

The Good News: 300,000 More Catholics

The Bad News: Few Additional Priests

New York (NC) — The number of U.S. Catholics rose more than 300,000 in the past year but there were almost no additional priests to serve them, according to figures in the 1984 Official Catholic Directory.

Figures from the directory, published annually by P.J. Kenedy and Sons, were released in New York May 23.

The 1984 figures showed 52,392,934 U.S. Catholics, up 304,190 from 1983, and representing 22.31 percent of the total U.S. population.

According to the new statistics, Los Angeles remains the largest archdiocese in the country with 2,373,021 Catholics, followed by Chicago with 2,368,316. Los Angeles moved ahead of Chicago for the first time last year.

The total number of priests in the country rose for the first time since 1980, but only by 21, from 57,870 to 57,891. There were 193 fewer diocesan priests but 214 more priests in religious orders.

The new data showed significant increases in the number of U.S. bishops, up 22 (nearly 6 percent) to 392, and permanent deacons, up 636 (10.5 percent) to 6,702. But they also showed a continuing drop in the number of Sisters, down 2,672 to 118,027, and a slight decline in the number of Brothers, down 62 to 7,596.

The new data showed further drops in the number of seminarians. The figures, representing those in novitiates or in the last six years of study for the priesthood, showed 7,486 diocesan candidates, or 560 fewer than last year, and 3,776 religious order candidates, down 232 from last year. The combined total of 11,262 represents a drop of more than 8,000 in the past decade.

While 279 more parishes were recorded, bringing the 1984 total to 19,118, the statistics also showed a continuing trend of more parishes without resident priests -- up 7 percent, from 919 last year to 983 this year. For the first time in recent decades, more than one parish in 20 in the United States is without a resident priest.

The number of nuns teaching full time in Catholic schools dropped by 1,789, to

31,521. This is 69.8 percent fewer than there were 20 years ago when the number of teaching Sisters peaked at 104,441. There were also slightly fewer priests, Brothers and scholastics teaching in Catholic schools.

The total number of teachers in Catholic schools increased by 2,332, however, as the number of lay teachers grew by 4,365 to 131,673. When the Official Catholic Directory first began recording figures for lay teachers 40 years ago, they made up only 8.25 percent of the full-time teachers in Catholic schools. Now they represent 77 percent of the teachers.

There were nine fewer parish and diocesan high schools but 39 more parish elementary schools. However, the number of students in parish elementary schools dropped 45,240, to 2,156,187. The total number of students in Catholic primary and secondary schools -- diocesan, parish and private -- decreased by 60,177, to 3,022,404.

Public school students enrolled in religious education programs totaled 4,067,477, a decrease of 137,836 from the previous year.

Catholic colleges and universities, however, showed an increase of nearly 17,000 in their enrollments, for a total this year of 560,835.

Both infant baptisms and conversions during 1983 increased by more than 10 percent over the previous year. Infant baptisms were up 9,968, to 975,017. The number of converts admitted to the church rose 1,095, to 95,346.

Among the nation's 33 archdioceses, five besides Los Angeles and Chicago have Catholic populations of more than a million. They are Boston, New York, Detroit, Newark, N.J. and Philadelphia.

Of the 145 dioceses in the country, only two -- Brooklyn and Rockville Centre, both in New York -- have Catholic populations of more than a million.

The U.S. Military Vicariate, a non-territorial church jurisdiction similar to a diocese, has 2,125,000 Catholics under its care in the armed forces and U.S. posts overseas.



Victory Sprints

Mercy runners Bethany Parrinello, Maureen Paonessa, Kati Hanna, and Donna DeKing display the trophies they won at the recent Aquinas Relays.

Mercians Awarded

Our Lady of Mercy High School seniors Linda Haas of Webster, and Erin Countryman, Honey Falls, received merit awards by the Monroe County Council Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

The girls received the awards at a Loyalty Day Program, Sunday, May 6, at the Mapledale Party House.

DPC Agenda

June 2, 1984
St. Catherine
Mendon, N.Y.

- 9-9:30 a.m. -- Gathering and Prayer (Tompkins/Tioga Region.)
- 9:30-10:00 a.m. -- Bishop Matthew H. Clark.
- 10-noon -- The Laity in the Church facilitated by Sara McLaughlin.
- noon-1:30 p.m. -- Liturgy and lunch.
- 1:30-2 p.m. -- Bishop Clark.
- 2 p.m. -- Election of the Executive Committee.

