

E-mail Subject Line
"Be Heard By The Catholic Church"

Dear Student:

What are yours views about the Catholic Church, about spirituality, and about religious vocations? St. John's University is collaborating with the Bishop of the Brooklyn Diocese in an historic on-line study that explores the views of local college students regarding important issues that affect the relationship between the Church and the young people of New York City. This is a 15-20 minute on-line, confidential questionnaire designed to open a dialogue between the Church and today's youth. At the end of the questionnaire, you have an option to enter your e-mail address for a chance to win one of 40 cash prizes.

Click here to begin the questionnaire (or paste this into your browser):
<http://surveys.stjohns.edu/vocations>

Thank you for your time and participation in this important confidential study.

Dr. Jeffery Fagen, Dean, St. John's University
Dr. Frank Biafora, Associate Dean, St. John's University
The Most Reverend Nicholas DiMarzio, Bishop of Brooklyn
Rev. Kevin Sweeney, Diocese of Brooklyn

Youth Culture and the Catholic Church:
Findings from an On-Line Survey of Student
Attitudes Towards Religious Vocations in NYC

Dr. Jeffrey Fagen

&

Dr. Frank Biafora

St. John's University

In collaboration with the Office of the Bishop, Diocese of Brooklyn

July 2007

Acknowledgements

No research project of this magnitude could be accomplished without the generous support and dedication of many individuals, all of whom already had a full plate of daily activities but they somehow still found time to assist us in carrying out this important project. We are particularly grateful for the invaluable assistance of Rev. Kevin Sweeney, Vocation Director, Diocese of Brooklyn, who guided us at each step in the process and helped us navigate over, under, and around obstacles on our way to developing the student questionnaire and administering it to the Catholic high schools in Brooklyn and Queens. The assistance of Lisa Amore, Assistant to Rev. Sweeney in the Vocations Office, is also notable as she was always a quick phone call or e-mail away ensuring all of our questions were answered and that all research needs were met with enthusiasm. A very special thanks to James Campese, Master's Student at St. John's University. In his role as Graduate Assistant in the Graduate Division of St. John's College, James went over and above his normal duties, serving as the "face" of this project when we were unable, pulling together an extensive literature review that helped in the creation of the questionnaire, while at the same time successfully keeping up with a full compliment of graduate coursework. We would also like to recognize the assistance of Mrs. Piyaporn Nawarat in the Office of Institutional Research. Piyaporn worked magic behind the scenes transforming our paper questionnaire into its final live, on-line format. We only wish we had even an ounce of the technological talent that she was able to bring to this endeavor. A very special "thank you" to Pam Shea Burns, Vice President for University Ministry at St. John's University, and to Michael Germano, Director of Campus Ministry at Archbishop Molloy High School. Both Pam and Michael were particularly helpful early in the planning stages in pulling together subjects for our two focus group subjects, one held at St. John's University, the other at Molloy.

Thank you all,

Jeff and Frank

Research Design

At the center of this research project was a voluntary, confidential, on-line questionnaire. Given the private nature of the project, the attempt to reach all Catholic high school juniors and seniors and college/university students in the Brooklyn/Queens area, and the limited time, funding, and staff for this project, the research team quickly moved away from the idea of a hard copy instrument in favor of an on-line design. Once created the questionnaire was uploaded and housed on the St. John's University computer network under the following 24-hour accessible web address: www.stjohns.edu/vocations. The survey was live for the better part of three months (February, March, April, 2007). Eligible high school students were directed to this survey web address by their home room teachers who were also instructed to pass out a printed 4 X 6 invitation/incentive card (copy attached). College students were invited to participate and directed to the web address from an e-mail blast (copy attached) sent at three different times throughout the administration period.

En route to the final 45-item instrument, the research team obtained invaluable input from two student focus groups, one with high school students, the other with college students. The first focus group meeting was held at Archbishop Molloy High School early in the conceptualization process. This initial meeting consisted of a diverse group of 10 Catholic student leaders (mix of juniors and seniors) selected by the Vocations Director of Molloy. The second focus group was held at St. John's University. This group consisted of a diverse group of 12 Catholic students identified by the Vice President for Campus Ministry at St. John's University.

Measures

Questions were written and designed to tap nine pre-determined domains of interest (see attached questionnaire):

1. Demographic characterizes of the participants
2. Religious beliefs and practices

3. Families views of religious vocations
4. Friends' views of religious vocations
5. Perceptions/beliefs about recent issues in the Catholic Church
6. Perceptions of modern youth culture
7. Perceptions / memories of vocations recruitment
8. Career goals
9. Open ended write-in response for Bishop DiMarzio

Sample

Through ongoing collaborative discussions with the Bishop and his Vocations Director, the decision was made to focus our efforts on reaching the local student population of 18 – 24 year olds. With the support of the staff of the Office of the Brooklyn Diocese, the population sampling frame was identified and consisted of area Catholic High Schools in Brooklyn and Queens (listed below) and a select group of colleges/universities (listed below).

Once secured and cleaned, usable data were obtained from a total of 1,170 respondents. Males and females were about evenly represented, with 562 males (48.4%) and 599 females (51.6%). The majority of the respondents were non-Hispanic White (51.9%), followed by 14% Hispanic/Latino, 12.2% Asian, 8.1% African American, and 13.8% specifying "Other". Two-thirds of the sample (67.5%) was Catholic, followed by a small number of Protestants (6.6%), Jewish (1.6%), and Muslim (2.2%) students. Approximately one-fourth of the students (22.9%) selected "Other" for this question or did not answer it. Nearly three in four (75.6%) stated that they belonged to a Church, Mosque, Synagogue, or other religious community. Additional details about the characteristics of the sample are presented in the next section along with the percentage of students who chose each choice for each question.

High School Participation

The following 20 Catholic High Schools were approached and asked to participate in the study. In mid December 2006, Rev. Sweeney and Dr. Biafora attended a regional meeting of

Catholic School Principals (held at Stella Maris High School) to discuss the project and to solicit institutional support. This was followed by telephone calls, e-mails, and in some cases personal visits. It should be noted that in an effort to ensure confidentiality, school names were not identified on the instrument and, as such, we are unable to know with certainty which of the schools ultimately participated. Although it is possible that students from each of these schools were represented, follow-ups with school contacts lead us to believe that representation comes from those schools noted in **bold by a ***.

