

A SURVEY OF ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIESTS

in the United States and Puerto Rico

conducted by the Los Angeles Times Poll

June 27 to October 11, 2002

"I love God, and Jesus Christ is a personal friend and I love being a Catholic priest!"

—Priest from the mid-Atlantic region

"I love being a Catholic priest. I cannot imagine a more fulfilling life. I am called to be with people at the most significant moments of their life."

—Ohio priest

"I am ending up a lonely old man who wishes he would not

have been ordained and could get free from the church. But, at this age and stage, I need it for retirement and financial aid. So I feel like a hypocrite."

—Priest from the northern Great Plains

"Most bishops and priests are good men—sinful—but trying to do God's work: loving the people and the church. The one thing the present crisis has given us is an opportunity for humility. All of us."

—Midwestern priest

"I grieve the loss of a certain moral voice the bishops rightly had in challenging our culture to be better. This, next to the harm inflicted on the abused children and families, is the greatest loss suffered, and some bishops have only themselves to blame."

—Iowa priest

"Basically this is 'Reformation time' once again. It may take hundreds of years, but the church will be better for it."

—Minnesota priest

"I'm just glad that Christ doesn't have a zero-tolerance policy for us!"

—Illinois priest

"The bishops not only perpetuated harm upon those sexually abused, but now they put at social, spiritual and physical risk those of different sexual orientation. Shame!"

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"I don't trust you, and I hope you get a taste of what you dish out."

—Louisiana priest, referring to the news media

"The media has been a great blessing to the priesthood, the church and, of course, to the victims."

—Southern California priest

Los Angeles Times
The Los Angeles Times Poll
SURVEY OF ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIESTS

This is a confidential survey. Please do not sign your name.

For each question, please check the box next to your answer; if a question calls for a response in your own words, write it on the lines provided beneath the question. There is additional space on the last page of the questionnaire for your general comments or suggestions. Thank you for your cooperation.

- Your age is: _____ years
- The last grade of education you completed is:
1. High school graduate or less
2. Two-year college
3. Four-year college
4. Master's degree
5. Doctoral degree
6. Post-graduate work
- How many years have you been a priest, that is, counting back to when you were ordained? (if less than one year, write "1")
_____ years
- Are you a diocesan priest or are you a member of an order? (if belong to order) To which order do you belong?
001. Diocesan priest
002. Member of order: (write in full name of order) _____
- Which of the following best describes your principal assignment as a priest?
01. Retired, semi-retired
02. Pastor of a parish
03. Curate, assistant pastor
04. Some other parish assignment
05. Administration
06. Education, teaching
07. Chaplain
08. Itinerant preacher
09. Other: (write in answer) _____
- Are you an external priest in this diocese, or not?
1. Yes
2. No
- Were you raised in the United States or in some other country?
01. United States
02. Other country: (write in country name) _____
- If you were raised in another country, how long have you been living in the United States? (if less than one year, write "1")
_____ years
- Are you of Latino or Hispanic descent—for example, Mexican, or Puerto Rican, or Cuban, or some other Spanish background?
1. Yes, Latino
2. No, not Latino
- Is your race:
1. White
2. Black
3. Asian or Pacific Islander
4. Something else
- What are the greatest joys that you receive in your life and work as a priest today?

Los Angeles Times Poll
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Los Angeles Times

SUNDAY OCTOBER 20, 2002, HOME EDITION, MAIN NEWS, PAGE A-1

THE TIMES POLL

Most Priests Say Bishops Mishandled Abuse Issue

Many believe that the U.S. church's charter, though protective of children, is unfair to clerics, and many are angry at prelates.

First of two parts

By LARRY B. STAMMER
Times Staff Writer

Two-thirds of the nation's Roman Catholic priests disapprove of the way that U.S. bishops have handled sexual abuse allegations against members of the clergy, a nationwide Los Angeles Times poll of the priesthood has found.

The findings of the poll, the most extensive nationwide opinion survey of American priests since 1994, point to a pervasive and deep-seated anger among many priests. Many are upset at the nation's bishops. They are also, in many cases, angry at the news media.

In written comments that many priests submitted with the poll responses, they said bishops delayed dealing with the crisis in the first place, then compounded the problem by adopting a "zero-tolerance" policy, the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, that denies accused clerics their rights to

due process.

But the poll also found a bedrock of faith among priests, happiness in their chosen vocation and a belief that the church will come out of the crisis stronger.

Nonetheless, in their comments on the sexual abuse policy, which the U.S. bishops approved in June, priests expressed many of the same objections raised by Vatican officials. On Friday the Vatican released a letter to the U.S. bishops saying some aspects of the policy conflict with church law and need to be changed.

Seventy-five percent of poll respondents said the charter has done a "good" or "excellent" job of protecting minors from sexual abuse by priests.

"Probably at this point the safest place for any kid to be is in the church," said Father Frank Jasper, a Franciscan priest and psychotherapist in Indianapolis who agreed to a follow-up interview.

Fifty-five percent said the charter would restore confidence in the church.

But only 34% rated the charter's fairness to priests accused of abuse as "good" or "excellent," with 45% calling it "fair" or "poor" in that regard.

Like many other priests, Jasper, 56, who has been ordained for 29 years, said the charter was hastily put together under intense media pressure and undermined the due-process rights of priests guaranteed by the church's canon law.

The sexual abuse scandal has resulted in an estimated 300 priests nationwide being removed from ministry and an unprecedented official apology from the church. The furor has taken a toll on the morale of priests who have never been accused of sexual abuse, the survey found.

"I feel so badly for the innocent victims, but in a way, I feel victimized by these sexual monsters because they, in a way, stole from me some of

the pride and joy I had as a priest," said one California cleric.

More than three out of five of those surveyed said they believed that most or many of the allegations of sexual abuse of minors by priests were true. More than half, 53%, said they think the church has been too lenient in disciplining those accused of misconduct.

Yet in addition to disappointment with the bishops, many priests expressed anger at how the news media have covered cases of abuse. Seventy-three percent of priests responding to the survey said the news media had been "negative" in their treatment of the church.

"I'm terribly disappointed," Father Eugene Burns of Chicago said in a follow-up telephone interview.

"I never saw anything about us who have borne the heat of the day and have been good, faithful priests," said Burns, 74, who has been a priest 47 years. "They threw mud at all of us. I used to enjoy our national news, as well as local, but it was getting nauseating. So I just shut it off."

Many said they were outraged by the publication of unproven allegations, particularly in cases involving alleged molestations that occurred decades ago and in which there had been no indication of further offenses.

"Faithful laity seems to forgive our sins. The press seems to delight in our sins," a priest from New Jersey wrote.

Although there have been polls of rank-and-file Catholics and Americans in general since the sexual abuse scandal erupted in January in Boston and spread across the U.S., this poll marks the first attempt to survey the views of priests.

Catholic institutions have done some polls of the nation's roughly 45,000 active and retired priests in recent years, but the current survey, conducted by the Los Angeles Times Poll, is the most extensive opinion

survey of U.S. priests since a similar Times poll of priests and nuns conducted in 1993 and 1994.

The latest poll surveyed 1,854 priests nationwide and has a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points. Priests were given an opportunity to add written comments along with their answers. Some also agreed to follow-up interviews with Times reporters.

The poll found that overwhelmingly priests are happy with their vocations (70% say they are “very satisfied” with their lives as priests), approve of the way their local bishops manage their own dioceses (76%), and expect that in the long run the church will emerge from the crisis stronger and healthier.

“At 85 years of age, I see the ship listing greatly but not ready to sink,” commented one person who responded to the poll. “God’s promises are too convincing for that. I’ll stay on board with God’s help.”

Another said: “I believe the church will survive this scandal, as it has for the last 2,000 years. Hopefully, it will emerge more pure, more refined and more holy. I pray for that every day.”

But the priests also agreed that the current crisis is a serious one. Asked if the sex abuse scandal was the worst crisis the church in America has faced in a century, more than two-thirds said yes.

None of the priests in their written comments sought to excuse or minimize child abuse. As have U.S. bishops and Pope John Paul II, they expressed agreement that there is no room in the priesthood for those who would sexually abuse minors.

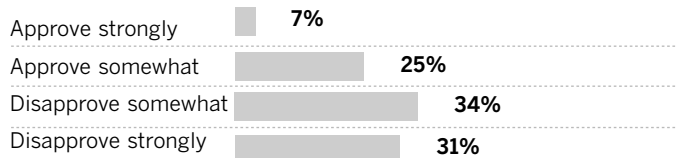
“They should be removed from ministry, but not publicly,” Burns said. “They must know that nobody’s above the law. It’s their fault. They’re stupid. They must have known it was wrong. Certainly, God wouldn’t look the other way. They had to know what a horrible disgrace. But the power of passion!”

Others faulted the bishops for waiting so long to address the issue of sexual abuse, which they began discussing at their national meetings at least as early as 1985.

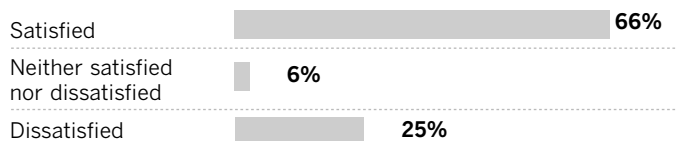
“I’m very angry that no charges

Sex scandal in the church

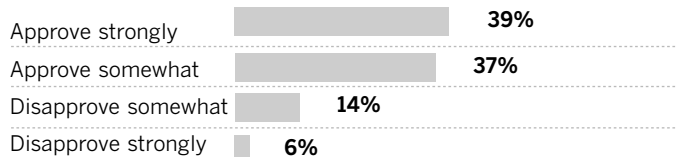
Do you approve or disapprove of the way bishops have handled allegations of child sexual abuse against their diocesan priests?



How satisfied are you that the charter approved by the bishops’ conference in June adequately addresses the issues of child sexual abuse by priests?



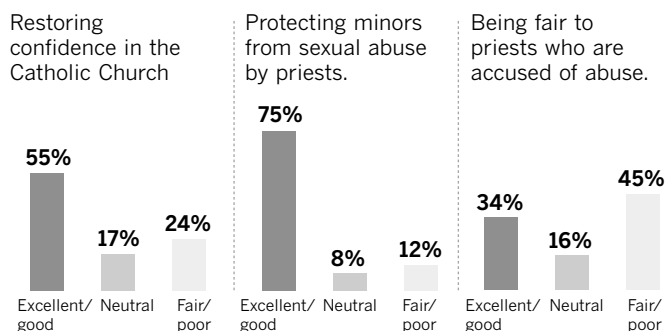
Do you approve or disapprove of the way the bishop who presides in your diocese is handling his duties?



Agree or disagree: “The Catholic Church in America is now facing its biggest crisis in the last century.”



Rate how well the bishops’ charter addresses the following issues:



Note: Numbers may not total 100% where some answer categories are not shown.

Times Poll results are also available at www.latimes.com/timespoll.

Source: Los Angeles Times Poll

REBECCA PERRY Los Angeles Times

have been brought against” bishops who failed to protect children from molesters, “and at the present time it seems that no charges will ever be brought against them,” wrote one

Pennsylvania priest.

“Heads have to roll in the episcopacy [bishops] before people are going to be satisfied,” commented a cleric from the northern Great

Plains.

Wrote one Southern California priest: "I can't wait for a bishop or cardinal to go to jail."

About one-third of priests identified themselves as liberals in matters of doctrine; roughly another third identified themselves as conservatives. Both groups expressed criticisms of the bishops, but liberals were more likely to criticize them than conservatives, 76% versus 59%.

Many of the same priests also said the rights of the accused, as well as victims, must be honored. Many asked if Christian forgiveness had also become a victim of the scandal, particularly in cases in which a priest may have abused once decades ago and led an abuse-free life with an effective ministry ever since.

"The Dallas charter is so broad that it places most priests at risk of an unjust accusation," wrote a cleric from upstate New York. "An allegation is regarded as proved if it is merely credible."

Some came to the defense of the bishops. "The church is taking aggressive action to end these scandals. Please don't make its task more difficult by trying to dictate how it should do its duty," wrote one priest, adding that the church's "leaders, wisely, are looking to, and praying to, God for help."

Others, however, commented angrily on the fact that bishops are not subject to the rule requiring abusers' removal from ministry and the priesthood. Sixty-five percent said the charter did a fair to poor job in providing for the discipline of bishops who cover up for abusive priests.

According to church law, only the pope can discipline a bishop. Nonetheless, the anger of some priests was palpable.

"In the end, the bishops have absolved themselves and will walk away unscathed," wrote a priest from the New York City area. "Perhaps corporate America is following the bishops' lead."

