. Prayer life and Eucharistic Adoration.

Our internationality, sense of joyfulness in ministry and focus in education in the broadest sense to spread the good news of Christ.

Our ministry among God's people. Educating a new generation of Catholic leaders.

Our monastic prayer life and horarium.

Our prayer life – our way of praying and our prayers. The visibility and witness shown to others in the wearing of our habit.

Our prayer life and our apostolate.

Our sisters are one branch of a family with priests and brothers, and laity. We really feel like family and we complement one another in our differing gifts. We are like the Marines – we like to go to remote places and take on abandoned work no one else is doing. It's an adventure.

Our sisters, charism, spirituality, love of the Church (fidelity), that we wore a full habit, and our mission in the Church most attracted me to our community.

Parishioners at my church knew sisters at my institute very well. They were in a neighborhood. I am a convert. I knew nothing about religious life. But, I listened to people around me, especially my god-mother and priest, carefully.

People and prayer

Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration

Prayer and community life that happily extended from the members of the community I first met.

Prayer and community life. Evident joy and goodness of the sisters. Structure/horarium of their contemplative-apostolic life.

Prayer and Community Life. Hospitality.

Prayer and community life. We spend time together in faith sharing, revision of life – and monthly retreat.

Prayer and community.

1. Prayer life, Divine Office chanted throughout the day. 2. Strong community life, we are usually ten in community, have community time together. 3. Apostolic life – caring for the elderly poor.

Prayer life – Mass daily, rosary, Adoration all daily. Liturgy of the Hours. Habit. Community life – very active, centered on unity and Eucharist. Mission and 4th vow – to protect and enhance the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death.

Prayer life – spirituality

Prayer life and being a witness that prayer is one and only necessity, to all people who come to our chapel.

Prayer life and being treated as an adult – being allowed to take responsibility in making decisions.

Prayer life, centered on the Eucharist. Joyful, lively community life. The charism and the apostolate.

Prayer life, example of the sisters – their joy.

Prayer life.

Prayer life. Monastic customs. Habit. Community life. Love of Blessed Mother. Solid formation. Joy of the sisters. Fidelity to the Church. Love of Eucharist.

Prayer time, community, study, the apostolate.

Prayer, community life, habit, faithfulness to the Magisterium, type of apostolate (because that was already part of my vocation).

Prayer, Mass, devotions, wearing habit. Community living. Mission and charism.

Prayer. Actually, I just wanted to have a retreat. Never to be a religious.

Prayerful women.

Proclaiming that we are made in the image and likeness of God – unrepeatable.

Profound sense of community and the love members have for one another, our partners in ministry and those whom we serve.

“Real” quality and compassion of the sisters, how hard they worked in their ministries, their professional orientation, their desire for spiritual growth.

Refer to answer of the questions 1-5.

Relationships with each other, very free and loving.

Respect and appreciation for the individual, treated as an adult with maturity. Mission focused on peace and justice issues. Progressive stance in political, social and church issues.

Reverence, prayer, center on Eucharist, friendliness of members, Carmelite spirituality, contemplation, time for private prayer.

Sense of common identity, habit, vibrant joy in living our life as Spouses of Christ.

Sense of community engaged in the ministry of Jesus. Importance of study in charism.

Sense of community, prayer, and commitment.

1. Sense of mission. 2. Focus on women/children/needs not being met.

Sense of peace with life and self.

Service and prayer life and community

Service of the poor.

Service to God is a variety of ministries (however, very much focused on education in all these ministries), their love of God and the Church and its people, genuine concern for the people of God; spirit of community, love for one another, incarnational spirituality.

Service to persons who are poor. Internationality of the company.

Serving the aged poor.

Several aspects of my sisters' life most attracted me: Eucharistic center, emphasis on Holy Scripture, fidelity to the Church, wearing of a uniform habit, and apostolate of teaching and praying for priests and sinners.

Several things. First, the charism – service of the poor. Second, the fact that my community takes annual vows. This challenges me to reflect what my vows mean given the ministry, community, spiritual space, family space, and personal space I'm in each year. I think more about what they ask of me. Third, our community is international. I felt being moved around would challenge me to grow. And I felt, in 1993 and now, that the community would have longevity. Finally my community values living in community. We stayed in community even when trends were to have a lot of solo sisters in others.

Simplicity and gentleness of the sisters.

Simplicity, community, spirit and charism – education for life, internationality, diversity, spirituality.

Simplicity. Worked serving the young. Habit

Simplistic way of life.

Singleness of life, joy of the sisters, God's call saying, "Here."

Sisters were joyful, dedicated, mission-driven and the charism felt like "home" more than other institutes.

Sisters' example of service to others in need. Prayer of the sisters. Community that the Sisters witnessed. The interest that Sisters showed in our (young people's) personal, spiritual, and professional growth. At the time the German Sisters wore a habit (I wanted a habit to show other young people that this life is worth living – be a witness!).

Size (large) and location. The work with social justice issues – a flexible community life style. Initially lived with a small group in active ministry operating at a modern developmental level of consciousness. They were open to varied forms of prayer.

Small community. Rural Setting. Social Justice issue.

Small group prayer, small group living.

Social justice issues – the rights and plights of women and children and commitment to environmental issues. The expectation that members discern the direction of their call to ministry and assume responsibility for their decisions in communication with other community members. And the fact that independence as well as interdependence are valued. Also faithfulness and obedience to perceived calling. Prayer and meditation. Spirit and hospitality and dedication of the women in our community, as well as the founding story.

Spirit of Francis and Clare. Charism of on-going conversion.

Spirit of joy and hospitality/welcome.

Spirit of St. Francis lived out in its members. Purposeful living of the vowed life.

Spirit of the sisters

Spirit. Community. Prayer life.

Spirituality (Alphonsian), joy of sisters, commitment to spiritual and personal growth.

Spirituality and charism of Maryknoll sisters. Commitment and service while sharing gifts with God's people. The ability to

That they would consider a 55 year old transfer who had been a United Methodist Pastor. Joined the Church in 1987. Perpetual Adoration – Non Habit – On the cutting edge. Unified in Diversity – Life Giving.

The “down to earth” lifestyle and spirituality of my community. Lack of a habit. Strong collaboration with laity – love for the Eucharist – a variety of ministries.

The “realness” of the sisters and their openness in sharing their spirituality.

The ability to know of God’s love through the spirituality and charism of the Order.

The apostolate of teaching theology and the sisters themselves.

The apostolate.

The articulated charism as well as the lived charism-my experiences with the sisters.

The authenticity of the Dominican charism to contemplate and to give to others the fruits of our contemplation, fidelity to truth; zeal for souls; and ardent, consuming love for Christ.

The authenticity of the sisters’ life. The sisters seemed to radiate peace and joy as they went about their daily duties, from praying to teaching to cleaning, etc. It was evident that they loved religious life, loved their community and most especially, they loved their Divine Spouse.

The balance between prayer and apostolate and fidelity to the Church.

The beautiful, generous and courageous spirit of some of the memb



The charism.

The charism – commitment to family.

The charism – the spirituality around the Magnificat. Also, some of the ministries sisters were involved in – diverse and while individual pursuits seemed like they connected and networked with each other to support one another's call and/or pursuit of the larger mission.

The charism (devotion to the Sacred Heart, which I already had strongly), a natural feel with the sisters (though I didn't know them well), the openness to any service of the Church (I didn't feel called to one apostolate), and the Franciscan simplicity and poverty. Jesus was the main call though – I felt it was purely His will, not tainted with mine, that I entered here (for example I wasn't entering because I liked the habit.)

The charism and mission institute and the members struggle/joy in living it out. The members were real and invited me to be myself and join them in sharing the gifts of the charism and the mission... Just as I am/was... it didn't matter that I was not a member. Their lives were/are about love in not sacrifice. In a nutshell, relationships.

The charism and spirituality of our community. Being a small but international organization. Community and prayer love; joy. The focus on Jesus as our Redeemer.

The charism and the sense of "home" in the motherhouse. I did not look at any other congregation – my heart knew this was the right place.

The charism of community and common prayer, the monastic life.

The charism of the Dominican Order has always been part of me since grade school and also relationships of friendship with several sisters.

The charism of the founders of the congregation. How hospitable and how caring each sister was for me. How much each sister made me feel at home and were supportive of me while going through RCIA, while my family was not.

The charism of the institute and the visible living out of it. I believe I was born with the charism – an instant attraction I knew when I saw it.

The charism of the institute, the spirituality, love, and fidelity to the Church, to the Holy Father's teaching, the apostolate and community life.

The charism, how the sisters carried it out in their daily life. The charism spoke to how I already viewed my life – allowed that part of me to be cultivated.

The charism, intentionality and ministry.



“feel-good” group of women, but a joyful, genuine and intelligent group of women who are serious about their consecration to God.

The community’s love of the Eucharist, fidelity to prayer, love of the Church, wearing of the religious habit, devotion to the Blessed Mother, an evident love between the sisters (all ages).

The compassion, openness, and acceptance by the sisters attracted me the most.

The congregation is forward thinking, not tied to old ideas of what religious life is about. They are interested in serving God’s people and enjoying the life we are given. The sisters are committed to a solid prayer life, to preserving Mother Earth, to help women achieve their full potential, and to spread the Good News to all. And the sisters are committed to good, wholesome fun!

The congregation’s joy and fidelity to the Church most attracted me.

The congregation’s mission, commitment to social justice, option for the poor, openness to the laity, incarnational spirituality.

The contemplative-active blend. Their flow of life – the balance of their rhythm between prayer, work, and ministry and the safeguard/amount of time reserved for the contemplative dimension.

The contemplative-active lifestyle coupled with missionary zeal and a charismatic spirituality.

The dedication and joyfulness of members I knew. The mission of my congregation also attracted me as being very actual and something I could really contribute to. But ultimately I felt God was “inviting” me.

The deep joy and commitment between and among the members.

The deep spirituality and radiant JOY of the members.

The desire to be completely consecrated to God and His Church.

The devotion for the Blessed Sacrament. The commitment to prayer despite the fact that we are an active community.

The diversity in ministries and nationalities of the congregation.

The diversity of ministries, spiritualities, and personalities.

The diversity of the women – in age and ministries – the vision statement and the focus on the poor – empowering women – supporting women – and the marginalized. The positive and happy feelings – the desire to be with one another – to pray together – very supportive of diverse ministries-artists! We have wonderful artists!

The Dominican charism of love of truth and the teaching apostolate; but what ultimately tipped the scales and impelled me to enter was the tremendous joy I saw in all the sisters.

The Dominican charism.

The Dominican Sisters of Saint Cecilia taught at the high school I attended in Baltimore. Their joy, habit, and prayer and community life were what most attracted me.

The educational mission rooted in the Heart of Jesus – I came because of my attraction to above. I stay because of my relationship with God.

The empowering of women through their ministries, their hospitality, and prayer style.

The Eucharist – source and summit of life. Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Fidelity to the Church/ecclesial congregation.

The Eucharistic Adoration, community prayer, habit, fidelity to Magisterium.

The evident joy of the members, the sense of common purpose, the youth (median age) of the members, the continuity of an established community with a long history and clear identity.

The example of the sisters.

The experience of community life and the traditions of ministry to the sick.

The fact that I felt comfortable and my best self possible with the community.

The fact that I saw the congregation in a catalog from the CMSWR, the newer national council for religious women in the U.S., the fact that they wore a habit, and prayed in common and that parish ministry fit in the charism.

The fact that the community was proressive and willing to take risks.

The fact that the ministry was given free of charge. The joy of the members of the communities I visited.

The fact that they're alive and real and serious. They're prayerful and progressive – they're concerned with things I care about.

The fact that, as a community we are not called to do stuff, we are simply called to be in community.

The faith, commitment and love lived by its members, especially the senior sisters who are still doing God's work in our convent for sick and aging sisters.

The fidelity to the Church, religious life, charism, and prayer in community. Joy of the sisters.

The first community I entered was very strict – difficult for my family to bear. This community is much more family oriented.

The first thing that attracted me to my religious community was Perpetual Adoration that is our main charism, from that flows our works of mercy in schools and hospitals. The next attraction came from the family atmosphere of our community.

The first time it was to save my soul and the souls of others as I was taught by some very cheerful, friendly, younger sisters. The second time I wanted to participate in community life, especially in the Eucharistic and prayer life in this community. I also felt called to a community whose ministry was all aspects of charity and service.

The first time was the work. The next time, the justice work and the love of God and neighbor.

The focus of their mission.

The foundress' commitment to the poor and vulnerable

The foundress of my community – she felt compelled to start a religious institute to serve people who are poor despite the fact that it was against the law to even practice Catholicism at that time in Ireland.

The Franciscan atonement charism.

The Franciscan focus of its members and community life – working in ministry with other members. The charism of the Founder.

The freedom to be one among many. I didn't have to walk, dress or talk like a duck. I was/am accepted for who I am today!

The friendliness and hospitality of the sisters made me feel I was very welcome.

The friendliness and joy of the members. Their history of ministry in the community.

The friendliness and sincerity of the sisters with whom I worked. They were dedicated and balanced work and prayer and fun.

The genuine love and acceptance I felt when I first met them. Also, their prayer life, rosary, Adoration, meditation. But it was the visible and tangible love that was a draw.

The global vision and concrete practicality of our foundress, St. Manade Mathias. Also, lives of members and their faith practices (lived experience of and with members).

The habit (the fact that they wear one, not the style) and the kindness and joy of its members.

The habit the sisters wore. The happiness they had.

The habit, community life, Eucharist focus, commitment to the Church.

The habit, fidelity to the Church and the Eucharist, teaching apostolate.

The habit, prayer and study.

The habit, the monastic traditions, chanted office in community, devotion to Our Lady and the Rosary – silence at meals with spiritual reading, devotion to the Sacred Heart and Eucharistic adoration.

The habit.

The habit.

The habit. Fidelity to the Church's Magisterium. Love and support for the Holy Father, Bishops, and priests. Devotion to Our Lady. Tradition.

The Habit. Liturgy of the Hours. Community.

The hand of God and a desire to fully serve God and his people in the manner of the growing seed God planted within, to serve God in a fuller manner.

The happiness of the sisters, their simplicity, their habit, their community life. The welcome that they gave me the first day that I visited them.

The history and mission of our congregation. The

The idea of giving myself in consecration to Jesus.

The Ignatian spirituality of my institute. The charism of my institute. The fact that it is an international congregation. The excellent formation I received as a novice in this country and the personal growth that I experienced as a consequence.

The independence yet *cour unum* in every aspect of our lives.

The inexplicable sense that this is where God wants me. The love the sisters have for one another, their overt loyalty to the Church and the Pope. Their joy and genuine concern, and their expressed desire for others to be as happy as they.

The institute's loyalty to the Church. Our congregation has daily Mass, the Liturgy of the Hours, and other prayers in common. We also have other prayers that we pray on our own. We live the religious life in common. I also wanted to enter a community where the habit is worn.

The intensity of the community life. The joy and dynamic energy of the sisters. The ways in which they renewed religious life as a renewal community born out of Vatican II

The interaction between the men and women, brothers, priests and sisters, the internationality and missionary work.

The interaction of the sisters among themselves. Their sense of joy and peace. This view has changed throughout the years – I do not expect a lot from community life anymore.

The internationality and commitment to serve the poor is what attracted me most to my religious institute.

The joy and easy smile and laughter that each member had.

The joy and example of the sisters most attracted me.

The joy and fidelity of the sisters in their life espoused to Christ.

The joy and happiness that the sisters reflect in their faces. The beautiful welcome they gave me the first time I visited them. The habit.

The joy and life that the members with whom I came in contact with shared. They were always so alive and interested in helping others be their best.

The joy and love I saw in the sisters and the feeling of family.

The joy and peace of the sisters, their clear sense of identity, their love for the Eucharist, the Church, Mary, loyalty to the Holy Father and the Magisterium, their true femininity, fidelity to their received charism, desire to evangelize and teach the truth, sense of purpose as a religious,

their community prayer life, clear sense of focus as the only reason for it all and spousal consecration.

The joy and prayer of the sisters.

The joy and respect that I saw among the sisters (group to which I transferred). I was looking also for a group that did not wear a habit and that allowed members to live in apartments – Basically, I wanted a group that allowed for individuality and personal needs.

The joy and vitality of each sister, an emphasis on community life, our habit and fidelity to the teachings of the Magisterium.

The joy and youthfulness of our Sisters. I had also never met Sisters in habit before.

The joy at service, hospitality, openness, simplicity, the fact that Jesus is the center of our lives.

The joy experienced in the Sisters who taught me in school.

The joy filled witness of the Sisters who have given all for the glory of God and for love of Jesus. Most definitely our fidelity to the Church, especially in the wearing of the habit and the communal life.

The joy I found in all of its members (especially its oldest members). The unity among the sisters.

The joy of all the sisters of all ages and the visible witness of living a consecrated life such as communal life and a habit.

The joy of our sisters and great witness of His love. All the sisters are very real

The joy of the members and a common focus on Christ.

The joy of the members of it, and their realization that they are brides of Christ, first and foremost.

The joy of the members, the depth of spirituality and the contemplative emphasis. Franciscan spirituality.

The joy of the sisters and how young they were.

The joy of the sisters and my interest in their apostolate.

The joy of the sisters and the commitment



The joy of the sisters and the fact that they were faithful to the Holy See. Also community life, habit, prayer, apostolate.

The joy of the sisters and the ministries in the apostolate.

The joy of the sisters and their commitment to prayer.

The joy of the sisters and their fidelity to authentic religious life.

The joy of the sisters and their fidelity to the Church as manifest in their devotion to prayer, the sacraments, the Blessed Mother, and the Holy See. Also their wearing of the habit.

The joy of the sisters and their sense of identity as brides of Christ in the heart of the Ca4(2 0 TDaSvSw5-13.975



The joy, the simplicity, and the almost hidden way of life of the sisters as we work with the sick at night.

The joy/fun that the members had when they were with each other.

The joyful and generous spirit of the sisters.

The joyful and welcoming spirit of the sisters. Also their close and loving relationship they have with people they minister to.

The joyful of lived religious life.

The joyful spirit of the sisters; the hard manual work and the professional work done side by side; the intense community life; the prayerful environments we live in; daily Mass and prayer together as a community.

The joyfulness of the sisters, the prayer in common, the religious habit, fidelity to the Church, the apostolate, the love they have for Jesus and the desire.

The joyfulness of the Sisters, their love for one another, and the simplicity of our lives as Religious.

The joyous spirit of the sisters, they were very comfortable with one another and LOVED what they were doing in their ministries. They were very comfortable with each other and still connected with the real world.

The life and spirit of the members. Their commitment to community living and the spirit that they brought to prayer and ministry. (I was specifically looking for a Franciscan congregation.)

1. The life and works of the foundress. 2. The mission of the Institute. 3. The spirituality of the Institute. 4. The community of the Institute.

The life of prayer and the fact that our Congregation wears the full religious habit.

The life of prayer. The sisters are each their own person. The sisters love each other.

The life of the foundress, the congregation's (exhibited through the member) love of the foundress, community prayer, and love of community, commitment to the poor.

The life story of some sisters in the community.

The life style of the sisters. The spirit of the sisters.

The lifestyle these sisters lived. I had volunteered at an active order and they worked or overworked too many hours a day. I had entered a cloistered community. With the community I

am in now I have a happy medium. I was impressed with all the accomplishments the sisters had done with their lives.

The lived example of the Sisters, especially their sense of joy and purpose, attracted me to my religious institute. In an uncertain world, the community radiated a place on which I knew I could build a life and place it at the service of the Church.

The lives of my religious teachers in elementary school and their encouragement.

The lives of the members; commitment to social justice and to community and to prayer in many forms.

The living witness of the sisters who in sacrificing all for love of God found joy deeper than I had ever seen in anyone I had ever met.

The location and the welcoming community along with the sense of peace I get when I was here for visits.

The love and joy my sisters showed when I met them. Their love for Jesus, our Lady, the Eucharist, the Church, and for the poor and sick people.

The love shown to me by the sisters, their prayerful attitude and kindness and peace; their dedication and life of service and love of Jesus!

The majority are African Americans and I am also!

The members – passionate about God, God's people and justice – radical lifestyle – simple living, i.e., Catholic Worker.

The members I met early on were the first women religious who impressed me as being “reality” based. They made the lifestyle appear “real” as opposed to “fake.”

The members were all very kind to each other and seemed to be happy to see each other, especially at meetings.

The ministries of the institute.

The ministries that the sisters had begun and served through. Their leadership in the Church in the fields of education and healthcare. The corporate nature of our institute and the example of women in leadership dedicated to the poor.

The ministries they were involved in, as well as the prayer life – the individuals I met.

The ministry and the sisters (members) of the institute.

The mission and internationality.

The mission and spirituality of the foundress and the mission of the sisters.

The mission of Mercy was clearly seen in the work at Mercy Retirement and Care Center. The



The pristine spirit of the congregation and its apostolates.

The realness and joy of the first SSJ I met. Later: its members, my community's ability to respect its traditions yet at the same time change with the needs of the times.

The realness, sincerity, openness of the individual members; and the incorporation of the whole person and all of her life experiences into her spiritual life and the life of the community. Also, fidelity to the teachings of the Church in a lived way.

The relationships the sisters had with each other and those with whom they work and serve. The religious habit. The continuity and faithfulness to the Magisterium.

The religious habit was the thing I noticed first. When I came to visit the convent. I liked very much to see the "humanness" of the sisters and the joy and zeal that filled their hearts.

The religious were joyful and obviously showed that they lived God's will in the present moment.

The Rule of Benedict.

