



The CARA Report

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ASSESSING CATHOLIC CAMPUS MINISTRY

According to a new study commissioned by the USCCB Secretariat of Catholic Education, “Catholic campus ministry provides a unique opportunity to meet and engage young adults and adults at every phase of Church life and testimony. The Church must be intentional and campus ministry must be accountable in every way possible to enrich the character and formation of the whole community, taking into account the ethnic, social, and spiritual diversity of each campus and its surrounding community.”

To explore the extent to which this is taking place, the Secretariat commissioned Professor Brian Starks of Kennesaw State University to lead a study of the current state of campus ministry in the United States. The study involved two national surveys—the first is on the formation and development of those who minister on campus and the second is on the impact of Catholic campus ministry on those who participate. The newly-released report presents these key findings:

- The Secretariat identified 1,911 campus ministers nationally, including more than 500 FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students) missionaries, with 1,117 responding to the survey, for a 56 percent response rate. Nearly all serve at four-year institutions, with only 43 (2 percent) serving at community colleges. Catholic campus ministers serve at 816 campuses including Catholic, public, and private non-Catholic institutions, with a presence in one in four U.S. four-year in-

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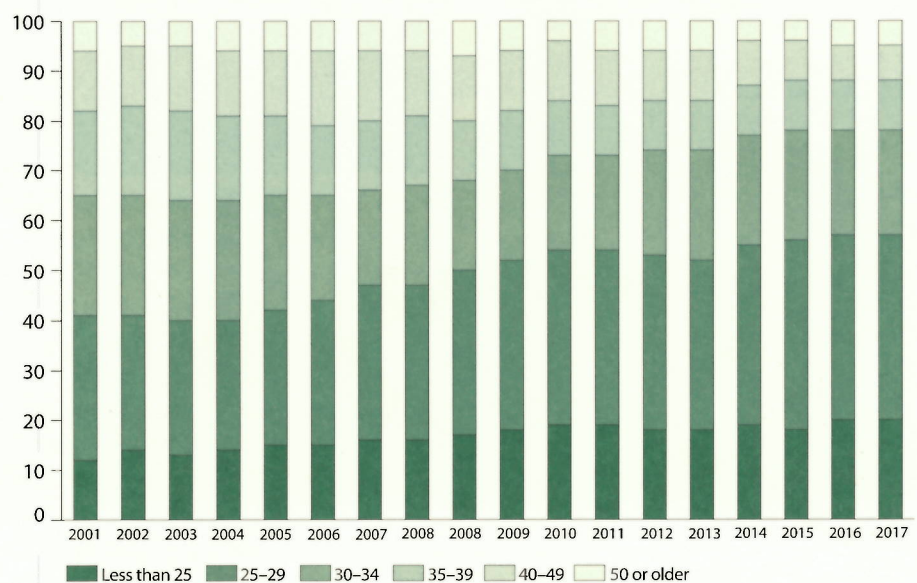
Young Adult American Catholics

Professor Maureen K. Day of the Franciscan School of Theology in California, and a research fellow at Villanova’s Center for Church Management, has released a new book, entitled *Young Adult American Catholics: Explaining Vocation in Their Own Words*. Published by Paulist Press in time to be of value at the Synod of Bishops on “Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment” in October 2018, the book presents aspects of young adult Catholic life from both a scholarly and experiential perspective.

Each of the book’s thirteen sections is introduced by a scholar who has significant expertise in that specific aspect of young adult Catholic life who presents some of the latest research, offering the reader a broader context for the particular group that follows. Following each scholarly piece are two or more articles written by Catholics who actually come from these populations, thereby bringing the academic findings to life in a very personal way. For example, CARA researcher Mary Gautier prepared a chapter on the characteristics of U.S. seminarians and young adult priests, which is followed by three reflections from a current seminarian and two newly ordained priests about their life and experiences. Each section of the book ends with a series of questions to guide further reflection and discussion. The thirteen sections are divided into three parts:

- **Part 1, Vocation through the Life Course**, follows young adult Catholics over time, providing a window to view the changing needs of young adults as they hit particular

TREND TOWARD YOUNGER MEN ENROLLED IN U.S. THEOLOGATE-LEVEL SEMINARIES, 2000–2017



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Why People Are Reluctant to Discuss Faith

The Barna Research Group surveyed U.S. adults for whom spiritual conversations are rare or nonexistent to find out why they don't talk more often about faith. The survey of 1,714 U.S. adults was conducted during June 22–July 13, 2017, with an over-sample of 535 Millennials and 689 Practicing Christians.