***Archbishop Molloy High School**
***Bishop Ford Central High School**
***Bishop Laughlin Memorial High School**
***Cathedral Preparatory Seminary**
***Christ the King Regional High School**
***Holy Cross High School**
***Msgr. McClancy Memorial High School**
***Nazareth Regional High School**
***St. Edmund Preparatory HS**
***St. Francis Preparatory School**
***Xaverian High School**

Bishop Kearney High School
Catherine McAuley High School
Fontbonne Hall Academy
St. Agnes High School
St. John's Preparatory High School
St. Joseph High School
St. Saviour High School
Stella Maris High School
The Mary Louis Academy

College / University participation

Presidents from the following 15 colleges and universities were approached and asked for their institutions to participate in the study. Contact was first made by a letter from Bishop DiMarzio explaining the project. This was followed by an e-mail (and in some cases a telephone call) from Dean Fagen soliciting participation. Only four colleges/universities responded to these requests. These are noted in **bold by a ***.

***Polytechnic University**
***St. John's University**
***St. Joseph's College**
***St. Francis College**

Long Island University, Brooklyn Campus
New York Institute of Technology
Medgar Evers College
York College
Queensborough Community College
Kingsborough Community College
Pratt Institute
LaGuardia Community College
Vaughn College of Aeronautics and Technology
Brooklyn College
Queens College

Ethical Assurances and Incentives

The research team took special care to ensure that this survey research followed necessary human subjects and ethical guidelines specified by the federal government and the Institutional Review Board of St. John's University. It was important to ensure that students under the age of consent (i.e., 17 and under) obtained parental consent prior to being directed to the survey web address. Attached is the parental consent form in both English and Spanish that was utilized. The research team relied on high school officials and classroom teachers to collect signed consent forms prior to giving out the survey web address. As an added protection, the opening ascent paragraph to the on-line instrument stated that "*Students must be 18 years old or have parental consent before taking this survey.*"

As an incentive, each participant (whether or not s/he finished the questionnaire) was offered an opportunity to win 1 of 40 gift cards (10 @ \$100; 10 @ \$75; 10 @ \$50; 10 @ 25) via a random drawing. Students who were interested in this voluntary raffle were required to provide the research team with an email address with the assurance that this email address would only be used for the raffle.

Results

For each question, the percentage of respondents selecting each choice was calculated. These data are presented first. Second, we present these percentages divided by gender. A series of chi-square analyses was conducted to determine if there were any significant differences ($\alpha = .05$) in the responses between the males and females. Third, for the Catholic students only, we used a series of chi-square analyses (with correlations) to compare the students' answers to each question as a function of their answers to Question 44: "Looking into the future, how likely are you to explore the possibility of becoming a priest, brother, or

sister/nun?" This last set of analyses produced a great deal of data, some of which may be difficult to interpret. We have provided an explanation for each significant result; however, it is important to point out that, in most cases, there are other ways to look at and interpret these data, including those analyses where no significant difference emerged. Finally, we present the results of a content analysis conducted on the student's write-in responses to the final question on the survey: "As you are probably aware, the number of young people entering religious vocations in America is declining. If you could have a few honest and uninterrupted minutes with the Bishop, what advice would you offer him in an effort to increase the interest of young men and women to seriously consider a religious vocation?" Here the number of students whose open-ended comments fell into 1 of 20 categories is indicated along with an analysis by gender.



Youth Culture and the Catholic Church: A Survey of Student Attitudes Towards Religious Vocation in NYC

Dr. Jeffrey Fagen and Dr. Frank Biafora, professors at St. John's University (Queens, NY) are conducting a confidential study that explores the views of young New Yorkers towards the Catholic Church today. The study is designed to explore your personal thoughts and ideas about religious vocations that have witnessed declines in recent years -- namely priests, brothers, sisters/nuns. What follows is a brief questionnaire that will help us better understand youth culture of today with the ultimate goals of enhancing the dialogue between young people and the Catholic Church and also exploring ways to increase awareness and participation in church vocations.

Again, this is a confidential questionnaire. We are not interested in your names, only your honest views and ideas. **At the conclusion of the survey you will have the opportunity to enter a drawing to receive one of forty gift cards:**

1st Place (10 Winners) = \$100

2nd Place (10 Winners) = \$75

3rd Place (10 Winners) = \$50

4th Place (10 Winners) = \$25

If you have any questions regarding this study you may contact the co-project investigators: Dr. Jeffrey Fagen (718.990.6272) or Dr. Frank Biafora (718.990.6243) or contact the Secretary of the Internal Review Board at St. John's University, Dr. Jeffrey Olson (718.990.5705).

Student must be 18 years old or have parental consent before taking this survey.

Youth Culture and the Catholic Church: A Survey of Student Attitudes Towards Religious Vocation in NYC

Student **must be 18 years old or have parental consent before taking this survey.**

Are you currently 18 years of age, or do you have parental consent to complete this survey?

Yes No

If YES, please continue on the next section (DEMOGRAPHICS).

If **NO**, you **MUST** obtain parental consent in writing in order to complete this survey. Speak to your vocations director if you would like a permission slip.

I. DEMOGRAPHICS

1. You are: Male Female

2. You currently attend: High School College/University

3. Do you currently attend a Catholic High School or College? Yes No

4. Counting grade school, middle school, high school and college, approximately how many years of Catholic education have you had?