1. The Rule of St. Benedict. 2. Monastic life in common. 3. I believed they wanted me. 4. It was Benedictine and had the religious lifestyle that seemed to fit me best.

The Rule of St. Benedict, the large community that was not very far from home.

The sense of belonging and welcome.

The sense of community and relationships among the sisters.

The sense of community/family.

The sense of identity that the sisters had as religious women; their fidelity to their apostolate, to community prayer and recreation, to the Eucharist, to our foundresses, and to the Founder of the Order. The outward sign of their religious consecration by wearing the religious habit was also VERY attractive to me.

The sense of joy and peace experienced by the sisters in their life choice, and the spirituality.

The sense of joy in the members.

The sense of welcome and hospitality, and a strong sense of prayer life. Also, the first sisters I got to know related to me as an adult who already has an existing relationship with God.

The sense that our Sisters truly enjoy being together. Simple, gentle, Midwestern spirit. Deep prayer life of the Sisters. The fact that I felt at home very quickly.

The simple fact that I knew God was calling me there. I knew it wasn't my choice for many reasons. I knew if I wanted control of my life, I could have it, but if I let Him have my life He would refashion me into the person He created me to be. I was drawn also to certain aspects of the apostolate – the privilege of being with people when they die. But it was mostly in the quiet of the chapel at holy hour I felt most drawn. Also the life of our foundress – her courage and devotion to the will of God were so heroic.

The simple life style and values of the sisters as well as their commitment to being a presence to everyone.

The simplicity and joy of the Sisters Servants of Mary. Also, their peaceful and quiet environment in their communities.

The simplicity and joy of the sisters.

The sisters – the way they interacted, the fun they had together, diocesan community, most did not wear a habit.

The sisters – very authentic, committed, absolutely supports the Church, totally given in prayer/community life, habit – loved by the people they serve.

The sisters and their lived expression of spirituality. The charism of compassion.

The sisters I met in my work place-joyful spirit and communal life.

The sisters lived in community; prayed together and served together. The community is world-wide, international bigger than any country or province. Rooted in the charism and spirit of the founders – long lived tradition.

The Sisters of Mercy take a fourth vow of service especially to women and children which was a big attraction. Also the warm hospitality and welcoming of newer members.

The sisters seemed happy and liked one another. They lived out the community; virtues of humility, simplicity, charity.

The sisters themselves and the ministries and lived experiences.

The Sisters themselves, their faith and charism and their love of serving others to bring about the kingdom.

The sisters themselves, who are all different, but are one in their love for Christ, for the Church, and for one another, a love that is evidenced in their joy and sincerity.

The sisters themselves. Franciscan values.





The spirit and openness.

The spirit of foundress and the ministry (teaching for the poor and the needy).

The spirit of joy and prayer that I sensed and experienced in the sisters.

The spirit of the community and their values in ministry.

The spirit of the sisters over the years I have known them. Responding to the needs of the times.

The spirit of the sisters within the then small province in St. Louis. The sisters were very welcoming and I enjoyed being with them.

The spirit the vocation director conveyed about religious life. She was on fire with the Spirit and I caught it!

The spirit, compassion, religious aspect, i.e., prayer life, apostolic work.

The spirit – focus on relationship to each other and the Universe. Emphasis on the contemplative life.

The spiritual development and the charism of our community. The individual members I came to know lived with such a deep desire to love others and serve with compassion.

The spirituality and charism of the institute. Faithfulness to the Church's teachings – truth. The habit – I belong completely to God and want the world to know.

The spirituality and charism. The feeling of being home.

The spirituality of Divine Providence and the Holy Trinity. Knew our priest community for many years and admired their sense of spirituality and dignity.

The spirituality of the Carmelite Order and the Carmelite habit.

The spirituality of the community – its Ignatian roots and the commitment to ministry and the call. More to presence to neighbor than anything else.

The spirituality of the congregation, the faith/prayerfulness of the members, their welcoming spirit/hospitality is so authentic/genuine.

The St. Francis Mission Community was very close to my parents and the sisters were very welcoming when I visited them.

The stable commitment to the Church and the joy that radiated from each member of our community attracted me.

The story of their founding. The aspects of their founding was cutting edge.

The strong commitment to ministry with and for those who are poor with the willingness to be taught/evangelized by them.

The strong sense of community life, including communal prayer, in a spirit of fidelity to the Church.

The teachings of Mother McAuley, service to the poor.

The time of prayer-cloister. The habit, the joy of the sisters. Be in the missions.

The values the community tries to live by are solid gospel values which have been the foundation of our religious order for over 1500 years. They are tried and true.

The values they have matched my own. I felt at home right away.

The variety of ministries, the ability to wear a habit or not and the uniting of three congregations and merging in of another.

The variety of ministries. The lifestyles of the women.

The way sisters greeted one another with kindness. The way people were terribly imperfect – and yet God works through them. Humanity – humility. International. Variety of ministries – yet one mission – to support the needs of families. Devotion to the Holy Family from which we get our charism.

The way the institute has at its heart the needs of the “poor” wherever it is located and the ability of the institution to reach out and help!

The way the sisters interacted with one another, prayed, and ministered.

The welcoming and the openness and the generosity.

The welcoming atmosphere, the sisters’ openness to sharing their life, prayers and own stories.

The wisdom, spirituality, joy of members.

The witness and lives of the sisters. They were joyful, spiritual and communal minded. The community had such an inspiring spirituality, prayer life and communal support that I could see this was the next step to take in growing in the faith and giving to God.

The witness of other members of the congregation.

The witnesses of the religious women who truly love God, others and totally self giving to the young.

The wonderful acceptance and caring that I received when I attended a Sunday liturgy. I felt so welcomed.

The work for the poor.

The work I was doing as a volunteer for this religious institute. The welcome I received from sisters residing here at that time, especially the superior. Mostly because I felt this is where God wanted me to be, for whatever reason.

The work of the institute (pro-life work) as a formed part of the Church, in community

The youthfulness of the group and its hospitality.

Their (our) commitment to Church teaching, their (our) strong community life, their (our) developing of lay faithful communities and relationship with ministerial priesthood, wonderful programs for families, children.

Their Catholic orthodoxy.

Their charism – service to the poor.

Their charism and their spirituality but the most thing was the mission.

Their charism of unity and reconciliation.

Their charism.

Their charismatic spirituality and evangelistic outreach ministry. Faithfulness to the Pope and Church teachings, and wearing a habit, along with what I have come to learn about the Essential Elements of Religious Life.

Their charismatic spirituality and work with youth.

Their commitment to one another, their spirit and that the ads are important.

Their faithfulness to the Holy Father, their prayer life – they were religious. I also felt called to healthcare/service more than teaching so the apostolate also drew me. I love the elderly.

Their faithfulness, as daughters of the Church, and their joy attracted me. I also have a strong attraction to St. Augustine (our rule) and our Carmelite spirituality.

Their fidelity to the Church, their Joy, their charism – especially how the community meets each person and accepts them where they are.

Their Franciscan spirituality

There was an immediate sense of recognition that this group of women shared the passion and Gospel values that I saw in myself, were light-hearted and hospitable, and cared for God's "little ones." They also enjoyed being together.

There were many young Sisters who wore the full Dominican habit, lived a traditional religious life (i.e., in community), and had a strong loyalty to the Holy Father and the Magisterium, and were very joyful about their life.

They are an international community who are both contemplative in prayer and active in mission.

They are very clear about their identity and mission, as well as faithfully committed to all Church teachings. These sisters are dedicated and joyful daughters of the Roman Catholic Church.

They could enjoy each other, laugh, but also were very prayerful.

They were charismatic.

They were faithful to their charism or what the Church had confided to them through their foundress. They didn't change it. Their love and obedience to the Holy Father, prayer life and community life. Total trust in Divine Providence. They also wear a habit.

They were real people who showed a beauty th

To make a difference, to be a part of a community.

To serve God in serving others especially the poor.

To serve God through SSM community.

To witness of the members toward service with the poor in their ministries and prayer experience.

Traditional habit. Fidelity to the Magisterium. Devotion to the Eucharist. Devotion to Mary. Strong community life. Strong sense of mission, charism, apostolate.

Traditional, obedience to Magisterium, spirituality of community. Solid traditional customs, comprehensive apostolate: teaching, health care, food pantry, shelter for poor.

Two things – personal connections – as I got to know members of my community, knowing them and their commitment to ministry and charism, interest and value of education. And the community's commitment to education, justice, and needs of the poor and oppressed.

Under the direction of the Pope and Magisterium. Habit. Prayer life/community life.

Various ministries using whatever talents they had. Willingness to be open to those who may have left and desired to return from ages 82 to 30.

Visible trust and joy in Christ.

Wearing habit and veil, living in community, life centered in prayer and sacraments, respect, reverence, and obedience to Church, Holy Father, Magisterium, variety of apostolic works, members who were my age (20s), the joy of the sisters I encountered.

Wearing habit. Fidelity to Magisterium.

Wearing the habit, their love for one another, charism of our foundress, the Blessed Sacrament.

Welcome of the members, community life, service.

What attracted me most was our full habit and the joy of the two sisters I first met.

What attracted me most was the charism.

What attracted me most was their total dedication of their lives to God and love for His Church. The sisters are centered on Christ, trusting Him as His Brides, and devoted to the Eucharist and Our Lady.

1. What attracted me to my first religious institute: spirituality of the Founder, prayer life and style; focus on spiritual development. 2. What attracted me to my current religious institute: larger in size, more ministry options, more diversity, spirituality of the institute.

What attracted me was their commitment and dedication to service.

What finally helped me discern where God wanted me to serve Him was seeing the deep prayer life and committed mission (single ministry of caring for the elderly) of the members of the Institute. They seemed to combine a life of contemplation, deep rooted prayer, with apostolic life. This singular ministry strengthens us in serving Jesus Christ. The common life, both in fraternal encounters and during times of prayer, along with wearing a religious habit, attracted



were joyful, realistic women. They were in touch with the reality of life. They were able to converse with, walk with ordinary folks. They were present to people and supportive without being “pushy.” They enjoyed having a good time with us. They loved each other with an affection that was obvious to all.

When I finished my high school I wanted to follow the nursing career and when found out that the Sister Servants are religious and nurses, that caught my attention. Above all as the care for the sick in their homes gratuitously.

When I first began looking at religious life, all congregations seemed to share some basics – prayer, community living and ministry. In the end what attracted me to my particular congregation was the sense of joy and love I experienced among them. Their clear affection for each other and welcoming those around them. I was also attracted by their internationality, global vision, commitment to ministering among those who are poor and marginalized.

When I visited – it felt like home; a sense of identifying with spirit, joy, and prayer life of the institute.

When I visited it just felt right. Felt at home. The Franciscan values; simplicity, love of nature, etc. Charisms, friendliness, hospitality.

Who the sisters are when they are together most attracted me. Their joy-filled response to life and ministry was a strong draw.

Women religious who shared the same ministry, but yet could bring their individuality to the ministry (i.e., cook/dietician, physical therapists, nurses, social workers, bookkeepers, education). Our community is health based.

Women who radiated joy in living community while being involved in a variety of ministries.

Work which our sisters are doing in Brazil (where I was as a volunteer when I first met them). Open-minded attitude of the Brazilian sisters when I requested entrance.

Working with others with like values, a big pond to swim in with many others – many ministry opportunities, global world view.

Young sisters, lots of them, and their joy.

### ***Contemplative Men***

An interior sense of belonging to this place, and a way of life that fits my needs and talents.

Contemplative prayer life lived in community.

Contemplative community.



The spirituality of the order.

### *Contemplative Women*

A fidelity the Church, Holy Father, strong leadership and love for the life of the Institute, strong prayer life and community life, excellent formation.

A life patterned to the simple, humble, silent, and hidden, prayerful and charitable life of our Blessed Mother.

Actually, my personal call was too wonderful to condense (but I will do so). He laid a trap and for me and I said yes to His call.

An awareness that God was calling me to this particular community.

Authenticity of religious, contemplative life.

Benedictine spirituality – cloistered contemplative. Full habit.

Call.

Clear sense of God calling me to it first and foremost. Secondary the habit, contemplative, the sisters themselves.

Cloistered life of prayer; full habit; clear sense of mission and purpose.

Contemplative life and carmelite spirituality.

Contemplative lifestyle/authentically lived monastic life.

Contemplative spirit and close proximity to my home.

Desire to be a spouse of Christ. Also, doing everything for the Glory of God.

Eucharist adoration. Living the gospel.

Eucharistic Adoration.

Faith in the power of prayer.

Faithful living out of the Benedictine Rule with the desire to pray and sacrifice for priests, also the idea of being a bride of Christ, also the love of tradition and the Tridentine Mass, also having known the community for several years after my blood sister's entrance.



My desire to make an offering of anything I could of have done in an active apostolate of God – to serve God directly for his own sake in monastic life and in turn reach out to every apostolate that my active brothers and sisters are engaged in.

My sisters fidelity to Holy Mother Church, our Holy Father, and to our poor life. Also, the love and joyous poverty of our Holy order.

Opportunity for silence and solitude within community (10 members now) as a means of following call to deeper life with God was powerful motivator. They allowed my participation as associate so I gained real knowledge of a healthy (psychologically) and devoted community with a charism and spirituality and way of life that was attractive.

Perpetual Adoration and community life.

Prayer life (we are cloistered Carmelites).

Prayer life of the community and respect for community members.

Prayer life, community life, Carmelite charism.

Prayerful environment. Eucharistic Adoration 24/7. Vibrant community. Rural location.

Simple, contemplative life of prayer and silence. Mission of prayer for all in need.

Spirit of the Order – founders.

St. Teresa and life of prayer.

Strong Marian devotion, family spirit and habit wearing.

The balance of its elements of the life: importance of study, the life of the mind. Perpetual Adoration was a big draw. (The habit was a sine qua non.)

The belief this is where the Father called me to draw me closer to Him.

The Carmelite charism and how we live it. The women were all well educated. The community had a vision to the future of spiritual life. They did not wear a habit. Although we are a contemplative community, Carmelites, we share our prayer and liturgical life with our worshipping community. No grills or grates. No sense of oppression.

The Carmelite charism of prayer and cloister.

The Carmelite spirituality and the Rule. The way these are lived out in our community. I was drawn by the strong and historic nature of our particular Carmel. There is freedom to focus on world-wide issues of our day and stand in solidarity of prayer for the world. We can invite everyone to enter into contemplative life and prayer – to share the solitude and silence.

The charism, the spirituality and the way of life.

The Cistercian Spirituality, a life of silent and solitude, of prayer, obedience, and humility. The passing from one self towards God – God center

The contemplative life held a very great attraction for me and the Carmelites are well known for this life. These sisters seemed faithful to the charism.

The Dominican charism of prayer and study; praying for the salvation of souls and especially for priests participating in the Divine Liturgy of the Church through Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours.

The fact that they maintained the traditional habit and their sense of joy in living their cloistered community life.

The focus was singularly on God and seeking Him; the good that was/is “accomplished” is a result of this.

The reverent manner in which the Mass was offered attracted me, and also the members' openness to the Extraordinary Form of Mass. I was also attracted by the candor and simplicity of the Mother Foundress who was at that time Novice Mistress; and the joyfulness of the community with their welcoming attitude.

The simplicity of the environment – poverty – and the authenticity of the foundresses – the fact that it is canonical in union with the Church.

The spirit of self-renunciation, simplicity which leads to union with God for the life/salvation of the world.

The spirituality of the founders (both St Teresa and St John of the Cross) and the life of prayer, intimate relationship with Christ and another.

The traditional Mass, habit, and living of monastic life. Secondly came the desire for spiritual motherhood as is exemplified by our specific charism. What made me discover this and “single out” the order was the ease with which I could pray and discern in the silence and offices chanted throughout the day when visiting the sisters.

The very strong call I felt from God. To my monastery: the orthodoxy of faith and fidelity to the Order's charism that I perceived in this community. To my Order: the lives, works and spirituality of the Founders.

The way of life, fidelity to the spirit of our foundress. It is very traditional.

The way of prayer and community.

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What most attracted me here was – besides the Holy Spirits promptings – the faithful way the life is lived in this monastery, to the Church, the intention of our founders, in humble, whole-hearted dedication, with all the traditional practices. St. Francis' example is what drew me to this order.

What most attracted me to this Discalced Carmelite Monastery was the rich spiritual heritage of the Order. Upon visiting this community, I saw



I was taught (CCD) by the community. Family (mother) was taught by the community in a parish school. History of the community matches my family history – Polish origin.

International, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic living community.

Its spirituality.

lived expression of religious life. I was impressed with their faithfulness to the mission and the congregation and the Church.

The variety of ministries, charism – were authentic in living the vows. I was not minimized or treated as though I hadn't lived until I entered the community. Prayer life was reasonable and authentic.

The vision of the Foundation, personal relationship connected with the foundation, the realness of the foundation.

There is no partiality, whoever is technically wrong is reprimanded.

Youth –



All the good things I see us accomplishing.

Always trying to have a better relationship with God and others. I like serving others and helping others who you know appreciate what you do for them.

Apostolic work (I currently teach in a Jesuit high school).

Apostolic work and community life

Balance at work and prayer, meaningful ministry and community life.

Being a presence of Christ to the people I serve.

Being a radical witness to the love of Christ. Allowing Christ to shine through me and see others come to a personal relationship with Him.

Being a young religious in a secular world. Bringing others to Christ and Christ to the world.

Being able to be close to God and give myself to him. Being with a group of guys who want to do the same.

Being able to serve the Lord, grow both in my personal and spiritual life.

Being able to spend a good deal of time working on my relationship with God. The love I have for many members of my province. The ability to enter people's lives at critical moments and help them in their personal/spiritual development.

Being apart and doing work of the Roman Catholic Church! Gratitude for daily Mass and

Brotherhood, fellowship.

Building my life around God along with other people. Serving God's people and spending my life in that service.

Call to holiness, challenge to go deeper in the spiritual life.

Call to love in the name of Jesus. Focus on seeking God and life's meaning in God. Sharing commitment and goals with others. Opportunities to be open to grace, to grow, to mature.

Church teaching. Openness/sincerity. Collaboration in ministry.

Close friends, prayer, ministry, studies.

Closeness of God in daily life.

Collaborating with lay people on projects related to justice, peace and the integrity of creation; presiding and celebrating the sacraments.

Common life, ministry, sometimes common prayer.

Common life: prayer, meals, fraternity together.

Common prayer, heartfelt discussions about faith and life, ministry and the opportunity to participate in a variety of ministries, opportunity to use my God-given gifts in a way that brings personal fulfillment and joy to other people, prophetic witness, mutual example and inspiration among friars and sisters.

Communal impact/identity with national Church and society.

Communal life and prayer; friendships and intimacy inside my community; a sense of being engaged in an important project together with others; building the kingdom of God

Communal life.

Communal living with some of the older Brothers, prayer.

Communal prayer and living. Ministry that is diverse.

Communal prayer.

Communal support and prayer.

Community

Community – prayer

Community and hospitality.

Community and learning to welcome the many trials that arise in formation.

Community and ministry.

Community and personal prayer and friendship with diverse people in the community. As a Benedictine personal prayer means *lectio divina*.

Community and prayer.

Community fellowship.

Community for prayer, support.

Community life

Community life

Community life (especially in the house of studies). Ministry (especially opportunities to preach). Regular prayer life and study. Support of the laity. Long, deep, and rich history of my Institute.

Community life (which also comes with many joys). Communal failure to live up to our ideals.

Community life and fraternity. Study and intellectual side of faith. Common prayer with traditional devotions (Eucharistic Adoration, chant).

Community life and ministry

Community life and ministry.

Community life and prayer. Ministry.

Community life and working the ministry with people who are given seriously to following Christ and faithful to the Church. Having that identity which I was made for.

Community life because here is where I can fully express/live my vows to the Lord.

Community life in the formation program.

Community life is a real blessing.

Community life on a local and international level.

Community life, freedom of the vow of poverty, sense of feeling loved and valued by fellow members.

Community life, living the Gospel with one another.

Community life, prayer and spiritual life, ministry opportunities, educational opportunities.

Community life, prayer.

Community life, variety of ministry.

Community life.

Community life.

Community life.

Community life. Opportunities to serve.

Community life. People with and to whom I minister.

Community life/prayer. Sharing the faith experience with other members of the institute. The ministry (education of low-income, minority students).

Community life/prayer/meal/social. Young people/member in leadership. Endless possibilities to serve God's people.

Community life; ministry to the youth.

Community life; sense of fulfillment; frequent encouragement and consolation at feeling I'm in the right place.

Community prayer and ministry.

Community prayer, support in ministry from other brothers. Comradery.

Community support

Community support for spiritual and faith formation.

Community support, coming closer to Christ.

Community support.

Community, family environment, service, meaning, purpose (in life); to be able to see beyond myself.

Community, prayer, mission to education.

Community, support for ministry, openness to others, joy.

Community.



Depth of prayer and Sacraments that feed us, strengthen us to do our ministry.

Diverse ministries. Spirituality. Fellowship. Community.

Doing good for others.

Engagement in the mission, interaction with diversity of believers, connection to the wider Church; engagement in the world with a faith perspective.

Eucharist, prayer, community.

Evenly balanced between prayer and work.

Everything, being ordained a priest, celebrating Mass and the Sacraments, being with the people we serve.

Experiencing God's love more and more every day.

Feeling connected with others who are serving the Lord.

Feeling that I am contributing to others' spiritual growth.

Filling the needs of those around me while growing closer to God.

Finding grounding for my work and prayer.

Focus on interior life; ministry without financial worries; belief in Eucharist.

Following God's will and giving my "yes" to His invitation.

Fraternal life.

Fraternal life/solidarity with the poor/mission.

