



National Study of Catholic Priests: Survey of U.S. Catholic Bishops





SURVEY OF U.S. CATHOLIC BISHOPS

CENTER FOR APPLIED RESEARCH IN THE APOSTOLATE AT GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

DIRECTIONS: Please fill out this questionnaire and return it in the envelope provided. To maintain the confidentiality of your response, return the postcard separately to let us know that you have completed the survey. **If a question does not apply to you or you do not know how to respond, please leave it blank.** Please note that “Diocese” is used here as a generic reference to both Archdiocese, Archeparchy, Diocese, and Eparchy.

For questions 1-10 please enter a number from 0 to 10.

- ___ 1. Overall, how satisfied are you with life as a whole these days? (0=Not Satisfied at All, 10=Completely Satisfied)
- ___ 2. In general, how happy or unhappy do you usually feel? (0=Extremely Unhappy, 10=Extremely Happy)
- ___ 3. In general, how would you rate your physical health? (0=Poor, 10=Excellent)
- ___ 4. How would you rate your overall mental health? (0=Poor, 10=Excellent)
- ___ 5. Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile? (0=Not at All Worthwhile, 10=Completely Worthwhile)
- ___ 6. I understand my purpose in life. (0=Strongly Disagree, 10=Strongly Agree)
- ___ 7. I always act to promote good in all circumstances, even in difficult and challenging situations. (0=Not True of Me, 10=Completely True of Me)
- ___ 8. I am always able to give up some happiness now for greater happiness later. (0=Not True of Me, 10=Completely True of Me)
- ___ 9. I am content with my friendships and relationships. (0=Strongly Disagree, 10=Strongly Agree)
- ___ 10. My relationships are as satisfying as I would want them to be. (0=Strongly Disagree, 10=Strongly Agree)

For questions 11-29 please use the responses below.

**1=No problem at all 3=Somewhat of a problem
2=Very little problem 4=A great problem**

How much are each of the following a problem to you on a day-to-day basis?

1 2 3 4

- 11. Theological divisions among my priests.
- 12. Political divisions among my priests.
- 13. Unrealistic demands and expectations of lay people.
- 14. Conflict with parishioners or laity about issues of the day.
- 15. Loneliness of priestly/episcopal life.
- 16. Too much work.
- 17. The way authority is exercised in the Church.
- 18. The image of the priesthood today.
- 19. The image of bishops today.

1 2 3 4

- 20. Criticism from priests.
- 21. Criticism from laity about priests.
- 22. Criticism in the secular press or media.

How much of a problem are these administrative issues to you on a day-to-day basis?

1 2 3 4

- 23. Limited number of available priests.
- 24. Parish restructuring in the Diocese.
- 25. The diocesan financial situation.
- 26. Diocesan legal issues.
- 27. Priest morale.
- 28. Priest personnel issues.
- 29. Non-priest diocesan personnel issues.

For questions 30-36 please use the responses below.

**1=Disagree strongly 4=Agree somewhat
2=Disagree somewhat 5=Agree strongly
3=Neither agree nor disagree**

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: "As a bishop, I value being accountable to..."

1 2 3 4 5

- 30. God
- 31. The Pope
- 32. My priests
- 33. The laity
- 34. The general public

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

1 2 3 4 5

- 35. I take great efforts to know each of my priests personally (e.g., by having dinner with each priest of my Diocese or small groups of priests at least once a year).
- 36. It is not possible for a bishop to know each priest personally.

Yes No

- 37. Are you personally active on social media?
- 38. Do you think bishops should be active on social media?
- 39. Do you think priests should be active on social media?

For questions 40-45, please use the responses below.

1=Not well at all 3=Moderately well

2=Not very well 4=Very well

Reflecting upon your relationship with your priests, how well...

1 2 3 4

- 40. do you and your priests know each other?
- 41. do you support your priests?
- 42. do you take criticism from your priests?
- 43. do you and your priests align on theological matters?
- 44. do you and your priests align on political matters?
- 45. would you help your priests with their personal struggles if they asked for help?

For statements 46-62, please use the responses below.

1=Disagree strongly 3=Agree somewhat

2=Disagree somewhat 4=Agree strongly

1 2 3 4

- 46. I am too busy to pray as much as I would like.
- 47. I would be happier if I could focus on my pastoral ministry and let others do administrative work.
- 48. I frequently feel burned out.
- 49. I wish to spend more time with other priests in the Diocese.
- 50. I am too busy to personally counsel and pastor all the priests of my Diocese.
- 51. I feel my current Diocese is my home.
- 52. I feel accepted by most priests of my current Diocese.
- 53. Most of my closest priest friends are priests of my current Diocese.
- 54. Other bishops are among my closest friends.
- 55. I support bringing more international priests into my Diocese.
- 56. It is essential to uphold the distinction between priests and laity in the Church.
- 57. Catholic laity are sufficiently respectful of the priest's authority in my Diocese.
- 58. Priests are sufficiently respectful of the voice of the laity in my Diocese.
- 59. Priests in a Diocese should be able to elect their bishop.
- 60. The Catholic Church's right to religious freedom faces increasing threat from the government.
- 61. Women should have more leadership roles in my Diocese.
- 62. Media coverage of clergy sexual abuse has made it challenging to present or defend Church teachings in my Diocese.

For questions 63-68, please use the responses below.

1= No diocesan policy 4= Detailed/highly standardized

2= General guidelines 5=Don't know

3= Specific guidelines in key areas

How would you describe diocesan-wide policies related to parish operations in the following areas?