1 3 5 7 9 11 13 15 17 19
 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20

5. Which of the following best describes your ethnic background?

Non-Hispanic White/Anglo African American
 Hispanic/Latino Asian
 Other: _____

6. Which of the following best represents your family structure when you are at home?

Your Mother and Father Your Mother Only
 Your Mother and other adult Your Father Only
 Your Father and other adult No parents, but other adults

7. At any time in your life, did your parents get divorced? Yes No

8. Were you born in the **United States**? Yes No

8.1 If NO, please name the country.

II. SPIRITUALITY/RELIGIOSITY

9. What is your religious denomination?

Catholic Protestant Jewish Muslim
 Other: _____

10. Do you belong to a Church, Mosque, Synagogue or other religious community? Yes No

11. Are you a member of a youth group that is affiliated with a Church, Mosque, Synagogue, or other religious community? Yes No

12. In general, how important is religion in your life?
 Not at all important Moderately important Very important
 Not too important

13. How often do you attend religious services?
 Never Rarely Sometimes Often Always

14. How often do you turn to your religion or spiritual beliefs to help you deal with your daily problems?
 Never Rarely Sometimes Often Always

15. How often do you pray?
 Never Once a week More than once a day
 Rarely Once a day

16. How strong would you say is your religious faith?
 Not strong at all Not too strong Moderately strong Very strong

17. I currently know (or knew in the past) a priest or religious brother or sister on a personal level, that is someone whom I could easily talk to comfortably outside of church. Yes No

18. I believe being a priest, brother, sister brings structure and a sense of purpose to one's life.
 Not at all true Somewhat true Very true

III. FAMILY VIEWS

Historically family members have been a source of encouragement for individuals considering a religious vocation (priesthood, brotherhood or sisterhood). For the following questions, think about your own family, including extended family such as aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents.

Note:
If you are a male, the term Religious Vocation in the questions that follow refers to a priest or brother. If you are a female, Religious Vocation refers to religious sister or nun.

19. Is a member of your family (aunt, uncle, brother, sister) a priest, brother or sister/nun within the Catholic Church? This includes those who may have been in the past. Yes No

20. How often have members of your family encouraged you to consider a religious vocation?

- Never
- More than a few times
- All the time
- Once or twice

21a-c. In general, what reaction would your family have if you told them you were seriously considering a religious vocation? They would

Yes No

- 21a. encourage me
- 21b. take me seriously
- 21c. talk me out of it

22. Is a Catholic priest, brother, or sister/nun a close friend of your family? Yes No

23. In the past year or so, how often have members of your family talked to a priest, brother, or sister/nun to discuss problems and/or to get spiritual guidance?

- Never
- More than a few times
- Frequently
- Once or twice

IV. FRIENDS VIEWS

24a-c. In general, how would your closest friends react if you told them you wanted to become a priest or brother (or sister/nun for female respondents)? They would

Yes No

- 24a. Encourage me
- 24b. Take me seriously
- 24c. Talk me out of it

V. YOUR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS ABOUT RECENT ISSUES WITHIN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

25. How knowledgeable are you of the sexual abuse scandal within the church?

- Not at all
- Somewhat
- Very

26. How true is the following statement to you: "The recent sex scandals in the church have discouraged me from considering a religious vocation."

- Not at all true
- Somewhat true
- Very true

27. What impact has the sexual abuse scandal in the Church had on your personal faith?

- Diminished my faith
- No impact
- Increased my faith

28a-k. "More young people my age would consider becoming a priest, brother, or sister/nun if..."

	Not at All True	Somewhat True	Very True
28a. They could get married and have a family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28b. They did not have to take a vow of poverty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28c. The Church did not have so many rules of obedience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28d. The Church did not require giving up so many personal freedoms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28e. Commitments to religious life could be time-limited and less permanent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28f. The Church was more permissive of a woman's right to abortion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28g. The Church was more permissive of homosexual lifestyles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28h. The Church was more permissive of the use of contraception/birth control	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28i. The Church was more supportive of sexual relations between non-married couples	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28j. Women were able to be ordained as Priests	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28k. They were not required to live in a religious community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

VI. YOUTH CULTURE

29. I believe that the Catholic Church, in general, is in touch with the ideas, views and feelings of young people today?

- Do Not Agree Somewhat Agree Strongly Agree

30. I believe that the Priests in my parish try to understand the thoughts and feelings of young people of my age?

- Do Not Agree Somewhat Agree Strongly Agree

31. How often do you talk with a priest, brother or sister/nun to discuss problems and get spiritual guidance?

- Never More than a few times Frequently
 Once or twice

32. In the past few years, how often have you been invited to engage in religious/spiritual based activities, whether through your church, your school or your community?

- Never More than a few times Frequently
 Once or twice

VII. RECRUITMENT

33. I have received promotional materials encouraging me to consider joining a religious vocation?

- Never Once in a while Frequently

34. A priest, brother, sister/nun has personally talked to me about the possibility of becoming a priest, brother, sister/nun.

- Never
- More than a few times
- Frequently
- Once or twice

35. I believe that the Church has done a good job of reaching out to me in an effort to educate me about religious vocations.

- Not all true
- Somewhat true
- Very true

36. I believe being a priest, brother, or sister/nun is a fulfilling career choice.

- Not at all true
- Somewhat true
- Very true

37. About how many priests can you honestly say that you look up to as "role models"?

- None
- One
- Two
- Three or more

38. I have attended a Vocations Recruitment Program where I learned about religious life

- Yes
- No

If **NO** to Question 38, please go to **VIII. MY FUTURE CAREER.**

If **YES** to 38, please respond to the following. I _____ about what the vocation dircetors/presenter(s) has said.

Yes No

- 38a. seriously listened to
- 38b. had serious talk with my parents
- 38c. had serious talk with my friends

VIII. MY FUTURE CAREER

39a-l. When you consider your future career, how important are the following issues: A job

Not Somewhat Very
Important Important Important

39a. That pays very well	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
39b. That is satisfying to me spiritually	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
39c. Where I can directly help people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
39d. Where I feel good about myself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
39e. That is exciting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
39f. That is fulfilling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
39g. That offers long-term stability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
39h. That offers travel throughout the world	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
39i. That allows me to help my community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
39j. That gives me a lot of personal freedom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
39k. That provides me and my future family with financial security	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
39l. That provides me with opportunities to share my feelings about God and the Catholic faith.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

40. I believe I understand what priests, brothers, or sisters/nuns do on a day to day basis.

Not at all agree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

41. I believe I understand what type of professional training it takes to become a priest, brother, or sister/nun.

Not at all agree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

42. I am not sure I would be accepted into a religious vocation even if I wanted to because of the things I have done in the past.