Fraternal support in living our charism of all sufficiency of Christ. Experiencing fruit of the mission.

Fraternal support in prayer life and ministry.

Fraternity – prayer – serving people

Fraternity, faith sharing, prayer in common and alone. Sharing the fruit of our life together with people outside of the community.

Fraternity, pastoral work/outreach. Spiritual aspect.

Fraternity, Prayer, Ministry.

Freedom to pursue mission and pursuit of perfection

Getting to share in all that drew me to the life.

God graces me with a profound sense of peace in prayer, which allows me to go about my day to day routine. I love studies, especially in theology. I value spiritual conversation and personal intimacy shared with friends in the Society of Jesus.

God. The structure of prayer

Growing in relationship with God and others.

Growing in relationship with the Trinity, especially Jesus, and helping others discover and deepen their path to God.

Growth in holiness. Deepening my union with Christ.

Growth in relationship with God and the sense that I am doing God's will.

Growth in spirituality.

Having a community.

Having a life solely focused on spiritual growth and serving God.

Having people around who share a sense of the importance of ministry and of living always centered on God with Christ as the example. Living with men of varying backgrounds, and sharing with them my life, and essentially enjoying life and our work together.

Helping others as a consecrated man. Passion for God's cause – passion for human dignity and faith. Being profoundly human and deeply spiritual.

Helping others find God in their lives. Devotion to prayer and mission.

Helping people, and living the gospel life.

Helping the young people I serve develop as Christians.

Helping to bring others into communion with God and the Church.

Helps me give myself over more fully to God and allows me to seek God in prayer and whole of life. Members of my order.

I am happy, a better person, and my ministry is valued by others and by God. The chance to help others grow closer to God, and



It is where and how I believe God has called me to live.

It makes personal sense to me although my non-religious friends could not fully grasp my free choice to live in celibacy and accountability in community.

It provides the space, setting and context to respond to God's call to me.

It seems to be a "good fit" for me and is where God is calling me to. Religious life helps me live a context of simplicity and social justice that I was searching for. I feel supported by the community in my ministry, prayer, and personal life.

It's freedom in the spirit.

It's my calling, and that's all I can say!

It's amazing how much we need to grow and how much more I need to embrace this life, and that each of us youngest to oldest recognizes this too. That we strive to grow and change together in Christ each day.

Its spirituality.

Joy – Peace – Love I experienced in prayer, ministry, community.

Joy. I am not alone. I have people to discern with. I have opportunity to do many things.

Joyful fraternal life.

Knowing I am doing God's will; being a radical witness for my love of Jesus; knowing I live with men thinking as I do and loving Christ, our Lady and the Church; loving and serving the poor; embracing poverty and being detached from distracting material goods; trying to grow in holiness with others desiring to do the same.

Knowing people from different countries and different cultures. It can see the face of God in every single person.

Knowing that I'm where I was born to be: doing ministry with my brothers and bringing others to love the one we love.

Knowing that my work supports the mission and livelihood of the community, and growing closer to God.

Life and community prayer.

Life of prayer and ministry to our less fortunate brothers and sisters.

Life of prayer, commitment to People of God and Magisterium.

Life of prayer, ministry, fraternal support.

Life security

Life structured by prayer = God-centered life.

Living in a faithful and faith filled community that follows the Church and the Pope. Service of the poor is second to that.

Living in community and being known as a Franciscan because of the good works of the entire Order.

Living in community and helping people come closer to our Lord. I find my studies very rewarding as well.

Living in community I could find opportunities for prayer and ministry: it's living in community that can't be found anywhere else.

Living in community, doing a common mission together, proclaiming and living the Gospel in a radical way.

Living in community.

Living out my unique baptismal calling – serving Church – celebrating sacraments. Sense of common purpose.

Living the life with some solitude. Finding time for peace and quiet.

Living the vows.

Living with Jesus and being a sign of His presence and action in the world – wearing the religious habit – all the conversations and prayers with people that would have otherwise not happened; the framework of prayer times throughout every day keeps me more disciplined.

Living with my brothers constantly challenges and helps me grow.

Living with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and also with other men who are in love with Jesus and the Church.

Making a difference in people's lives.

Making a difference in the world and preparing young minds for the future with the support of a community striving to live out our vows.

Meeting God in my ministry. Living with people who have similar goals.

Ministerial opportunities. Community life. Service to God's people.

Ministry – especially preaching, communal prayer (Liturgy of Hours).

Ministry and personal prayer life.

Ministry as a religious.

Ministry satisfaction which is high.

Ministry with people in overseas mission.

Ministry with those in need. Sharing community.

Ministry, community relationships.

Ministry, community.

Ministry, community.

Ministry, especially work with young people.

Ministry, prayer.

Ministry, prayer.

Ministry, working with lay collaborators, partners.

Ministry.

Ministry.

Ministry.

Ministry.

Ministry.

Ministry.

Ministry.

Ministry. Daily opportunity to pray/Eucharist.

Ministry. Mass and Sacraments.

Ministry. Prayer.

Ministry. Supportive community

Mission and spirituality.

1. Mission. 2. Community Life. 3. Prayer Life. 4. Ministry.

Mutual care of community members – we have a strong sense of fraternity and commitment to our life together.

Mutual support in ministry. I could not be a diocesan priest. Access to people's most significant moments in their lives.

My full and public identity as a Catholic and my work with the poor.

My growth in understanding myself and how this understanding of self impacts my relationship with God and other people.

My ministry.

My relationship with the Lord and service to the poor.

My relationship with the Trinity through myself and others. Ministry – being able to serve others as a visible member/representative of Christ. Opportunity for Christian maturity in the living of the life.

My some plans were successful. I am learning the different kinds of problems.

On spiritual growth.

Opportunities for growth – prayer – opportunities to express faith and share the Good News.

Opportunities for prayer and meditation, self-growth, to be of service.

Opportunities to pray with my fellow Salesians and the youth we serve. I love to see kids on fire with their faith.

Opportunities to work in numerous settings, cultures, countries; study, community life, opportunities to make an impact.

Opportunity for prayer; our work; our community members, my relationship with Christ, and the opportunity to serve globally.



Opportunity to draw closer to Christ both personally and with others and to maximize my service to others and the Church.

Opportunity to focus more on spiritual/personal growth, focus on service, ability to live counter-cultural lifestyle.

Opportunity to grow closer to God, develop as human being, live in community, do ministry and be of service in the world, friendships with others in order.

Opportunity to pray and to serve people.

Our Lasallian notion of “together and by association.” The grace of serving God and others through this way of life.

Our mission. Our ongoing ministry to the least of our sisters and brothers.

Our prayer life and commitment to ministry.

Our shared life

Our spirituality and mission asks of us to be men of prayer; only in that way we will be able to help others to grow as persons, Christians and discover their vocation. For the reason we are to be before all: contemplatives and then men of action.

Parish ministry/Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Peace, quiet. Prayer life.

Perseverance in community living (very counter-cultural these days). Increasing reverence/restoration of Sacred in our liturgical life. The growing trend in younger and more stable applicants. Our witness to guests and seminarians.

Personal and community support. Spiritual psychological and intellectual achievements. Ministerial development.

Personal prayer, sense of mission.

Prayer and community living.

Prayer and community.

Prayer and faithsharing/practice.

Prayer and fraternity.

Prayer and our communal prayer life.

Prayer. Ministry.

Prayer/communion with the Lord.

Praying. Ministry.

1. Preaching homilies that save people's souls. 2. I'd imagine administering the Sacraments when I'm ordained. 3. Community life.

Presiding at Sacraments and being where the membrane between the human and divine is "oh so thin."

Priestly ministry in a province apostolate. The relationships I have with members.

Pursuit of religious life. Active/contemplative spiritual life/mission.

Regular communal prayer.

Regular prayer, spiritual growth and stability.

Relationship with God is strengthened by relationship with community, relationship with God lived out in collaborative ministry. It has helped me to grow in love and joy.

Relationship with God.

Relationships. Balance. Ministry and faith.

Religious life is the consummation or fulfillment of a vocation, a joyful confirmation of my identity with God in the Church; the conformity to Christ in the vows. Brotherhood and communal support (meals, prayer).

Representing Christ and the Church to so many students and guests, but as a member of a community, so I don't feel like I have to do everything myself.

Representing something good to people; representing the Church and the promise of the Gospel; fraternity; the sense that my life is meaningful and important and appreciated.

Sacramental ministry

Sacramental ministry and being allowed to pursue a ministry in media.

Sacraments.

Self discovery aspect. Enhancing relationship with God.

Sense of being entrusted with the gospel and having opportunities to minister with people, to be with people among their questions about God.

Sense of continuity and common purpose.

Sense of purpose and belonging with community

Sense of purpose and mission; camaraderie of community life.

Sense of purpose, prayer life, community relationships, meaningful work.

Sense of solidarity with one another, in being faithful to our life in community despite the many daily challenges.

Service to God and to the Church, solidarity, prayer.

Service to people, helping them find God's love and freedom in the faith and morals of our tradition; helping them in the process be a blessing in the Church and world. The Jesuits with whom I do share a deep union of heart and mind and with whom I can really talk and pray are among my best friends and consolations.

1. Service to the Church and souls.

Service to the poor, marginalized and inner city youth.

Service/ministry, community life, prophetic witness to Church/society.

Serving a cause that clearly is greater than myself.

Serving Christ in serving others.

Serving the Lord in others is the center of my life. I need not wonder about what I was created for.

Serving the most needed person.

Serving whole heartedly God's people. Seeing lives transformed by grace, the peace and joy that comes from doing God's will in your life, growing closer to Jesus and Mary.

Shared life of prayer, community, mission. Living according to Gospel values.

Shared mission in Christ.

Shared mission, brotherhood, sense of family. A religious away/apart from his/her institute makes as little sense as a father who lives apart from his wife and kids. Our lives as religious only have symbolic power when we are with our brothers/sisters.

Sharing charism and community with others who wish to share that charism with the Church in vibrant ministry.

Sharing experience of ministry and prayer, living in healthy communities.

Sharing ministry with my brothers. Having them to listen to and just enjoy each other's company. For my ministry to serve others.

Sharing the mission and ministry of our order with others; community life; great members, overall, who seem to live what they believe.

Sharing the struggles of people I serve. Sharing people's hopes. Being an agent of spiritual and psychological healing.

Silent meditation and apostolic ministry.

Simplicity, opportunity for prayer, daily Eucharist life centered on and devoted to God.

Spiritual conversation, common prayer and ministering together with others of my institute.

Spiritual conversation, community support, encounters with diverse cultures both within the institute and through ministry.

Spiritual development.

Spiritual growth.

(1) Spiritual growth; (2) Personal commitment to God and the Church; (3) Community lifestyle; (4) Service for other people.

Spiritual support of members, challenging apostolate.

Spirituality and adherence to identity.

Spirituality and ministries.

1. Spirituality in my life. 2. Friendship among so many Jesuits. 3. Incredible experiences of formation. 4. Working in so many different endeavors.

Spreading the Gospels, building up the Church in other countries

Stability (financial) and network for ministries.

Strong interior and prayer life. Increase in apostolic zeal. Sense of being consecrated.

Strong sense of fraternity.

Study, ministry, and community life.

Study. Prayer. Service.

Support and encouragement from the brothers; opportunity to grow in holiness and as a person.

Support and growing the whole person.

Support of individual gifts, talents, creativity.

Support of others. Common life – prayers, meals, Eucharist, fraternity. Charism.

Support of prayer and chance to pray.

Support religious life gives me to support my ministry.

Supportive confreres, strong prayer life and a wide variety of works.

Testimonials from those who have visited us. Community life. Personal growth.

That I can grow as a person through the rough and tumble of community life.

That I may best cooperate with or leave it to God to do whatever He chooses with my life. That in all things God may be glorified. That I may pursue the spiritual life with great fervor and help, such as being in rich soil. That I may make my life a witness to God. That I may be an oblation with God.

That it's bigger than me! I am working to build the kingdom of God with the support, care and love of my fellow brothers. I am enriched by our prayer and community life together.

That religious life continues to flourish. It is a life that challenges our nationalistic and individualistic society.

That there are so many intelligent members of my community engaged in a variety of apostolates – all for the love of Christ.

That we are a FAMILY. There is always a new challenge. There is always an opportunity to grow in every direction.

The “Community” aspect of living, working, praying and serving God and God’s people – together.

The ability to be Christ’s representative and administer the Sacraments.

The ability to celebrate the Sacraments and be involved in a parish with a school.

The ability to enter into the life of the Spirit more deeply.

The ability to preach and teach. The prayer life and community life.

The ability to slow down (solitude) and focus.

The ability to work with other like minded





The fraternity shared in community life on a daily basis and fraternity on a larger level within our province.

The freedom it gives me to minister to the “throw aways” of society. A close second: the companionship – I’m not in this alone.

The freedom it provides for ministry. The support of our community.

The growth of my spiritual relationship with a difficult to know God.

The high sense of community and brotherly fraternity.

The intentional, communal commitment to prayer and mission.

The interaction with people, with brothers in community, co-workers in ministry and those we minister to. It is the opportunity to encounter Christ in the world.

The invitation to an authentic interior life, community life, the challenge of fulfilling the virtues of poverty, chasity, obedience, working and living among the poor.

The joy and peace of belonging completely to Christ and of discovering Him and serving Him in my brothers and in the poor.

The joy of being called Brother and all it means and allows me to do in the Church. Daily Mass. The chance to travel and attend retreats.

The knowledge that I have committed my whole self to the Lord and His work.

The knowledge that I’m doing God’s will and that He’s saving souls through me.

The life of prayer and living and working with other friars brings out the best in me.

The life of prayer and service.

The little ways in which I can touch someone’s life. It is humbling to have someone ask to pray for them. Prayer is important to my staying in an intimate relationship with God.

The living out the vows in an authentically Dominican way in the context of intentional community.

The many opportunities for service, in little things and big things, and a deepening of my relationship with the Lord.

The meaning that it has given to my life. All that I am and do is for God and the young. There is no division or conflict between my life of faith and work, or my “home life” and my professional life. God and the young are my reason for everything.



The opportunity to be and to bring an awareness of Christ into others' lives, especially in the ordinary moments of everyday. Also the never-ending opportunity for personal growth.

The opportunity to grow as a minister and the various opportunities to do ministries, also prayers and praying in community daily.

The opportunity to grow in holiness and to live the gospel.

The opportunity to live and work with others of a similar goal and values.

The opportunity to make a complete gift of myself to Christ and his people.

The opportunity to meet good people to experience the Divine in so many ways, especially in ministry.

The opportunity to witness the Holy Spirit working in other people's lives.

The people I work with.

The people we serve, the satisfaction and enjoyment, celebrating the Sacraments.

The people whom I serve.

The people whose lives I get to be a part of. The variety of worlds I get to enter and ministries I

The sense of service and dedication to the B

Time to pray and the care I receive.

To be actively involved in the mission of the Church in a parochial setting where I can use my talents in a meaningful way.

To be on mission with Christ and my brothers.

To live the dream with a community and a people.

To love Jesus and to make Him loved.

To see people get closer to God by my example.

True fulfillment and interior joy. True peace. Self-emptying.

Two things: community and ministry.

Union with Christ, prayer, mission to serve Christ and the Church.

Varied ministries.

Variety of ministries. Challenge to grow personally and spiritually which community life presents.

We live our mission communally.

What I find most rewarding about religious life is serving the Church in various ways.

What I find rewarding is the freedom that comes from the total self gift to God alone that religious life calls for. There is an immense joy to be found in rejecting the world's promises of wealth, comfort, and pleasure, and embracing Christ through the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

What I find to be most satisfying/rewarding about religious life is our common prayer times that compel us to work outside of our four walls with the people of God and yet also knowing that I have some place to come back to.

When opportunities arise to work on a comm.0002TD0 the Church in au0.0002 Tw(Whe03 Tc)yaho Tw 2c-0.0

despite my weakness, but because of my weaknesses; nourishing friendship with some community members through deep spontaneous faith sharing.

Witnessing to youth. Community life. Celebrating the Sacraments daily.

Working and ministering to people

Working with a diverse group of people that both support me and aren't afraid to challenge either. Being part of something bigger than myself is important to me.

Working with and for young people in need as a consecrated religious.

Working with people and especially in pastoral ministry.

Working with people, community life, attempting to make a difference.

Working with people.

### ***Active Women***

A bond with devoted, loving women who spend their lives loving and serving God. It is an honor to be associated with these women.

A deep, close personal relationship with Jesus Christ, my Spouse. Good, spiritual friendship with other religious. Joy in doing God's will in the little things, work and obedience.

A life set entirely on Christ.

A place to live on the call of God with others – across the boundaries of culture, generation, class, congregation, etc.

A place where I can share my life with other women committed to prayer, service and a life together.

A praying community that fosters the ongoing formation as a religious in a changing world.

A profound and intimate relationship with God.

A religious life with a sense of balance, a congregation that opens to the need of the time but not lose the identity of religious life. A religious life that promotes members to use their talents and gifts for the service of the Church and God's people.

A sense of being part of God's design and being nourished daily in my relationship with God, community and the world. I have a heart that embraces the entire world, and so does my congregation.

A sense of being part of something larger than myself, being called to take risks and being associated with people who are engaged with life struggles and God until death.

A sense of belonging to a community that challenges me to be my best self for myself, the community and the world.

1. A sense of connectedness towards the common good. 2. Faith sharing is very important to me.

A sense of meaning and purpose that is worth living for: giving myself completely as an instrument of God sharing Jesus' mission of proclaiming God's love to the world – supported by my prayer life.

A unifying love of God.

Ability to be in full-time ministry.

Ability to give myself.

Able to go to Mass each day. Confession twice a month. Daily Office.

After my ministry – with God's people – I rejoiced in my growth in my relationship with God through prayer and ministry.

1. Again, doing God's will – that really makes me

An all encompassing passion to serve as Christ directs.

An ever growing understanding of communio – that my fidelity to religious life nourishes the Church as it nourishes me.

An ongoing, evolving , ever deepening sense of God's creative energies flowing through the world and being able to catch glimpses of God's love in meeting and working with people.

Be with God all the times and surrender to God's will.

Because I wear the religious habit, I can be a visible witness to Christ and his Church.

Because of the union of the community with the Magisterium, and with the community's encouragement and support, I am able to give vibrant witness in the secular workplace, to the viability of vocations to consecrated religious life in today's world.

Becoming virginal – meaning: integrating all past history and experiences in order to empty self for Christ in the other. Relationship is a gift and in order to become whole we must enter into relationship over and over again.

Being a bride of Christ.

Being a bride of Christ.

Being a member of a community of like-minded women who share the same religious heritage and mission. The common prayer life.

Being a part of a group of women committed to the Lord, living Gospel values, serving the poor. Joining my voice with those of others – together, we can make a difference.

Being a part of an international, multicultural group of individuals, committed to a common mission and steeped in a common spirituality.

Being a part of something bigger than myself – making a difference in the world together.

Being a part of something greater than myself to serve God together and to build His Kingdom.

Being a part of something greater than myself.

Being a spouse of Christ.

Being a witness to others and bringing them closer to Christ.

Being a witness to the world of another way of life – of living out the call of a Christian in a different manner. Then finding out how that witnessing positively affects and impacts other



lives. It is not something that is always apparent to me until someone says something to me. I'm always surprised because I don't think of how I live as being different – I'm just a person, another human being doing what I love.

Being able to attend prayer and Eucharist daily with a community of like-minded persons. Being able to live out a life serving God and others in ways that allows me to become more fully alive (not able to do this in the secular world). Being of and in the world, but living in community of like-minded.

Being able to be a witness of other-worldliness and of the mercy of God.

Being able to be part of a group of women who bring God in contemplative care and presence into the world. I love my ministry being a follower of Elizabeth Aston.

Being able to focus on what truly matters and to give my all to God and his Church as his spouse. Community life.

Being able to grow in freedom by being challenged to grow in the areas in which I am broken.

Being able to help others in need, working with members of my community, getting to know community members in and beyond just the “professional” they've been.

Being able to know of God's love in communion with others who are called to know of it also. Most importantly to respond to it.

Being able to live with various women and use our gifts and talents for the greater of the community and congregation. Being able to minister to various people in various ways. Being able to live community life and learn from one another. Being able to share our faith and compassion for God in each of our lives.

Being able to participate in daily lifting up the world/people around me in prayer and to know I am where God has called me.

Being able to share the gospel message with so many people, communal life, and being a visible witness.

Being able to spend myself for the Lord through the profession of vows.

Being able to work among God's people and help them to learn/know Him better. I love my life as a woman religious and would do it all over again. I value living in community and having the support I need from my sisters to grow in my identity as an SCJ. I love my life with God.

Being able to work together in the name of our community to bring Jesus to those we minister with and to. Sharing my faith life with my sisters and loving one another in a way brought about only by God's grace.

Being about God's work without some of the worldly encumbrances.

Being about something greater than myself and deepening my relationship with God through community life.

1. Being centered in the Holy Eucharist. 2. Community life that helps me to grow spiritually. 3. The opportunity to work with college students, especially on the life issues.

Being chosen by God to be his spouse. The happiness and satisfaction that I experienced when I help sick people, or just being with them when they feel lonely or in pain.

Being completely consecrated to God and His Church.

Being completely given to God's will – the freedom of this. Coming to know Jesus more and more. Giving the joy of friendship with him to others.

Being connected with others who are committed to living the Gospel. We love, support, challenge, collaborate with one another to bring God's love to those in need, and to do our best to live God's love for all of humanity and creation. Together we can be more effective, in responding to needs and discerning God's actions, than we could as lone individuals.

Being consecrated to God and leading souls to Him and His Church.