“People who don't talk very often about faith fall into two broad categories: avoidance and ambivalence.”

According to Barna, people who don't talk very often about faith offer different reasons, but most of these fall into two broad categories: avoidance and ambivalence. The most common reasons are:

- Religious conversations always seem to create tension or arguments (28 percent)
- I'm not religious and don't care about these kinds of topics (23 percent)
- I'm put off but how religion has been politicized (17 percent)
- I don't feel like I know enough to talk about religious or spiritual topics (17 percent)
- I don't want to be known as a religious person (7 percent)

Among all adults who rarely discuss faith, Boomers are significantly more likely to say they are not religious and don't care about these kinds of topics (32 percent compared to 17 percent among Millennials and GenX and 22 percent of Elders). Likewise, political liberals are more likely than conservatives to choose this option (28 percent compared to 15 percent). These groups tend more toward ambivalence or indifference than to frustration or fear.

“Why People Are Reluctant to Discuss Faith,” August 14, 2018, appears on the website of The Barna Group (barna.com).

DIFFERING VIEWS ON AMERICA'S MORAL AUTHORITY

A report from the Public Religion Research Institute finds that “Fewer than half (40 percent) of the public believes that the U.S. sets a good moral example for the rest of the world. Nearly six in ten (58 percent) believe we do not.” Further, “two-thirds (67 percent) of Republicans and only 20 percent of Democrats believe the U.S. sets a good moral example for the rest of the world.”

The report notes that there is less disagreement among religious communities than political parties on this issue. “Close to half of white evangelical Protestants (46 percent), Catholics (46 percent), and white mainline Protestants (45 percent) believe the U.S. is setting a good moral example for the world today. A majority of Catholics (51 percent), white evangelical Protestants (52 percent), and white mainline Protestants (53 percent) do not believe the U.S. is setting a good example. A strong majority of non-white Protestants (60 percent) and religiously unaffiliated Americans (73 percent) also say the U.S. is not providing a moral example for the world.”

“Growing Divide on Immigration and America's Moral Leadership,” by Daniel Cox, June 26, 2018, appears on the website of the Public Religion Research Institute (prri.org).

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milestones common in young adult life. The first section hears from students currently in college in a variety of contexts, the second examines the experiences of “emerging adults,” single Catholics figuring out the ways their faith and life choices inform each other. The final set of voices comes from Catholic parents raising their children in an intentionally Catholic way.

- **Part 2, Vocation through Identity and Practice**, demonstrates the ways various aspects of identity—such as political ideology or ethnicity—shape understandings of religious vocation. It explores the role of vocation among Catholics involved in lay groups, broadly defined, and it explores the progressive/traditionalist binary from the perspective of this age group. It also considers the role of ethnicity among Hispanic, African-Americans, and Asian-Pacific Islander Catholics who make deliberate efforts to wed their religious and ethnic identities, as well as the same religio-identity issues among LGBTQ Catholics. It ends with reflections from Catholics who are marginal or who have

left Catholicism and what they would need to come back or to strengthen their relationship with the Church.

- **Part 3, Vocation through Ecclesial Leadership**, examines understandings of vocation among those directly working for the Church as priests, sisters, and lay ecclesial ministers. With the dwindling numbers of priests and religious, it is helpful to hear the stories of those who have entered. The contributing sisters come from communities that are having varying degrees of success in attracting women to their religious communities and propose ways they could be better supported. Concluding this part are the voices of lay ministers, many of whom feel only partially supported by the institutional Church and the people they serve.

Young Adult American Catholics: Explaining Vocation in Their Own Words, edited by Maureen K. Day, was published in 2018 by Paulist Press (paulistpress.com).