Voices From the Priesthood

■ *"I love God, and Jesus Christ is a personal friend and I love being a Catholic priest!"*

—Priest from the mid-Atlantic region

■ *"I love being a Catholic priest. I cannot imagine a more fulfilling life. I am called to be with people at the most significant moments of their life."*

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—Louisiana priest, referring to the news media

■ *"The media has been a great blessing to the priesthood, the church and, of course, to the victims."*

—Southern California priest

■ *"People complain that bishops don't listen to the laity. Well, I've got news. They don't consult their priests either!"*

—Southern California priest

Los Angeles Times

SUNDAY OCTOBER 20, 2002, HOME EDITION, MAIN NEWS, PAGE A-32

THE TIMES POLL

15% Identify as Gay or 'on Homosexual Side'

By LARRY B. STAMMER
Times Staff Writer

The subject of gays in the priesthood has been hotly debated throughout the sexual abuse scandal that has rocked the Catholic Church in the U.S.

Many Catholic traditionalists, including some bishops and Vatican officials, have sought to blame gay priests for the scandal. On the other side, many have said the church has increasingly come to depend on gay men who have entered the priesthood in larger numbers in recent years.

Despite the debate, there has been little data on how many priests actually are gay.

The Times poll of priests asked respondents to characterize their sexual orientation. A combined 15% identified themselves as homosexual (9%) or "somewhere in between, but more on the homosexual side" (6%).

But among younger priests—those ordained for 20 years or less—the figure was 23%.

The figures, particularly for the younger priests, are higher than most estimates of the percentage of U.S. gay men, but lower than some estimates of the percentage of homosexuals in the priesthood, which have ranged up to 50%.

The figures bolster the idea that more gay men have entered the priesthood in recent decades or at

least that gay priests are now more open about their sexuality.

Five percent of respondents placed themselves "completely in the middle" between heterosexuality and homosexuality, while 67% identified themselves as exclusively heterosexual in orientation. Eight percent referred to themselves as "mostly" heterosexual, and 5% declined to answer the question.

Asked whether a "homosexual subculture"—defined as "a definite group of persons that has its own friendships, social gatherings and vocabulary"—exists in their diocese or religious order, 44% said "definitely" (17%) or "probably" (27%) yes, while 52% said no. Asked if such a subculture existed at the seminary they attended, 26% said "definitely" (12%) or "probably" (14%) yes, while 71% said no. But 53% of priests who were ordained in the last 20 years said such a subculture existed in the seminary when they attended.

Just as many traditionalists have blamed the sexual abuse scandal on homosexuals in the priesthood, many liberals have blamed the church's requirement that priests be celibate.

The poll also asked priests about "the role that celibacy plays in your life." One-third of those surveyed said they "do not waver" from their vow of celibacy, while 47% described celibacy as "an ongoing journey" and 14% said they "do not always succeed in following" it. Two percent said they are not celibate, and 5% declined to answer the question.

Psychologists and other experts on sexuality generally say sexual abuse of children is not connected to sexual orientation or celibacy. Most offenders suffer from arrested psychosexual development and are heterosexual, those experts say. But such views have done little to discourage arguments in the church and the secular media about celibacy or the renewed efforts by the Vatican

to discourage the ordination of homosexuals.

The poll respondents were guaranteed anonymity, but results on the sexuality questions could have been influenced by wariness of the media and fears among gay priests that disclosing their sexual orientation amid the current crisis would be ill-advised.

Catholic research groups periodically survey priests' views on many subjects, but the church has never polled its priests about their sexual orientation. Catholic researchers have said members of the church hierarchy did not want the question asked.

Los Angeles Times

SUNDAY OCTOBER 20, 2002, HOME EDITION, MAIN NEWS, PAGE A-32

THE TIMES POLL

How the National Survey Was Taken

Response rate among the 5,000 priests who were mailed the questionnaire was 37%, considered statistically representative.

This is the most extensive opinion survey of the nation's Catholic priests since a Los Angeles Times poll of priests and nuns conducted over several months in 1993 and 1994.

Opinion surveys of the general population usually are conducted by telephone, using random-digit dialing. For a small population such as priests, however, that method is impractical.

Instead, The Times Poll chose a sample of 5,000 active and retired priests across the country in 80 dioceses and mailed surveys to them. The packet included a cover letter promising that all results would remain anonymous.

The sample was designed to be geographically distributed in the same way as the 45,382 priests who make up the total U.S. priest population. Diocesan priests and those in religious orders were included in proportion to their overall share of the total priest population in each geographic area.

Addresses and population counts were taken from directories of dioceses

and religious orders and from the Official Catholic Directory published by P.J. Kennedy & Sons.

To achieve the largest possible return rate, the poll contacted respondents four times, mailing questionnaires June 27 and July 25, a reminder postcard Aug. 5, and a final set of questionnaire packets Sept. 4. The end date of the survey was Oct. 11, giving it a 16-week field period.

The poll was criticized by some Catholic organizations that said it asked inappropriate questions. Nonetheless, it achieved a response rate of 37%, for a total of 1,854 respondents nationwide, which is considered statistically representative.

Response rates were acceptable in all the dioceses surveyed, and ranged from 30% in some dioceses in the South to 44% in some parts of the Midwest. The margin of error for the sample is plus or minus 3 percentage points.

The sample of priests who responded to the survey slightly over-represents active diocesan priests as compared with those who belong to religious orders. It also slightly over-represents priests in the South as compared with those in the East and Midwest. The final results were adjusted slightly to account for the differences.

Besides the survey questions, the poll invited respondents to submit additional written comments. Some priests also agreed to speak with reporters for follow-up interviews.

In the written comments, some priests praised the survey. Others criticized the wording of some of the 67 questions.

The most common complaint was that some questions required a more complicated answer than simply yes or no.

Others suggested that certain items were designed to produce responses that would embarrass the church.

The survey was supervised by Los Angeles Times Poll Director Susan Pinkus along with Associate Director Jill Darling Richardson and Field Director Roger Richardson. Claudia Vaughn was the data management supervisor and Ray Enslow was the publications coordinator.

Further information on this study is available by writing to Los Angeles Times Poll, 202 W. 1st St., Los Angeles, CA 90012-4105. In addition, Times Poll data and question wording may be found online at www.latimes.com/timespoll.

Los Angeles Times

MONDAY OCTOBER 21, 2002, HOME EDITION, MAIN NEWS, PAGE A-1

THE TIMES POLL

Young Priests Hold Old Values

Their views often are at odds with liberal reform of Vatican II in 1960s.

Second of two parts

By TERESA WATANABE
Times Staff Writer

Younger Roman Catholic priests in the United States are markedly more conservative than their elders, a Los Angeles Times poll has found, reflecting a global trend toward Christian orthodoxy that is reshaping the world's largest church.

Clerics under age 41 expressed more allegiance to the clerical hierarchy, less dissent against traditional church teachings, and more certainty about the sinfulness of homosexuality, abortion, artificial birth control and other moral issues than did their elders, the poll found.

Those attitudes place the younger priests at odds with many priests who were shaped by the liberal reforms of the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s and who tend to support further changes in the church—including women priests, optional celibacy, more lay empowerment and the direct election of bishops.

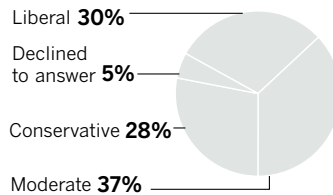
The poll found that overall, 30% of priests described themselves as liberal on religious and moral issues, while 28% described themselves as conservative and 37% as moderate. Among younger priests, however, nearly four in 10 described themselves as conservative, and three-

fourths said they were more religiously orthodox than their older counterparts.

The shift to orthodoxy has been actively promoted by Pope John Paul II during his 24-year pontificate. In addition to their predominance among the younger generation of American priests, orthodox views are in the ascendancy worldwide as Catholicism's center of gravity shifts from liberal Europe and North America to the more conservative regions of Asia, Africa and Latin America, according to scholars of the church.

Priests' views

Religious ideology:*



* Priests were asked to describe their own views on religious and moral matters as "liberal," "middle of the road" or "conservative."

Source: Los Angeles Times Poll

REBECCA PERRY Los Angeles Times

As the influence of those regions grows in the American church—in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, for example, Latinos and Asians already constitute more than 80% of the faithful—disagreements over the U.S. institution's future are certain to deepen, many experts say.

"The church has developed a fissure whose size most people do not fully appreciate," said Philip Jenkins, a Pennsylvania State University professor and author of "The Next Christendom."

The Times Poll surveyed a nationwide sample of 1,854 priests in 80 U.S. dioceses. The survey is the most extensive independent nationwide

poll of Catholic priests since a similar Times poll conducted in 1993 and 1994. The margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points.

The poll paints a portrait of a gradually diversifying and aging priesthood. Eighty-eight percent of priests are non-Latino whites—a figure that is down a few percentage points from the last Times poll but remains higher than the white percentage among lay Catholics. Younger priests are also considerably more likely to identify themselves as gay than are those who were ordained in earlier decades.

As the number of new priests graduating from seminaries fails to keep pace with the number reaching retirement age, the average age of a Catholic priest has risen to nearly 61; in the 1994 survey it was 54.

Great Expectations

The survey shows the vast majority of priests to be happy with their vocations, but the shortage of priests causes many to struggle with burnout. Some talk of feeling caught between what one poll respondent referred to as "a bishop who expects everything and a people who expect everything."

Throughout the poll, the clearest divide was the one between the younger and older generation.

That gap is reflected in men like Father Vincent Inghilterra, a 60-year-old Army chaplain based in the Diocese of Trenton, N.J., and Father Matthew O'Donnell, a 39-year-old pastor from San Andreas, which is east of Stockton.

Inghilterra came of age during Vatican II. The Second Vatican Council was launched by Pope John XXIII in 1962 as a way to "bring the church up to date." The council launched a revolutionary effort to bring the church closer to the people by emphasizing a greater role for the laity, declaring the primacy of individual conscience and abandoning

centuries of traditional practices, such as Latin Masses. Particularly in the United States, the reform ideas associated with Vatican II strongly influenced a generation of priests.

Influenced by such dissident theologians as Hans Kung and Charles Curran, who were both subsequently investigated by John Paul II's more orthodox Vatican, Inghilterra said he was encouraged to open all subjects to examination and to think for himself.

A Careful Approach

"I was taught to be very respectful of the conscience of people and not denounce everything as a sin," he said. "The Catholic people will do what they feel is right in their hearts—with or without the blessing of the local priest."

O'Donnell was raised in West Covina with such traditional Catholic practices as nightly family rosaries and frequent attendance at daily Mass. But he said that he, like many younger Catholics, longed for stability and certainty amid a climate of moral relativism, sexual permissiveness, social degeneration and a sense that the experiments of Vatican II had created more confusion than success.

In his seven years as a priest, O'Donnell said, he has gently but firmly laid down church teachings—telling one couple who had wed in a civil ceremony, for instance, that they could not receive Communion unless they married within the church.

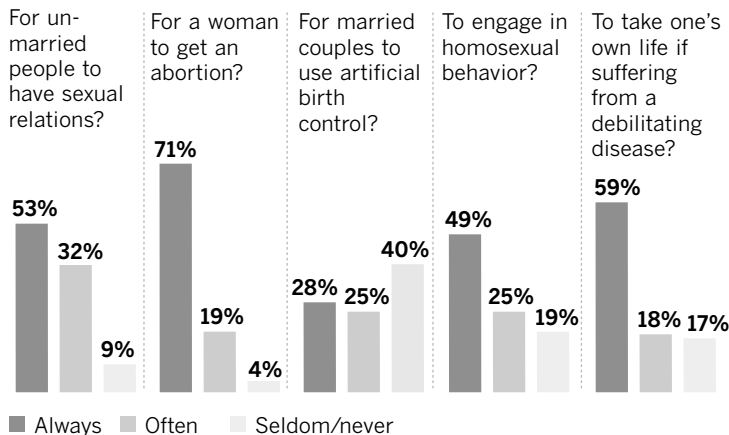
"The beauty and liberty comes in accepting church teachings, not making your own theology," O'Donnell said.

Many younger priests, like O'Donnell, see themselves as carrying out the mission of the pope. Indeed, the poll found that younger priests who came of age after Vatican II and during John Paul's papacy were the most positive toward him, with 79% ranking him outstanding. That compared with 60% of Vatican II-generation priests, and 64% of pre-Vatican II priests 60 years of age and older.

Three-fourths of younger priests ranked the pope's moral views as "about right," compared with 60% of

Belief in church doctrine

Do you think it is always, often, seldom or never a sin:



Do you think Roman Catholics must follow all of the church's teachings to be faithful, or do you think they may disagree on some issues and still be considered faithful?

	All	Liberals	Moderates	Conservatives*
Must follow all teachings	35%	6%	33%	64%
May disagree and be faithful	58	91	59	28

Would you favor or oppose the ordination of women as priests?

	All	Liberals	Moderates	Conservatives*
Favor	46%	81%	43%	17%
Oppose	51	17	54	82

Would you favor or oppose the ordination of married men as priests in the Latin rite?

	All	Liberals	Moderates	Conservatives*
Favor	69%	91%	73%	45%
Oppose	28	7	25	52

Do you think the church will ever again allow the ordination of married men as priests?

	All	Liberals	Moderates	Conservatives*
Never again	17%	4%	15%	33%
Yes, in less than 20 years	38	59	37	21
Yes, in 20 years or more	35	35	40	35

* Priests were asked to describe their own views on religious and moral matters as "liberal," "middle of the road" or "conservative."