Being consecrated to the Lord, prayer life (Holy Mass, Divine Office), serving others.

Being espoused to Christ.

Being focused with others on living a life of focus – on "God," on expressing our charism. Also the connection – i.e., we "belong" to each other in community and experience mutual responsibility

Being God's compassionate presence in the world and a voice of truth for change in the institutional Church.

Being in committed community with others in the service of something much bigger than myself/us for the good of the world based in faith.

Being one of many; the daily structure and invitation into a deeper prayer life; the guidance and

Being with Our Lord Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. The Real Presence is most endearing to and for me.

Being with the community. Formation on its focus to spiritual growth. Mission/apostolate.

Believing that where ever my sisters are, I am! I could never do so much alone!

Belonging entirely to Jesus through the vows. The times and places of silence in our life. The many helps to holiness (I need all the help I can get!). Community prayer life. Mutual support of sisters. The grace of obedience – knowing that I am doing God's will when I obey superiors.

Belonging to a group that is proclaiming the kingdom of God and working for justice. Living with those women who do the above.

Belonging to Jesus in a special way through vows. Common apostolate witness. Presence of Blessed Sacrament in our convent.

Belonging totally and completely to our Lord Jesus Christ. Living daily as his bride. And then sharing that love with others.

Belonging totally and only to Jesus.

Bringing Christ to children – spiritual motherhood. My personal relationship with Jesus.

Bringing the world to Jesus truly present in the Eucharist and being a sign of heaven to all I meet.

Building and/or deepening relationships with God and my sisters and others with whom I come in contact is most rewarding for me. I always appreciate the time I have for prayer and the opportunity to learn more about social justice and needs of people and . . .

Building relationships in my community.

Camaraderie – reasonably consistent, values and ideals among membership.

Can do more with others than can do alone. Public witness to the Gospel. I'm more the person God dreams for me to be as a sister.

Caring for Christ in the poor. Having the Eucharist here among us. I can go to him in the chapel anytime I want. Mass every day.

Challenge to living the gospel life.

Christ – as He is found in my sisters, as we seek Him in our daily lives and as we seek to do everything for His greater glory and to serve Him and His people

Christ as my Spouse

Close relationship with Jesus. By the sheer way of life, we always have opportunities to stay close to Jesus. Chapel with Blessed sacrament is in the same house. How many exterior people have that gift! I am edified by those who visit/go to Mass each day!

Closer relationship to God and my ministry as hospital chaplain.

Combination of active apostolate and contemplative dimensions.

Commitment to God and good community life (in local house).

Commitment to something and someone greater than me.

Common focus – vision.

Common focus. Richness of experience of others.

Common life with others, all the while keeping an eye on the real prize – God.

Common life.

Common prayer, common life, interdependence, looking out for each other and being supported/helped in looking out for others in our neighborhood and city. Educational opportunities. I love my ministry. It's not something I would have been able to do if I hadn't joined.

Common sharing. Being with like-minded women, life-giving, professional women. Strong historical roots. Prayer. Broad prayer life. Evolving ministry.

Common vision/values. Ministr

Communal prayer.

Community all focused on the ministry and praying together, so we have a common connection and purpose.

Community and prayer

Community and prayer life.

Community life

Community life

Community life – just sharing ordinary life with my Sisters. Community prayer – I love the way we pray together. I have found no other place that nourishes me in the same way.

Community life – when I've been part of healthy, supportive community. Regular communal prayer and faith-sharing.

Community life and apostolic work.

Community life and common prayer.

Community life and communal prayer; educational enrichment.

Community life and my own growth in my relationship with God.

Community life and my sisters, also our extended community of associate members.

Community life and our love for each other.

Community life and prayer in a broad sense.

Community life and prayer life is very rewarding to me – and it helps me to grow personally and spiritually.

Community life and prayer time as a support for my ministry and myself personally.

Community life and prayer time. Opportunities to grow in spiritual life through spiritual devotion, retreat, adoration.

Community life and prayer. Wearing the habit always. Living the vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience.

Community life and prayer/spirituality.

Community life and prayers. Also working in our nursing home.

Community life and praying together. Ministry. Being able to work not just for the pay check, but for the building of the Church.

Community life and the attention given to living community as best we can.

Community life, living in community, community celebrations, faith sharing as part of every day life.

Community life, our teaching apostolate, and our prayer life which is Eucharistic and Marian.

Community life, prayer in community and dedication to our Lord Jesus in a public way. Also being available to others by virtue of being a woman religious.

Community life, prayer, and ministry.

Community life, prayer, ministry.

Community life, prayer, teaching middle school.

Community life.

Community life.

Community life.

Community life.

Community life.

Community life. Freedom. Love and support of my sisters.

Community life. Helping others in ministry when I would not be able to help if I was on my own (the poor) – having a community of like-minded (yet diverse) people behind me.

Community life. Prayer in common.

Community life. Prayer life – especially personal prayer time.

Community life. We often meet with successes and failures in the apostolate, and much of the fruit of our labor we never see, but within community we have the support and a measure of our own growth in holiness. To be able to reach out to a sister whom you never would have chosen for a friend can be very rewarding because you discover true friends in places you never would have looked.

Community life. We support each other. My most rewarding “lesson” since living in community is the importance and freedom of reconciliation.

Community life: Sharing life with women of like basic values. Praying, studying, and playing together. Being supported on those days when I don’t have the energy to go it alone. Loving and being loved by the women in this Congregation.

Community living

Community living, friendships, spirituality, identity, support, being rooted in God and mission. Being Franciscan and Eucharistic.

Community living.

Community living.

Community living. Growth: personal, spiritual. Opportunity to minister to others in ways I never could have imagined.



Contentment/confidence in response to a felt sense of God's call, as lived out everyday in community, prayer and ministry.

Daily Eucharist and Eucharistic Adoration; liturgical prayers.

Daily Eucharist. Greater opportunities to be of service.

Daily prayer. Opportunities for spiritual growth. Community living.

Dedication to God.

Deepening of my relationship with God and others through communal, prayer and ministry aspects of religious life. Sharing faith and personal experience with other members. I am fortunate to have peers (age and stage of formation) in community and although it was not an initial draw to religious life it has proven to be a great gift of support and faith sharing.

Deepening prayer and closeness to the Lord. Being a witness to the world – an icon of the Church and a sign that there is more than just what the “world” is giving them.

Deepening relationship with Jesus.

Development of spirituality, community, and relationship with God-relationships with community members.

Devotion to my Lord and my community. Being as one and as yet different among ourselves.

Divine Office in community.

Doing God's will and finding peace in it.

Doing God's will and the every moment opportunity to grow in union with Him.

Doing God's will in communion with my Sisters.

Doing God's will.

Doing God's will.

Doing God's will.

Doing something good for others in following Jesus as his disciple. At the end of the day I feel rewarded and fulfilled knowing I am doing God's will. I feel in harmony with God in doing his will. Interior freedom.

Doing something meaningful with my life, our charism, having spirituality and prayer at such a central place in my life.

Doing the will of God, being faithful to Him and His Church

Doing what God wants me to do.

Emphasis on individual and communal spirituality and ministry. I love Franciscan theology; I love this Franciscan group of sisters and associates.

Emphasis on prayer.

Encouragement and support to be the best person God calls me to be. Commitment to being a part of creating a just world.

Espousal to Christ. Evangelical counsels.

Even though there are 50 different women with as many personalities and ideas, it works because God is here and we're journeying together.

Every moment of my life is dedicated to God, and my presence is a sign to others of God's presence and fidelity.

Everyday, God is bringing forth from me talents I never really knew I was capable of – like nursing the retired diocesan priests, or handling the account books. I was a home-mom for 45 years.

Everything – it fulfills me – it helps me be me.

Everything I do in obedience is God's will (and that is everything!).

Everything.

Faith centered.

Faith sharing and community living and our shared prayer and ministry.

Faith sharing ministry.

Faithful, dedicated relationships. Commitment to mission – care for earth and all. Commitment to personal, spiritual growth.

Falling in love with Jesus. The humbling privilege of being used as an instrument of God's grace and love for the salvation of souls. The witness of the habit as a billboard for Jesus... The life of prayer and sacrifice bearing fruit in my own conversion and in the lives of family and friends. The joy of belonging to Jesus entirely.

Feeling grounded with God better because I am with like-minded women who have given themselves to God and the charism of our congregation. I didn't want to do and be for and with God alone – we make a better witness together.

Feeling that I am doing the work of the Gospel by working for justice and human rights.

Finding deep meaning in life's experiences; growing in relationship with God; all the lives I've touched and been touched by. Sharing a mission and hope with other women of the Church.

Finding that falling in love with God can last beyond all emotional highs and lows and that this kind of love makes self-sacrifice easier (not easy, but easier!).

Focus of energy and time to live a God-centered life – support and accountability for this in personal prayer life and personal growth, community living and ministry.

Following God's will and leading a life FO



Growth in prayer/relationship with the Lord; strong community life.

Growth in relationship with Jesus Christ.

Growth through a lived common life. Daily recepti

Here one can give back to God what He has given me. Truly be yourself.

Honest attempt to live the charism.

Hopefully fulfilling God's call for what He made me to become.

Housing enough time and space with the Lord, by being who we are for others and with others.

I am able to be contemplative in a monastic community. My live is normally balanced with prayer, work, study, leisure.

I am able to develop my talents and utilize my gifts in assisting the Holy Spirit in building up or bringing about the reign of God.

I am daily able to give myself as a gift to Jesus and His Church.

I am in awe of God's plan – how it has unfolded and led me to where I am today. During my incorporation, I read that a religious vocation is a mystery and a gift. I find I am most fulfilled when I remember that I am called to witness the viability of Gospel values...to be countercultural. It is our baptismal call and it is lived authentically by lay people as well. When I interact with people in ministry, I often sense their gratitude...the presence of a vowed religious seems to reassure them. It's not about me but rather a "public" sign of God's hope.

I am not alone in my desire to know and be known ... to love and be loved by God. I feel at home in what the vows/call invite me to each day. It is not always easy ... but I find life in the attempt to say "yes" everyday to the vows I made to God and to God's people.

I am not alone in my Incarnational beliefs. I can journey with others in my faith. My community gives me a bigger base in which to keep and nourish my faith within the Catholic Church. I am able to do the ministry I'm called to which demands sharing resources (retreat center).

I am truly at peace here and much accepted, have been able to work informally these past years helping with appointments, teach Special Education Program (adults).

I am who I am because of my institute and its members. I have been encouraged to live the Gospel fully and I can't imagine not being a member. I am deeply grateful.

I appreciate shared prayer and the support given to each other daily.

I believe that I am doing God's will and it has been a privilege and also rewarding to serve His people.

I belong to something greater than myself. I have others who profess the same beliefs.

I can honestly say that my hardest day in religious life is better than my best day before I entered the convent. I say this because I have a peace within me that I didn't have before. A peace that I spent years in search of. As we know, it is in doing God's will that we find our peace.

I can teach about God, I live with those who share my values and faith.

I find growing closer to Christ the most satisfying part of religious life. However, community is also very satisfying.

I find it most rewarding to be a Bride of Christ, living my love for Jesus through the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, as part of a Congregation which has a clear sense of identity within the Church.

I find it rewarding to see the impact religious men/women have in society. I enjoy meeting people and to hear what they have to say...to share in their life.

I find it the most rewarding/satisfying to have such a prayerful religious community. Also, because we are a Eucharistic community, I know that we are always united in the Eucharist...no matter how far apart the rest of our community may be located.

I find living in community rewarding. I am grateful for daily Mass in our chapel. Just the fact that the Blessed Sacrament is in the same house (reserved in our chapel) is a blessing.

I find most rewarding about religious life is the belonging to God as a consecrated person. Set aside for Him. While trying to love Him with a pure and undivided heart. And with Jesus as the center of my heart helping me to love and to serve my brothers and sisters with the grace of God so as to continue Jesus' mission spreading the Gospel through charity and with love.

I find most rewarding or satisfying about religious life is a spiritual life and to be part of a community.

I find most rewarding our truly deep desire to seek God together and what it is God is calling us to in this time and place. I find deeply satisfying our communal desire to reach out to those in need among us and the joy of having the opportunity to do that together, either actually ministering together or knowing we have the support of the others. I also deeply appreciate our daily life and prayer that sustains us.

I find my religious consecration most rewarding – that I am a bride of Christ, totally consecrated in Him and His will.

I find our life of prayer and service most satisfying and belonging completely to Christ.

I find that having the privilege to be all His even now is most rewarding – being His bride like Mary.

I find that I am daily encouraged and challenged by our life to grow deeper in love with the Lord and my neighbor. This brings great joy and satisfaction.

I find that I am loved and supported. I find that I am freed by that support to engage in the God quest.



I find the deep commitment to serving others especially, women and children, most satisfying because we do this together all around the world.

I find the deepening of my relationship with God to be the most satisfying element of my religious life.

I find the impact and influence that religious life has in ministerial settings and in the culture to be satisfying and rewarding. On a more personal level I find the opportunity to grow in deeper and deeper relationship with God through my vows – living the vows daily – to be rewarding.

I find the peace I feel and the knowledge that I am a part of something bigger than myself.

I find the rhythm of the life (the communal prayer, work, and sharing) very satisfying as well as living in community. As a means to growing closer to our Divine Bridegroom we are perfected here before meeting our final judgment.

I find the time I have to pray and minister most rewarding about consecrated life. I am grateful for the opportunities to keep in touch and visit my family (which I originally thought would be limited). I am happy and grateful for the many ministry opportunities and am edified by our aged sisters who are wisdom women for me.

I find very rewarding about religious life to serve the most needed.

I have a real sense of not only doing God's will for my own life, but of placing my whole person at the service of others. Beyond a particular "work" I feel that religious life has freed me to give of myself finally.

I have a renewed energy and hope with the newer members coming in today – the desire for community is finally being heard – listening to the needs of all people/sisters in community – the old to the young. The prayer life is the most important to me – to share that with others – share community – to share my life.

I have a sense of belonging to something big – a sense of purpose. I am convinced the Holy Spirit wants us to exist and carry out a particular role in the Church's mission. I love my sisters.

I have always felt called and I know I am where I am supposed to be.

I have been visiting nursing homes, our hospital and many homes to bring Communion and spend some time with our parishoners. They are very happy for the visits and that is my reward.

I have had the opportunity to meet such a variety of wonderful people. It has also helped me become more fully who I am called to be.

I know I am the Lord's and that he will give me all I need to grow in holiness – I have sisters that will help me to focus on growth – I can tell children I teach and adults I work with how much God loves them!



I love when people can see that the Catholic Church and religious life are still alive and thriving. This is very rewarding to me.

I receive back much more from those I minister to than I give to them – very rewarding.

I thought I entered because I loved God but through the years have come to realize that the beauty of the journey is learning how much I am loved by God. Our main apostolate is education. I've grown to love the privilege of helping young people tap into their potential.

I'm grateful for the freedom in obedience. All I want to do is to love and please our Lord, and all I need to do (to fulfill this desire) is fulfill my vow of obedience. I'm also grateful to live in the same house as our Eucharistic Lord.

I'm in seminary still. So far, I love getting close to Jesus and learning new prayer methods and new ways of serving God.

In education, the experience of witnessing the awakening to sacred mysteries in the hearts and minds of children is not only satisfying, but a privilege that in turn strengthens my own commitment to "be about the Lord's business."

In my apostolate when I see the young students conn

Involvement at the international level. An increased desire to look for new forms and what is new in religious life. I find others who prefer to have a spiritual practice of meditation and who are generally operating at a post modern developmental level.

It brings joy to my soul or my being

It gives my life grounding, direction, meaning and I've found wonderful companions along the way – in unexpected places. It keeps my life centered – God seeking, prayerful and reflective. It gives me a way.

It is a life I find requires all of me. What I give, I get in return. It is a chance to be about something bigger than me.

It is a tremendous gift to belong totally and radically to Jesus Christ and His Church. Living His own way of life – poor, chaste, and obedient – is a gift and mystery of divine love and mercy.

It is a way of life that helps me live better the gospel values and co

It seems to be the place where I “belong.”

It’s a life that supports me in deepening my relationship with God and in living out of that relationship the best I am able in love.

It’s all for the honor and glory of God.

Its counter cultural witness to a life of service to God. Being God’s instrument in service. Jesus – His daily invitation to draw close to Him in this way of life through prayer and service to others, and to know I might be helping others come closer to Christ and follow Him in loving service to the Church.

Jesus Christ as Bridegroom of my life.

Jesus Christ for spouse.

Jesus is everything. Here I seek His will. He calls me and I desire each day to offer him my every suffering and to let him use me to shine his light on the world.

Jesus! Especially prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. There is really no other reason to be a religious...I am – for Him

Joining a group of women who try to live a prophetic life style in lists of the Gospels and social justice.

Journing with like valued companions. Sharing life in many keeps me broaden minded and other focused or open to the spirit for growth, healing, response to each day's call.

Knowing and following God’s will. Striving always to love Him more and become more Mary-like with a group of religious women working together and encouraging each other towards this end.

Knowing I am doing God’s will in all that I do.

Knowing I am following the call Christ has called me to.

Knowing my life is totally given over to God to use as he wishes. God works through each of us to bring souls to Christ.

Knowing souls are being saved through our life of sacrifice.

Knowing that I am called to be the best version of myself within this religious family. I am able to use all that I am for God’s glory and not be put in a box.

Knowing that I am doing God’s will.

Knowing that I am doing God's will. I am His bride, because it is His will that I be so.

Knowing that I am living out a spirituality that is shared/valued by many others and being part of something worthwhile that is bigger than myself.

Knowing that I am living out of the vocation God called me to.

Knowing that I am where God has called me to be.

Knowing that my life makes a difference in the lives of those whom I serve. And knowing that I have a whole community behind me who is supporting me in my ministry. I'm not out there by myself.

Knowing that Our Lord chose this vocation for me from all eternity, and this charism.

Knowing that people will call us and ask for prayers, and every once in a while they call to let us know that they were answered.

Knowing that through me, with me and in spite of me God shares his love with others and brings His Kingdom closer at hand.

Knowing that we are all seeking God's will and fulfilling our deepest desires as persons.

Knowing that wherever I am I represent the community and all are with each other in spirit whatever the ministry. People who understand the ups and downs of community life.

Knowing this is where the Lord wants me – I have so much peace. I feel I am growing spiritually closer to the Lord and as a person, through personal prayer, formation, and healing ministry opportunities with our formation directives and communally. I am growing as a person and feel loved and incorporated into my community.

Learning more about God and seeing how He works in my life and those around me.

Life of prayer, community life, being of service.

Liturgy of the Hours and personal prayer. Love and care of community. Sense of connection with tradition.

Living (and being best friends) with women who want to be holy above all else.

Living a life of prayer and a sense that what I do really helps to build the kingdom.

Living a sense of being where I feel God wants me to be. I also enjoy my ministry as musician and liturgist at our motherhouse in St. Louis, MO.

Living according to the Rule of St. Benedict in a community of women who have a common goal.

Living and working among religious of various ages.

Living and working with people

Living in the same house with our Eucharistic lord; the encouragement and example of my



Ministry with support of community life.

Ministry work, being a member of the Institute.

Ministry.

constitution, directory, rule, Gospel way of life, fidelity to the Church, daily Eucharistic Adoration, rosary, ministry th



Opportunity to serve with others who are also passionate about our mission and charism.

Our community life and prayer gives us the strength to serve those who are poor and in need. My community has encouraged and challenged me to see beyond my personal expectations. Together we work to make a difference in serving others spiritually and corporally. Community life is rewarding as well as the most difficult aspect of this life given to God in service of the poor.

Our community supports one another. Fraternal charity is alive and well . There are many of all ages striving for holiness. It is good to study and work and pray with others who love our Lord and his Church.

Our gift of knowing strong witness in our Foundresses, depth of spiritual life, relationships in and out of community, meeting other religious and lay faithful who share beliefs.

Our prayer life. Community.

Our shared commitment to God through loving and serving people who are poor. Our shared commitment to seeking justice for people and earth.

Our spiritual life as we renew our commitment in daily prayer, Eucharistic Liturgy, monthly recollection, annual retreat, etc. If I am a lay person I would not have an opportunity for all these things.

Our strong life of prayer, strong fraternal bonds within community. The joys and sorrows of spiritual motherhood experienced through our ministries.

Peace about being in God's will, seeing God's work and His love torching people.

Peace in doing God's will

Peace. Knowing about God through other faithful, especially sisters at my community, community life. They have patience with culture difference, even they are aged.

Perpetual adoration, community life.

Personal spiritual growth, commitment to ministry, ongoing study, faithfulness to mission.

Planting God's seeds in pre-school children!

Possibility to serve in total givenness; being an integral part of the Church.

Prayer and community life.

Prayer and community life.

Prayer and community.

Prayer and companionship of other of same interest.

Prayer and service.

Prayer and study.

Prayer life – beautiful example of my sisters being in a close and very special personal relationship with my Jesus, my Love!

Prayer life – opportunities for spiritual growth.

Prayer life – opportunity to be a sign with my life.

Prayer life – the opportunities for spiritual growth – retreat opportunities – working with others in my field (nursing home owned by the Sisters) living in community with like-minded (prayerful) people (sisters).

Prayer life and my relationship w

Prayer, our congregation's charism of making Jesus known and loved, witness of members.

Prayer.

Prayer. Communal living. Charism

Prayer. Community life/relationships. Service.

Prayer. Unity and commitment of our community to the Church

Prayers, daily living in common/community life. Eucharistic Adoration. Giving witness as a religious sister in a full habit!

Praying and serving.

Praying life and also I can help a lot of people in the world with my work.

Probably being with the older sisters.