Not at all agree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

43. I believe that young people do not necessarily *choose* to enter a religious vocation, but do so because of a calling from God.

Not at all agree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

44. Looking into the future, how likely are you to explore the possibility of becoming a priest, brother, or sister/nun?

Not at all agree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

45. As you are probably aware, the number of young people entering religious vocations in America is declining. If you could have a few honest and uninterrupted minutes with the Bishop, what advice would you offer him in an effort to increase the interest of young men and women to seriously consider a religious vocation?

Optional

If you are interested in entering a raffle drawing for a gift card, please provide your e-mail address. Winners will be notified via e-mail after the data collection period . (Only one e-mail entry per person)

E-mail address (For drawing only):

More information about the ministry as a vocation

If you are interested in learning more about the ministry as a vocation, please provide your e-mail address for future contact.

ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY SURVEY
Section II - Percentages

I. DEMOGRAPHICS

1. You are:

562; 48.4% Male 599; 51.6% Female

2. You currently attend:

304; 26.3% High School 854; 73.7% College/University

3. Do you currently attend a Catholic High School or College?

1075; 93.2% Yes 79; 6.8% No

4. Counting grade school, middle school, high school and college, approximately how many years of Catholic education have you had?

128; 11.2% 1	43; 3.8% 5	36; 3.2% 9	55; 4.8% 13	32; 2.8% 17
124; 10.9% 2	41; 3.6% 6	45; 3.9% 10	59; 5.2% 14	15; 1.3% 18
114; 10.0% 3	37; 3.2% 7	62; 5.4% 11	46; 4.0% 15	9; 0.8% 19
114; 10.0% 4	51; 4.5% 8	87; 7.6% 12	37; 3.2% 16	5; 0.4% 20

5. Which of the following best describes your ethnic background?

600; 51.9% Non-Hispanic White/Anglo
 162; 14.0% Hispanic/Latino
 141; 12.2% Asian
 94; 8.1% African American
 160; 13.8% Other

For "Other," students listed (Note: some categories were listed by more than one student):

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Italian, Irish, Cuban, and English • European descent • West Indian • West Indian/Black • American • Pacific Islander • Multiracial • African, East Indian and Chinese • Italian • Caribbean • Italian American • Mixed Caribbean descent • Native American • Spaniard • Indo-Caribbean • Mixed Ethnicities • Filipino • East Indian • African • Guyanese • Italian and Colombian • Black Guyanese • Hispanic and White | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indian • White, Asian, Hispanic • Egyptian • East Indian, Polynesian, Asian • Asian (Chinese)/Pacific Islander (Philippines)/European (Spain) • Nicaraguan/Brazilian/Pakistani • Sicilian French Jew • Arabian • Asian Indian • Mixed • Central Asian Jew • Caribbean/Black • Caucasian • South Indian • White/Italian • Arab/Middle Eastern • Prefer not to disclose • Combination of many different ethnicities • Indian-Asia Subminor • Puerto Rican & Polish • Asian American • Caribbean black • Indian- (Asia) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White/Asian • Albanian • Caribbean Mixed • Afro Caribbean • Bangladeshi • Indian Subcontinent • Spanish • Guyanese West Indian • South Asian (Indian) • Anglo/Hispanic • Asian-Indian • Middle Eastern • Garifuna • Portuguese • Russian • Non-Hispanic White - European • East Indian (from the Caribbean) • Jamaican and German mix • Black/Hispanic • White Ukrainian • Black • 3/4 Italian ,Part American Indian, part Irish, part of some other things I'm not sure |
|---|--|---|

- Haitian American
- Albanian
- White
- Hindu
- Greek
- Black West Indian

- Italian/Puerto Rican
- Ethiopian Indian
- Hispanic/Latino/White/Anglo
- Italian American/ Latino
- Haitian

- Native American and African American
- Bangladeshi/Portuguese
- Interracial
- Guyanese/Peruvian
- Mixed Latino and White

6. Which of the following best represents your family structure when you are at home?

815; 70.7% Your Mother and Father 200; 17.4% Your Mother Only
 74; 6.4% Your Mother and other adult 27; 2.3% Your Father Only
 8; 0.7% Your Father and other adult 28; 2.4% No parents, but other adults

7. At any time in your life, did your parents get divorced?

236; 20.5% Yes 915; 79.5% No

8. Were you born in the United States?

968; 83.4% Yes 192; 16.6% No

II. SPIRITUALITY/RELIGIOSITY

9. What is your religious denomination?

782; 67.5% Catholic
 77; 6.6% Protestant
 18; 1.6% Jewish
 25; 2.2% Muslim
 268; 22.9% Other or no answer

For "Other," students listed (Note: some categories were listed by more than one student):

- African Methodist Episcopal Zion
- Agnostic
- Agnostic Atheist
- Agnostic; raised Catholic
- Anglican
- Apostolic
- Atheist
- Baptist
- Believe in God, not organized religion.
- Born with Buddhism but have been thinking to convert it to Christian
- Buddhist
- Buddhist/Spiritual
- Bulgarian Orthodox
- Cherubim and Seraphim
- Christian
- Christian (Lutheran)
- Christian Nondenominational
- Christian Orthodox
- Christian with an undecided denomination
- Christian-Marthomite

- Christian: Congregationalist/ Bible based
- Converting to Catholicism
- Coptic Orthodox
- East orthodox Christian
- Eastern
- Eastern Orthodox
- Episcopalian
- Gnostic
- Greek Orthodox
- Greek Orthodox Christian
- Gregorian
- Hindu
- Hindu/Muslim
- I do not practice any 1 religious faith
- I don't affiliate myself with any religion, but I am not an atheist.
- I was raised as a Baptist
- I was raised Catholic, and my family is very active within in the Church, but I determined that my beliefs do not coincide with Catholicism

- I was raised Catholic, but I'm not sure what religious category I would fall under at this point in my life
- I am spiritual
- Indian Christian Orthodox (Eastern Orthodox)
- Jainist
- Just Christian
- Just plain Christian-It is ridiculous that Christianity has been divided into so many branches
- Latter-day Saint (Mormon)
- The Light of the World
- Lutheran
- Methodist
- Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist
- No affiliation
- No religion
- No religion/Recently left the Church
- Non-religious Taoist-Buddhist
- Non-denominational
- Non-denominational Christian