Note: Numbers may not total 100% where some answer categories are not shown.

Times Poll results are also available at www.latimes.com/timespoll.

Source: Los Angeles Times Poll

REBECCA PERRY Los Angeles Times

Vatican II-era priests and 61% of pre-Vatican II clerics. About one-third of the older two groups found John Paul's views "too conservative."

To priests such as O'Donnell, the pope represents "a guiding light and a strength." Amid social and religious confusion, he said, "Pope John

Paul II speaks with certainty, love and compassion. This is what young people need."

In addition to their admiration for the pope, the younger priests surveyed were more upbeat about the church in general, with 69% ranking conditions "excellent" or "good" com-

pared with 56% among priests of the Vatican II generation, defined by Catholic officials as those ages 42 to 59.

‘Empower the Laity’

The younger priests were more apt to believe that no reform is needed in the church, compared with priests of the Vatican II generation, who most frequently chose “democratization” and “empower the laity” from a list of possible reforms.

Younger priests were also far more likely to fully embrace traditional church teachings—and expect the same from their fellow Catholics.

While 72% of Vatican II priests said Roman Catholics could disagree with some church teachings and remain faithful, only 48% of younger priests agreed with that proposition. The younger priests were the most likely to regard as “always a sin” such acts as premarital sex, abortion, artificial birth control, cloning, using fetal stem cells for research, gay sex, masturbation and wearing condoms as protection against AIDS.

About two-thirds of younger priests opposed the ordination of women as deacons or priests, although a narrow majority favored ordination of married men as priests in the Latin, or Western, rite.

By contrast, among the older priests, large majorities favored women deacons and ordination of married men as priests; among the Vatican II-era priests, 51% also supported the ordination of women as priests.

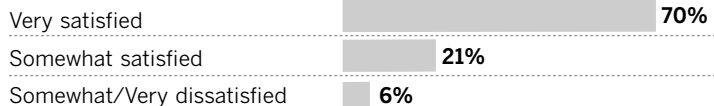
Shortage of Priests

The differences between liberal and conservative priests color views on everything from the cause of sex scandals that have rocked the church to the solution for shortages of priests—a problem named as the church’s most pressing issue by the largest number of respondents across the ideological spectrum.

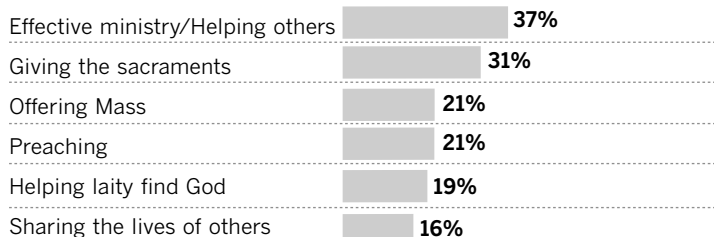
Liberals argue that the church must open the priesthood to women and married men. But many conservatives assert that the dioceses and religious orders headed by orthodox leaders are brimming with people eager to devote themselves to the

Life as a priest

Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way your life as a priest is going these days?

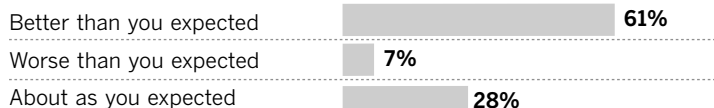


*What are the greatest joys that you receive in your life and work as a priest today?**

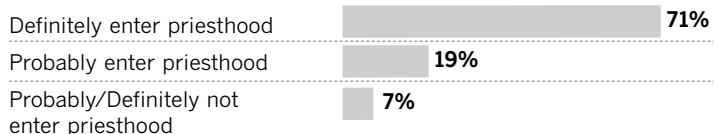


* Accepted up to five replies; top six responses shown

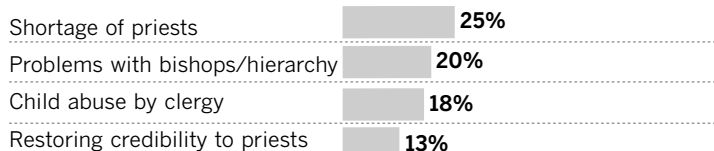
Has your life as a priest turned out:



If you had the opportunity to make the choice over again, would you:



*What are the most important problems facing the Roman Catholic Church in the United States today?**



* Accepted up to five replies; top four responses shown

Note: Numbers may not total 100% where more than one response was accepted or some answer categories are not shown.

Times Poll results are also available at www.latimes.com/timespoll.

Source: Los Angeles Times Poll

REBECCA PERRY Los Angeles Times

religious life.

An example frequently cited by conservatives is the Diocese of Lincoln, Neb., home to 90,000 Catholics

According to Msgr. Timothy J. Thorburn, the diocesan vicar-general, the number of candidates for the priesthood or religious orders is

growing at both seminaries in the area, and within three orders of nuns—including a new Carmelite monastery of cloistered women established last December.

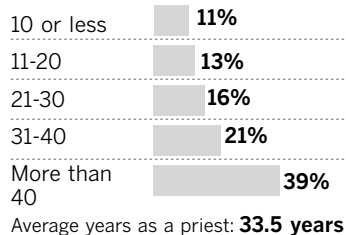
One of the seminaries, Thorburn said, recently had to expand its quarters to accommodate the surge of

young men—more than 60—attracted to the Latin liturgies and other traditional practices of the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter.

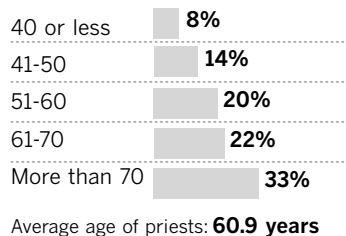
Thorburn called the priest shortage “a short-term problem” that

Profile of priests

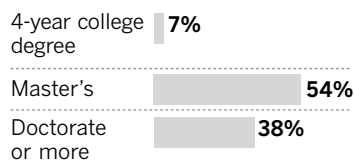
Years as a priest:



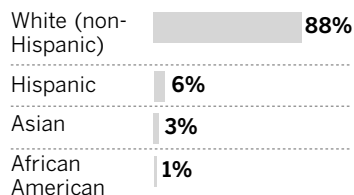
Age of priests, in years:



Education:



Race/ethnicity:



Religious ideology*:



* Priests were asked to describe their own views on religious and moral matters as “liberal,” “middle of the road” or “conservative.”

Note: Numbers may not total 100% where some answer categories are not shown.

Times Poll results are also available at www.latimes.com/timespoll.

Source: Los Angeles Times Poll

REBECCA PERRY Los Angeles Times

would be solved in a few decades by the return to orthodoxy. “Young people with ideals are not looking for the easy path,” he said. “A ‘Catholic lite’ is not attractive to them.”

Some critics fear that younger, conservative clerics will alienate a more liberal Catholic lay population. But conservatives argue that orthodoxy is growing among the laity as well.

According to Father Joseph Fesio, editor of the conservative Ignatius Press in San Francisco, about 20 new Catholic magazines have been launched in the last two decades—all of them orthodox.

Conservative Catholics, he added, have started a host of new organizations, such as St. Joseph Communications, which holds an annual family conference in Long Beach that has grown from 300 participants when it began a decade or so ago to 7,000 today. In addition, he and others assert that younger families are having more children and increasingly choosing to home-school them.

As the Catholic population continues to change complexion, with increasing numbers of the faithful coming from immigrant communities, Jenkins and other experts say, ideological conflict between younger traditionalists and an older generation of reformers is bound to increase.

In Southern California, for instance, conflict frequently occurs over the role of the laity, said Father Thomas Rausch of Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. Discomfort “comes out all the time” from younger priests over the issue of treating lay pastoral associates as equal, professional partners, he said.

“It’s very important that these younger Catholics not become so enamored with tradition that they lose sight of the need for greater inclusion of the laity or a more collective style of decision making,” Rausch said. “Laypeople are claiming their ministry and won’t have it taken away from them by some conservative cleric.”

In a recent essay in the national Catholic magazine America, however, Rausch wrote that he had also become more sympathetic to some

of the concerns of the younger, more conservative theologians.

“After all the confusion and ‘Cafeteria Catholicism’ in the post-Vatican II climate,” he said, referring to the practice of selective adherence to church teachings, “there is a real desire for a greater sense of Catholic identity, more Jesus-centered piety and a rediscovery of the purity of the tradition.”

He called on the church and its theologians to bridge the growing divide.

To many Catholics, however, diverse opinion is as old as the church itself.

“We’ve never been a community that thought the same way,” Inghilterra said. “We’re richer for the diversity.”

Priests Say Catholic Church Facing Biggest Crisis of the Century

■ But most are satisfied with the way their lives are going.

Most priests and members of religious orders believe the Catholic Church is currently facing the biggest crisis of this century, according to the latest Los Angeles Times poll. The survey of 1,854 priests and religious in 80 dioceses across the United States and Puerto Rico reveals a clergy who are happy in their chosen life, but who feel embattled by a barrage of negative media attention. Many also expressed concern over the Church hierarchy's handling of the crisis, and some fear loss of credibility and possible witch-hunts as more allegations—some decades old—come to light.

The survey uncovered a religious community whose members are satisfied with their own lives and ministries, but who are at the same time concerned over internal and external stresses on the Church itself. Even though about seven in 10 agreed with the statement “The Catholic Church in America is now facing its biggest crisis in the last century” priests in the survey were generally upbeat about their lives. Nine in 10 said they are very (70%) or somewhat (21%) satisfied with the way their life as a priest is going these days. Six in 10 said their life in the priesthood has turned out better than they thought it would and more than seven in 10 said they would definitely make the same choice again, along with another two in 10 who would probably do so.

Allegations of Abuse and The Bishops' Conference

The survey contacted priests in the weeks following the yearly conference of Roman Catholic Bishops in the United States. During this conference in June, 2002, which took place in a heightened atmosphere of crisis and was extensively covered by the media, the bishops drafted a set of guidelines for dealing with priests who are accused of sexual misconduct. The zero tolerance guidelines set forth in the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People require bishops to report allegations of child sexual abuse to civil authorities and remove accused priests from public ministry. Because bishops are heads of their local dioceses and cannot be sanctioned by other bishops, the guidelines do not address the issues of discipline of bishops who

are involved in misconduct themselves or who cover up for priests who are accused of misconduct.

Generally speaking, while priests approve of and trust the bishops who head their own dioceses—three out of four said they approved (39% approved strongly and 37% somewhat) of the way the bishop in their own diocese is handling his duties overall—two-thirds *disapprove* of the way bishops in general have handled the allegations of child sexual abuse against priests.

There is also a sense among priests that the problems are happening elsewhere, outside their home dioceses. Eight in 10 over-

all said they were satisfied that adequate procedures had already been established in their own diocese for dealing with the issue of child sexual abuse by priests even before the Bishop's conference last June.

When asked to name what bothered them the most about the crisis, priests mentioned the bishops' response to the crisis most often at 21%. (Next highest mention was concern about unsubstantiated claims of abuse at 16%, followed by the media response to the crisis at 14%.)

While this shows that some are clearly worried about unsubstantiated claims, a majority (60%) indicated they believe that most (19%) or many (42%) of the allegations of sexual misconduct that have been leveled at priests are true, and over half (53%) said they think the Church has been too lenient in disciplining priests who are accused of misconduct. (Thirteen percent feel the Church has been too harsh, and 26% say the level of discipline has been just right.)

Not surprisingly, a priest's religious leanings play a role in his perception of how the crisis is being handled. Generally speaking, priests who identify as liberal (i.e. non-orthodox) on the religious ideological spectrum tend to feel more strongly about the lack of protection of accused priests by their bishops, but also to be more inclined to believe that the bulk of the allegations against priests are true. Also, they are less satisfied with the guidelines set forth in the Bishops conference last June, and more willing to advocate that bishops resign if they are found to

“ [W]hile priests approve of and trust the bishops who head their own dioceses ... two-thirds disapprove of the way bishops in general have handled the allegations of child sexual abuse against priests. ”

have covered up for abusing priests than are their more conservative brethren.

When priests were asked about the greatest challenges they face in their life and work, issues surrounding the scandal were not immediately foremost in their minds, but that is not to say that concerns are not there. Priests most often mentioned the need to combat secularism and materialism in the laity (12%), the problems of burnout from excessive demands on their time (15%), and the issues of effective ministry (10%). However, aggregating mentions of related issues—media attacks on the Church, the problems laity and clergy are having in the wake of the abuse scandals, and concern over lost credibility—reveals that just under two in 10 priests expressed concern about one or more of those issues.

Many priests indicated in their written comments at the end of the survey that they feel that the Church and especially the clergy have been portrayed unfairly by the media, who they feel do not understand the life that priests lead. Nearly three in four said they think the news media’s treatment of the Church is too negative.

Satisfaction With the Bishop's Charter

When priests were asked to rate the guidelines set forth in the Charter, two-thirds said they were at least somewhat satisfied that it adequately addresses the issues dealing with sexual abuse by priests but 25% said they were not. Six percent said they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. The largest proportion said they were “mostly” (33%) or “somewhat” (26%) satisfied that it addressed the issues.