Profession of the evangelical counsels is most satisfying because my vows free me to pursue the perfection of charity, and my eternal reward in heaven. Serving as a teacher in the apostolate can be rewarding, but more importantly it is a gift to do God's will and bring Christ to others.

Protected prayer life and the privilege to work with/for the heroic men and women we serve for life.

Provides an environment for deepening relationships and union with God.

Receiving, as a consecrated religious, Christ's love poured out in the Mass and Divine Office and communicating that love in community and in teaching.

(1) Relationship with Christ which grows daily. (2) Community life that aids me in living the vows and growing in holiness. (3) Apostolate in passing on to others the fruits of my contemplation.

Relationship with God. Community life.

Relationship with sisters and ministry.

Relationships within community. Our celebrations together. Our commitment to serving the poor and responding to needs around us. The many opportunities to participate on committees/boards, etc. for our future.

Relationships, challenge for growth, spirituality, personally, ministerially, ability to make a difference in our world as a community.

Relationships.

Religious consecration to Jesus Christ – belonging wholly to Christ. Ability to share the love and truth of Jesus Christ with other (apostolate of education). Community life – seeing Christ in my sisters and experiencing His love through them.

Religious identity as “Bride of Christ.”

Religious life culture; being able to discuss, talk out, share my God-quest, and the role of religious in culture, society,

Sense of being part of a larger whole dedicated to a common purpose/values/good.

Sense of being part of something larger than myself. Being a sister challenges me to seek God in all aspects and to be the presence of Christ to others. I could not do the same by myself.

Sense of belonging/being understood. Opportunities for spiritual growth/service alone and with others. The sisters!

Sense of oneness with the group and seeing the group discern directions to move.

Sense of purpose, growing in faith

Service

Service and giving/experience of union with God through prayer and ministry/overwhelming feeling of doing God's will.

Service to/with persons who are poor.

Service, but also the God committed sisters I have around and along the way.

Serving God and neighbor as part of something much larger than oneself. Support for the sake of the mission. Also recognition that I am part of the larger Dominican family and that together, we can serve others. Religious life continues to challenge me to become more of the person God has called me to be/become.

Serving God and the Church without counting the cost.

Serving God's people, community life.

Serving in ministries of the religious community.

Serving others and knowing it isn't just about me, it's what God has called me to do.

Serving others, being with the sisters.

Serving the Lord always.

Shared commitment to living and witnessing to the Gospel.

Shared mission in an apostolic community. Shared values and support.

Shared prayer, meals, work, view of world, service to God's people, love of Church – but ability to see problems. (We are daughters of the Church – but must not be silenced.)



Sharing a common mission – for us its serving the poor. Being part of something larger, bigger – international, provincial, local.

Sharing community life, being one with the poor, support and love of community members.

Sharing community prayer and living. Support in my ministry from international community.

Sharing faith and life together (charism and lifestyle). Serving together (ministry and charism).

Sharing global spirituality and vision with a community of women with a world wide heart.

Sharing in community and helping others find Jesus.

Sharing religious life with my immediate cenacle which includes three other MSBTs. The ministry, the challenge to spiritual and personal growth. Faith sharing.

Sharing to others what I have received in abundance; living a life of gratitude.

Sharing, support or pooling of resources at the spiritual, emotional and financial levels for personal as well as ministerial growth.

Silence. Silence is the #1 thing that helped



That I can be a witness to Christ in the world, our common prayer life and community life.

That in a way I am wasting my life for God and that people sometimes come back to God because we help them.

That it's challenging and causes growth and acceptance.

That no matter what I do, where I am, with whom I am, I am consecrated to God. My greatest joy is to be a spouse of Christ.

That there is still room for individuality – though living in obedience and community – that you are always challenged to find the best you.

That through community I am better able to serve the poor and do God's will.

That through my growing deeper in my prayer life, I am able to make the merciful love of Christ visible to all I encounter.

That together we live pray and serve those who are the poorest in our world. We are always growing trying to live more deeply our relationship with God. I love the radicalness and challenge of the life.

That we are chosen by God. It is a great gift, unique, mystery, a special and radical vocation from God.

That we still live in common and share the mission together.

The "knowing" of doing God's will with my life and sharing community with my sisters.

The ability to dedicate time to growing in relationship with the Lord.

The ability to grow and be myself.

The ability to maintain a focus on spirituality and my relationship with God – and the support of others who are doing the same.

The ability to reach into peoples' lives and hearts at a deeper level than they would generally open up, if I were not a religious.

The ability to serve God's children, whatever their age(s) may be in a way that I never could as a lay person. As a Religious people look at you differently and the Lord uses that to make/have a greater impact in their lives.

The acceptance I have received from my Community and from those to whom I minister. I also work with a very supportive staff.



The constant encouragement and support to grow in union with God.

The daily call to conversion and drawing closer to the Lord in prayer.

The daily opportunities to be of service to others.

The daily trial/rewards of striving to be faithful to the grace of living my vows completely for the glory and honor of God.

The deep experiences of God in prayer and the active demands of service. A sense of meaning and purpose. Simple living.

The deepening of my relationship with God. Deepening in the spirituality and charism of my congregation. Lived out in ministry to my neighbors.

The development of a prayer life centered on the Blessed Sacrament has given me an opportunity for growth in maturity and personal integrity. Classes have given me an understanding of the dignity and responsibility of the religious life; and working with each sister has given me a wide view of how to apply these principles to every day life.

The experience of God and unity of the community toward the same goal.

The fact of being as a religious sister.

The fact that as religious, we belong to God in a spousal union through consecration – that as consecrated religious, everything in what we do and who we are is directed to the worship of him and to the salvation of the souls: the joy found in the above.

The fact that I can live out my calling in ways that bring me peace and at the same time I know I am supported by my congregation mentally, physically, and spiritually.

The fact that I know I am doing the will of God.

The feeling of rightness in where I am. Joy and peace in prayer, community, ministry...

The focus on ministry/connectedness from spirituality/community life and mission.

The focus on the God-quest that permeates the personal, communal and ministry – all aspects of life – integration.

The focus on the spiritual journey, one's relationship with God – the ability to focus on what matters in my life – The freedom to focus my life around spiritual values and ministry – and to be with others with similar values.

The freedom and opportunity to grow in prayer and ministry.

The freedom I have to give my time to people in need. Whatever the ministry.

The freedom to finally respond to God's love with my whole heart.

The freedom to give myself to God and to be one in mind and heart with the members of my institute. The privilege to proclaim the Gospel message everyday with or without words.

The freedom to live an authentic Christian life in response to the call God has placed on my heart.

The immense possibility and the devotion to a life with and for God in service to my neighbors and community.

The internationality of our Congregation.

The intimacy with my Spouse. Religious community life in common. Mission and those we serve.

The journey of sacred Spirit as a human person in this society.

The journey with Jesus and community.

The joy of doing God's will in loving service in community.

The knowledge and experience of sharing this journey with a community who supports me but also is willing to challenge me when needed out of love.

The knowledge that all is not for nothing – all of my trials and sufferings bring about a greater good. The self-knowledge of discovering who God has created and desired me to be, even in all of my weaknesses and short-comings.

The knowledge that I am totally consecrated to God. That He has given to me the gift to live my life totally with Him and to walk through this world as a witness to His existence, His love, and His power to transform us.

The knowledge that whatever I do, even the most simple I do not do it alone. His ever present presence is there. Doing everything for God, with Him, in Him.

The Liturgy of the Hours together every day – the great relationships I've formed with many sisters – the opportunity to learn, grow, develop – my ever deepening relationship with God.

The love and support and encouragement to growth (also a challenge)...the ability to minister to other people and meet God in them...the ability to be free to respond to God's call...to have time and space for prayer...to afforded opportunities to meet and know people (sisters and others) of all backgrounds.

The love of God and I am able to share freely to the young and others this love.

The Love of God in the Eucharist, in the prayers, in my sisters, in my patients, in myself. To be able to serve God with what I am and I do.

The love of God that trusts us and is ever faithful, the fact that the Holy Spirit works through all our fragility and His will is fulfilled no matter what and is so good.

The many blessings the Lord entrusts to us each day. Community life.

The many forms of “built-in” spiritual nourishment.

The many opportunities every day to learn more about my faith, to pray, and to spend time in intimate union with the Lord.

The most rewarding aspect about religious life is Jesus’ availability to me and me to Him 24/7.

The most rewarding aspect of religious life for me right now is the community life. I truly appreciate living and sharing my faith with my sisters. I am so grateful for their support and encouragement and it is life-giving to me to be a support to them. I love my sisters!

The most rewarding aspect of religious life is belonging to Jesus. In experiencing covenantal love, it becomes easier to share that love with others. It is very important to me to exercise the Works of Mercy. In caring for the elderly poor, there are numerous occasions to follow Jesus’



The ongoing intimate relationship with Jesus Christ through my life of prayer and service with a loving and joyful community.

The opportunities for spiritual and personal development in the context of others who share in a common vision. And a sense of “sisterhood.”

The opportunities for spiritual growth and the chance to live and work with others toward a common goal.

The opportunities to love God with all my being every moment of my life, uniting myself to His Holy Will for his greater glory and salvation of the world.

The opportunity for communal liturgy of the hours. The daily Eucharist. Ministering in my profession as a sister and being a witness. Relationships with some other members of this house.

The opportunity for prayer, time for spiritual renewal, our ministry especially as a spiritual director. I am also pleased with deep friendships with sisters of a wide variety of ages.

The opportunity to be associated closely with so many good women who share my values and support me spiritually. Being part of a community. Being part of something that is doing so much good in the world. Being part of a group that embraces and lives some very counter cultural values.

The opportunity to be part of something larger than myself. The sense that I am responding to God’s call in my life. Sharing the dailiness of life with other women who are also seeking God. Our witness to another way of life in our over-sexed, consumerist, individualistic culture.

The opportunity to be supported on my God quest and to engage in ministry with other women who share my values and desires. To be part of ministry that is larger than myself.

The opportunity to bring others closer to personal fulfillment through a relationship with Christ and the Church. Living a community life, and prayerful life that brings out the essence of who I am called to be in God.

The opportunity to deepening my relationship with God and to be able to serve God's people.

The opportunity to go where God is inviting me to be because I have the support of the wider community and I am not alone. I walk with other women wanting to live the Gospel Message.

The opportunity to live with Sisters from other cultures, different backgrounds, and personalities. And to be able to go beyond those differences to share our love and faith for God. From this experience to “go out”errs peopof 0p3fffev(hereho aresst.ng)5.4.

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The opportunity to share life and ministry with others. The sense that I am part of a bigger whole.

The opportunity to witness a person's last breath on earth; just like Mary at the Foot of the Cross. There is so much to learn from suffering, you realize that this world is so temporary. I think young people don't realize that until you are faced with death, someone dying. And also the fact that in each convent we have a chapel where I can go visit Jesus anytime.

The opportunity to journey with God's People as one among them – the privilege of being allowed into people's lives – trusted to care as Christ (deeply humbling). The gift of being in community – part of something greater than myself. The opportunity to orient my life around one central relationship: with God.

The peace and contentment I feel internally. I do





call in the model of Mary at the foot of the cross. A call that brings an awareness of one's unworthiness, but gratitude for God's great love.

The time of prayer. Sharing with the sisters – spiritual experience.

The times of prayer, my community life. Working with the dying.

The unique call by Christ to enter into a relationship with Him through the profession of the vows: to be His Bride and to model Mary and the Church. In addition, living in community and having a rich prayer life and serving the Church through the Apostolate of teaching. I love it all!

The vast network of unique women all journeying on the same path to know and love God more each day. There is always someone to discuss any variety of issues with who are willing to talk.

The vows – as a mode of living out the charism and mission in relationship with others – being accountable and interdependent to one another in order to do what we're called to – live out of the Gospel. Living the vows in this time, balancing spirituality and theology and applying it to daily life – in community with others whom we serve and minister with.

The way people share their needs with you asking for prayers. It is very humbling.

The wide variety of opportunities for service and the different possibilities for community life.

The women I live, work and pray with are incredible. I can't say I am the model religious but one comment that students, faculty and others say about me is that I "am real." I love my community, my Church, my ministry – community and faith sharing are very important to me.

The women who commit to share their faith and service to the poor serve as inspiration and support in my work with the uninsured.

There are so many things that I have come to value in my very young religious life: community life, prayer, our apostolate in education, our history. Most of all it is the witness I am able to give with my life. When someone sees me they are reminded of faith and of God's great love for them.

There is a reverence for space needed for communal and personal prayer.

This is the lifestyle that fits who God is calling me to be. I love our charism – especially as I have learned about it and I lived it these years.

Time and space's respect for prayer – individual and communal. Strength or solidarity for a challenging ministry. Giving life to an ancient tradition in the Church.

Time for prayer – time for meditation is in the daily schedule. Living with women who have the same purpose.

Time to develop relationships, first of all, with God and then with others. You didn't ask about contemplation, but it is a vital part of my life!

To ability to serve and love God wholeheartedly – to give myself to God in community and in prayer and to take that to the people of God and serve them.

To adore Jesus daily in the Eucharist celebration and to seek the salvation of self and others.

To be able to share in all aspects of community living.

To be concerned with the one thing necessary.

To belong completely to Christ is such a joy; a joy that nothing could ever take away!

To experience the joy of daily Eucharist, having a chapel with the Blessed Sacrament. Having a shared vision with my sisters. Ongoing formation. Seeing new members enter and profess vows. The gift and grace of perseverance.

To give my life to God in serving my brothers and sisters in need.

1. To give our life to help the needy and make them happy – I'm more happy and rewarded. 2. To give up money. I have a very satisfying life.

To grow in the spiritual life (our relationship with Christ) and the assurance that He is guiding your life if you are open to Him (through your superiors).

To have the firm conviction that there is nothing small in religious life if we do everything for love of God, and the infinite graces of God which have helped me to overcome difficulties, to accept them and to offer them to the Father, and to persevere in my beautiful vocation as a Little Sister of the Poor.

To see God's powerful presence and love come through members – religious lives when they truly allow God's grace to come through them to reach others.

To see the faith on people's heart and able to help them in difficulties.

To share my gifts and talents and to be the best person that I could.

Together, we, as community, can have a greater impact in people's lives than I could have as an individual!

Total commitment and belonging to Christ, completely at His service.

Total gift of self to God for service of the poor. Living the evangelical counsels, chastity, poverty, obedience.

Total gifts of self to God that cannot otherwise be given with this calling.

Totally consecrated to God-everything is for Him and for salvation of souls.

Truly it is inexpressable. I am so at peace even when there are challenges and difficulties. I suppose the most satisfying aspect could be simply stated as community. To elaborate, I would say I have the knowledge and guidance of all the sisters before me. I have sisters praying deeply when I can not and I pray deeply when they can't. It is knowing that we all strive for holiness together. There is so much and my space too limited.

Two of the most rewarding/satisfying things about religious life are: 1. knowing that I am doing God's will – that this is what He wants of me, 2. fraternal life in community.

Union with God through prayer with the community and personal prayer, as well as working for Christ in the apostolate.

Union with God. Cooperating with God's graces and trying each day to be in a state of grace by frequenting the sacraments, especially the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist.

Union with God. Good relationships with humanity and the universe.

United with others in service to God for the greater good.

Uniting sufferings to the cross of my spouse. Being united to my sisters through Sacraments and community life.

Unity of prayer, community and mission.

Using talents to be of service to others. Opportunity for prayer in community.

Various ministries that I have been involved in and knowing that I made a difference in people's lives through education and health care for the uninsured.

Vision and faith of community, challenge to be the best person I can be.

We all have the same goal, and can help one another, because through our Rule and Constitutions, we know God's will for us.

We are able to help so many people in their spiritual and physical poverty. I find joy in being God's hands here on earth for Him.

We are all in this together. The same vision/mission.

We are called to serve in the simple and the profound but we never know which is which. Just being able to participate in God's work, love, and plan is challenging, rewarding and humbling.

We are very hospitable. We love each other and that shows in our prayer and in our ministry and in our outreach to others.

We share Gospel values of peace and justice and the Vatican II Church – this is rewarding and satisfying. We are committed to prayer both personal and communal.

Wearing a habit and being stopped and thanked for “being visible”; the ability to reach out to others and help them in their needs; my close and growing relationship to Christ in prayer and through my community.

What I have been able to do as a religious – learn – grow – have TIME to do the things I have done. Time to pray and grow spiritually.

What is most satisfying to me as a religious is knowing that I am doing God's will! Also hopefully leading others to God's great love and mercy!

When community life is at its best I find it very rewarding. It takes a great deal of work on everyone's part. I especially find shared prayer (including faith-sharing) to be life-giving.

When community works it shines God's joy. The opportunity to teach and care for God's children in a way only made possible in religious life.

When I can make people happy by my touching actions.

When I come home after ministry and I pray with my sisters, when I share life and God and food



Working for justice and acting for peace in the context of a community dedicated to serving God and God's people.

Working together to accomplish something valuable that I could not do alone.

Working towards a common vision. Mutual support. Being encouraged to use my gifts and talents in community and ministry.

Working with the inner city community.

Working with the people in a parish-sometimes presenting the Body of Christ to the Body of Christ.

Working with the sisters in my community to serve the needs of others.

(Wow! What a question!) The clear commitment to God and the freedom that the life allows to pray, serve, love, commune and be.

You are privileged to see God's grace transforming lives, miracles every day in the lives of those we serve.

### ***Contemplative Men***

A touch of God's finger. Taste and see, how good the Lord is – Happy the men who take refuge in Him (Ps 33:9). They who eat me (wisdom) and will hunger for more. They who drink me will thirst for more (Si 24:21 &29).

Being committed to the Gospel.

Call to personal and communal prayer – As stated in rule of life and constitutions of the order.

Focus on prayer, both communal and individual.

I feel I have improved as a person and have drawn closer to God.

I strongly believe that I am in the will of God for me, for the Church. It is God's life invitation for me and I accepted it and try to live it the best I can, with what I am rs

Our prayer life (about 5 or 5.5

Belonging entirely to Jesus.

Both # 188 and 190

Brideship in being the spouse of the son of God.

Community life and common liturgical prayer.

Community life, prayer, spiritual reading, schedule silence.

Connection with others who are intent on consciousness and assisting the world to awaken.

Contributing in service on a daily basis. Knowing that I can be truly available to serve others, to serve community and grow personally in love of God and neighbor.

Experiencing God's love and his presence, and uniting my daily activities with the intentions of Holy Mother Church are most rewarding and satisfying about my religious life.

Free from worldly cares to center my heart on God.

Growing more and more in union with my divine spouse and more clearly seeing His face in my sisters. Experiencing the freedom of my weakness and sinfulness; growing in my acceptance of the mystery that my life of prayer touches the whole world.

Having a sense of commitment and fulfilling God's will for my life.

Having our Lord for one's Spouse, and being (hopefully) an instrument of His grace and mercy.

I find deepening relationship with God most rewarding.

I find it very rewarding to know that I can be of service to the Church

rewarding are ~~our Lord, my divine spouse~~ our Lord, my divine spouse

I love my ministry of working with our elder sisters. The prayer life is enriching and I feel I have grown immensely in so many ways.

I love prayer – living with Jesus in the Eucharist – Adoration – being in service to the Church and people – my sisters make it satisfying.

I'm not there yet, although I participate in about 80% of life in the monastery.

Interior life and community life. Atmosphere of open to the Holy Spirit provides enormous personal growth which gives a huge witness of the power of God to all especially friends and family.

Intimate union with God.

Joy in the possession of God. Living life fully and truthfully and peacefully which comes from daily dedication to the Rule and routine.

Knowing that I am doing God's will through holy obedience. Knowing that I belong entirely to God alone.

Knowing that the monastic contemplative vocation is at the heart of the Church and that our life of prayer and sacrifice is at the service of the Church and the world.

Knowing that you are doing God's will and strengthening the Church at large through prayer and sacrifice.

Knowledge of my consecration to God. Entering more deeply into prayer and love of God. Interior freedom. Growing gradually in charity; service and self-knowledge.

Life of commitment. Liturgy/Eucharistic of Hours.

Life of prayer.

Living for God, giving myself to God totally for benefit of all people

My personal relation with my Spouse.

My satisfaction about religious life is the happiness and the feeling of simplicity, and humility.

My sisters.

Opportunity to live a life of ministry and prayer – the active/contemplative life.

Our apostolic work of intercessory prayer is a great responsibility but gives one a satisfying sense of mission and purpose. Contemplative religious life provides a total and very deep

grounding in the Paschal Mystery and supports development of a rich personal relationship with the person of Jesus. Community life keeps you honest, demanding that you make God's love present to your sisters. My former ministries kept me too focused on busy-ness and production. God called me to “waste” time in silence and prayer.

Our Eucharistic Adoration hour and all the prayer time we have before our Eucharistic Jesus as a community.

Prayer life – community – the intimacy you are able to cultivate with God. My focus is on God. My prayer is for God’s people. Prayer life and relationship with God which reaches out to the world in that mystical way only God knows. Serving my community.

Prayer life.

Prayer. Community life. Work, study

Praying the Divine Office and perpetual rosary, perpetual Adoration and living with Jesus Christ in our midst.

Promoting God’s kingdom here on earth.

Regular daily Eucharist and life in community. Support from my sisters.

Religious life is life lived immersed in God. Religious live in, with, and for God. As God is the sole desire of the human heart, He satisfies those who leave all to follow Him. God. God alone.

Saving souls and becoming closer to God.

Seeing God face to face, living heaven on earth. Heaven on earth is very real. I received a spiritual miracle after our annual retreat last June 2008, this being the 7th year since my monastic entrance. God “rewarded” me for my perseverance in sufferings/major trials despite apparent failures. Pope Benedict XVI's vision of a New Pentecost, a new springtime is being fulfilled, bearing fruit.

