



Laity Working in the Catholic Church 2025 National Survey

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1992

New Parish Ministers: Laity and Religious on Parish Staffs by Philip J. Murnion with David DeLambo, Rosemary Dilli SSND, and Harry Fagan. National Pastoral Life Center.

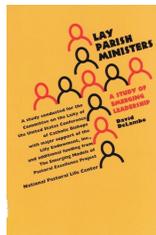


1999

Parishes and Parish Ministers: A Study of Parish Lay Ministry by Philip J. Murnion and David DeLambo. National Pastoral Life Center.

2005

Lay Parish Ministers: A Study of Emerging Leadership by David DeLambo. National Pastoral Life Center.



2010/2012

Lay Ecclesial Ministers in the U.S. (CARA)

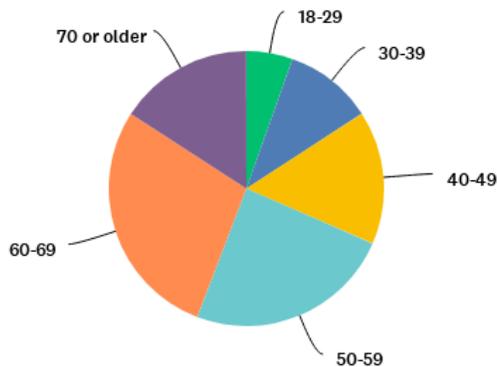
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About the Survey

- Invited through national organizations and diocesan
- All lay people involved in working in the Church: parish, diocesan, campus, organizations, and more
- Prior surveys focused on parish lay ministers
- 1861 total responses – 1,095 paid full time, 318 paid part time, 399 non paid
- 80% White/European lay ministers
- 15% Hispanic lay ministers (286)
- 75% Women

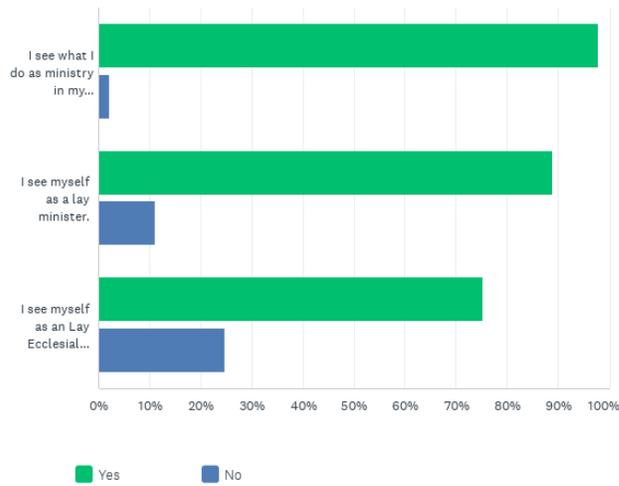
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Their Ages



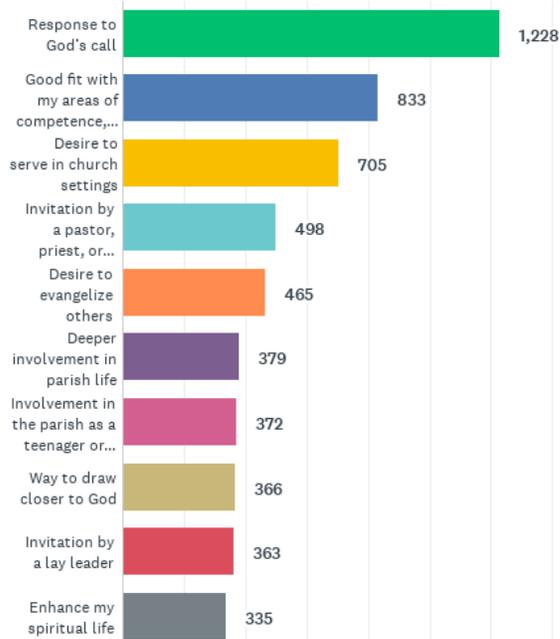
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How They See Themselves



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10 Most Cited Reasons for Entering Church Ministry



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10 Most Cited Reasons for Entering Church Ministry

1. Response to God's call (68.07)
2. Good fit with my areas of competence, interests, gifts (46.18)
3. Desire to serve in church settings (39.08)
4. Invitation by a pastor, priest, or deacon (27.61)
5. Desire to evangelize others (25.78)
6. Deeper involvement in parish life (21.01)
7. Involvement in the parish as a teenager or young adult (20.62)
8. Way to draw closer to God (20.29)
9. Invitation by a lay leader (20.12)
10. Enhance my spiritual life (18.57)