When asked to rate the Charter on a variety of specifics, priests expressed the greatest satisfaction with the way the compact set about protecting minors. Three out of four priests said it does at least a good job of protecting minors from sexual abuse. Over half (55%) gave the Charter an excellent or good rating for its ability to help restore confidence in the Catholic Church. However, when it comes to being fair to those who are accused of abuse, only 34% of priests said it did a good job and 65% said it did only a fair or poor job when it comes to providing for the discipline of bishops who cover up for abusive priests.

Priests rate how well the Bishop’s compact will:

	Excellent/ Good	Neutral	Fair/ Poor
Protect minors from sex abuse	75%	8	12
Restore confidence in the Church	55%	17	24
Treat accused priests fairly	34%	16	45
Provide discipline for bishops who cover up for abusive priests	15%	13	65

When asked what outcome they would most like to see if a bishop is found to have protected a priest who has sexually abused a minor, only 11% said they thought that the bishop should be arrested, and hardly anyone suggested the bishop should not apologize (1%). Most (75%) agreed that a bishop in that position should apologize and impose new safeguards. That group includes 34% who said that the bishop should take those

steps and then continue to serve, and 41% who said the bishop should take those steps and then resign. Thirteen percent did not answer the question.

Bishops

Generally speaking, priests reported good relations with their diocesan bishops. Along with the majority who approve of the job their bishop is doing, nearly three out of four (73%) consider their bishop’s view on moral issues to be just about right. Nearly two out of five liberal religious priests find the views of their diocesan bishops to be too conservative and 55% find his views on par with theirs. Conversely, more than four out of five each of moderate and conservative religious priests find their bishops’ views in line with their own thinking. More than two-thirds also feel comfortable in going to their superiors for guidance and comfort. But, 37% of liberal religious say they feel uncomfortable, as do 37% of priests who came of age in the Vatican II era. (This result is comparable to Catholics’ in a survey sponsored by ABC News/Washington Post in March 2002. More than three-quarters of Catholic Americans are satisfied with leadership provided by their bishop and 86% are satisfied with their parish priests.)

On another matter that may have more to do with the problems now confronting the Church, priests are divided as to whether they favor or oppose direct democratic election of diocesan bishops by the diocesan clergy and laity. However, priests who are liberal in their religious ideology overwhelmingly approve of this issue (73%), while virtually a similar group of religious conservative priests are as adamantly opposed to the idea. Those saying they are religious moderates are more prone to be against this idea (52% oppose to 44% in favor). Not surprisingly, priests who came of age after Vatican II are strongly opposed to direct elections (67%), while the priests in other generational categories are evenly divided in their opinion.

Gay Priests

Sociologists and researchers who survey the priest population have provided estimates of the proportion of priests who are gay ranging from about 35% to as high as 50%. This survey asked priests to rate their sexual orientation on a five point scale with heterosexual on one end of the scale and homosexual on the other. Sixty-seven percent identified as heterosexual, 8% said they lean toward heterosexual, 5% say they are completely in the middle, 6% lean toward homosexual and 9% say they are gay.

Allegations have been made by conservative members of the Church hierarchy that problems of abuse stem from the high proportion of gay priests and the existence of a homosexual subculture in the Church. The survey asked two questions about this, first defining a subculture as “a definite group of persons that has its own friendships, social gatherings, and vocabulary.”

Under half of the priests (44%) said that such a group definitely (17%) or probably (27%) exists in their diocese. In a survey conducted by Dean Hoge for Catholic University of America in

2001, 19% of priests said “clearly there is a subculture”, 36% said their probably is and 17% said there is not.

In this survey more priests who came of age after Vatican II, along with those who have spent 20 years or less in the priesthood, say there is a homosexual subculture in the seminary they attended. Priests who have been ordained the shortest time are more apt to say that the gay subculture exists in their diocese as well. Only 26% said they thought there was a homosexual subculture in the seminary when they attended (including 12% who said definitely and 14% who said probably.) In Hoge’s study, 15% said there clearly was a subculture in their seminary, 26% said probably and 44% said no subculture.

The survey did not ask any specific questions about a link between homosexuality and child abuse, and psychologists and other experts on human sexuality generally say that sexual abuse of children is not connected to either sexual orientation or celibacy.

Celibacy

About a third of priests say that celibacy is not a problem for them, while 47% say it’s something that takes times to achieve and is an ongoing journey. Fourteen percent said it is a discipline they try to follow, and 2% say celibacy is not relevant to their priesthood and they do not observe it. They also think the practice of celibacy is the same whether the priest is gay or not. But more than a fifth believe it is easier for straight priests to practice celibacy than for gay priests and 2% think it is easier for homosexual priests to practice celibacy than heterosexual priests.

Most priests are also satisfied with their intimacy with others, that is non-sexual intimacy, they have with their friends.

Analysis by JILL DARLING RICHARDSON
Times Poll Associate Director

◆◆◆◆ LOS ANGELES TIMES POLL ALERT ◆◆◆◆

Priests Satisfied With Their Lives

■ There is a serious shortage of men entering the priesthood. The newly ordained are more conservative than their older counterparts. But, if priests had to do it all over again, they would still choose the priesthood.

Despite the serious, ongoing problem that the American Roman Catholic Church is confronting with the child sexual abuse scandal, priests today are very satisfied with their lives and are more committed to their vows and to the Church they serve than they ever were, according to a new Los Angeles Times Poll. But, in addition to the scandal, the poll also shows a church in crisis because of a decline in the number of men entering the seminary, giving rise to a priest shortage. Priests are an aging population with fewer men entering the priesthood than retiring. Men entering seminaries today are more theologically conservative than their older brethren and are not as forgiving as older priests are to the Catholic laity who sometimes pick and choose what parts of the religion they will observe—the selective adherence to Church teachings. In many ways the Roman Catholic Church is out of step with the laity they serve.

In addition to responses to questions in the survey, there were hundreds of additional comments received from priests who say they are very committed to their religion, to the laity they work with. Their greatest joys are giving the Sacraments, offering Mass and devoting themselves to their commitment to God. But they say they are saddened and demoralized by the scandal and by the mostly negative reporting by the media. They believe the media doesn't completely understand them or the Catholic Church and they also do not understand why the media omits writing about positive and good things that are happening within the Church. They also feel that their brother priests are taking the blame for all that has happened, while the bishops are not bearing any responsibility for their culpability.

Demographics

According to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, there are about 46,000 active and retired priests in the American Catholic Church today, compared to 49,000 priests five years ago and 57,000 priests in 1985. Priests are an aging population (older than they were when the Times Poll conducted its first poll among this group in 1994). In 1994, the average age for a priest was 54 (median age 57), while today's priests' average age is

60.9 (with 63 years as the median). And priests have been in their vocation on average 33.5 years compared to 29.7 years in '94. Only 8% are 40 years of age or less, while a third are over 70 (55% are over 60).

The priests are highly educated—just 7% have a 4 year degree while 54% have a masters and 38% have a doctorate or more. Almost all of the priests surveyed were raised in the U.S. (89%).

More than two thirds (68%) of the priests in our sample are diocesan priests and 32% are in a religious order. In the Times' survey, 54% of the priests describe themselves as active diocesan

priests, 14% as retired diocesan priests, 28% as active religious (synonymous with religious order) and 4% say they are religious retired. (A U.S. priest census found in a 1999 CARA study—The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate—Georgetown, University, Washington DC—for the USCCB Committee for Priestly Life and Monthly, shows that 48% of priests are diocesan active, 15% are diocesan retired, 31% are religious active and 6% are religious retired.)

Regionally, 38% of the priests work in the Northeast, 30% are in the Midwest, 17% work in the South and 15% are on the West Coast (almost identical percentages to the CARA USCCB study mentioned above).

Thirty percent described themselves as liberal on matters having to do with religious beliefs and moral doctrines, 37% are self-described moderates and 28% consider themselves religious conservatives. Their political beliefs are very similar to their beliefs on religion. On political matters, 34% of priests are self-described liberals, while 35% considered themselves moderates and 28% say they are politically conservative.

In looking at the data, differences are sometimes dramatic between priests with differing religious ideologies (liberal, moderate and conservative) and by generational profiles. For this analysis, the generations the Poll uses are Pre-Vatican II, Vatican II and Post-Vatican II. The definition of these groups was taken from a CARA 2002 study. The Post-Vatican II priests are 41 years of age or less and they came of age after the Second Vati-

*“ The greatest joys
priests receive in their life and
work as a priest are helping others,
giving the Sacrament, offering
Mass, preaching, helping laity find
spirituality/God/restoring faith and
sharing the lives of others. ”*

can Council. They tend to place greater values on issues of identity and belonging. Vatican II generation priests are between 42 and 59 years of age and they tend to place greater value on change and questioning institutions and structures than other generations. Pre-Vatican II priests are 60 years of age or older and they think institutional loyalty is a key value.

A third of priests who are in the Pre-Vatican II generation consider themselves religiously liberal, 36% religiously moderate and 27% religiously conservative or orthodox. (Religiously conservative is synonymous with religiously orthodox. The terms liberal, moderate and conservative religious will be used for this analysis.)

The religious ideology among priests in the Vatican II generation is very similar to the Pre-Vatican II priests (31% liberal religious, 41% moderate religious and 26% conservative religious). The biggest difference is between the Post-Vatican II generation and their older counterparts. Just 21% say they are liberal in their religious beliefs, 36% are moderate in their religious thinking, but 39% consider themselves conservative religious. (Other studies by Catholic researchers have shown that the younger men entering the seminary are more conservative than their older counterparts.) Almost nine in 10 priests who are in The Vatican II generation believe that the younger priests in America are more theologically conservative than older priests.

Attitudes about life as a priest

Priests today are more satisfied with their lives than they were eight years ago when the question was posed to them by the Times Poll. Seven in 10 priests are “very” satisfied with their life, while another 21% are “somewhat” satisfied (for a combined 91% satisfied with being a priest). This is a sharp rise in satisfaction since the question was asked of priests in 1994. Eight years ago, 56% of priests were “very” satisfied and 30% were “somewhat” satisfied (for a combined 86% satisfaction). More priests in the current survey are saying their life turned out better than expected than they opined in the 1994 survey. Three out of five priests say that their life turned out better than expected while nearly three in 10 feel their life turned out as they expected it would. Just 7% say it turned out worse. In 1994, slightly more than half of the priests surveyed said their life was better, 10% worse and 34% as expected. There are varying views among priests who think of themselves as religious liberal vs. religious conservative. Nearly three out of five (58%) religious liberal priests are “very” satisfied with their life as a priest, compared to 78% of conservative religious. It appears throughout the survey that liberal priests are more ambivalent about the Church and some of its teachings. And there is some dogma in the Church they would like revisited.

Virtually all priests say they would not leave the priesthood if they had the chance to choose again (71% definitely, 19% probably), while 7% say if they had to do it over again, the priesthood would not be their choice. Among religious liberal priests, 55% would definitely choose their vocation again, compared to 74% of religious moderate and 84% of conservative religious. Eight

years ago in the same '94 Times poll, 70% of all priests said they definitely would enter the priesthood again and 18% said they probably would, while just one in 10 said they would not enter the priesthood if they had to choose again. (In the '94 poll, 77% of religious liberal said they would choose priesthood again.) Along with their joy of being a priest, it is not surprising then, that an overwhelmingly large number of priests, 91%, say it is unlikely (including 85% very likely and 7% somewhat unlikely) that they will leave the priesthood in the next few years (even 89% of religious liberal say it is unlikely they will leave, including 78% who say “very” unlikely). In the '94 Times poll, 53% of liberal religious said they would definitely choose priesthood again and 74% of this same group say it would be very unlikely that they would leave the priesthood.

It is evident in this survey that priests are totally committed to the Church and to the faith they serve. But despite the negative publicity swirling around the Church and the pressure they are under because of the sex scandal, almost nine out of 10 priests would still advise young men who come to them for advice to enter the seminary and to be ordained as a priest. Of the 8% of all priests who would not recommend this vocation for young men, celibacy is one of the main reasons why (20%), followed by problems with bishops and hierarchy of the church (18%) and the dysfunction of the structure of the church (16%).

The greatest joys priests receive in their life and work as a priest are helping others (37%), giving the Sacrament (31%), offering Mass (21%), preaching (21%), helping laity find spirituality/God/restoring faith (19%) and sharing the lives of others (16%).

Still, the greatest challenges they face are burnout/excessive demands (15%), secularism, materialism and the individualism of laity (12%) and effective ministry, helping others (10%).

Pope John Paul II

Most priests think Pope John Paul II will go down in history as either an outstanding pope (64%) or an above average pope (23%). Just 7% think his legacy will be remembered as just about average, while 1% think it will be below average and 2% think history will remember Pope John Paul II poorly. Four out of five Post Vatican II priests think the pope will be remembered as outstanding, while 16% think his papacy will be thought of as above average. This groups rates him much higher than the Vatican II priests or the Pre-Vatican II generation. Three out of five of the Vatican II priests think his legacy will be remembered as outstanding and 29% believe it will be considered above average. Nearly two-thirds of the Pre-Vatican II priests believe the Pope and his papacy will be considered outstanding, while 21% think it will be above average. Roughly three-quarters of the liberal religious priests think Pope John Paul II will be remembered in history as either an outstanding (38%) or above average pope (37%), compared to 84% of conservative religious who rank the pope as outstanding and 11% as above average.