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-religious • None • Not determined • Orthodox • Orthodox Christian • Orthodox-Greek • Pentecostal • Protestant Christian • Raised Catholic- no longer Catholic, but I attend a non-denominational Christian | <p>church every week and teach Sunday school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raised Protestant by father and converted to Catholicism in high school for mother • Rastafarian • Russian Orthodox • Secular • Seventh day Adventist • Sikh • Spiritual not religious | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studying to be a confirmed Catholic • Syrian Orthodox • Syrian Orthodox Christian • Theist • Transcendentalist • United Methodist • Wiccan |
|--|---|--|

10. Do you belong to a Church, Mosque, Synagogue or other religious community?

873; 75.6% Yes 281; 24.4% No

11. Are you a member of a youth group that is affiliated with a Church, Mosque, Synagogue, or other religious community?

280; 24.2% Yes 877; 75.8% No

12. In general, how important is religion in your life?

99; 8.6% Not at all important	492; 42.6% Moderately important
150; 13.0% Not too important	414; 35.8% Very important

13. How often do you attend religious services?

123; 10.6% Never	305; 26.4% Sometimes	194; 16.8% Always
282; 24.4% Rarely	251; 21.7% Often	

14. How often do you turn to your religion or spiritual beliefs to help you deal with your daily problems?

125; 10.9% Never	310; 27.0% Sometimes	220; 19.1% Always
151; 13.1% Rarely	344; 29.9% Often	

15. How often do you pray?

115; 9.9% Never	388; 33.5% Once a day
239; 20.7% Rarely	228; 19.7% More than once a day
187; 16.2% Once a week	

16. How strong would you say is your religious faith?

113; 9.8% Not strong at all	511; 44.3% Moderately strong
195; 16.9% Not too strong	334; 29.0% Very strong

17. I currently know (or knew in the past) a priest or religious brother or sister on a personal level, that is someone whom I could easily talk to comfortably outside of church.

635; 54.9% Yes 521; 45.1% No

18. I believe being a priest, brother, sister brings structure and a sense of purpose to one's life.

167; 14.4% Not at all true 608; 52.5% Somewhat true 383; 33.1% Very true

III. FAMILY VIEWS

19. Is a member of your family (aunt, uncle, brother, sister) a priest, brother or sister/nun within the Catholic Church? This includes those who may have been in the past.

157; 13.7% Yes 988; 86.3% No

20. How often have members of your family encouraged you to consider a religious vocation?

805; 69.7% Never 98; 8.5% More than a few times
212; 18.4% Once or twice 40; 3.5% All the time

21a-c. In general, what reaction would your family have if you told them you were seriously considering a religious vocation? They would

21a. encourage me.

683; 61.3% Yes 431; 38.7% No

21b. take me seriously.

664; 59.1% Yes 459; 40.9% No

21c. talk me out of it.

315; 28.5% Yes 791; 71.5% No

22. Is a Catholic priest, brother, or sister/nun a close friend of your family?

413; 36.1% Yes 732; 63.9% No

23. In the past year or so, how often have members of your family talked to a priest, brother, or sister/nun to discuss problems and/or to get spiritual guidance?

516; 44.8% Never 196; 17.0% More than a few times
348; 30.2% Once or twice 91; 7.9% Frequently

IV. FRIENDS' VIEWS

24a-c. In general, how would your closest friends react if you told them you wanted to become a priest or brother (or sister/nun for female respondents). They would

24a. encourage me.

410; 37.2% Yes 692; 62.8% No

24b. take me seriously.

353; 31.8% Yes 758; 68.2% No

24c. talk me out of it.

533; 47.5% Yes 589; 52.5% No

V. YOUR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS ABOUT RECENT ISSUES WITHIN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

25. How knowledgeable are you of the sexual abuse scandal within the church?

38; 3.3% Not at all 693; 60.1% Somewhat 422; 36.6% Very

26. How true is the following statement to you: "The recent sex scandals in the church have discouraged me from considering a religious vocation."

780; 67.5% Not at all true 270; 23.4% Somewhat true 106; 9.2% Very true

27. What impact has the sexual abuse scandal in the Church had on your personal faith?

175; 15.2% Diminished my faith 47; 4.1% Increased my faith
931; 80.7% No impact

28a-k. "More young people my age would consider becoming a priest, brother, or sister/nun if

28a. they could get married and have a family.

118; 10.2% Not at All True 437; 37.8% Somewhat True
600; 51.9% Very True

28b. they did not have to take a vow of poverty.

280; 24.3% Not at All True 559; 48.6% Somewhat True
312; 27.1% Very True

28c. the Church did not have so many rules of obedience.

322; 28.1% Not at All True 508; 44.3% Somewhat True
317; 27.6% Very True

28d. the Church did not require giving up so many personal freedoms.

201; 17.6% Not at All True 512; 44.8% Somewhat True
430; 37.6% Very True

28e. commitments to religious life could be time-limited and less permanent.

367; 32.2% Not at All True
260; 22.8% Very True

513; 45.0% Somewhat True

28f. the Church was more permissive of a woman's right to abortion.

531; 46.3% Not at All True
194; 16.9% Very True

422; 36.8% Somewhat True

28g. the Church was more permissive of homosexual lifestyles.

494; 43.1% Not at All True
228; 19.9% Very True

424; 37.0% Somewhat True

28h. the Church was more permissive of the use of contraception/birth control.

297; 25.8% Not at All True
389; 33.8% Very True

464; 40.3% Somewhat True

28i. the Church was more supportive of sexual relations between non-married couples.

387; 33.7% Not at All True
318; 27.7% Very True

442; 38.5% Somewhat True

28j. women were able to be ordained as priests.

272; 23.7% Not at All True
38.6% Very True

434; 37.7% Somewhat True 444;

28k. they were not required to live in a religious community.

358; 31.1% Not at All True
269; 23.4% Very True

523; 45.5% Somewhat True

VI. YOUTH CULTURE

29. I believe that the Catholic Church, in general, is in touch with the ideas, views and feelings of young people today?