Simply being religious and belonging to Jesus as his bride a very united community and excellent superiors and sisters, the life of enclosure, doing God’s will for me, privilege of having the habit and vows.



The opportunity to say yes to God in an environment that encourages and supports you in that quest.

The peace and joy that comes from doing God's will each day through the gift of myself through the vows.

The personal and liturgical times of prayer. The presence of the Blessed Sacrament in the monastery.

The relationship with God. We have very good religious here but many are, I think, stunted in their emotional development because of when they entered (year and age) and formation that needed more depth.

The same as above plus human interest.

The simplicity – I know what comes next, I know what to wear...I'm freed from thinking, wondering about unimportant details.

The spiritual fulfillment, joys and freedom. Intimacy with God.

The support of praying and living together, working together. The support of each other.

The thought that through my sacrifice others may benefit and be brought to Christ.

Time for intimate relationships with God; time for that relationship to flow out to others in prayer and through spiritual direction, liturgy, and educational efforts.

To be able to live under the same roof of the Lord. Prayer is to the religious life what communication, sustained interaction, and mutual contemplation is to any committed relationship.

To be of one mind and one heart on the same journey in friendship with Jesus.

To be united with Jesus, doing God's will.

To do God's holy will.

Total self-giving for love of God and in reparation for sin and the salvation of all!

Union with Christ in the Eucharist – transformation into Christ for the whole body of Christ – giving witness to God's love and care for all.

Union with our Lord!





God's love for me that I don't have to be afraid.

I truly believe that I was born to be in the religious life. Being able to fulfill God's plan is of utmost importance. The Lord has guided me along the path. He walks with me and I with him. He is my first and only love.

Intimate relationship with Jesus and the opportunity to live and give all my life to the service of others.

Joy that comes from saying yes to God's call and following His will and plan for your life. The daily challenge to grow in holiness.

Living in community with women with a common vision and not so set in our ways that we won't risk something new.

Living with women – who I can share my faith and



**190. What do you find most challenging about religious life?**

The responses below are grouped by active men, active women, contemplative men, contemplative women, and those the could not be classified according to these categories.

***Active Men***

A certain mediocrity in the religious life; insufficient paying of attention to the signs of the times and unwillingness to be more prophetic. Besides, not having children of my own, and a woman with whom I could be not only spirit

An inability of many members (including leadership) to address financial, cultural, and demographical issues within the community

Apostolic ministry.

Arbitrary confreres.

Articulating my needs and presenting myself more genuinely to all of the members of my community have been the most challenging parts of religious life.

As a younger community we have fewer older members so the witness value for following is hard to find inside and almost no witness value outside the community especially for male religious with strong community life, although many good individuals.

As much as the “day to day” can be rewarding, it can also become routine.

At the mission experiences.

At the same time, community life can be a challenge.

At times community can be tough. Also giving up “personal freedom.”

At times community life is a challenge to me. I need my quiet time and time to “recuperate” from being with people all day.

At times I do find myself lonely and at times find it challenging dealing with certain members.

At times, community life.

Attachment to the world, flesh, sin, and temptation to doubt and fear. Dealing with past wounds

Balancing prayer with apostolic commitments.

Be faithful to my commitment as religious in this society.

Being “lumped in” with some of the more reactionary/punishing elements of the Church. The fact that not all members of my province are not so concerned about the vows of poverty/chastity.

Being “single.”

Being a public person – handling a public recognition and expectations of those I serve.

Being a public person. Tenuousness of institute’s future. Obligation to support Church teaching with which I do not agree.

Being able to do a good job while being a good monk. The demands (conflicting) on time and energy.

Being alone and moving repeatedly to different assignments. The politics in Church is frustrating. The traditional and liberal members are at odds with each other and both show favoritism to their group members.

Being alone without being lonely.

Being away from family! I am kind of just getting started but imagine the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience will all at times challenge me! Fraternal life = different personalities – looking at myself and acknowledging my many areas of weakness and strength! Perseverance = life long commitment = challenging!

Being counter cultural and a prophetic voice.

Being raised in an uncatechized generation and loving (but also hating) a decidedly “left leaning” order, there is no sense to our “religious priesthood.” In fact, it is pretty vacuous. There is very little reason for our order to ordain

Busy schedules and lack of time together.

Busyness, difficult to say no.

Can be lonely at times.

Celibacy. Having become more developed in all aspects makes it tempting to want to share that with one person.

Celibacy – obedience.

Celibacy, community life, humility with obedience.

Celibacy, misplaced fear at decline, male competition.

Celibacy, stigma around Catholic priests in light of sex abuse scandals, long process of formation, counter-cultural lifestyle and values.

Celibacy.

Celibacy.

Celibacy.

Celibacy. Diminishment and abandonment.

Celibacy. Living with people you don't get along with.

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Coming to see how many in religious life are truly damaged and wounded, and how to live in the midst of this. There is a lot that is unhealthy about this life, if lived poorly it can lead to deep loneliness and addictions, and I have come to see this up close.

Common life with its disappointments and annoyances; a certain lack of observance, and dissent. Personally on-going struggle with prayer.

Common life, it's saving my soul.

Common vision. Contemporary incarnation of the charism.

Communal living.

Communal prayer and living.

Community – brothers have sometimes different understanding of things; like living singly, etc.

Community life and prayer. The growing conservatism among our younger members.

Community life and the invitation to constantly live for Jesus and not for ourself.

Community life at times, culture shock.

Community life dynamics.

Community life is the best and the most challenging part of religious life. The guys I live with force me to be humble, to face my own demons, and how to communicate in a healthy way.

Community life with old brothers.

Community life!

Community life, how to remain prophetic

Community life, leadership/“infantilization” of formation.

Community life, ministry in dangerous places, non traditional ministries.

Community life, which is also





Community.

Community.

Community.

Community.

Community.

Community. Different outlooks/perspectives regarding mission and ministry.

Community. Formation process at my age. Infantilization of novitiate.

Community...we are one big loving and “normally dysfunctional” family. I enjoy a good challenge.

Conservative nature of younger members who don't take the time to learn about our particular life and focus on some non-existent “ideal.” Decrease in vocations which greatly impacts our works.

Constant moving from one city/state to another (almost every 3 years for me). Diminishing membership and withdrawing from current ministry.

Constantly striving to go deeper in holiness and the continual battle against sin and temptation.

Continually striving for independence. Intimacy.

Conversion! Learning to live with and love others!

Critical Brothers. Brothers who have given up prayer. My own selfishness.

Cultural diversity, communal living.

Currently, I live alone – I'd prefer 5 Ta2 Tc-0.0006 Tw{Critic}4.4(b-1.1O9250 -1.1ostry. )8.3go0.0003 T12.49w

Dealing with my own and others' psychological problems.

Dealing with negativity, self-focussedness, laziness, etc. that can manifest itself within community life.

Dealing with non-believers and with people from other Christian denominations who are stubborn and unfriendly.

Dealing with others who have very different expectations of

Disparity between views of the younger students to those of their superior and professors (over 50 years usually). Anti-clerical movements among religious of my own Institute and others who make me feel guilty about wanting to be a priest. Hostile attitudes of my older brothers who judge me before they get to know me.

Disparity of lifestyle. "Poverty" is lived at very different levels in our institute.

Dispersal of peers, small local community/house, growing clericalism.

Disunity among members. Lack of vision. Age disparity (few young members).

Few members my age (relative to overall population of my order).

Few peers my age.

Fewer ordained ministers.

Finding brothers to really challenge me to grow in holiness.

Finding the balance between prayer, work, community life. There are many demands and requests and it is easy to become overwhelmed or burnt-out. Learning to say “no” is difficult as well as discerning what is the best use of my time and energy within the framework of the overall mission of the Society of Jesus.

Finding time to invest in friendships with community members; to interconnect, “link” our individual ministries into a common vision.

“Fishbowl” atmosphere where every move you make, or word uttered is under a microscope. Perceived perversion of Catholic priest due to scandals/celebrity – held by most of general population.

Focusing on the contemporary needs of the Church and world while being true to our Institute.

Formation (initial) – not being treated as an adult.

Formation and community leadership.

Forming friendships with community members.

Fraternal life.

Fraternal life/on-going formation.

Fraternal living and staying liberated from worldly allurements.

Fraternity – prayer – serving people. Walking the talk.

Fraternity!

Frequent moves – letting go of connections and establishing new ones on a regular basis...

Frequent moves.

Gap between rhetoric and reality – especially regarding community life – the impossible to speak of yet ever present tension between straight and gay members in part.

Generational differences, institutional inertia, moral decadence, laxity, middle class lifestyles, noise, irreverence, self-congratulatory institutional attitude.

Generational gaps between younger members and middle-aged or older members. On issues of religious identity, dress, community life, etc.

Getting brothers to find group prayer and Eucharist as a value – (priority).

Getting help and collaborating with others in ministry.

Giving myself fully and unreservedly to community life is a challenge. Obviously community life (I live with eight other friars) does not allow me to escape the messiness of human life altogether; since this is where charity and self-sacrifice are called for. This is sometimes tough in our pull toward INDIVIDUALISM.

Having the patience to take the time to properly develop a more comprehensive world view, and the patience to grow into the Capuchin form of spirituality.

How broken our world and all of us are. How broken the brothers and the people of the Church are. How unfaithful Catholics are. How difficult it is to maintain the proper perspective and balance amid the difficult work and turmoil and distractions.

How to live in community; How to open my heart to my brothers; How to be a religious man in these times.

I am 40 years old and I have been in final profession of vows for four years. I understand and even have a desire for more intentional religious life. This means a solid community prayer life.

It also may mean we embrace our traditions such as wearing the habit again. The problem is religious who are in their 60s are resisting the change. They hold onto ideologies instead of our religious traditions and beliefs. The millennials are challenging us to renewal, possibly even reform but the religious formed in







Lack of independence.

Lack of interest or availability for fellowship with my community members or other religious.

Lack of support for vocation of brotherhood.

Less frequent contact with family and friends, especially during the holidays; disciplined personal prayer life.

Letting go. Not being attached to persons and /or things.

Life without a family/spouse. Living the vows with integrity, responding to pedophilic/abuse crisis.

Limits my availability to family and friends. I like to keep up my relationships outside the

Living in community.

Living in community.

Living in community.

Living in community.

Living in community/the spirit of the vows lived with one-another.

Living the vows in a culture which runs counter to them.

Living the vows with integrity, being a consistent witness to holiness.

Living the vows.

1. Living the vows authentically. 2. Community life at times.

Living the vows. Follow Church teaching. Live the Gospel life.

Living up to the expectations of superiors and seniors without neglecting my prayer life.

Living with brothers who are dysfunctional or who have a theological chip on their shoulder.  
Following my conscience when it is at odds with the institutional Church.

Living with difficult personalities. Submitting myself to others – obedience.

Living with difficult personalities...and the loss of prayer and commitment to vows by others...we all need to be faithful to our vows.

Local community life. Living in common which is different than belonging to a larger fraternity. In other words the day to day challenges of living with others.

Loneliness – especially as communities get smaller.

Loneliness and poverty.

Loneliness.

Loneliness.

Loneliness. Communities that are more like boarding houses than a group of men who care about each other, eat together, pray together and support and encourage one another.

Loneliness. Difficulties of a celibate lifestyle.

Long formation process. Community life. Lack of a sense of identity as a religious institute, i.e., solemn vows seem like a formality while one is only considered a full member when he is ordained a priest and pastorally useful.

Maintaining a balance between prayer/work/study. Community life. Personal growth.

Maintaining a regular prayer life while trying to meet the demands of studies.

Making time for personal spiritual growth. Loneliness.

Me.

Meeting the ever-increasing needs of the world with ever decreasing numbers.

Members complaining about Church rules and Church hierarchy.

Mental health issues in communities, aging membership.

Ministering in age of increasing religious illiteracy.

Ministry and community.

Misery.

Moving from a natural way of life to the supernatural and also learning a lot of community dynamics which tend to stifle the familial aspect of the life. Examples might be moving from a very independent life style to a lot of surrender and submission without many of the natural attractions of a family. Many different opinions and difficulty in being oneself or learning to be

truly who God made me to be – not

Not all of the communities that could be places of assignment live a strong intentional community life. Also, in the same context the liturgical life of some houses are not faithful to the norms of the Church and/or a hostility to

Our current identity crisis as a Church and a religious order and the way that confusion of identity weakens our formation and community life.

Our future.

Our institute is very small, sometimes co-opted by individualism and materialism. We are dying in U.S.

Our seeming distance from the “institutional” Church; the generational battle between the Baby Boomers’ anti-authoritarianism and their wounds from crippling formation and our younger generations’ desire to be what our Institute has claimed and continues to claim to be – loyal sons of the Church.

Our shared life!

Our spirituality, to be like Jesus “priest and victim” to transform myself in Him.

Overcoming my inclination to judge my brothers; embracing the personality conflicts that makes us unique that may cause me to lose my interior peace or may cause me to judge.

Overcoming my own weakness and sins, and dealing with those of others, especially in my community, as well as the exhaustion of our demanding apostolic work and ministry.

Patience.

Peoples’ expectations of me.

Perseverance.

Personality conflicts with friars.

Philosophy!!!

Polarization. I am an OFM. But recently quite a few, so-called traditionalists emerged in the Franciscan Movement.

Poor liturgical life in communities. Lack of fidelity/enthusiasm for Church from older members.

Poor provincial leadership and malice of members.

Poor sense of Catholic identity, rigidly liberal Baby-Boomers, little efforts to promote vocations.

Prayer and community living.

Precisely because we are so busy in ministry, friendships within the community are a struggle to sustain.

Pride, being able to do what I want when I want. I sometimes look down at myself for trying out this way of life. I sometimes say, “what am I doing here, in a monastery!”

Promoting and upholding a vision of religious life, priesthood and the Church that is authentically Vatican II inspired and not reactionary or neo-traditional in a rigid way, especially when I see the movement and embracing of a tradition and devotional way of life and hierarchical liturgical life.

1. Provincial staff turning into misers whenever there’s a hiccup in the economy.

Reactionary conservatism of newest members.

Really leading that God-centered life!

Remaining connected with other friars as a basis for healthy intimate friendships. “Politics” within the province.

Remaining faithful to values and example of my community's founder in living of my vocation, when other members of my community (including members of leadership) justify their decisions not to do so, particularly decisions regarding celibacy/chastity and socio-economic lifestyle.

Remaining open and honest with brothers when they are hurting or hurtful. Having to confront a brother on a difficult or sensitive issue.

Remembering that all I do is to give praise to God.

Retrenchment and lack of creativity.

Rigorous formation process; efforts at intellectual pursuits sometimes drain energy from spiritual discipline and community interaction.

Sacrificial aspect.

Saying good bye within two or three years of being in one place.

See 189. Also, religious who dissent.

Seeing polarization in the Church in which reactionaries from both sides grapple for control, influence and domination. While giving witness through external forms is good, disordered attachment to these external forms (habit, clerical dress, public piety, etc.) disturbs me, especially when any of those forms become absolute. Desire to invest in relationship in community and ministry competes with fear and sadness of separation due to the mobility/availability of my vocation/our charism.



Seeing loneliness that is often satisfied by overzealousness in ministry. The misunderstanding of its meaning and intent by the larger world fed by negative reporting on stereotypes by media and movies.

Self discovery.

Serving the poor.

Setting limits with ministry so that it doesn't consume religious aspect of life.

Small numbers. Lack of commitment in society and community. Loneliness.

So little time and so much to do, resisting to do all fruitful and wonderful things in God's vineyard.

Solitude, loneliness.

Sometimes community life can be challenging, but it forces us to truly love each other as Jesus wants us to.

Sometimes community.

Sometimes creature comforts are aplenty to th







The missed opportunity to live the life radically. We take the vows and do not use the freedom they provide.

The misunderstandings and tensions that occur in a small religious community when members' communication skills are underdeveloped or lacking.

The monks that stay to themselves are not part of community. Mean old crabby men. The abbot being biased to "the good old boys," they can do no wrong, but the younger monks he gives no slack to and expects us to be perfect and expects us to always be at prayers and on time but older monks do what they want.

The most challenging about religious life is some restriction that prevents us from getting more vocations or that makes seminarians quit. Also the future of our religious institutes!

The most challenging aspect of religious life is our need to be open to all people, both those in our community and those to whom we minister. It is a challenge for us to minister and yet also allow others to minister to us.

The most challenging thing about religious life is living my vows in an American culture that is so opposite my religious institute. It is a battle that I am willing to fight.

The number of friends who leave during the long process of formation.

The number of people who have left during my years in formation has been challenging since there are not too many people in my age cohort in my province.

The occasional complaining of older members with whom I live; I worry about future vocations to our community. Overall, I am blessed in abundance!

The older members who are less orthodox.

The polarization of opinions regarding, e.g., the habit – voices on the fringes (especially "conservative" voices) speak the loudest but do not necessarily represent the diversity of the community, and often symbols/practices like wearing the habit become political statements rather than truly holy practices/prayerful practices. A split between "liturgically-minded" folks and "social justice-minded" folks – people tend toward one or the other, and rarely can a person find a religious openly committed to both.

The psychological problems of the brethren, generational differences, lack of fidelity to Church teaching, limiting education.

The pursuit to surrender to prayer, silence, solitude, giving, service in the quest for spiritual enlightenment.

The rapid aging of larger numbers of members; it is eclipsing our ministry and community life.

The reality of not having a family of my own.

The sacrifices of my perpetual vows.

The small amount of vocations coming into religious communities. Older members and not enough younger people coming into religious life.

The state of the Church in our time and its effects in religious life.

The studies, the slowness of the renewal of the order. Occasionally, members of the order will divide our politics and issues within the Church.

The suspicion that a contemporary religious male is a predator; often I feel as though I have to prove myself to others that I am not a sexual offender.

The temptation to despair over our spotty leadership.

The tensions that exist among the members of the institute. Tensions of ideology, of manner of prayer, of wearing religious dress or not.

The underlying (and unspoken) degree of competition between members and the inability to share life without fear.

The varied personalities are a challenge.

The vow of chastity primarily, and poverty secondarily.

The vow of obedience.

The vow of obedience.

The vow of obedience.

The vows of obedience and identification with the people in the mission.

The work load.

There are not that many of us out there in the world.

There is tremendous amounts of corruption, both moral and spiritual.

Those who come to us to escape (their own immaturity, inability to form relationships), who have poor social skills/self-awareness, who have a sense of superiority, moral elitism, those who think this is the “real” Christian life – the presence is toxic.

Time spent as a Brother among Brothers.



We are a small community (three FSCs and two volunteers). Social activities are lacking, we work hard all week, but we do not do anything together on the weekends.

What hinders things in #189 – life is mainly about everyday and mediocrity abounds in myself, the order, Church. Members of my order.

What I find most challenging about religious life is the tensions that can arise in having men from very different backgrounds, ages, and styles of life trying to live in one community.

When the moment comes to let God be in charge I mean, when I have done everything I can and is the moment to turn on the auto-pilot.

When there are many individualistic minded people who stress more their goals then community mission.

Withdrawing from ministries for lack of vocations.

Wondering what direction religious life is heading in the next



Adjusting my own desires and needs to those of others in the context of demanding community life.

Adjusting to different personalities in community. I have trouble understanding when others in community don't have the desire to pray together or share their spiritual lives. Coping with a few sisters who have a sense of entitlement rather than gratitude.

Adjusting to the aging process of myself and religious sisters.

After 30 years I still love it yet community living has provided some challenges.



Balance of community, prayer, service.

Balance of prayer, ministry, community life.

Balance with family

Balance!

Balance...

Balancing – community, ministry, personal prayer, and family.

Balancing the apostolate and the spiritual life, keeping in mind that this life choice is not a career.

Balancing between being part of community yet maintaining an individual. Our disconnection with parish life. How to bear witness more effectively. How to make this religious life more attractive to others.

Balancing community living with ministry and formation activities (workshops, etc).

Balancing community needs with those of the apostolate.

Balancing community tasks, committee work, and responsibilities along with full-time ministry and service.

Balancing community, ministry, education.

Balancing demands of ministry with prayer and community life.

Balancing ministry and leisure. And the fact that religious are in a very different place regarding the institutional Church.

1. Balancing ministry and local community commitments. 2. Finding others who want to live a more regular common life, especially in my peer group.

Balancing ministry, common life, family.

Balancing my prayer life, my ministry and my time with my community.

Balancing my schedule.

Balancing my spiritual life and ministry.

Balancing our interior life with our apostolate.

Balancing our teaching apostolate with my spiritual life.

Balancing prayer and apostolic work.

Balancing prayer and work.

Balancing prayer life and ministry.

Balancing prayer life, community life and ministry life.

Balancing prayer, community, ministry.

Balancing prayer, service, community, family, leisure.

Balancing solitude and study with community activities (viz., recreation and leisure).

Balancing teaching/active apostolate with monastic life of Dominican lifestyle.

Balancing the active and contemplative.

Balancing the apostolate with my community life and prayer life and the amount of study we undertake.

Balancing the contemplative and active dimensions of the life is most challenging.

Balancing the stress of life and the apostolate and living in community and learning to allow Christ to love others through it all.

Balancing time between work, prayer and community gatherings.

Balancing time on weekends among community local and congregational, family and friends.

Balancing time, being available for my sisters.

Balancing work and prayer.

Balancing...mind, body, spirit. Balance time-ministry, God, family, community, relationships, self.

Because so many of us are in inserted works, we often do not have the ability to be in charge of our own works so that we could better serve the poor!