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The Work Lay Ministers Do:

Primary & Secondary Roles

1. Catechesis – Lifelong (all ages) - 736
2. Adult Faith Formation - 641
3. Sacramental Preparation (Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation) - 638
4. Administration - 618
5. Children's Catechesis - 581
6. Evangelization and Outreach -461
7. Liturgical Ministry / Music - 447
8. OCIA - 405
9. Youth Ministry - 380
10. Diocesan Ministry - 356
11. Communication and/or Digital Ministry - 254
12. Safe Environment Coordination - 251
13. Family Life Ministry - 238
14. Pastoral Care - 223
15. Social Justice / Service to the Community - 221

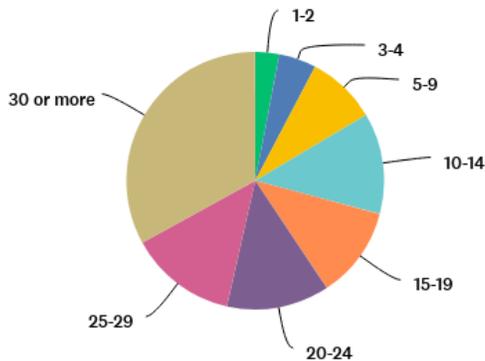
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The Work Lay Ministers Do: Primary & Secondary Roles

16. Pastoral Associate - 188
17. Young Adult Ministry (20s-30s) - 187
18. Bereavement Ministry - 165
19. Care for the Sick - 164
20. Campus Ministry - 164
21. Marriage Preparation - 138
22. Chaplaincy - 123
23. Financial Management - 117
24. Marriage Ministry (enrichment, separated/divorced) - 104
25. Wellness or Mental Health Ministry - 100
26. Ethnic / Cultural Ministry - 99
27. Governance - 92
28. Seniors Ministry - 91
29. Parish Life Coordinator (Canon 517.2) - 67
30. Addiction Recovery Ministry - 45

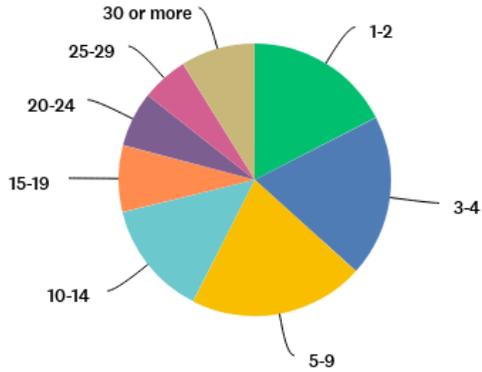
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Years Engaged in Church Ministry



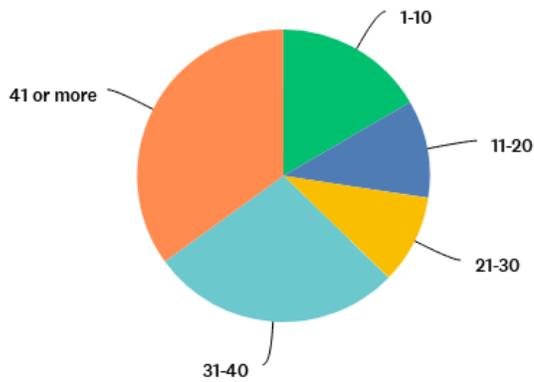
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Years in their Current Ministry Setting



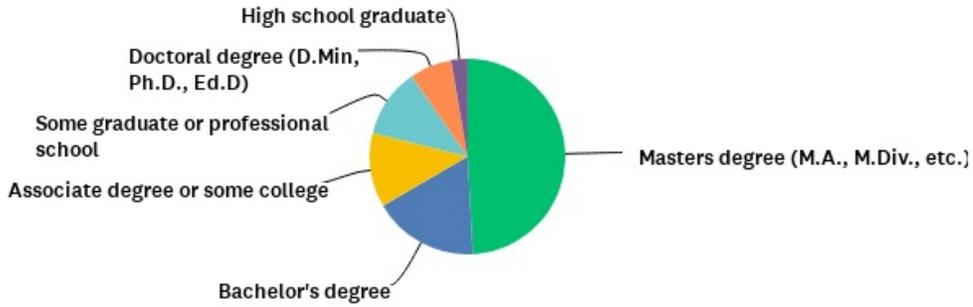
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Hours in a Typical Week