471; 40.9% Do Not Agree
101; 8.8% Strongly Agree

579; 50.3% Somewhat Agree

30. I believe that the Priests in my parish try to understand the thoughts and feelings of young people of my age?

274; 23.9% Do Not Agree
276; 24.1% Strongly Agree

596; 52.0% Somewhat Agree

31. How often do you talk with a priest, brother, or sister/nun to discuss problems and get spiritual guidance?

602; 52.4% Never
356; 31.0% Once or twice

116; 10.1% More than a few times
75; 6.5% Frequently

32. In the past few years, how often have you been invited to engage in religious/spiritual based activities, whether through your church, your school or your community?

148; 12.8% Never
328; 28.5% Once or twice

412; 35.8% More than a few times
264; 22.9% Frequently

VII. RECRUITMENT

33. I have received promotional materials encouraging me to consider joining a religious vocation?

685; 59.7% Never

393; 34.2% Once in a while

70; 6.1% Frequently

34. A priest, brother, sister/nun has personally talked to me about the possibility of becoming a priest, brother, sister/nun.

830; 72.4% Never
218; 19.0% Once or twice

69; 6.0% More than a few times
29; 2.5% Frequently

35. I believe that the Church has done a good job of reaching out to me in an effort to educate me about religious vocations.

523; 45.6% Not all true
140; 12.2% Very true

484; 42.2% Somewhat true

36. I believe being a priest, brother, or sister/nun is a fulfilling career choice.

307; 26.6% Not at all true
318; 27.6% Very true

527; 45.7% Somewhat true

37. About how many priests can you honestly say that you look up to as "role models"?

416; 36.2% None
310; 27.0% One

234; 20.4% Two
189; 16.4% Three or more

38. I have attended a Vocations Recruitment Program where I learned about religious life.

123; 10.8% Yes 1015; 89.2% No

If YES to Question 38:

38a. I seriously listened to what the vocation directors/presenters said.

137; 49.1% Yes 142; 50.9% No

38b. I had serious talk with my parents about what the vocation directors/presenters said.

60; 22.9% Yes 202; 77.1% No

38c. I had serious talk with my friends about what the vocation directors/presenters said.

62; 23.7% Yes 200; 76.3% No

VIII. MY FUTURE CAREER

39a-l. When you consider your future career, how important are the following issues: A job

39a. that pays very well.

69; 6.0% Not Important 645; 55.9% Very Important
440; 38.1% Somewhat Important

39b. that is satisfying to me spiritually.

163; 14.2% Not Important 524; 45.6% Very Important
462; 40.2% Somewhat Important

39c. where I can directly help people.

67; 5.8% Not Important 708; 61.5% Very Important
377; 32.7% Somewhat Important

39d. where I feel good about myself.

20; 1.7% Not Important 998; 86.9% Very Important
131; 11.4% Somewhat Important

39e. that is exciting.

18; 1.6% Not Important 864; 74.9% Very Important
271; 23.5% Somewhat Important

39f. that is fulfilling.

13; 1.1% Not Important 1011; 87.6% Very Important
130; 11.3% Somewhat Important

39g. that offers long-term stability.

27; 2.3% Not Important 915; 79.6% Very Important
207; 18.0% Somewhat Important

39h. that offers travel throughout the world.

379; 32.9% Not Important 326; 28.3% Very Important
447; 38.8% Somewhat Important

39i. that allows me to help my community.

102; 8.9% Not Important
469; 40.7% Somewhat Important

581; 50.4% Very Important

39j. that gives me a lot of personal freedom.

46; 4.0% Not Important
384; 33.3% Somewhat Important

723; 62.7% Very Important

39k. that provides me and my future family with financial security.

15; 1.3% Not Important
137; 11.9% Somewhat Important

997; 86.8% Very Important

39l. that provides me with opportunities to share my feelings about God and the Catholic faith.

480; 41.7% Not Important
440; 38.3% Somewhat Important

230; 20.0% Very Important

40. I believe I understand what priests, brothers, or sisters/nuns do on a day to day basis.

251; 21.9% Not at all agree
217; 18.9% Strongly agree

680; 59.2% Somewhat agree

41. I believe I understand what type of professional training it takes to become a priest, brother, or sister/nun.

389; 33.9% Not at all agree
192; 16.7% Strongly agree

567; 49.4% Somewhat agree

42. I am not sure I would be accepted into a religious vocation even if I wanted to because of the things I have done in the past.

707; 61.7% Not at all agree
115; 10.0% Strongly agree

323; 28.2% Somewhat agree

43. I believe that young people do not necessarily choose to enter a religious vocation, but do so because of a calling from God.

224; 19.6% Not at all agree
324; 28.3% Strongly agree

597; 52.1% Somewhat agree

44. Looking into the future, how likely are you to explore the possibility of becoming a priest, brother, or sister/nun?

907; 79.1% Not at all agree
47; 4.1% Strongly agree

192; 16.8% Somewhat agree

Question 45

Content Analysis of Write-in Response to:

“As you are probably aware, the number of young people entering religious vocations in America is declining. If you could have a few honest and uninterrupted minutes with the Bishop, what advice would you offer him in an effort to increase the interest of young men and women to seriously consider a religious vocation?”

A content analysis of the 782 usable write-in responses to this question yielded the following broad categories (the numbers in parentheses indicate how many of the write-in responses fell into each category):

1. Allow for families and marriage (112)
2. Do away with the vow of poverty (24)
3. Allow women to be ordained (49)
4. Do away with the vow of celibacy (17)
5. Loosen rules (non-specified) (72)
6. More teen programs in the Parish/Church (72)
7. More teen programs in the schools (24)
8. More teen programs (non-specific) (4)
9. Better marketing of vocational opportunities (13)
10. More respectful and tolerant Church (65)
11. Things are fine as they are / Things will be fine (20)
12. The end is near / All religions will decline (13)
13. Sex scandals turned me off / Zero tolerance policy (22)
14. More interaction between clergy and laymen (50)
15. More church sponsored community outreach programs (22)
16. Modernize (non-specific) (69)
17. Offensive or rambling response (30)
18. Better religious education (non-specific) (62)
19. More / better role models from within the Church (30)
20. Other (uncategorized) (113)

What follows is:

1. a series of chi-square analyses comparing the males versus the females ;
2. an unedited printing of the students' comments.

