



The CARA Report

Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate | Georgetown University | Vol. 24 No. 3

Winter 2019

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-

See *Assessing Catholic Campus Ministry*, page 10

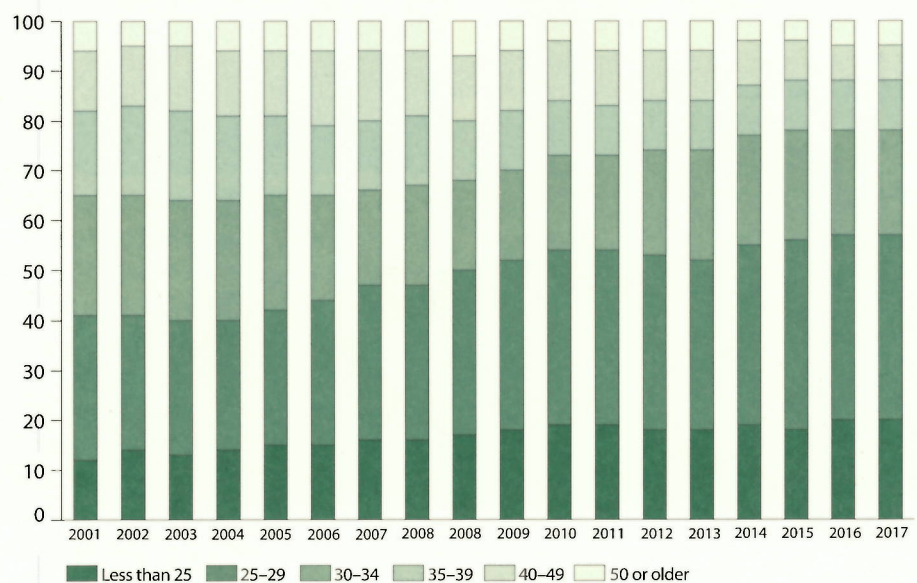
Young Adult American Catholics

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



See *Young Adult American Catholics*, page 11

stitutions. Among the roughly 1,500 community colleges, just one in 60 has a Catholic campus ministry. The study points to a rise in the presence of missionary organizations in campus ministry and the need for a stronger campus ministry presence on colleges and universities, particularly community colleges.

- The distinct models of ministry (office-based, parish-based, center-based, diocesan/multi-campus, and missionary), as well as distinctive pastoral styles of Catholic campus ministry, yield differences in the campus ministers’ perceived importance of pastoral skills and programmatic offerings. While no one model captures the fullness of the Catholic faith, collectively these models represent the incredible breadth of the Catholic faith. This diversity of models offers a variety of paths to encounter Christ, simultaneously calling for greater respect and appreciation among campus ministers as well as for honest ministerial self-assessment.
- Significant variation in training, formation, and certification exists among those serving in campus ministry. In fact, 40 percent of campus ministers had not completed ministerial degrees upon entering campus ministry. Those who perceive they possess greater training and formation in an area report feeling more efficacy in that area, increased satisfaction when performing that ministerial task, and greater interest in receiving additional training in that area. The bishops’ vision for campus ministry, articulated in *Empowered by the Spirit*, calls for “find[ing] dedicated persons for this ministry who have a solid faith, a love for the academic world, and the ability to relate well to both inquiring students and an educated faculty. They need proper training, which includes personal development, practical experience, and theological study.”

The report’s Executive Summary says, “These takeaways suggest a comprehensive ministerial solution is required for growth in presence and efficacy within campus ministry, respect and appreciation

among campus ministers, and enhanced competency among those who serve.”

After the study, the USCCB Committee on Catholic Education conducted a three-day symposium in fall 2017 which gathered bishops and practitioners from across the country to discuss and analyze the data. As participants reflected on the data and the lived experience of campus ministry, the following recommendations were articulated and submitted to the Committee on Catholic Education:

- Ask the Catholic Campus Ministry Association to review and update the National Standards for Catholic Campus Ministry.
- Ask CCMA to update and redesign the certification process for Catholic campus ministers. The certification process would be strengthened by the local bishops’ encouragement to pursue certification.
- In keeping with the Secretariat of Catholic Education’s strategic plan, develop guidelines for the formation and ongoing professional development of Catholic campus ministers in collaboration with the Alliance for Campus Ministry.
- Since 86 percent of campus ministers are white, and being aware of the growing diversity of campus life, create a diversity initiative to pursue ways of cultivating intercultural competence and greater pastoral engagement of diverse populations on campus.
- In light of the dearth of campus ministry at community colleges, explore innovative and creative means for providing pastoral presence and engagement at these schools.

A National Study on Catholic Campus Ministry: A Report Prepared for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Secretariat of Catholic Education, by Brian Starks and Maureen K. Day, was published in 2018 by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and is available on the USCCB website (useccb.org).

JOB SATISFACTION AMONG CAMPUS MINISTERS (Percentage responding “somewhat” and “very” combined)