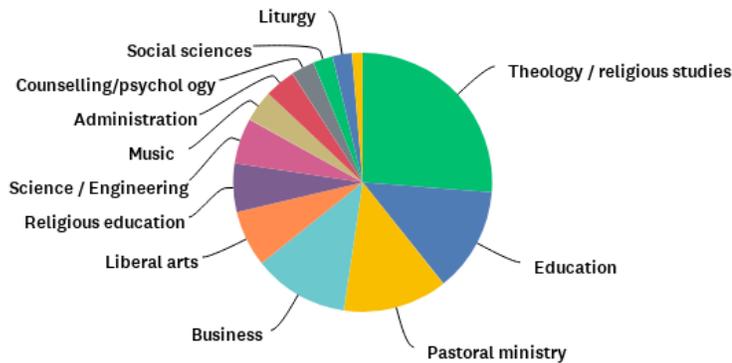
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Highest Level of Education



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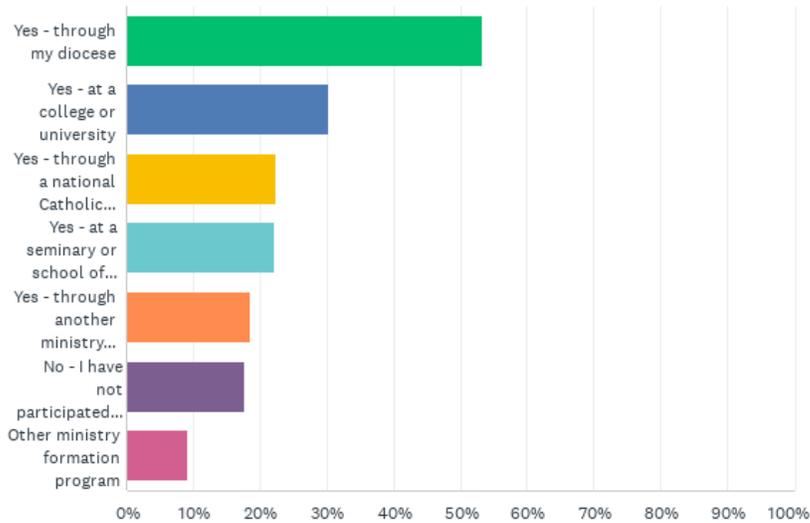
Field of Study



9/11/25

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Participation in Formation Programs



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Experience in Church Ministry as a Lay Person:

Highest Rates

1. I find my work/service to be meaningful (4.58)
2. I feel a deep sense of calling to Church service.
3. My gifts, skills, and passions align with my work.
4. I have support systems (family, friends, colleagues) that I can rely on during difficult times.
5. I feel a sense of accomplishment in my work.
6. My work contributes to my overall sense of well-being.
7. I feel a sense of joy or satisfaction.
8. I have regular practices that contribute to my physical well-being (exercise, diet, rest).
9. I feel the support of my team or staff or colleagues
10. I feel confident that I can overcome problems and challenges in my work
11. I feel the support of my supervisor(s). (3.96)

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Experience in
Church
Ministry as a
Lay Person:

Lowest Rated

- I often feel energized after a typical work week. (3.28)
- I often experience feelings of burnout or fatigue. (2.82)
- I often feel emotionally exhausted. (2.75)

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Challenges
They Face:

Highest
Rated

1. Building trust with the people I serve (4.33)
2. Collaboration with my senior leader
3. Maintaining the Church's relevance in a more secular world
4. Clear ministry responsibilities
5. Having enough volunteers for programs and projects
6. Authority to carry out my ministry
7. Addressing the diverse needs of people I serve
8. Overcoming resistance to change (new ideas and approaches) in my team and people I serve
9. Addressing the needs of people disaffiliating from the Church
10. Having enough resources for programs and projects
11. Long term future in Church ministry as a lay person
12. Being respected and recognized as a lay minister in the Church (3.60)

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Challenges They Face:

Lowest Rated

10. Impact of diocesan and parish restructuring (3.26)
11. Declining diocesan and parish finances
12. Having job security in the Church
13. Facing the challenges of being treated equally as a lay woman in Church work
14. An adequate salary for my work
15. Impact of the pandemic on finances, staffing, volunteers, workload, etc.
16. Adequate benefits (medical, retirement) (2.91)