1 2 3 4 5

- 63. Liturgy.
- 64. Sacramental preparation.
- 65. Finances.
- 66. Personnel management.
- 67. Religious education.
- 68. Sexual abuse prevention.

For questions 69-76, please use the responses below.

1=Never 3=Often

2=Occasionally 4=On a regular basis

In the last five years, how often have you written to Catholics (e.g., a pastoral letter or column in the diocesan newspaper) on these topics?

1 2 3 4

- 69. Spiritual or Biblical reflection.
- 70. Catholic theology.
- 71. Catholic teaching on the family.
- 72. Catholic teaching on sexual morality.
- 73. Catholic teaching on sanctity of life.
- 74. Catholic social teaching.
- 75. Religious freedom issues.
- 76. Clergy sexual abuse crisis

77. Which of these images reflect how you see your relationship to your priests? (*Select all that apply*)

- Administrator HR manager
- Brother Policeman
- Co-worker Role-model
- Father Servant
- Friend Shepherd

78. In what USCCB region is your current Diocese?

79. What is the name of your current Diocese? (Optional)

80. How much media coverage, either local or national, was directed at your current Diocese in the wake of the revelations of clergy sexual abuse in the Church?

- Little or no coverage.
- Some coverage.
- A large amount of coverage.
- Extensive coverage.

81. What is your age?

- <60 65-69 75 or more
 60-64 70-74

82. How many active diocesan and religious priests are in your diocese?

- <100 200-299 400 or more
 100-199 300-399

For questions 83-86, please use the responses below.

1=Disagree strongly 3=Agree somewhat

2=Disagree somewhat 4=Agree strongly

In 2019, Pope Francis issued the Motu Proprio “Vos Estis Lux Mundi”. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following aspects as they pertain to the US?

1 2 3 4

83. The emphasis on bishops’ responsibility in handling sexual abuse accusations.
 84. The mandatory reporting requirement.
 85. Expanding the category of vulnerable persons to include more than minors.
 86. The recommendation to involve lay people in the process of handling sexual abuse accusations

87. How effective do you think the Dallas Charter has been in dealing with the problem of sexual abuse committed by priests?

- Very effective
 Somewhat effective
 Not too effective
 Not at all effective

For questions 88-94, please use the responses below.

1=Disagree strongly 4=Agree Somewhat

2=Disagree somewhat 5=Agree Strongly

3= Neither agree nor disagree

To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following?

1 2 3 4 5

88. Bishops should have been subject to the same anti-abuse protocols as priests.
 89. Anti-abuse policies have reduced priests’ trust in bishops.
 90. The clergy sexual abuse crisis has negatively impacted my faith.
 91. The McCarrick revelations and Report were not surprising to me.
 92. I think there are still many unrevealed abuse cases in the Church.
 93. I think there is still wide scale corruption in the Church.
 94. I think the sexual abuse crisis in the Church is basically over.

Yes No

95. Were you born in the United States?
 96. Did you grow up in your current Diocese?
 97. Are you a member of a religious order?
 98. Did you attend a high school seminary?
 99. Do you currently have a spiritual director?
 100. Did you make a personal retreat last year?

101. Which best describes your current role in the Church?

- Archbishop with (an) auxiliary bishop(s).
 Archbishop without an auxiliary bishop.
 Bishop with (an) auxiliary bishop(s).
 Bishop without an auxiliary bishop.

102. What kind of undergraduate college did you attend?
(Select all that apply)

- Diocesan Seminary. Other Private.
 Catholic college. Public.

103. When were you ordained to the episcopacy?

- <2000 2005-2009 2015-2019
 2000-2004 2010-2014 2020+

104. When were you appointed to your current position?

- <2000 2005-2009 2015-2019
 2000-2004 2010-2014 2020+

105. Which one category best describes your primary racial or ethnic background?

- African / African-American / black.
 Native American / Alaska Native.
 Asian / Pacific Islander / Native Hawaiian.
 Caucasian / European American / white.
 Hispanic / Latino.
 Other (describe:)_____

106. Your prior experience as a bishop: *(Select all that apply)*

- Auxiliary in current Diocese.
 Auxiliary in a different Diocese.
 Ordinary in a different Diocese.
 No prior experience as bishop.

107. Typical number of hours you work each week. _____

108. Describe your general theological orientation:

- Very traditional.
 Moderately traditional.
 Moderate.
 Moderately progressive.
 Very progressive.

109. Considering all of the various vital aspects of a person's life (mental health, physical health, relationships with others, etc.), which statement below best represents your personal experience? "The changes to my life stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic have been overall..."

- Very negative
- Negative
- Not significant
- Positive
- Very positive

110. Do you follow a regular routine of physical exercise?

- Yes
- No

111. Overall, how healthy would you say your diet is?

- Not at all healthy
- Not too healthy
- Somewhat healthy
- Very healthy

112. In general, how can the priests of your Diocese reach you?

- Through my personal email address.
- Through my office email address.
- Through my secretary's email address.
- They call or text my personal cell phone.
- They call the secretary at my office.
- Other: _____.

113. What aspect of the Church in the U.S. today gives you the greatest amount of hope?

114. What do you perceive as the greatest challenge to the Church in the U.S. today?

115. In your opinion, what is one step that needs to be taken to improve priests' trust in bishops?

Thank you for completing this survey.
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