El Salvador

Continued from Page 1.

plored the lack of investigation into the tens of thousands of other deaths in El Salvador since 1980.

The five ex-guardsmen were found guilty May 24 in Zacatecoluca, El Salvador, a town near the site where the bodies of the four women were found. The trial had begun the previous day and the jury reached its verdict after deliberating for an hour.

Presiding Judge Bernardo Rauda Murcia said he would pronounce sentence by June

8. The ex-guardsmen face up to 30 years in jail.

Reporters covering the trial said one of the accused, Carlos Joaquin Contreras Palacios, told them during a recess that he had been coerced and offered money for his confession. He is the only one to have confessed to the murders and his confession was key to the investigation.

Progress in the investigation of the murders of the four U.S. missionaries has been a key issue in U.S. congressional debates over military aid to El Salvador.

Opponents of the aid had cited the lack of progress in solving the December 1980 murders as an example of Salvadoran unwillingness to respect human rights in its fight against guerrillas.

Congress last year voted to withhold 30 percent of the \$64.3 million in military aid for El Salvador until a verdict was reached in the case.

Hicks

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Vocations

Continued from Page 1.

The 95-page book summarizes and analyzes significant research to date on the Catholic vocations question in the United States.

Catholic University of America researchers Dean R. Hoge, Father Raymond H. Potvin and Kathleen M. Ferry co-authored the study under the direction of Father Eugene Hemrick, director of the USCC's Office of Research.

While the report's main conclusion is that much more research is needed to determine clearly the role that various factors may play in the vocations decline, it says that existing research suggests patterns and elements that would be worth studying in greater depth.

In addition to collecting and analyzing existing research, the full report has a final chapter of interpretive commentary on its meaning by three theologians: Fathers Joseph Komonchak of The Catholic University of America, Richard McBrien of the University of Notre Dame, and Philip Murnion of the National Pastoral Life Center of the New York Archdiocese.

Father McBrien focused on

the celibacy issue as something which "in particular emerges constantly as a major negative factor" in vocations studies. He said celibacy deters young men who might otherwise consider the priesthood and "is one of the principal reasons" why parents and priests do not encourage vocations.

In addition, he said, the discipline of obligatory celibacy appears to play a negative role in determining the psychological qualities of seminarians who persevere to the priesthood.

"The vocations crisis is as much qualitative as quantitative," Father McBrien wrote. The research available indicates that current recruiting and formation practices favor the ordination of men who are "more dependent, institutionally oriented, sexually indifferent and conservative," he said.

Writing from a different point of departure, Father Komonchak also took issue with criteria currently used by vocations directors to evaluate priesthood candidates. The criteria that vocations directors use are "a very odd lot," he said.

"They did not consider very important or desirable

"having a questioning mind, being self-directed, having leadership ability, being affectionate, spontaneous or aggressive," he noted.

He countered that, according to one line of argument, "leadership defines the ministry and the minister and...should, therefore, also define the primary qualities desirable in a seminarian."

Father Murnion suggested that if the church is to benefit from research and make "healthy" adaptations to changing conditions, it needs to identify the impact that various changes might have on "the Catholic style" -- the way in which Catholics interrelate their faith and their institutional life.

Acceptance of a married clergy or temporary ministry could have profound impact not only on the number and type of priests ordained, but also on many other aspects of Catholic life, he said.

"Faith and institution are not so easily separated in the Catholic style.... The research must examine how vocations are attracted (or recruited) to the specifically Catholic style and how adaptations that might attract more vocations may also modify the Catholic style," he wrote.

In these troubled times—the Catholic Press must remind us of the most important fact.

When you read about the Middle East, or unemployment, or crime, it's easy to forget the most important fact of all.

That is, that God still works through the Church to save humanity. All over the world -- at this very moment -- Catholics are nobly rising to meet the challenges of this age.

But it would be easy to get discouraged if you never heard about the works of the Church's modern heroes and heroines.

And you *wouldn't* hear about most of them if it weren't for the Catholic Press, the largest, and oldest religious press group in America.

The Catholic Communication Campaign wants to thank the Catholic Press for its outstanding achievements. It is a privilege to be able to assist such an important part of the Church in America. Thank you.



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Saturday, June 9th
Sunday, June 10th