John Paul II's views on moral issues are just about right for more than three out of five priests, while a third think him too

conservative. (In a CBS/*NY Times* May 2002 poll, 57% of Catholics say Pope John Paul II is more conservative than they are.) Again, Post-Vatican II priests think somewhat differently than their older cohorts. Three-quarters of them think the pope's views on moral issues are just about right and 23% think his views are too conservative. At least a third each of the other two generational groups say the pope's views are too conservative and roughly three out of five believe they are just about right. Not surprisingly, two-thirds of the liberal religious priests think the pope's views are just too conservative for them, while 88% of conservative religious priests think they are just about right.

John Paul II will mostly be remembered as the most widely traveled pope (40%), helping to bring down communism (30%), the intellectual revolution in the church (19%), the way he relates to all people (16%), his leadership, both morally and spiritually (15%), his devotion to the youth around the world (14%) and his holiness and commitment to God (14%).

The priests want the future pope to continue many of John Paul II's accomplishments. Some of them are travel—visits to all laity around the world (24%), his holiness, orthodoxy and commitment to God (18%), the way he relates to all people (15%), his concern for the poor-social and economic injustice (15%) and Ecumenicism (14%). Some issues that are not associated with the current pope, but priests would like his successor to pursue is to allow priests to marry (15%), decentralize church hierarchy (15%), ordain women as priests (12%), be open to discussion and dialogue (12%) and provide stricter guidelines for elections of bishops (8%). (For this question there was a large share of priests, 25%, who did not answer this question.)

Catholic Church in America

More priests rate things in the church today as good (55%), while just 3% say things are excellent. A third say things are not so good and 5% say they are poor. This result is not much different than when the Times Poll asked the question in the 1994 poll. In that poll, 4% rated the American Catholic Church as excellent, 50% good, 36% not so good and 7% poor. Priests living in the Northeast region are not as sanguine about the Church as priests living in the rest of the country.

	Northeast	South	Midwest	West
Excellent/good	54%	60%	64%	58%
Not so good/poor	41	34	33	38

Priests in the Vatican II generation are also giving the Church a lower rating than the other two generational groups:

	POST-VAT II	VAT II	PRE-VAT II
Excellent/good	69%	56%	58%
Not so good/poor	30	42	36

Issues that the American Roman Catholic Church are facing have a direct bearing on the well-being of the Church. They are: shortage of priests which includes aging clergy (25%), problems with bishops and the Church's hierarchy (20%), child abuse by clergy (18%) and restoring credibility to priests (13%). (Roughly

7 in 10 priests believe that the sex abuse scandal is the biggest crisis for the Church in the last century.)

Along with those issues, priests are somewhat divided in their feeling about whether the Catholic Church in America is getting better (35%), worse (27%) or staying about the same (33%). Younger priests (less than 50 years of age) think the church is getting better (41%) as do priests who are in the Post Vatican II generation (48%) and conservative religious (42%). Two out of five liberal religious priests say the church is getting worse.

Yet, even with priests uncertain as to whether the church is getting better, they still have a lot of confidence in the American Church today. A preponderance of priests have a great deal (53%) or some (33%) confidence in the church. This opinion is expressed by priests across all generational lines, years as a priest and religious ideologies. The Church has withstood many crises in its 2,000 years and will eventually see itself clear of the sex abuse scandal. Although most priests have confidence in the Church, priests still believe that some reform does need to take place. Only 15% answered that the church doesn't need to be reformed. (Seven percent of the priests refused to answer this question.) But among those who say there should be reform, 43% think it should be done quickly, while virtually the same share, 45%, say it should proceed slowly. Among self-described liberal religious priests, 53% want church reform to move ahead quickly (38% slowly), while surprisingly, conservative religious priests are divided (41% quickly, 47% slowly). Among those who want reform, they mention an increase in laity involvement or an effort to empower the laity (19%) as one way. Some other ways are to democratize the Church or decentralize the Church (19%), do away with celibacy, allow priests to marry (14%) and allow ordination of women priests (9%). (In March 2002 ABC News/*Washington Post* Poll, 54% of Catholics think the Church should do more to involve the laity in deciding church policies and practices.)

Interestingly, many priests (58%) believe that Catholics do not have to follow all of the Church's teachings to be faithful to the church, while more than a third believe the opposite. This sizeable number of priests who say the laity doesn't have to follow all of the teachings may be a reflection of the laity they serve. Many American Catholics use a form of "cafeteria Catholicism" that fits their lifestyle. Pope John Paul II has criticized American Catholics for this form of faith. However, looking at poll data, Catholics are moderate in their beliefs about abortion, birth control and artificial insemination. Most liberal religious and many moderate religious priests believe the laity may disagree on some issues and still be considered faithful (91% and 59% respectively), while most conservative religious priests (64%) believe the laity have to follow all of the teachings. The younger priests (those in the Post Vatican II generation) are divided whether all of the Church's teachings must be adhered to in order to be faithful to the Church. But, on the other hand, most priests believe that the sole path to salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ. Nearly half agree "strongly" with that statement and 23% "somewhat" agree with it (for a combined 68% who agree); 26% disagree with that statement. Liberal religious priests are divided—

51% agree that the sole path to salvation is through Jesus Christ, while 46% disagree with that statement.

Laity and their problems

Priests were asked what the greatest problems the laity faced as practicing Catholics and their top responses are lack of faith or lack of knowledge about faith (14%), resolving conflict between religious principles and secular world (12%), materialism and secularism (12%), apathy, indifference or disillusionment with religion (10%) and overall inadequate religious education (10%). Priests believe that the laity they come in contact with are devoid of spiritual awareness and need their spiritual guidance more so than guidance on moral issues. Also, more than four out of five priests believe that families in this country are threatened more today either by a moral climate that hurts community standards and strong family units or by both a moral and economic climate in the country. (Hardly any priest thinks it is solely just an economic climate that makes finding jobs and affordable health care difficult.)

Priests believe that lack of understanding about the church (15%) is one of the main reasons why the laity is leaving the Church. They also think lack of commitment on their part (10%), doctrinal disagreement or resistance to church and moral teachings (9%), and secularism (9%) are other reasons for their departure.

What is considered a sin

The Poll asked the priests a litany of what they consider a sin or not based on issues that are either in the news today or on the minds of most people to gauge whether priests have become more like the laity they serve. Most of the issues from abortion to cloning to stem cell research and masturbation are considered by most priests as sins.

IS IT A SIN:	Current Poll			
	Always	Often	Seldom	Never
For unmarried people to have sexual relations	53%	32	7	2
For a woman to get an abortion	71%	19	3	1
For married couples To use artificial methods of birth Control	28%	25	32	8
To use cloning for medical research	45%	18	16	8
To use stem cells of fetuses for medical research	57%	17	10	6
To use condoms as a protection against AIDS	32%	17	18	25

	Always	Often	Seldom	Never
To engage in homosexual behavior	49%	25	15	4
To take one's own life if suffering from debilitating disease	59%	18	13	4
To masturbate	30%	21	28	14

1994 Poll

	Always	Often	Seldom	Never
IS IT A SIN:				
For unmarried people to have sexual relations	51%	33	9	1
For a woman to get an abortion	66%	25	3	1
For married couples To use artificial methods of birth Control	26%	23	34	10
To use cloning for medical research	<i>No data available</i>			
To use stem cells of fetuses for medical research	<i>No data available</i>			
To use condoms as a protection against AIDS	33%	13	13	28
To engage in homosexual behavior	53%	20	13	5
To take one's own life if suffering from debilitating disease	65%	16	7	5
To masturbate	28%	18	32	15

Overall, 16% of priests categorize all of these nine sins as "always" a sin, while no priest believes that any of these are not a sin.

Abortion is a very controversial issue and one that the Church is out of step with the Catholic laity. In a LA Times June 2000 poll, 46% of Catholics say that abortion should be legal, 45% say it should be illegal except for rape, incest or to save the life of the mother. Also 45% of Catholics favor the Supreme Court decision of Roe vs. Wade, 42% oppose. In this current priests survey, at least two-thirds of priests from most demographic groups believe abortion should always be considered a sin, except for priests who describe themselves as liberal religious—half of them believe it is always a sin, while 35% say it is often a sin.

Other issues

Another controversial topic is the notion of allowing women to be ordained as deacons and priests. More priests would be open to ordaining women as deacons (57%) than they would to ordaining women as priests. However, priests are divided over the idea of women priests—46% favor the idea, while 51% oppose it. They are more likely to oppose women confirmed as bishops (40% favor, 57% oppose). Nearly two thirds of Post-Vatican II priests are opposed to women serving as deacons and almost seven in 10 oppose them becoming priests. On the other hand, nearly two-thirds of priests who belong to the Vatican II generation favor women as deacons and 51% favor women ordained as priests. Pre-Vatican II priests don't mind women ordained as deacons (57%), but are divided in their opinions about allowing them to be ordained as priests (47% to 49%). Again, not surprising, liberal and conservative religious priests are on opposite sides of these issues. 87% of the more liberal priests favor women deacons and 81% favor women priests. For conservatives, it is 68% who oppose women deacons and 82% who oppose women priests. However, most subgroups of priests oppose the ordination of women as bishops. Some exception to this opposition are liberal religious and priests who have been priests between 31–40 years.

Perhaps they are not adamantly opposed to the idea of women in the church because two-thirds of priests say that the most compelling reason to ordain women as priests is to enhance the life and ministry of the church. (In the same May 2001 CBS/NY Times poll, 63% of Catholics favor women becoming priests.)

However, a full 69% of priest favor the ordination of married diocesan priests (up a significant 10 points when asked the priests this question in '94). Priests are somewhat optimistic that this might happen in the future. 38% say this event might happen in less than 20 years, while almost the same share of priests, 35%, think it will happen in 20 years or more. Just 17% of priests believe it will never happen. (30% of Post-Vatican II priests say it will never happen.) The most compelling reason to let priests marry is to reduce the shortage of priests (36%), followed by make the priesthood more representative of the laity (31%) and to help the priest understand married and family life better (15%). (As an aside: no priest mentioned that it would reduce instances of sexual abuse of minors.) (In the CBS/NY Times poll, 71% of Catholics agree that priests should be allowed to marry.)

The shortage of priests is a very serious problem for the American Catholic Church and more than a third of priests think because of this problem, the church has lowered its standards in admitting men into the seminaries. Two in five think the standards are about the same as they were, while a fifth believe the standards are higher.

Not surprising, 73% of the priests surveyed, think the media has been negative in its treatment of the Catholic Church. All demographic groups believe this.

Analysis by SUSAN PINKUS
Times Poll Director

SELECTED RESULTS FROM THE TIMES POLL STUDY #471, ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIESTS

conducted June 27–Oct. 11, 2002

(A full summary of results will be available at a later date through the Los Angeles Times Poll)

GUIDE TO COLUMN HEADINGS

ALL	All Roman Catholic Priests in U.S. & Puerto Rico
<21	In priesthood 20 years or less
21–30	In priesthood 21 to 30 years
31–40	In priesthood 31 to 40 years
>40	In priesthood more than 40 years
LIB	Liberal on religion & morals, self-described
MOD	Moderate on religion & morals, self-described
CON	Conservative on religion & morals, self-described

NOTES

All answer frequencies are given in percentages. Totals may exceed 100% in questions where more than one response was accepted. Totals may be less than 100% where some answer categories are not shown.

“–” indicates less than 0.5%.

The wording of some questions has been abridged.

Q1: Your age is:

	ALL	<21	21–30	31–40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
21–40	8	35	–	–	–	5	8	12
41–50	14	46	20	–	–	12	17	14
51–60	20	13	70	26	–	24	21	16
61–70	22	3	7	65	16	28	22	15
71–80	21	1	1	7	50	20	20	22
Over 80	12	–	–	–	31	9	10	18
Refused	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	3

Q2: The last grade of education you completed is:

	ALL	<21	21–30	31–40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Two-year college	–	–	–	1	1	–	1	–
Four-year college	7	2	5	5	11	5	6	8
Master's degree	54	72	57	47	45	53	55	54
Doctoral degree	14	11	19	16	12	17	15	11
Post-graduate work	24	14	19	30	30	25	23	25
Refused	1	1	–	1	1	–	–	2

Q3: How many years have you been a priest, that is, counting back to when you were ordained?

	<u>ALL</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>MOD</u>	<u>CON</u>
20 years or less	24	19	24	30
21–30 years	16	18	17	12
31–40 years	21	30	21	13
Over 40 years	39	33	37	45
Refused	-	-	1	-

Q4: Are you a diocesan priest or are you a member of an order?