Youth Culture and the Catholic Church: A Survey of Student Attitudes Towards Religious Vocation in NYC Comments (Data as of 5/4/07)

45. As you are probably aware, the number of young people entering religious vocations in America is declining. If you could have a few honest and uninterrupted minutes with the Bishop, what advice would you offer him in an effort

- I would tell the Bishop that I feel the requirements and expectations of becoming a nun/priest have to be altered. I feel that even if many young people want to be a nun/priest, their minds change when they realize they will not be able to be married or have children of their own. They also do not want to vow to a life of poverty, they want to not only be fulfilled by being a nun/priest but have a certain amount of fulfillment financially. I also believe not everyone my age knows all they can about this vocation, and if the Church reached out to us more we may come to enjoy this vocation or become more heavily interested in it. Lastly, I believe that they should be more Teen programs to make us aware, not to force us into becoming a nun/priest but to let us know it is a possibility.
- Honestly, the church is too conservative. If the church became more open minded and accepting of different groups of people, more young men and women would consider a religious vocation. I believe that homosexuals in particular are not being treated fairly in the church. The world today needs more love, and I don't believe homosexuals are being treated with the respect they deserve. Many young men and women would probably consider a religious vocation if you allowed priests and nuns to get married.
- I would tell the church to consider letting priests and nuns get married. I would also tell the church to try to become more accepting of homosexuals.
- In America, the number of young people entering religious vocations is declining. If I could have a few minutes with the Bishop, in an effort to increase the interest of young men and women who are seriously considering a religious vocation, I would advise him to relax some of the rules regarding women, poverty, etc.... Most young people do have faith and believe in God. However, the strictness of the church often turns them away. I'm not saying to throw all the rules out the window, just loosen up a bit and conform to fit the lifestyle of the modern day.
- If I were to meet with the Bishop, I would suggest trying to make the prayer services more youth oriented, while keeping the Catholic tradition, so teenagers may see what a great life they could have with God in their lives. I believe that going to church is a great experience, and I love having hope in my life, I just wish everyone else could feel the same way.
- I think it would be best that we invite the youth to youth groups and meetings so that they can first learn more about God. It shouldn't be something where they feel they are forced. If they go to groups for the youth where those who have devoted their lives and given their lives to the Lord can speak with them on a personal level, it would be better. It is always nice to hear that a person would be great for the priesthood or to become a nun but when it becomes forced, then it is not so appealing. I am actually a server in a youth group in St. Laurence Parish in Brooklyn and it is good to see the youth come together and praise the Lord without having to be forced, but doing it because they love God. Some people come in not knowing what to expect and they leave feeling Blessed. I think there should be more groups within the church but also I think the adults need to have more belief that the youth want to do this. If the adults in the parish doubt the youth, the youth might stop or it just might push them harder. But I think the youth need more support.
- Many young people are unaware of the rewarding and fulfilling lives offered through religious vocation. I only know of one high school or institution that creates a pathway into religious vocation--Cathedral Prep in Queens. I feel there needs to be more interaction with young people,

and the Church should seek the advice of the young people, not the elderly, because we are the future of the Catholic Church and we need to be informed. We, the youth of the Church, are ignorant to what the Church is truly about and what a life of vocation would mean for us. There is a cliché of priests, nuns/sister and brothers that turns many people away. They are often seen as uptight and do nothing but pray, however, the priests and sisters I know are wonderful and hysterical. If there was more interaction between the young people and the amazing people there are in the Church I am sure a life of vocation would be more appealing because they could see that priests/sisters are real people. There must be more action taken by the church to teach our young people of what is available to them, because there may be hundreds ignoring the calling because they're scared and uninformed.

- That no matter what a person has done, that the church will still accept a person. Also, to maybe show the younger people what it's like to be included in religious vocations in America.
- The idea of having a religious vocation is seriously -- VERY SERIOUSLY -- inhibited by people's need for companionship of the opposite sex. There is a certain human NEED that goes unfulfilled in eros which eventually leads to agape.

I don't know what to tell the bishop about this problem; the problem almost seems inevitable. People want that companionship, and I think the only way to fulfill that need for some type of eros is by creating agape for the poor and all of God's People.

I think once the problem with divorce and marital separation is solved, the rest should fall into place.

There also seems to be a lack of information and example for someone who is called to the family vocation to mimic the virgin martyrs and saints. There seems to be no modern or PRACTICAL way for the family to elevate itself to Sainthood. There is plenty of practical examples of persons of sainthood who became successful -- saint Vincent DePaul included; but there is no practical example to live by for the majority of God's People: Family Vocations.

- I don't think that anything should be changed. We should stick with our strong morals and values as Christians and never compromise Christ's teachings for the sake of encouraging young people to join. God will call those he feels would be fit to represent him and his Church. It wouldn't matter whether we change things or not because at the end of the day God chooses the ones he wants and nothing can ever change that. I would also tell the Bishop to ask God for advice. He is really the best person to ask.
- The Church needs to find some way to really get across how exciting a career in religious life can be. Too little young men and women see the Church as offering exciting opportunities to travel, help others, be a part of a community...really make a difference in the world. The youth of this country are indoctrinated practically from birth by the media and television programs that clearly define so-called American-values as those that revolve around the fanciest car, the biggest paycheck, the prettiest spouse, etc.

I think if more people really understood that a religious life can be just as exciting and much more rewarding personally and spiritually than just another job on Wall Street, then maybe more young men and women would consider a religious vocation.

I suppose the key is outreach programming that really showcases what a dramatic impact religious can really have in other people's lives. The Church should also continue developing web-based materials and should add more interactive features to some of its websites...really allow people to explore what life might be like within the Church without leaving the comfort of their own home. Then when they are ready they can come in to a local parish, campus ministry, etc. and talk to someone in person about a possible vocation.