Because we are getting so few vocations, more “internal” responsibilities are falling on me, taking time and energy from my mission. We are being forced to close missions the Church still needs, and pass up missions the Church needs, due to aging membership.

Becoming older, perhaps too old for teaching and needing to redirect my ministry ... being patient with God’s offering me opportunities to continue in a meaningful ministry.

Being a good Christian and sister towards my sisters at all times.

Being a new member as an older person, i.e., not being accepted for who I am and what I bring by many of the life-long members.

Being a religious woman and a minority in a public school.

Being a young religious I find it challenging at times to live the present moment. I can find myself at times worrying about the future of my congregaton with so few young members!

Being accepted by outsiders who don’t understand religious life.

Being away from family and friends.

Being away from family/friends. Sometimes the lack of independence is difficult.

Being completely consecrated to God and His Church.

Being faithful every single moment to God’s will. Trying to live with all my heart for Him no matter if I feel His presence or not. To live it because He is pleased with it!

Being faithful everyday to our schedule. We are nurses, I am still a student. So to become a nurse and to follow my community life is what I find most challenging now.

Being faithful to deep and sincere prayer and silence. Finding the joy in suffering in all

Being part of a society and culture that individualism is supreme and community is naïve.

Being patient with myself as God shows me areas I need to grow and yet let Him love me in all of that.

Being patient with others who are afraid to take risks.

Being ready to die to yourself and be willing to always see Christ in the other.

Being relevant in today's world while maintaining a faithfulness to the commitment of religious life.

Being the youngest and uncertainty about how religious life will unfold in the years to come.

Being the youngest in community and not being able to live with anyone my age or in formation.

Being younger than everyone else. Feeling that I am not understood or heard.

1. Both challenging/rewarding to live with variety of personalities. 2. The place religious life is now is both challenging and rewarding. It is in a state of change/growth.

Bringing God to a young generation that does not believe they need God. Hard to pass on Catholic doctrine, teachings to parents and their children – very secular.

Building good community. Some of our sisters have “left” without filling out the paper work. . .

Busyness – to find the right balance for myself – it is so much out there.

Celibacy! The lack of a peer group – older sisters care and want to be supportive, but often don't understand what it's like to enter today. It can be lonely and tiring always to be counter-cultural, to try to swim upstream (in terms of culture).

Celibacy.

Challenge to look for a positive side for every member of the congregation, not to be discouraged right away. Challenge to cling to God everyday. Put more faith. THANKFUL AND GRATEFUL being a religious.

Challenges of finding my place in community. Instances in some of community living. Living far away from my family.

Change is occurring.

Changing ministries-fear that we will lose the communal aspect of ministry as sisters seek their own jobs. Sisters burning out-increased concern about monetary issues.

Coming to grips with my own imperfections and inability to love Christ as much as He deserves.  
We are called to live the perfection of charity, but it takes a life time to fulfill that mission.

Community life.

Communal life – especially after living a

Community life and our secular world.

Community life and some of the sisters. Being told what to do. Being treated like a child.

Community life and the “politics” that sometimes creep into the dynamic.

Community life and the plurality of views on how to interpret the mission and charism of the institute.

Community life as well as apostolate life sometimes.

Community life at times. Activity in apostolate as principal and superior.

Community life can be challenging, but is worth the challenge. Describing why I/we do not wear the habit. The seeing of my own growth areas expressed in others.



Community life is very rewarding but can be challenging. It requires a lot of prayer, energy, effort. A challenge can be learning about yourself in the midst of learning about others.



I find there are many people in community in need of healing. That either don't want to get help, can't admit they need help. And others that feel there is nothing they can do about it. But what we close our eyes to is eating away at a healthier environment.

Community life. We've become so entrenched in individuality, age/demographic needs, sets/cliques of friends and choice to not address conflict. We lose each and together. In my 21 years, I have sensed what I thought/hoped community to be only about three years. We've kept trying, hoping, believing but have been most challenged the past five years in all areas of community life. The unrealized potential saddens me. Five people have left community in the past three years. I myself am planning to go on leave but parental duties have intervened.

Community life. Learning to live with individual personalities.

Community life/obedience.

Community life; and small daily sacrifices.

Community life; living situations.

Community life...the rubbing of elbows. Balance of prayer and ministry.

Community living – finding healthy/life-giving community. Making time for prayer in a hectic ministry schedule.

Community living – to forgive and forget.

Community living by far is the best and the worst part of living this life. Living with personalities that you wouldn't naturally be drawn to is quite the challenge and then figuring out who you are and what you're willing to give up in order to make life do-able!

Community living is both rewarding and challenging. Keeping faithful to prayer life and spiritual development in the midst of ministry demands.

Community living is challenging also. It is a challenge to take positions in the struggle for justice.

Community living.

Community living.

Community living.

Community living.

Community living.

Community living. Expecting the women to “be friends” – doesn’t happen – the newer women in my community.

Community living. Seeing sisters who are angry, bitter and clearly not happy in religious life and yet stay in community for whatever reason.

Community living: it is one of the greatest joys and one of the hardest tasks. “Relationships take you to the edge of yourself.” Stephen Levine.

Community! I am always being stretched and learning all kinds of things about myself along the way. My sisters help me to grow and strive to love more!

Community.

Community.

Community.

Community.

Community.

Community.

Conflicts; balancing community, prayer, ministry.

Confusion about what it means for our modern world.

Confusion in the Church about what religious life is, and therefore conflicting images of religious life that do not build up the Church.

Constant tension between the many needs of the apostolate and keeping my mind and heart centered on my first Love – the Lord Jesus.

Continual building of community.

Continuing the life of the community in the face of an uncertain future, not knowing if there will be others to follow in our footsteps.

Continuing the vision of our Foundresses, maintaining a Catholic identity in a very secular country/world, hostility to religion and the Magisterium.

Continuous conversion in living valiantly for the Gospel.

Creating and enhancing community life.

Creating good community life (relationships), being who we say we are.

Cultural challenges in apostolate. Apostolate can be physically/emotionally tiring.

Cultural differences and living in community.





Feeling that my community seems willing and resigned to die out rather than get serious about inviting new members.

Few (age) peers within the community and a lack of understanding of religious life among those not in religious life.



Finding time and energy for prayer

Finding ways to balance time with community, self, and others/ministry and also the rubs that come from choosing to live in community.

Focusing efforts.

Following the leadership of others when you are a founding member attempting to protect the prayer life of the institute as well as a balance of work and leisure.

For me everything is a challenge; and every day has a new surprise, a new blessing and a new challenge to live my religious life with the same Love, illusion, joy, energy as I started nine years ago.

For me, the challenge lies in the daily conversion and conformity to the sentiments of Christ, both in the context of community life and the apostolate. However, there is also great joy in this challenge, for this is why we are here!

Forming real community. Finding moments to share deeply and pray together.

General spiritual journey of any Christian is challenging at times.

Generation gap.

Getting along with others can be challenging in community. Everyone is different and we have to make adjustments for each other.

Getting it back on the menu of life's choices. Sisters/religious who have bought into American middle class life – loss of witness and focus

Growing tendency for personal good to take priority over common good.

Growth in love.

Growth in my journey with God and community.

Growth in self-knowledge.

Hard to sustain such active ministry when community living groups are really small (2-3) –

I am 62 – yet I still find celibacy a challenge – I miss the absence of one special person whom I can love and who will love me – that we are committed to growing together especially around holidays, vacation, etc.

I am a Franciscan and want to follow the gospel. I sometimes question where the Church is going. It seems we are going back to pre-Vatican

I find most challenging about religious life is to have fidelity to God and the Church as well as my religious congregation. We as religious are called to be a sign of God's love in the world as well as to be brides to the Church. With such worldly mindedness, less love and respect for God and our neighbor I find it challenging, but also it is a joy to be a presence of God in a world where he is much needed.

I find most challenging about religious life which is the deeper relationship (inter-relationship) among the religious men and women and support each other to go deeper in relationship with God.

I find most challenging new ways to witness good religious life.

I find most challenging things in my religious life is my own will. It is challenging to me, but with God I can do everything.

I find most challenging with living community life and the vows.

I find obedience and community life most challenging, in that I must die to myself and the world daily to find true joy and obedience and loving sisters I may find difficult to live with and love.

I find serving God's people the most challenging.

I find that among some members there is an over emphasis on "personal freedom" which often translates into individualism. We have too many sisters living alone and failing to participate in any but the most basic ways in the life of the province. I have also found that while some are claiming a vow of poverty, they are living middle-class and even upper-middle class lives. Our leadership has tried to reign this in, but this has been met with quite a bit of resistance and complaints of not being treated as adults. I find this hard because we could be leading lives radically committed to the Gospel, but too often we are choosing consumerism and individualism.

I find the newness of our community (founded in 1988) to be very difficult at times, including much evolution in an ongoing way and in a lack of stability. Personally I find communal living to be very challenging and rewarding. Various difficulties/challenges with each of the vows have come over the years, but I have felt supported by my community and others as these challenges continue to unfold.

I find the progressive women's communities have become over individualistic and have lost their group edge and voice. Due to demographics, there are a large number who can get very defensive and seem to have difficulty truly hearing anyone who came of age after Vatican II. I think we are trying to respond to the desires of newer members who want to live in community and to be sent, but I fear that the small numbers coming in won't be enough critical mass for the shift we need.

I find working in the apostolate and living community life well to be equally challenging aspects of religious life, providing much opportunity for growth.

I have concerns about the disparity in age – not in its effects on community life, but because I wonder what will happen in 10-20 years when most of our sisters will not be available to fill all these roles.

I have just been notified that I do not “fit in” with this community by my regional superior. My final vow date has been removed from the calendar. I am devastated and did not see this coming. Although our community advocates for conversation and discernment it doesn’t really practice it.

I love life in community, but it can become dampened by members who have not taken care of their own emotional health.

I tend to be overstretched, and sometimes lonely. Taking care of oneself is very important, but our life in a very poor neighborhood in Latin America is quite demanding. If in a mood of desolation it is easy to get discouraged by the small number of vocations to our life, and concerned about the future. Still most of the time I feel peace, hope and trust in that regard.

I think one of the most challenging things is to be faithful to the totality of religious life without worldly influence creeping in. The need for vigilance is constant.

I think that the life of our community is almost flawless in design – profound, transcendent, a pure gift of God. The challenges, then, are more a result of personal weaknesses, temperament. Mine include some practices requiring regularity of schedule – but I WANT to become stronger.

I was in a religious community when I was younger. I have been involved in various aspects of Church ministry over 35 years. I lived alone for many years. What has been most challenging is the concept of formation/incorporation for someone older, with theology degrees, ministerial experience, and life experience. It all worked out okay but was difficult at the time. Also for a new person coming in older, it is difficult at times to live with the ups and downs of daily community life.

I will try my best to explain this. I find it challenging to identify or be aware of the relevance of religious life in the world today when what I do isn’t any different from others. To keep in the forefront my relationship with God is challenging in a culture of so much material goods, activities, etc. I guess it could best be described as the challenge of living contemplatively in the midst of it all; to be contemplative for action is my deepest desire and also greatest challenge.

I wish leadership had more vision for the future – some are still stuck in decades-old culture wars and don’t put much emphasis in being 21st century women of faith.

I wish that women religious would take greater risks to be a voice for those who don’t have a voice. I wish that women religious would be aware of the need to more visible among the youth and young adults. I wish that women religious would be aware of the need to provide religious formation to the youths and young adults. I see that there is more an emphasis on action which loses sight of being guided by prayer and trust in God. I wish that women religious would

recognize the need to provide greater witness of community life and prayer life as expressed in living together in groups larger than four sisters.

I would never want to live outside of the community, but I must say that living with so many women can be a bit hard at times. :)

I would say that what is most rewarding and satisfying is also the most challenging – learning how to love as Christ does and daily conforming my life to his.

I wouldn't call my life challenging – except in the way that life is challenging to everyone regardless of their state in life and that is responding to the grace in the day-to-day living out of our life of faith. Difficulties arise when I take my eyes off the goal or too much of self gets in the way. My life is not all sweetness, but I do consider my vocation and my congregation to be a true blessing.

I'm older but young in this community, it is a difficult balance.

I'm one of the few younger ones so we don't have a collective voice. In other words, I'm usually out numbered.

In a way, the same thing that is most rewarding: the honesty with which one is confronted. Our personal growth in holiness depends largely upon how honest we are with ourselves in relation to God and to others – a depth of honesty, openness and humility is daily challenging – and daily rewarding.

In community life – to allow each other to be who we are. To accept diversity and see where we can complement each other.

In the six years since I entered religious life, the challenges have changed with (and sometimes within) every step of formation. Currently, as a first-year teacher I'm finding it hard to balance my prayer and active work for the apostolate...but I'm sure this will become more manageable with time.

Increasing ministry demands. Aging issues of membership – decreasing energy. Lack of opportunity to interact with my own age group/younger members.

Individuals who are prophets of doom or question the identity and charism of the congregation.

Individuals with mental illness.

Integrating my life of 45 years, prior to entering, with sisters who have entered at 13, 18, etc. Trying to integrate and share my spirituality into theirs. It seems it's more "their" side and my past is non-existent. Adhering to a formation program for an adult woman wanting to deepen into charism and life, but one who comes with a background and spirituality. Forming new

Inter-generational issues. 1. Different expectations for community life on a local level. 2. Desire for changes – especially related to governance – on a congregational level.

Interpersonal relationships. Balancing time to effectively meet commitments and needs for self-care.

It is sometimes difficult to remain prayerful or committed to spiritual practices when the rigors of ministry fill the day.

Its so hard to love, understand and be faithful to each other if God doesn't do it in us...

Keep the vows

Keeping a balance between ministry, community and time for prayer.

Keeping a good balance between work/prayer/vocation/school, etc.

Keeping a healthy balance between apostolate and community/prayer life.

Keeping at it, distance from family.

Keeping everything in balance, prayer, ministry, community, family.

Keeping faithful to my daily prayer, living far from my family and the feeling of “giving up” on vocations some of my sisters have.

Keeping focused on what is most important. I came seeking God, but busyness often leaves me forgetting that. So I have to keep remembering what life in a Benedictine monastery is for.

Keeping the community schedule and yet being able to accomplish everything else on my agenda.

Lack of a developmental perspective towards religious life and consciousness growth especially within the institutional Church. The absolutism within the institutional Church in general.

Lack of communal living. Too much focus on aging and health issues. Talking too much about what to do and doing little.

Lack of communication and relationship problems in community.

Lack of focused direction; individuality.

Lack of honesty and courage to talk about the hard issues: community life that has changed – and living the charism in 2008. No encouragement to get involved in current social justice issues in the USA: immigration, Hispanics, politics!

Lack of other people my age/new vocations. Sisters not faithful to Church teaching or community living/prayer.

Lack of peer group. Generational divide on issues. Thankful for our lay associates.

Lack of peers in my age group.

Lack of peers in religious life.

Lack of personal commitment – seem to becoming more individualistic. “My needs are more important than the common good.”

1. Lack of support from the well-situated members of the institute. 2. Lack of identity. Sisters seem invisible both in the Church and the world. Extreme feminist movement.

Lack of support within community.

Large group prayer; being considered “young” even when old enough to have college age children; not being recognized for the gifts you bring.

Laying down my will for the sake of Christ, the good of others and for the common good as well. Putting away the old me and let Jesus take control of my life. Healing my heart and mind so that I might have the mind and heart of Christ, i.e., vices being pruned and virtues being planted.

Leadership and their lack of business professionalism and no management training.

Leadership pool – many of our leaders are not skilled or able to deal professionally with issues. A lot of fear and inability to solve problems – never seem to get along as a group.

Learning enough about the teachings of the Church on current Life Issues as applied to today’s situations, in order to have an accurate and understandable defense when they are challenged by those I encounter with differing views.

Learning how to deal with lay people without being judgemental and authoritative in teaching them about God and his ways.

Learning to balance the intensity of our prayer life with the intensity of our apostolate, and maintaining the first fervor.

Learning to be detached from family and friends. Overcoming my self-will. Daily annoyances in dealing with others/personality differences.

Learning to live in community after living alone for over 20 years – it’s also one of the greatest joys!



Learning to live with so many different Sisters with so many different backgrounds/upbringings.

Learning to live with, and love, first, myself, and then, sisters with whom I may not naturally get

Living in community – being away from family and friends and teaching and especially coaching H.S. sports.

Living in community – not having the time or the “ear,” the interest of others for sharing experiences, stories, etc. People are too busy!

Living in community and having all my failings and short-comings so easily seen to me. Community is the greatest blessing, outside of Jesus, and one of the greatest crosses because I am led to look at myself and change what is not compatible with charity or not Christ-like.

Living in community can be challenging. My Sisters and I are from different cultures and backgrounds. But, I must say that no matter what difficulties I have experienced, there are many more blessings. I have received a deeper understanding of how we are the Body of Christ. We truly share in each others’ joys and sorrows, and help each other to remember our first Love. We help each other to keep our eyes focused on Jesus. We must be convinced of the reason why we are here!

Living in community has been challenging – I am very easy going and get along with everyone – (usually!) but sometimes there is bound to be conflicts – and disagreements.

Living in community is my greatest challenge and greatest joy. Living out my vow of obedience can be very challenging for me.

Living in community with imperfect people! Judgment of some sectors of Church against non-habit-wearing religious.

Living in community with older sisters.

Living in community with other congregations. Choosing a household to live with based on location to ministry rather than personal needs.

Living in community with sisters who see community life very differently than I do.

Living in community with those whose formation pre-dated the changes after Vatican II.

Living in Community! To remain hopeful despite no new people entering today.

Living in community, subjection of will in obedience, sacrifice of a family.

Living in community.

Living in community.

Living in community.

Living in community.

Living in community.

Living in community.

Living in community.

Living in community.

Living in community.

Living in community. Finding common ground with others who may think quite differently from me.

Living in community. The old valued traditions of “niceness” over honesty and transparency of communication.

Living in community. The struggles we often encounter living with one another.

Living in larger local communities and absolving many of the responsibilities as a younger member.

Living in the world (even though in community) but not being a part of it, i.e., keeping myself apart in those life choices which could be positive or negative witness to others.

Living my vows as honestly and with the most integrity possible.

Living out love well in community with our variations on values/their expression.

Living out my profession in the everyday details is most challenging.

Living out my vows.

Living peacefully with 60+ women.

Living together with people who seem to share the same goal with you but not getting along.

Living up to our ideals. The Sisters!

Living with 19 sisters which can be very challenging as well as rewarding!

Living with 20+ other women of all ages and backgrounds in the same house.

Living with 40 other women. Lack of solitude.

Living with 40+ women with different personalities. Learning the unwritten rules and traditions.

Living with coherence what I believe and profess.

Living with different personalities who have their own ideas and views on life.

Living with integrity the particular vows, not compromising or choosing an easy route.

Living with older sisters no longer in the ministry – Their needs are so very different, like the amount of heat they need to be warm, however they also give a sense of faithfulness and stability to us too. Also they have valuable history, experience and wisdom. Some sisters are emotionally unstable.

Living with only one other person. Producing money in order to keep our ministry as the only Catholic institution supporting adults beyond the parish. There are no Catholic high schools nor colleges in this diocese.

Living with other people that may not have good communication skills and exhibit various co-dependent behaviors.

Living with other sisters in a community setting, it is my biggest challenge.

Living with other women who have grown up with such different backgrounds and experiences than me. Sometimes we misunderstand and even hurt one another, perhaps due to such various ways of thinking and responding in daily situations.

Living with others and their personalities.

Living with others in close proximity daily and abandonment to God's Holy Will.

Living with others in community when I lived alone for 25 years. Continuing to have hope in light of our declining numbers.

Living with others, communicating effectively. Living as a witness.

Living with people with whom I have very little in common or whom are poor communicators and base their impressions of me on unverified judgements/opinions.

Living with sisters that I would not choose to live with.

Living with so many varied personalities and trying to live the genuine spirit of communal life.

Many sisters look to the old ways of living and being. This is not the current reality that I see. I think we need to think outside the box if we are to attract others.

Me. Within the great scheme of things and lofty ideals, simply put I must know myself and grown in sanctity. If I am to serve God, the Church and my community I am not disturbed by obedience, poverty, or chastity. They are all three such great gifts. But I must know myself. I may add that being a superior can be a challenge because I must weigh carefully what is best for the sisters I serve.

Meeting the challenges of a culture of death society. Providing for people searching (hungry) for

My work, it is difficult and demanding. I can only do it by living a life of faith in God, that this is where He wants me to be now.

Myself and how quickly I can turn my heart away from God.

Myself.

Myself.

Myself. Beyond that, in some ways, it's all a challenge and that's some of the point. It's a challenge to surrender, but that's what I most deeply desire.

Myself. Learning to die to self will, but then I have never known such freedom and peace as I know now.

N/A

Newer members who are focused on turning back the clock, putting us back in habits and living community life as it was. With diverse ministries it is difficult to be "present" when the clock strikes "6." The challenge is finding oneself and loving oneself as a person called by God to mission.

Not all sisters are treated equally. Too much hierarchy control with little to no input from the sisters.

Not always choosing holiness, or seeing needs of my co-sisters before taking care of my own.

Not always having a choice, but putting my life in someone else's hands.

Not being able to help my children and see them as much. Lack of independence in community – too much dependency on leaders.

Not being able to see my children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren, perhaps when I retire!

Not being free to do as I would like when I would like to do it. Waiting for your superior for decisions that pertain to you. Not knowing what you will be doing until they make a decision then it is brought to you to talk about.

Not being listened to by my higher superiors. I also find obedience hard at times, especially when I don't understand why I am being asked/told to do something.

Not being the saint we're called to be right away. We must be patient with ourselves.