	<u>ALL</u>	<u><21</u>	<u>21–30</u>	<u>31–40</u>	<u>>40</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>MOD</u>	<u>CON</u>
Diocesan priest	68	79	70	64	62	63	68	72
Member of order	32	21	30	36	38	37	32	28

Q5: Which of the following best describes your principal assignment as a priest?

	<u>ALL</u>	<u><21</u>	<u>21–30</u>	<u>31–40</u>	<u>>40</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>MOD</u>	<u>CON</u>
Retired, semi-retired	18	1	3	9	40	19	16	19
Pastor of a parish	43	40	55	52	33	42	46	41
Curate, assistant pastor	13	28	9	8	9	12	13	15
Some other parish assignment	1	1	2	1	-	1	1	1
Administration	8	9	9	9	6	7	9	7
Education, teaching	14	15	15	16	13	16	13	14
Chaplain	9	8	7	8	10	7	9	8
Itinerant preacher	2	1	3	2	1	1	2	1
Other	6	7	6	7	6	7	7	6

Q7: Were you raised in the United States or in some other country?

	<u>ALL</u>	<u><21</u>	<u>21–30</u>	<u>31–40</u>	<u>>40</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>MOD</u>	<u>CON</u>
United States	89	86	89	88	92	89	88	89
Western Europe	6	3	3	9	6	7	6	4
Eastern Europe	1	1	-	1	-	-	1	-
Latin America/Caribbean	2	6	3	-	1	2	2	3
Africa	1	1	3	-	1	1	1	2
South Pacific	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Mideast	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Asia	1	2	2	1	-	1	2	-

Q8: If you were raised in another country, how long have you been living in the United States?

	<u>ALL*</u>
5 years or less	16
6–10 years	13
11–15 years	9
16–20 years	7
More than 20 years	53
Refused	2

* Base for this question is too small to break out subgroups.

Q11: What are the greatest joys that you receive in your life and work as a priest today? (ACCEPTED UP TO FIVE REPLIES) (TOP FIVE RESPONSES SHOWN)

	<u>ALL</u>	<u><21</u>	<u>21–30</u>	<u>31–40</u>	<u>>40</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>MOD</u>	<u>CON</u>
Effective ministry/ Helping others	37	36	33	41	37	37	41	34
Giving the sacrament	31	40	38	31	23	28	32	34
Offering Mass	21	19	16	17	27	14	20	30
Preaching	21	21	25	25	17	24	20	19
Helping laity find God/Restoring faith/Absolution	19	23	26	18	15	18	21	19

Q12: What are the greatest challenges you face in your life and work as a priest today? (ACCEPTED UP TO FIVE REPLIES) (TOP FOUR RESPONSES SHOWN)

	<u>ALL</u>	<u><21</u>	<u>21–30</u>	<u>31–40</u>	<u>>40</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>MOD</u>	<u>CON</u>
Workload/Burnout	15	23	23	15	7	16	13	19
Secularism of laity	12	15	9	13	12	10	13	13
Effective ministry/ Helping others	10	8	9	13	10	10	11	9
Ill health/Aging/ Retirement	8	1	2	5	17	9	9	8

Q13: All things considered, would you say you are satisfied or dissatisfied with the way your life as a priest is going these days?

	<u>ALL</u>	<u><21</u>	<u>21–30</u>	<u>31–40</u>	<u>>40</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>MOD</u>	<u>CON</u>
Satisfied (Net)	91	92	90	89	92	86	94	93
Very satisfied	70	70	64	62	77	58	74	78
Somewhat satisfied	21	22	26	27	15	28	20	15
Dissatisfied (Net)	6	7	8	9	4	11	4	4
Somewhat dissatisfied	5	6	7	7	3	9	3	3
Very dissatisfied	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1
Refused	3	1	2	2	4	3	2	3

Q14: Has your life as a priest turned out:

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Better than expected	61	58	56	62	65	54	65	65
Worse than expected	7	9	11	9	4	10	6	4
About as expected	28	32	31	24	26	31	25	28
Refused	4	1	2	5	5	5	4	3

Q15: If you had the opportunity to make the choice over again, would you:

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Enter priesthood	90	91	87	88	92	84	91	94
Not enter priesthood	7	8	11	9	4	13	6	3
Refused	3	1	2	3	4	3	3	3

Q16: If a promising young man came to you today for advice as to whether he should enter the seminary and become a priest, would you advise that young man to enter the priesthood today or not?

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Enter priesthood	87	90	85	83	88	78	90	92
Not enter priesthood	8	8	12	11	5	16	5	4
Refused	5	2	3	6	7	6	5	4

Q17: If you would not recommend that he enter the seminary, why not? (ACCEPTED UP TO FIVE REPLIES) (TOP FIVE RESPONSES SHOWN)

	ALL*
Chastity/Celibacy	20
Problems with bishops/hierarchy	18
Operational structure of Church is dysfunctional	16
Not enough opportunity for individuality	10
Work load is too heavy/Burnout/Excessive demands	9

* Base for this question is too small to break out subgroups.

Q18: What are the chances that, in the next few years, you might leave the priesthood?

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Likely	5	8	7	4	3	8	4	2
Unlikely	91	91	90	94	91	89	93	94
Refused	4	1	3	2	6	3	3	4

Q19: How do you think Pope John Paul II will be remembered by history?

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Above-average pope	87	92	88	83	86	75	91	95
Average pope	7	5	7	9	6	13	5	2
Below-average pope	3	1	3	5	3	7	1	1
Refused	3	2	2	3	5	5	3	2

Q20: In your opinion, are Pope John Paul II's views on moral issues generally:

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Too liberal	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Too conservative	33	27	40	46	27	67	28	8
About right	62	71	56	49	67	28	68	88
Refused	4	2	3	5	6	5	4	3

Q21: Thinking now about Pope John Paul II's papacy, what accomplishments do you think he will be best remembered for? (ACCEPTED UP TO FIVE REPLIES) (TOP FIVE RESPONSES SHOWN)

1. Most widely-travelled pope
2. Helped with the fall of communism
3. Intellectual revolution in Church/Ecumenical work/Catechism of Catholic Church/Renewal of Church's spiritual life
4. Relates to all people/Respected by Catholic and non-Catholics alike
5. Leadership/Moral and spiritual/Safeguarding faith and morals

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
1.	40	35	45	45	38	46	42	32
2.	30	36	35	36	22	32	34	26
3.	19	23	23	17	16	17	21	21
4.	16	14	12	15	19	11	17	19
5.	15	17	15	15	13	8	16	19

Q22: As you know, many of Pope John Paul II's accomplishments are admired by Catholics and non-Catholics around the world. Thinking now about the election of the next pope, are there any issues or characteristics commonly associated with Pope John Paul II's papacy that you would like the next pope to continue? (ACCEPTED UP TO FIVE REPLIES) (TOP FIVE RESPONSES SHOWN)

1. Visits to laity all over the world
2. His holiness/Orthodoxy/Commitment to God
3. Relates to all people/other cultures/Compassion for all
4. Concern for poor/Social and economic justice/Justice for all
5. Ecumenicism

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
1.	24	29	27	25	18	25	25	21
2.	18	22	16	15	17	8	16	30
3.	15	17	13	19	14	15	18	14
4.	15	18	21	18	9	20	16	9
5.	14	13	14	15	14	17	15	11

Q23: Again, thinking about the election of the next pope, are there any issues or characteristics not commonly associated with Pope John Paul II's papacy that you hope the next pope will pursue? What are they? (ACCEPTED UP TO FIVE REPLIES) (TOP FIVE RESPONSES SHOWN)

1. Allow priests to marry/Allow ordination of married priests
2. Decentralize Church hierarchy
3. Ordination of women
4. Be open to dissent/discussion/dialogue
5. Bishops: Stricter guidelines for elections/Collegial aspect of college of bishops/Choice of bishops at local level

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
1.	15	15	14	22	11	24	14	7
2.	15	10	17	22	13	25	14	5
3.	12	12	15	18	9	25	10	3
4.	12	11	16	14	8	19	12	5
5.	8	7	9	12	7	11	8	7

Q24: Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way the bishop who presides in your diocese is handling his duties?

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Approve	76	76	70	70	81	65	81	81
Disapprove	21	23	27	27	14	31	16	16
Refused	3	1	3	3	5	4	3	3

Q25: In your opinion, are the views of the bishop of your diocese on moral issues generally:

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Too liberal	3	5	3	3	2	1	2	7
Too conservative	18	15	21	28	14	38	12	5
About right	73	77	73	65	76	55	81	83
Refused	6	3	3	4	8	6	5	5

Q26: When you need counsel and guidance, how comfortable do you feel about going to your bishop or to the superiors of your order?

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Comfortable	68	67	59	63	75	58	72	72
Uncomfortable	28	31	39	34	18	37	25	24
Refused	4	2	2	3	7	5	3	4

Q27: Would you favor or oppose direct democratic election of diocesan bishops by the diocesan clergy and laity in the U.S.?

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Favor	46	38	44	56	46	73	44	22
Oppose	50	61	53	41	48	23	52	76
Refused	4	1	3	3	6	4	4	2

Q28: What are the most important problems facing the Roman Catholic Church in the United States today? (ACCEPTED UP TO FIVE REPLIES) (TOP FIVE RESPONSES SHOWN)

1. Shortage/Aging of clergy and lack of vocations
2. Problems with bishops/hierarchy
3. Child abuse by clergy
4. Credibility/Restoring credibility to priests
5. Materialism/Individualism

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
1.	25	26	26	26	22	27	25	24
2.	20	19	25	25	17	30	19	13
3.	18	21	23	17	16	19	19	18
4.	13	12	19	15	9	15	15	8
5.	9	12	9	10	7	6	13	8

Q29: Overall, would you rate things in the Catholic Church in America today as:

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Excellent/Good	59	62	57	50	63	47	64	65
Not so good/Poor	37	36	40	47	31	50	32	30
Refused	4	2	3	3	6	3	4	5

Q30: Would you say things in the Catholic Church in America are generally:

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Getting better	35	41	33	25	38	25	38	42
Getting worse	27	25	28	37	22	40	21	21
Staying about the same	33	31	36	35	33	32	36	32
Refused	5	3	3	3	7	3	5	5

Q31: How much confidence do you have in the Catholic Church in America today?

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Great deal/Some	86	86	85	83	89	78	92	89
Not much/None	10	12	12	14	6	18	6	7
Refused	4	2	3	3	5	4	2	4

Q32: Generally speaking, do you think younger priests in America are more theologically conservative—that is, more religiously orthodox—than their older counterparts, or are they more liberal, or are they just about the same?

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
More conservative	73	82	84	82	59	85	68	70
About the same	13	11	9	9	17	7	17	11
More liberal	10	6	3	5	19	6	11	15
Refused	4	1	4	4	5	2	4	4

Q33: Generally speaking, would you say that younger priests today are more theologically conservative than they were in the 1970s and 1980s, or are they more liberal, or have priests stayed about the same theologically?

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
More conservative	75	86	84	85	60	86	73	71
About the same	12	9	10	9	17	8	15	11
More liberal	9	4	2	3	17	5	8	14
Refused	4	1	4	3	6	1	4	4

Q34: Do you think the Catholic Church needs to be reformed in any way, or not? If you think the Church needs to be reformed, what kind of reform do you think is needed in the Catholic Church? (ACCEPTED UP TO FIVE REPLIES) (TOP SIX RESPONSES SHOWN)

1. Reform is not needed
2. Increasing laity involvement/Empower laity/Shared authority with informed lay people
3. Church needs to be more democratic/Reform Church authority/Decentralization
4. Do away with celibacy requirement/Allow priests to marry/Allow ordination of married priests
5. Allow ordination of women priests
6. Orthodoxy/Established Church teachings

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
1.	15	17	9	7	21	6	17	22
2.	19	16	24	26	15	28	20	9
3.	19	16	26	29	13	34	17	8
4.	14	15	16	20	11	27	12	6
5.	9	10	12	14	5	19	7	2
6.	8	12	6	7	8	2	7	15

Q35: If you think the Church needs to be reformed, do you think reform should proceed quickly in the Church or should it proceed slowly?

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Proceed quickly	43	38	47	44	44	53	36	41
Proceed slowly	45	51	44	46	42	38	53	47
Refused	12	11	9	10	14	9	11	12

Q36: Do you think Roman Catholics must follow all of the Church's teachings to be faithful, or do you think they may disagree on some issues and still be considered faithful?

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Must follow all teachings	35	37	21	19	48	6	33	64
May disagree and be faithful	58	57	75	74	44	91	59	28
Refused	7	6	4	7	8	3	8	8

Q37: To what degree do you agree or disagree with the statement: "The sole path to salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ"?