NOT changing as quickly as I would like and following Church teachings – example – no women priests (I'm for it).

Not comparing myself to other sisters.

Not getting personally lazy in my living of virtue and the vows, keeping my whole vision supernatural, the sacrifices that are required to build deep relationships with sisters.

Not having more younger members to share the experience with...perhaps this is only heightened because there are so many that are significantly older. Also, we are not as removed from the "world" as others before us once were. I would not change this at all but it does add to the counter cultural tension. I also think it makes us more real.

Not having sisters around my age. Lack of support or encouragement from members. Older sisters being jealous of the "young sister."

Not having the support of the leadership team. Lack of communication. Not being able to have the means for our ministries (work).

Not knowing how to manage the time-struggling with the word "no." Engage with too much activities outside community to the point that if I am not doing it, nobody will. Wrong perception. The world will still spin without me.

Not letting the secular mindset enter in, keeping a balance, not let the apostolate become the focus.

Not living the life of the world, but striving to live the sentiments of Christ. The world does not understand this and can try very hard to pull you away from fidelity to God and the Church as well as works of charity, especially when the world is out to get what they want. Whatever makes one happy.

Not taking back (in little or big ways) the gift of self freely given as well as certain aspects of community life.

Not to have enough time for studying for the courses that I had started.

Not too much young people is religious recently. The American culture is huge different than Catholic teaching.

Novitiate

Now – the acceptance in the Diocese of women religious – the need to live alone.

Number of members with significant psychological baggage – "ME" attitude of younger generation – young members don't know how or want to work hard.

Obedience – I am a product of the culture I lived in – independent. I struggle to not take back my will which I have given to Jesus by my vows.



1. Obedience is challenging, submitting my will to the will of another. 2. Living in community can be challenging since we all have different personalities, backgrounds, etc. 3. Living a life of chastity, having a pure love for God alone, can be a challenge.

Obedience (but this is also one of the greatest graces). Community life (but this is also one of the greatest graces).

Obedience is very challenging. I often feel very keenly that I am unable to make decisions on my own. I sometimes feel controlled and a lack of freedom. Chastity is very difficult. In spite of the difficulty, the Lord has always given me the necessary grace to be faithful and persevere. I love my consecrated life.

Obedience to His will, and seeing how humans convey it. But "In His will is our peace" (Dante?) Basically, seeing the supernatural with the eyes of faith in the "natural" of community life and apostolate.

Obedience, but also a great joy.

Obedience.

Obedience.

Obedience. All of my challenges s Tw(revert u7eT05 TD0.0i9ey .0017 Tw{Oa Tcpritince, but15. Community )

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Our contemplative/active life often brings with it a tension which given our apostolate of education and the seemingly ceaseless “doing” leaves less energy for “being” – which is what was the attraction to religious life in the first place.

Our institutional relationship with the Church and its teachings about women in the priesthood and participatory “rites” of Eucharist are also a challenge due to their inflexibility.

Our profession of stability (I love to travel) and poverty (I’m “Imeldific” – (re: Imelda Marcos) on a monastic budget!)

Our relationship with – and struggle with – the patriarchal, hierarchal Catholic Church.

Our small congregation became part of a new 850 member congregation that has no resemblance to our former community. Now we are, as a corporate body, more concerned with “non-religious” things like saving the earth and “undoing” racism...sadly, the “new congregation” seems to have ceased to be religious.

Overcoming my own self-centeredness and pride in order to give my all to the Lord.  
Community life.

Overcoming my own tendencies towards sin.

Overcoming personal ambition and pragmatism. Obedience.

Over-emphasis on ministry/work. Newer members have little voice in institute because other age cohorts dominate in number.

Patience required in ongoing dialogue. It’s what I most appreciate and what I find most challenging.

Peaceful solutions to conflict management!

People who do not communicate or function in mature authentic ways.

Perfect poverty, perfect chastity, perfect obedience.

Perfecting myself as a member of our religious community.

Perseverance.

Persevering, but faithfully. Secularism can creep into the convent’s window and it is a battle to remain faithful to our vows the way Jesus expects us to. But that is what makes religious life so exciting, the challenge, the opportunity to grow in mature young adult religious women, be authentic, holy.

Personal balance between prayer, study, community, physical well-being (sleep, exercise), and the demands of the apostolate. The vow of chastity requires constant vigilance and prayer, but the struggle is worth fighting to belong totally to Christ and His Church.

Personal faults and failings of

Relationship with the institutional Church.

Relationships, personal growth, fewer members.

Religious life is so counter-cultural that it's hard to be living in a different lifestyle than most of mainstream America. This is especially true when religious values are being replaced with secularism.

Religious life challenges to grow and to want to be better each day. It means to work everyday about accepting and loving the Sisters with whom I live and work, above all, to be faithful to God in everything I do. As we are having less sisters in our congregation, the younger generations feel more lonely and burnt out because of the responsibilities we are assuming and each year we are fewer in our local places.

Religious life is a call to follow the poor, chaste, and obedient Christ in radical way. I find it most challenging battling the relativism and self centered spirit that keeps people from forgetting themselves and following Christ.

Religious need to live "poverty," to be one with the poor.

Resistance to change. More talk than action.

Respond to the modern needs of our time with modern means.

Right now I find living with sisters much older than I to be my biggest challenge. I find being in active ministry as a Vocation Director to be extremely challenging among women who are retired from ministry and are too tired to see a future for community.

Right now, having just come out of the novitiate, I am working full time at a ministry that I don't prefer and one that is different from almost every sister's at the monastery who mostly minister in the same place. Because of this I am not included in much of what concerns the sisters regarding ministry and it is making the adjustment harder than it needs to be.

Right now, I live alone while at school. At this point, staying faithful to praying the liturgy of the hours and personal prayer is most challenging.

Rubbing off those rough edges is painful and constant. Takes a lot of work on my part. Mess up a lot along the way. God is patient and merciful. Can I be the same for myself?

Sacrifice of marriage and family, obedience.

Sacrifice, community life.

Same as above.

Same as above.

Same as above.

See above (#189).

Seeing the diminishment of my older sisters.

Self! Learning to grown in my capacity to love others unconditionally with Christ's love. Not getting in the way of God's will.

Self-knowledge, the desire to be holy and the suffering it takes to get there.

Self-renunciation, obedience. Understanding American sisters since I am a Japanese convert. I have to make a lot of adjustment to American lifestyle and Catholicism.

Serving God outside the monastery as a family as a family law paralegal.

Sharing community life with members who really have serious issues, but on denial forever.

Sharing community with my sisters. Staying focused on the "real." Dealing with an uncertain future while maintaining confidence.

Since I live alone getting together with other members without always be driving 100 miles to motherhouse. Often expectations of others that I'm somehow more knowledgable about

The older sisters do not feel comfortable with faith sharing and spiritual conversation. I go outside my community to share with others about my journey and discernment with the Lord.

Small rules, limited visions, narrow mindedness.

So many different people who have their own ideas about what newest members should be doing and after living on my own taking care of myself, my car and my house, now I have to ask about everything. We're adults though and conversations are worthwhile.

So many feel discouraged about the future – I see it as a challenging time causes us to rethink and re-shape our life. Will religious life continue? Probably in new ways and forms.

So many things to do and so few to do it all . . . This can become rather draining, striving to “do” all you can!

Some of the constraints put on newer members by old traditions of behavior.

Some of the language used by the older sisters.

Sometimes communication is challenging with other members of my community.

Sometimes dealing with different personalities can be tough. People have different wants and needs, and negotiating those and sending signals can be difficult. Misunderstandings can undermine joy sometimes.

Sometimes I am lonely as I live far from some of my closest sisters.

Sometimes it can be challenging to live closely in Community with Sisters who are different SomeIJTo8aTc0.17

Sometimes our actions do not match our words. We have become very much a part of the culture – (US) first world – and not counter-cultural as Jesus was/is. We need to stay at the edge with those who are marginalized – the poor.

Sometimes the Institute's limits as it faces challenges for the future in...caring for retirement needs of aging members which is very important. I don't mean to minimize this effort – but there is a desire for creating new ministries and sometimes the realities of numbers and needs hold us back.

Standing firm in an institute's charism when outsiders "attack us" with "shoulds" and expectations according to their agenda. Maintaining the balance when the apostolate becomes very demanding.

Staying faithful to a Church which seems to be more and more out of touch with the Catholic faithful.

That it is increasingly secularized. That we no longer emphasize common life, living together, common good, common prayer. That we are not generally passionate about vowed life. It's a challenge to be faithful in face of a death wish. The Church is a challenge – but so is the anti-Church, anti-canonical status movement.

That some members believe religious life is dead and want to see associates as our future. I am yearning for a revival of what vows mean/can be in the future.

That the actual culture sometimes tries to get inside religious life. And don't understand the real meaning, so we have to walk against it.

That the schedule doesn't always promote "much" free time. Struggle with finances and vocations entering. How long/process it takes for things to happen or change.

That there are few younger/newer members who have experienced the formation process. In



The age/culture gap – most sisters are well over 30 years older than me – we are mutually challenged by our differing customs, eating habits, the way we speak (esp. the speed!), what we do for entertainment, some our values, etc.!!

1. The aging of our membership is difficult because we are not able to continue to minister as we have in the past. This requires restructuring. 2. The sense of individualism, entitlement and “needy-ness” that are more a part of our lives now. 3. Respectful and honest dialogue needed for authentic community discernment.

The aging population and the apparent disappearance of religious life as a life form.

The apparent refusal to change with the times. Things like cell phones and credit cards are not typical in the USA province of my institute. There’s a huge demographic hole (25 years separates my entrance from the next-older sisters’s entrance) and a suspicion of anything “new.” Hugely irritating and at times infantilizing.

The balance of contemplative and active life.

The balance of prayer and work.

The balance of work and prayer is a challenge.

The balance of work and prayer is what attracted me to the Sisters. However, I find it hard in my life to balance them both most of the time. Comm

community meetings, formation days, retreat, family visit all within two weeks of paid vacation plus an additional week for which I negotiated.

The challenge now is at 84 my mind wants to

The demands of the apostolate – much to do with limited time, resources, etc.

The demands of the apostolate and balancing my time. When I live with a “difficult” co-sister.

The development of virtue – becoming holy, dying to self.

The differences of opinion that members of my congregation seem to have about: attracting/inviting newer members, community living, lifestyle, our future as a congregation, relationship with the Church, various social justice issues (legal abortion, undocumented immigration being the two biggest ones that members seem to differ on).

The different takes (personal opinions) of how we are called to live this life – the inability to differentiate between essentials and non-essentials. I think this just boils down to communication and how older Sisters are afraid of the word “dialogue” with reason.

The difficulties come from my own selfishness and weaknesses, in relating with those around me with charity, yet when I bring my failures and difficulties to Jesus, he bears them with me.

The difficulty of balancing our community life with prayer life. Sometimes it is challenging to fulfill the obligated prayers and at the same time give the needed time to the apostolate.

The difficulty of having only two sisters on the

The focus on work to the exclusion of quality community time.

The gap between ages. Community life. Cultural differences. The struggle to try or do something new or different (prayer, food, celebrations, etc.).

The great challenge (and gift) of religious life is a constantly deepening knowledge of one's own weaknesses and faults. Another challenge is fi

The lack of community, the complacency among men cannot hinder a person (spiritual growth is an

The most challenging aspect of religious life is the activity. It is very difficult to maintain a balance between prayer and apostolate.

The most challenging aspect fo

The patience to wait. God is in control of my life and I must be open to His desire and movement in all things. The waiting is very important for reorientation of life in becoming a consecrated religious.

The persons in leadership who do not take into account – the experiences, age and needs of a religious who is older and re-entering a congregation. Leaders who do not welcome a person as members of congregation have – The conflict within the Church between bishops and religious women.

The pessimism about the future of religious life.

The picky – cutting – unsupportive shaming – belittling – cutting down of others – gossip – power ploys – cliques – women just being women and not rising above the petty stuff to our higher callings.

The prayer life.

The process of decision-making. I look at a problem, make a decision and move on – in community, the process is long and tedious – I work hard at being patient with people who need to process forever.

The rate at which members are dying due to age vs. numbers entering.

The restrictions in regards to “social” life.

The sacrifice of self – I don’t belong to me, I belong to the Church. It is something I have to remind myself of often.

The same things that are challenging in other Christian vocations, that is the challenge of growing daily more self-less and giving. It is a beautiful life.

The schedule at times. Loving others the Lord uses to purify you.

The schedule since it always seems so busy. The balance of a healthy lifestyle. Missing out on having fun by playing sports on a team or at least another person. The many meetings you are required to go to and the various people that you need to sit down and meet with.

The seemingly constant changes permitted to take place.

The silence.

The slow but necessary progress of going from “I” to “we” in my general attitude and daily opportunities for sacrifice and charity.

The spiritual battle of fighting the enemies of self-pity, unforgiveness, misdirected anger, bitterness, resentment is the most challenging. It’s so easy to fall into these temptations and to

think my enemies are other people or my sisters – but the only real enemy is the devil and his weapons of destruction.

The struggle to be authentic, faithful and open to God's spirit and at the same time not get caught in the "doing" that goes along with apostolic life.

The tension between those with a contemporary (adult) formation and those who were formed in a hierarchical parent/child formation.

The transitions and the isolation experienced at times by a young woman going through formation without peers in her community or sisters that can really relate to her experience.

The true labor of love in developing and seeking to maintain sisterly relationships so as to remain a true "community" and so as to give witness to the world of the work of unity which is the one mission of the Church – the mission of Jesus Christ who came to earth to draw all people to







To daily die to self so not to take back the gift I offered to God – not to take back or desire things I gave up for the love of God.

To empty myself in following Jesus in order that he really prevails over all I am and do and his grace could act more freely in loving as he does each person to be a real witness of his redemption.

To give more...live generosity to the fullest sense.

“To give God what is his and to Cesar what is Cesar.” I think sometimes we (religious) forget for what we came to religious life. We need always to go back and think how God loved us first and do not forget his love for us and his mercy.

To guard and grow in my consecration by not letting myself be absorbed with “the things of the Lord” but with the Lord of all things, in this world of ours that is always “on the go” and asking for results and accomplishments.

To live a life of fidelity and responsibility in the contemporary and consumeristic world.

To live a spirit-filled life – to be a messenger of peace in an active ministerial life – to adhere to Christian tenets of justice. Thank you.

To maintain healthy balance of self-care, ministry, community engagement and prayer life, including spiritual and intellectual, personal enrichment (which is on-going formation, but expected to self initiate and not always supported time-wise and financially). Also lack of trust among sisters to engage in healthy faith sharing.

To read the signs of the time, and its culture. To incorporate contemporary theology into daily life; include daily renewal of my vows to the language of love, commitment and service.

To remain faithful to love every moment of everyday – to keep our eyes on God at all times.

To strive to a greater donation of ourselves to the Lord in radicalism which is nothing else than holiness. I believe that the Church today needs to see the true light in us religious. Our world is searching for God and they want to see Him in us as consecrated. I feel that my way will be to fill my self completely with God and bring light to all souls in order to bring them to Him.

To try and balance contemplation and action.

Trying to balance work and prayer.

Trying to defend the “indefensible” in the institutional Church.

Trying to form relationships with others in community.

Trying to get along with sisters I find most challenging to live with. It's hard to bear one another's weaknesses in mind and body. It's challenging to make ends meet with an allowance of \$40 a month for the last 10 years.

Trying to help others understand that joining our community and being a religious is awesome.

Trying to incorporate varying opinions on religious identity into our common life together, accepting one another and yet not losing one's own ideals and sense of call from God for a purpose.

Trying to live a balanced life with relationships, prayer, community, apostolate is a challenge.

Trying to live the life of poverty – keeping the focus of Christian living in sight – trying to be kind to others – when I'm tired – understanding some of the ways of behavior of other members in my congregation.

Trying to love and understand the Sisters I work with and following my vow of obedience.

Trying to mend wounds and misunderstandings among laity and priests about religious life, often caused by religious who were/are antagonistic toward legitimate authority within the Church and toward the Church's teachings. Also, my own weaknesses are a source of great challenge.

Walking the fine line of respecting the administration/leadership/"elders" and challenging with where I feel we are called to grow. The questions of the "young" can be ignored or challenged by those in 70-60 especially.

Watching my own community's leadership and a number of the membership (in the province) just as so many women's communities in the U.S., become so liberal. Almost as if they no longer wish to remain Catholic.

Wearing too many hats – amazed able to do more than I thought.

What I find most challenging is the conflict I experience between 1) my desire to welcome women to join us in service to God's people, and the Church (knowing the wonderful gifts we have received from God through Christ and the Church). And 2) my hesitation to invite women when women in our Church are still considered second-class citizens in the Church in areas of ministry like preaching or presiding or sharing the sacraments.

What I find most challenging is the fidelity on a daily basis to living our religious life well. I am very aware that the preservation of the fidelity to the religious life and to the Church that first attracted me to this Congregation depends on my fidelity. It is hard at times to live the vows of



Silence and solitude.

Spiritual growth (i.e., not getting distracted by others' fervor or tepidness).

The declining number of vocations. Lack of a real cohort group in formation. An aging and aged community where the next closest to me in age is twelve years older than I. Increasing work loads and stress due to declining numbers (either from death, departures, lack of new entrants).

1. The failure to confront issues pertaining to healthy community living and a tendency to capitulate to problematic and domineering personalities in the interests of maintaining "peace."
2. Living with members with significant personality disorders who nonetheless are entrusted with positions of influence and responsibilities.

The separation from family and friends was the most challenging thing in my early years. Now I feel challenged to keep improving my spirituality and not become too complacent.

Time and work required to keep a community going which is often at odds with the simple life aims to live. Diversity of opinion. Different formations as to how life is meant to be lived.

### ***Contemplative Women***

Accepting correction with humility. Being detached.

All the challenges of living 24-7 around 15 other women. The dailyness of the demands.

Community life is the greatest challenge since in a monastery we pray, play, work, and eat together. It is an intense enclosed life which severely limits the breadth of options for both relationship and distraction. We do go out (shop, take classes, visit family) but life is focused in a small group of people – all wounded and imperfect trying to live in love with God and each other. As a mother of three sons it is hard to be absent from formerly very important holiday celebrations of which I was the hostess.

Community life, living with a wide range of people from different backgrounds, 24 hours a day in close quarters, requires a great deal of self denial and sacrifice. Also, living a frequent spiritual life that requires constant vigilance and effort, in order to keep from slipping into the mediocrity or living on the natural plane.

Community life.

Community life.

Community life.

Community life.

Community life.

Community living – being patient with the various personality types, different styles of communicating, ways of being, etc.

Community problems (division, relationship problems, lukewarmness). Aging in my community. Uncertainty about the future. Demands of obedience. Societal misunderstandings about religious life.



Finding young women willing to make commitment and who are balanced.

I find it very challenging to give up my own will and judgment to that of my Superior.

I find obeying superiors all the time most challenging.

I miss my family and home very much. However, I can call/write and we have a home visit each year. I find the “scheduling,” “structure” of monastic life challenging – would like more free time.

I must decrease and the Holy Spirit must increase.

I think it is community life and the differences of cultures.

Living in community.

Many things are challenging in religious life and also in life in the world.

Me!! “Though the will to do good is in me, the power to do it is not...” Romans 7:19. This life demands a lot of faith to see beyond the daily grind to the supernatural aspect of life, and to not despair of our and other's failings.

Mediocrity among many religious (not referring to my own community, just a general observation that challenges me about my identity as a religious).

My family's reaction. My family was not supportive and my dad still refuses to visit, write, or call. It is very hard to break your parents' hearts.

My personal lack of virtue.

My sisters.

Myself, overcoming myself.

Myself.

Personal conversion in community

people who ask us for our prayers; sometimes not knowing if my prayers are having an effect. And realizing that cloistered contemplative life is virtually ignored by the media and by organizations like CARA – gearing everything towards “active” life and ministry/apostolate and forgetting about us nuns who pray for the salvation of the world.

Striving for personal sanctity, a good challenge.

The 24/7-at all time and in every place you must be a nun lest you scandalize people.

The call to live the highest spiritual perfection; naturally speaking, this is the most challenging because it requires constant effort and self-denial – putting down the “old,” natural self and striving to be continually attentive and docile to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit.

The common life; interpersonal relationships. (In the first years it was enclosure, and separation from my family.)

The community life!

The concern about vocations and how to attract new members.

The lack of vocations and younger members in our community.

The most challenging aspect is probably our limited contact with our family.

The most challenging aspect of religious life, for me, was adjusting to the radical change in lifestyle. Coming from our modern culture of noise and activity it was hard, in the beginning, to be silent, prayerful and interior.

The most challenging element of religious life is never feeling worthy of being chosen by God for this life, yet knowing the great responsibility I have.

The need to be constantly and ever more completely self-emptying.

This life, there is the constant practice of living in perfect faith and confidence alone in God which will yield to the practice of all the virtues, most especially of charity to the purest and perfect love of Him alone.

1. To always have fraternal charity. 2. To accept and do well the responsibility given by your Superior. 3. To be cheerful despite hardships and trials.

To live the rule perfectly for the glory of God and salvation of souls.

To take personal responsibility for fidelity to my vows and to my rule Constitutions in areas where others may not be living them as I feel called to.



Community life.

Community life.

Community life.

Community life-some people hard to live with. There are so many expectations and

Not much. There are challenges in all walks of life and the religious life is no different. Challenges make us stronger. They form us and help us.

Not to take the gift of a religious vocation for granted and to fall into the habit of routine in the schedule of daily life.

Obedience and dying to self.

People come or came and left. How will we look in another (shvp843 Tw1years)4.6?shvpwg to sek ioue less.

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