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Agree	68	74	66	61	70	51	72	82
Disagree	26	21	29	31	24	46	21	13
Refused	6	5	5	8	6	3	7	5

Q38: What are the greatest problems that the laity you come into contact with face as practicing Catholics? (ACCEPTED UP TO FIVE REPLIES) (TOP FIVE RESPONSES SHOWN)

1. Lack of faith/Lack of knowledge about faith
2. Materialism/Secularism
3. Resolving conflict between sacred/religious principles and secular word
4. Inadequate religious education in general, as opposed to religious education of youth
5. Apathy/Indifference/Alienation/Disillusion with Church/religion

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
1.	14	17	14	12	14	10	14	19
2.	12	11	14	10	13	7	13	15
3.	12	15	17	13	9	12	14	13
4.	10	11	10	9	9	10	9	10
5.	10	8	13	13	9	10	11	9

Q39: Do you think families in this country today are threatened more by:

1. An economic climate that makes finding jobs and affordable health care difficult
2. A moral climate that hurts community standards and strong family units
3. Both equally
4. Something else
5. Refused

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
1.	8	6	9	9	7	14	5	4
2.	43	43	36	39	48	28	42	59
3.	43	45	50	44	39	52	47	32
4.	4	6	4	4	2	5	4	3
5.	3	1	2	4	4	2	3	3

Q40: Are the laity you come in contact with these days most in need of:

1. Spiritual guidance and fulfillment
2. Guidance on moral issues
3. Help with temporal (family, job and economic) issues
4. I don't come into contact with the laity
5. Both spiritual and moral guidance
6. Refused

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
1.	62	69	66	65	53	66	62	56
2.	19	16	16	16	25	12	18	30
3.	8	9	10	8	7	12	9	5
4.	3	-	-	1	6	2	2	4
5.	2	1	3	3	3	2	2	2
6.	6	5	5	7	6	6	7	3

Q41: When it comes to moral issues, such as sexuality, marriage and reproduction, are most of the Catholic laity you come in contact with:

1. Following the Church's teachings
2. Going their own way
3. I don't come into contact with the laity
4. Refused

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
1.	27	27	22	20	31	15	27	37
2.	63	67	70	71	54	79	62	52
3.	2	-	-	2	6	1	2	4
4.	8	6	8	7	9	5	9	7

Q42: In your opinion, what are the principal reasons laity are leaving the Church these days? (ACCEPTED UP TO FIVE REPLIES) (TOP FIVE RESPONSES SHOWN)

1. Lack of knowledge/Understanding/Ignorance of Church role
2. Lack of commitment/Laziness/Selfishness
3. Secularism
4. Materialism/Hedonism/Consumerism
5. Doctrinal disagreement/Resistance to Church moral teachings

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
1.	15	16	12	11	17	9	15	21
2.	10	10	10	12	10	9	10	12
3.	9	5	7	9	11	6	11	8
4.	9	6	9	10	10	7	11	9
5.	9	8	9	8	10	8	10	10

Q43A: Do you think it is always, often, seldom or never a sin for unmarried people to have sexual relations?

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Always	53	57	41	39	64	21	57	81
Often	32	30	44	44	22	54	31	14
Seldom	7	7	9	10	6	16	6	1
Never	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	1
Refused	6	5	5	5	6	7	5	3

Q43B: Do you think it is always, often, seldom or never a sin for a woman to get an abortion?

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Always	71	75	66	63	75	50	75	89
Often	19	18	24	27	13	35	17	7
Seldom	3	2	4	3	3	7	1	-
Never	1	-	1	1	3	2	1	1
Refused	6	5	5	6	6	6	6	3

Q43C: Do you think it is always, often, seldom or never a sin for married couples to use artificial methods of birth control?

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Always	28	31	17	15	39	5	25	54
Often	25	32	21	23	23	16	30	30
Seldom	32	25	45	45	23	54	32	11
Never	8	6	11	11	7	20	5	2
Refused	7	6	6	6	8	5	8	3

Q43D: Do you think it is always, often, seldom or never a sin to use cloning—that is, copying DNA cells—in medical research that could result in a cure for diseases such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's or cancer?

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Always	45	51	39	33	51	23	46	66
Often	18	19	22	22	14	24	19	13
Seldom	16	15	18	22	11	26	15	7
Never	8	6	10	10	8	15	7	4
Refused	13	9	11	13	16	12	13	10

Q43E: Do you think it is always, often, seldom or never a sin to use stem cells of fetuses for medical research?

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Always	57	66	53	48	57	34	58	77
Often	17	20	22	22	12	26	18	9
Seldom	10	6	12	14	9	18	8	3
Never	6	3	4	6	8	11	5	3
Refused	10	5	9	10	14	11	11	8

Q43F: Do you think it is always, often, seldom or never a sin to use condoms as a protection against AIDS?

	<u>ALL</u>	<u><21</u>	<u>21-30</u>	<u>31-40</u>	<u>>40</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>MOD</u>	<u>CON</u>
Always	32	35	22	20	40	7	29	58
Often	17	21	15	13	18	12	21	19
Seldom	18	15	22	26	14	26	20	10
Never	25	23	34	33	18	49	20	7
Refused	8	6	7	8	10	6	10	6

Q43G: Do you think it is always, often, seldom or never a sin to engage in homosexual behavior?

	<u>ALL</u>	<u><21</u>	<u>21-30</u>	<u>31-40</u>	<u>>40</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>MOD</u>	<u>CON</u>
Always	49	50	34	36	62	18	49	80
Often	25	26	28	32	18	35	27	13
Seldom	15	13	26	21	9	32	13	2
Never	4	5	5	4	4	7	3	2
Refused	7	6	7	7	7	8	8	3

Q43H: Do you think it is always, often, seldom or never a sin to take one's own life if one is suffering from a debilitating disease?

	<u>ALL</u>	<u><21</u>	<u>21-30</u>	<u>31-40</u>	<u>>40</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>MOD</u>	<u>CON</u>
Always	59	63	53	49	64	38	60	79
Often	18	21	21	23	13	24	20	11
Seldom	13	9	15	18	10	25	11	4
Never	4	2	5	4	6	7	3	3
Refused	6	5	6	6	7	6	6	3

Q43I: Do you think it is always, often, seldom or never a sin to masturbate?

	<u>ALL</u>	<u><21</u>	<u>21-30</u>	<u>31-40</u>	<u>>40</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>MOD</u>	<u>CON</u>
Always	30	32	21	17	40	7	26	56
Often	21	24	16	19	21	14	24	24
Seldom	28	24	35	39	23	45	30	12
Never	14	15	22	19	8	28	13	4
Refused	7	5	6	6	8	6	7	4

Q44A: Would you favor or oppose the ordination of women as deacons?

	<u>ALL</u>	<u><21</u>	<u>21-30</u>	<u>31-40</u>	<u>>40</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>MOD</u>	<u>CON</u>
Favor	57	50	66	73	50	87	57	30
Oppose	40	49	32	25	46	11	40	68
Refused	3	1	2	2	4	2	3	2

Q44B: Would you favor or oppose the ordination of women as priests?

	<u>ALL</u>	<u><21</u>	<u>21-30</u>	<u>31-40</u>	<u>>40</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>MOD</u>	<u>CON</u>
Favor	46	38	54	62	40	81	43	17
Oppose	51	61	44	35	57	17	54	82
Refused	3	1	2	3	3	2	3	1

Q44C: Would you favor or oppose the ordination of women as bishops?

	<u>ALL</u>	<u><21</u>	<u>21-30</u>	<u>31-40</u>	<u>>40</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>MOD</u>	<u>CON</u>
Favor	40	35	49	54	33	73	36	14
Oppose	57	64	49	43	63	24	61	84
Refused	3	1	2	3	4	3	3	2

Q45: Regardless of whether you favor or oppose it, which of the following statements do you think is the most compelling reason for ordaining women as priests?

1. It would increase the number of priests/reduce the shortage
2. Women's equality is important to American society and the Church should reflect the society it serves
3. Women could provide an important voice in the Church's response to sexual abuse allegations
4. Women in the priesthood would reduce the instances of sexual abuse
5. Women's spiritual gifts would enhance the life and ministry of the Church
6. Refused

	<u>ALL</u>	<u><21</u>	<u>21-30</u>	<u>31-40</u>	<u>>40</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>MOD</u>	<u>CON</u>
1.	8	7	6	4	11	3	9	11
2.	6	4	5	8	8	10	6	4
3.	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
4.	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
5.	65	70	73	75	53	79	67	53
6.	21	18	15	13	28	8	17	32

Q46: Would you favor or oppose the ordination of married priests in the Latin Rite?

	<u>ALL</u>	<u><21</u>	<u>21-30</u>	<u>31-40</u>	<u>>40</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>MOD</u>	<u>CON</u>
Favor	69	61	81	83	62	91	73	45
Oppose	28	38	16	14	34	7	25	52
Refused	3	1	3	3	4	2	2	3

Q47: Regardless of whether you favor or oppose the ordination of married priests in the Latin Rite, which of the following statements do you think is the most compelling reason for allowing the ordination of married priests?

1. To help reduce the shortage of priests
2. It would make the priesthood more representative of the laity
3. It would help priests understand married and family life better
4. It would reduce instances of sexual abuse of minors
5. Refused

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
1.	36	34	38	30	40	24	40	47
2.	31	30	33	39	26	49	30	16
3.	15	17	14	16	13	17	15	14
4.	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
5.	18	19	15	14	21	10	15	23

Q48: Do you think the Church will ever again allow the ordination of married priests in the Latin Rite or do you think that will never happen? (IF YES) When do you think that will happen?

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Never again	17	20	9	11	21	4	15	33
Yes, in less than 20 years	38	34	47	51	30	59	37	21
Yes, in 20 years or more	35	39	38	33	34	35	40	35
Refused	10	7	6	5	15	2	8	11

Q49: In your opinion, has the shortage of priests caused the Church to lower its standards in admitting men to the seminaries, or are standards higher, or are standards about where they have always been?

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Lower	36	33	38	44	33	44	32	35
Higher	19	23	22	16	18	16	20	24
Same	40	42	38	36	42	37	46	38
Refused	5	2	2	4	7	3	2	3

Q50: Do you think the U.S. news media's treatment of the Catholic Church is:

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Positive	2	-	1	2	2	3	1	1
Fair	22	16	17	29	25	36	19	14
Negative	73	82	80	68	68	60	78	83
Refused	3	2	2	1	5	1	2	2

Q51: Would you describe your views on most matters having to do with religious beliefs and moral doctrines as:

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Liberal (Net)	30	24	35	43	26	100	-	-
Very liberal	4	2	4	4	4	12	-	-
Somewhat liberal	27	21	32	39	22	88	-	-
Middle-of-the-road	37	37	40	38	35	-	100	-
Conservative (Net)	28	35	22	17	32	-	-	100
Somewhat conservative	23	31	21	15	24	-	-	83
Very conservative	5	5	1	2	8	-	-	17
Refused	5	4	3	2	7	-	-	-

Q52: Would you describe your views on most matters having to do with politics as:

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Liberal (Net)	34	28	39	47	28	77	20	9
Very liberal	5	4	4	5	4	13	1	1
Somewhat liberal	29	24	35	42	23	64	19	8
Middle-of-the-road	35	34	36	34	36	17	62	22
Conservative (Net)	28	36	24	17	31	6	17	67
Somewhat conservative	25	33	23	16	25	6	17	56
Very conservative	3	3	1	1	7	-	-	11
Refused	3	2	1	2	5	-	1	2

Some people have suggested that there are homosexual subcultures in some seminaries, dioceses and religious institutes. A "subculture" refers to a definite group of persons that has its own friendships, social gatherings and vocabulary.

Q53: Would you say there is a homosexual subculture in your diocese or religious institute, or not? How certain are you?

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Yes, definitely	17	24	22	22	8	26	14	12
I think so but I'm not positive	27	26	28	29	27	29	28	26
I don't think so	40	37	38	39	44	36	45	42
No, definitely not	12	12	11	7	13	7	10	17
Refused	4	1	1	3	8	2	3	3

Q54: Thinking now about the seminary or seminaries you attended, was there a homosexual subculture there at the time, or not? How certain are you?

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Yes, definitely	12	31	17	6	3	16	12	11
I think so but I'm not positive	14	22	21	14	7	17	13	12
I don't think so	37	32	43	44	33	38	38	35
No, definitely not	34	15	18	34	52	27	36	40
Refused	3	-	1	2	5	2	1	2

Q55: Some people think of themselves as heterosexual in orientation, while others think of themselves as homosexual in orientation and still others feel their sexual orientation lies somewhere in between. How about you?

1. Heterosexual orientation
2. Somewhere in between, but more on the heterosexual side
3. Completely in the middle
4. Somewhere in between, but more on the homosexual side
5. Homosexual orientation
6. Refused

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
1.	67	65	59	66	73	57	70	75
2.	8	6	10	9	8	10	6	8
3.	5	3	5	6	5	4	6	4
4.	6	8	10	8	3	9	7	4
5.	9	15	13	9	2	17	8	3
6.	5	3	3	2	9	3	3	6

Q56: Which of the following statements most closely describes how you feel about the role that celibacy plays in your life?

1. Celibacy is not a problem for me and I do not waver in my vows
2. Celibacy takes time to achieve and I consider it an ongoing journey
3. Celibacy is a discipline I try to follow, but do not always succeed
4. Celibacy is not relevant to my priesthood and I do not observe it
5. Refused

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
1.	32	31	22	22	43	17	34	44
2.	47	52	53	54	37	50	51	43
3.	14	11	17	16	12	24	11	8
4.	2	2	4	5	2	6	1	1
5.	5	4	4	3	6	3	3	4

Q57: Generally speaking, would you say celibacy is easier for priests with a heterosexual orientation, or is celibacy easier for priests who have a homosexual orientation, or would you say it is the same regardless of orientation?

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Easier for heterosexuals	23	19	9	21	31	15	22	31
Easier for homosexuals	2	2	2	3	2	3	2	2
Same	69	77	87	72	56	79	74	59
Refused	6	2	2	4	11	3	2	8

Q58: As you know, intimacy may be defined as a basic human need that includes close non-sexual bonds with personal friends. How satisfied are you with the level of that type of intimacy in your life?

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Satisfied	87	90	83	86	89	85	89	91
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	6	5	8	7	4	6	6	4
Dissatisfied	5	5	7	6	2	8	4	2
Refused	2	-	2	1	5	1	1	3

The next few questions are about the current allegations of child sexual abuse by priests. Please remember that this is a confidential, anonymous survey. Your answers will be published only as a percentage of those answering.

If you are not comfortable in answering any one question, please skip it and move on to the next one. However, each of your answers is extremely valuable for the success of the survey and we hope you will want your opinions to be fully represented. Thank you.

Q59: Generally speaking, do you approve or disapprove of the way bishops have handled allegations of child sexual abuse against their diocesan priests?

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Approve (Net)	32	28	33	27	36	23	36	37
Approve strongly	7	6	4	3	10	3	7	10
Approve somewhat	25	22	29	24	26	20	29	27
Disapprove (Net)	64	70	65	71	58	76	63	59
Disapprove somewhat	34	33	32	37	33	34	35	35
Disapprove strongly	31	37	33	34	25	42	28	24
Refused	4	2	2	2	6	1	1	4

Q60: Thinking now about the recent allegations of sexual misconduct by priests... Do you think that most, many, some or only a few of the allegations are true?

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Most	19	22	18	24	16	26	18	16
Many	42	43	46	47	36	47	41	39
Some	28	28	30	23	31	21	33	30
Only a few	7	5	4	5	10	5	6	11
Refused	4	2	2	1	7	1	2	4

Q61: When it comes to disciplining priests accused of child sexual abuse, would you say the Church has:

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Been too harsh	13	11	15	14	13	14	13	12
Been too lenient	53	58	49	58	49	57	52	54
Done just about the right thing	26	23	28	22	29	24	28	27
Refused	8	8	8	6	9	5	7	7

Q62: Thinking about the compact approved by the Bishops' Conference in June... Overall, how satisfied are you that the bishops' compact adequately addresses the issues dealing with child sexual abuse by priests?

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Satisfied	66	62	59	68	70	64	70	67
Neither	6	5	7	5	6	4	7	7
Dissatisfied	25	32	32	26	17	31	22	21
Refused	3	1	2	1	7	1	1	5

Please rate how well the bishops' compact addresses the following issues:

Q63A: Restoring confidence in the Catholic Church.

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Excellent/Good	55	53	52	49	59	45	59	63
Neutral	17	22	16	20	13	20	18	14
Fair/Poor	24	24	29	29	19	34	21	18
Refused	4	1	3	2	9	1	2	5

Q63B: Protecting minors from sexual abuse by priests.

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Excellent/Good	75	76	76	78	73	75	78	77
Neutral	8	9	9	8	7	8	8	8
Fair/Poor	12	13	12	12	11	15	11	9
Refused	5	2	3	2	9	2	3	6

Q63C: Being fair to priests who are accused of abuse.

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Excellent/Good	34	29	29	28	42	27	36	40
Neutral	16	18	15	20	12	16	18	15
Fair/Poor	45	51	53	50	37	55	43	39
Refused	5	2	3	2	9	2	3	6

Q63D: Providing for discipline of bishops who cover up for abusive priests.

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Excellent/Good	15	14	9	10	21	11	13	23
Neutral	13	14	9	12	15	7	17	15
Fair/Poor	65	70	78	75	51	80	65	53
Refused	7	2	4	3	13	2	5	9

Q64: In your diocese, had an adequate procedure or mechanism been established before the Bishops' Conference for dealing with the issue of child sexual abuse by priests?

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Yes	81	86	86	80	76	78	86	82
No	13	11	12	16	13	18	10	12
Refused	6	3	2	4	11	4	4	6

Q65: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "The Catholic Church in America is now facing its biggest crisis in the last century"?

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
Agree	69	66	70	70	72	78	67	66
Disagree	27	33	27	28	21	21	31	29
Refused	4	1	3	2	7	1	2	5

Q66: Thinking about the recent allegations, what one aspect of the crisis bothers you the most, or aren't you bothered by anything in particular? (ACCEPTED UP TO FIVE REPLIES)
(TOP SIX RESPONSES SHOWN)

1. The way the bishops have responded to the crisis
2. Priests guilty until proven innocent/A single case many years ago, now priest has admirable record
3. The way the media have covered the crisis
4. Bishops covering up guilt on the part of abusive priests
5. Harm to victims/Harm to youngsters
6. Laity lost confidence in priest/Church because of allegations

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
1.	21	28	22	23	16	26	21	17
2.	16	11	17	16	19	16	17	15
3.	14	17	11	15	12	9	17	16
4.	9	10	10	9	9	10	10	9
5.	8	6	9	13	6	10	8	6
6.	8	11	10	8	6	6	10	9

Q67: As you are aware, the Bishops' Conference did not address the issue of disciplining bishops. If a bishop is found to have protected a priest who has sexually abused a minor, what do you think should happen to the bishop? Should he:

1. Not apologize, impose new safeguards and continue to serve
2. Apologize, impose new safeguards and continue to serve
3. Apologize, impose new safeguards and resign his post
4. Be arrested for aiding and abetting a criminal
5. Refused

	ALL	<21	21-30	31-40	>40	LIB	MOD	CON
1.	1	1	-	1	2	-	2	2
2.	34	25	27	30	44	28	35	41
3.	41	46	47	46	32	51	40	34
4.	11	15	15	12	7	14	10	8
5.	13	13	11	11	15	7	13	15

Tables compiled by RAY ENSLOW

STUDY #471: METHODOLOGY

Overview

This survey is the 471st in a series of *Los Angeles Times* opinion studies designed to measure public attitudes on a number of critical issues. It is the second *Los Angeles Times* survey of Roman Catholic priests in the United States. The study takes a look at the attitudes of priests in the Roman Catholic Church in America today, in a period when the Church is undergoing public and private scrutiny. Although Catholic-affiliated surveys of the attitudes of priests have been done recently, no independent survey of this population has been taken since the Times Poll surveyed priests and nuns over a period of months in 1993 and 1994 (LAT surveys 321 and 323).

For this survey, 1,854 active and retired priests in 80 dioceses across the U.S and in Puerto Rico returned mail-ballot questionnaires over the period June 27–Oct. 11. Diocesan and religious priests were included in the sample. Spanish language questionnaires were provided for priests in Puerto Rico.

Sample Design and Coverage

The Times Poll selected 5,000 priests from a total population of 45,382 in the United States and Puerto Rico using a two-stage procedure. First, the *Official Catholic Directory* (OFCD), published by P.J. Kennedy & Sons, was used to compile a complete list of all the dioceses in the country as well as the total priest population in each diocese. The list was pre-stratified by regional geography. Eighty dioceses were randomly selected, proportional to priest population in each region.

For the second-stage sample selection, Times Poll researchers obtained directories for each of the sample dioceses wherever possible. When such directories were either unavailable or actively withheld, the OFCD was substituted as a source. In this way, a sample of 5,000 active and retired priests was drawn in proportion to priest population in each diocesan area.

At this point, two Tribune newspapers—the *Morning Call* in Allentown, Pa., and the *South Florida Sun-Sentinel* in Ft. Lauderdale, Fl.—expressed an interest in oversampling dioceses in their areas for national comparison. In order to provide enough data for separate analysis of the three southern Pa. dioceses of interest to the *Morning Call* (Scranton, Allentown and Philadelphia, of which only Scranton and Philadelphia were in the first-stage sample pick) and the two dioceses of interest to the *South Florida Sun-Sentinel* (Miami and Palm Beach, neither of which was in the original first-stage sample pick), every priest in those five dioceses was contacted. Note that the data set under analysis here includes only the Times Poll's original selected priests in the Scranton and Philadelphia dioceses.¹

The survey questionnaires were first mailed on June 27. This was after the Bishop's conference. Seven thousand two hundred and twenty-two questionnaires, cover letters and pre-paid return envelopes were sent. A second mailing of the same packet was sent to 5,878 non-responding priests on July 25. A reminder postcard was mailed to 5,707 non-responding priests on Aug. 5,

and a final third set of 4,924 questionnaire packets was mailed to continuing non-responders on Sept. 4.² The end date of the survey was Oct. 11, making it a 16-week field period. In creating its design, the Times Poll followed the general guidelines for mail surveys found in Dillman's *Mail and Internet Surveys*.³

Research and field work for the 78 dioceses outside southern Pa. were completed by *Los Angeles Times* field staff⁴ under the supervision of Times Poll Field Director Roger Richardson and Times Poll Director Susan Pinkus. Data collection in the dioceses of Philadelphia and Scranton, Pa., was overseen for the *Morning Call* newspaper by Chris Borick, assistant professor of political science at Muhlenberg College.

Return Rates and Margins of Error

By the standard calculation for true random sample of a population of this size, one can say with 95% certainty that the margin of error for this sample is +/-3 percentage points. All population surveys, including this one, are subject to errors of many kinds. Bias may be introduced through coverage errors, survey non-response, question wording issues and other types of human error. Every attempt was made to reduce all of these through preliminary research and follow-ups on non-responders. Four attempts were made to convince priests to return their questionnaires.

Using a response-rate calculation that removes deceased, unqualified and reassigned priests from the sample, resulting in a total sample size of 4,965, the survey has a type A response rate of 37%. Additional removal of unavailable priests results in a sample size of 4,887 and a type B response rate of 38%. Type A response rates ranged from 30% among dioceses in the South to 44% in the Midwest.

Response rate on this survey may have been affected by a variety of issues. First, the Roman Catholic priest population has been subject to intense media scrutiny over the last few months. Many non-responding priests indicated that their refusal to cooperate was due to a concern that their answers would be sensationalized by the press. There were various negative publications about this survey in the Catholic community. Despite the negative publicity, response rates were acceptable in all dioceses and outstanding in some.

In addition to response rate issues, undetected flaws in the way the sampling and interviewing procedure were carried out could have a significant effect on findings. Changing the wording of questions and the sequence in which they are asked can produce different results. Sometimes questions are inadvertently biased or misleading and people who respond to surveys may not necessarily replicate the views of those who refuse to participate. Moreover, while every precaution has been taken to make these findings completely accurate, other errors may have resulted from the various practical difficulties associated with taking any survey of public opinion.

Some of the best data available for comparison on this survey are surveys of priest populations conducted by Georgetown University's Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA).

Comparing numbers of active and retired priests nationwide⁵ to those in our survey, one can see that this survey slightly overrepresents active diocesan priests and underrepresents religious priests.

	All US ⁵ Priests	LA Times Priests Poll 2002
Diocesan, Active	48%	54%
Diocesan, Retired	15	14
Religious, Active	31	28
Religious, Retired	6	4

Comparing sample population to the figures taken from the *Official Catholic Directory*, the sample slightly underrepresents priests in the East and Midwest and overrepresents those in the South. The sample figures have been adjusted slightly to account for this difference.

	All US Priests*	Unweighted LA Times Priests Poll 2002
East	38%	36%
Midwest	17	13
South	30	35
West	15	16

* Figures calculated from population totals in *Official Catholic Directory* 2001.

The Los Angeles Times Poll is directed by Susan Pinkus under the general supervision of Los Angeles Times Managing Editor Dean Baquet. Jill Darling Richardson is Associate Director, Roger Richardson is Field Director, Claudia Vaughn is Data Management Supervisor, and Ray Enslow is Publications Coordinator.

Further information regarding this study is available by writing to the Los Angeles Times Poll, 202 West 1st Street, Los Angeles, California 90012-4105, by calling (213) 237-2027 or by e-mailing timespoll@latimes.com.

This report conforms to the standards of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls and the American Association for Public Opinion Research.

1. Only the dioceses originally selected in the first stage and priests originally selected in the second stage of the sampling process are included in this data set. No interviews conducted in the dioceses of Allentown, Miami or Palm Beach have been included and the interviews with non-sampled priests are excluded as well.
2. Fifty-five percent of the total completed and refused questionnaires had been returned by the date of the second mailing, 68% by the date of the reminder postcard mailing, and 88% by the date of the third and final mailing.
3. *Mail and Internet Surveys, The Tailored Design Method*, by Dillman, Don A., John Wiley & Sons, 2000 (2nd ed.)
4. The Times Poll would like to acknowledge supervisor Art Dodd and editors Walter Boxer, Debra Birgen and Cynthia Kirk for their diligence and hard work on this survey.
5. National study of priests conducted by CARA in 1999 for the Committee for Priestly Life and Ministry of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.