- Religion is man-made. To get people to enter a religion vocation, the rules have to be based more on spiritual beliefs than on the Church. If a person could handle devotion to both God and his family, let it be so.
- To try to understand what the younger generation does and to listen instead of just giving advice, sometimes having someone listen to what happened is better than receiving advice.
- Appeal to the youth of America more by doing good unto others. Show the youth that the religious people do not suffer from any of the seven deadly sins. Prove to the youth that the clergymen are honest, true, and good.
- I'm not sure.
- I would ask him why he thought this was true. In my opinion, the times are changing and there are not enough strong willed Catholics to live as it says in the Bible at this day and age. I'm not sure that the vocations in America will ever become plentiful again without changing the rules that have been followed for a few thousand years, which to me is something that sounds like a solution but would be going against what God wanted.
- The church needs to worry more about spirituality and love for a higher being- not whether males are marrying males and so on. The church has turned into a political system over a place of acceptance and worship. I think that if Jesus came back today then he would not be happy with how the church is run. We are not following his word- we're following the word that human's wrote down as the Bible with our own interpretations of what those things mean.
- Advertise more about vocational programs. Make sure people know it is an option and not just a calling you must have.
- I would tell him that having a family is very important for all of us and that shouldn't be stop if someone wants to become a priest or nun. I believe that all those sex scandals would stop if the priests are able to have a family. If the Church changes this then more young people will enter religious vocations. I know this because I know so many people who follow the Church but don't want to follow the religious vocation because they all want to have their own families.
- The Church has not moved with the times as it should. Of course there will be traditions and teachings that are static but somethings can change. The church should take a serious look at it's strengths, weakness, opprotunities and threats. Then it should look at society and see the good qulites that exemplify the catholic christian teachings and try to icorporate those more so into the faith community. When society is more easiliy welcomed into the chruch people will more freely come foward.
- Confront the child-sex abuse issue head on! Loudly, angerly and PUBLICALLY to the entire religious community. It NEEDS to be announced that there is a stong intolerance for this within the Catholic Church. And it needs to be shown that the Catholic Church will PUNISH to the full extent of the law, and by this I also mean Catholic law, i.e., announced and published excommunication from the Church. Sadly, very little is being said OR DONE, and whenever a young person says anything about a Priest the first thing others do is balk about the sexual abuse issues. That Catholic Church needs a PR firm! Seriously. This IS the number one reason people are straying from the Church. Even though the media claims that its the Catholic Church's lack of tolerance for birth control, same sex couples etc., that is keeping people away, it is not. It is the fear of sexual abuse at the hands of the most trusted men in the Catholic society. Stomp this issue out and there will be more answering the calling.
Thank you.
- Find some way where you can better relate and understand the issues the youth are obligated to deal with at this tiime. If we feel as if you understand then it may be easier to get through to tus. In addition,the rigid structures and restrictions imposed in the catholicc Church tend to scare a lot of young people and do not encourage them to join or practice their religion
- I would encorage the Bishop to visit parishes and talk to the congregation about religious vocations.
- Consider women being ordained.
- Catholic education at the lower levels is too simple. The best things I have learned about Catholicism have been in my last two years of high school and the first two of college. I am sure

that if some of those things could be taught earlier, more people would become interested in religious vocations.

- I am fully aware about this issue within the Roman Catholic Church. Although I am not exactly sure what could possibly help with this situation.
- Sexual activity between non-married couples is a very normal thing today and I feel that the Bishop needs to understand and accept that. Also, the Church's rules are quite outdated in the sense that spreading God's message, I feel, no longer requires the messenger to be chaste, poor, and obedient. On the contrary, the messengers (priests) should be allowed to encourage open discussions without fear of taboos. I feel that religious life could be just as satisfying with or without the restrictions placed on our priests today. The sex scandals are just one of the ways that priests are coming out of their sexually frustrated shells with terrible consequences. These sexual acts are partially due to the restrictions that are placed upon priests. I feel that if the priests were sexually satisfied at home, with a wife or other "partner," they would be better able to control themselves and not have turned to pedophilia.

There are many faithful young people out there, including myself. It's so unfortunate that the Church never seems able to catch up with the times. I have basically stopped going to mass on a regular basis. It's time for the Church to reinvent itself. If not, sooner or later, it would simply become an institution of the past.

- To be honest, it's nothing you can CONVINCE someone to do - like I answered in a previous question, I feel that it is a call from God to live a life such as this. The problem is that today's youth is not interested in doing something that will make them appear as different or make them stand out. I'm not sure there's a whole lot the Church can do to overcome something like that.

My honest opinion is that I can't understand why women are not allowed to be priests, and don't give me that whole 'Jesus didn't use women so we won't' thing... You'd be doubling your pool of priests! Aren't we supposed to be treating people as equals? How can God be seen as being sexually biased when even the 7-11 can't turn a woman away for a job because she is a woman?? Women can be incredibly spiritual and loving leaders, just as men can. So that is my personal opinion on how you can increase membership in your seminaries.

- If the church really wants to recruit more younger priests and nuns they should sacrifice a little bit of traditions of the church and be a little bit more lenient with church rules.
- I would encourage him to listen to young people talk about their issues and concerns and to do his best to give them a better understanding of the way the Church works. He should encourage participation in ministries and education about their faith.
- Not enough information out there. Other vocations have lots of information out there for us to read and see and hear on tv. Nothing about the religious vocation is ever told.
- I think that it takes a divine human being to consider a religious vocation but at the same time in 2007 the barriers and issues young people must confront before entering a religious career are innumerable. Bisexuality, contraception, birth control, homosexuality, even heterosexuality are such deep and complex issues and it is a complete rarity for a young person not to question his own values before deciding that priesthood or becoming a nun is really the answer for him or her. The Vatican and Rome and all of the tradition does not seem to be transforming fast; so I believe that people who feel like this is their calling will continue to enter these vocations but at the same time the world and its complexities with the sexuality and overall anguishes of life also are not shrinking. So it seems as if intense changes are not made within the seeds; within the true centers of Catholicism; then young people may begin to sadly write off religion and forget that its true core is genuinely such goodness.
- We need to reform Religious Education in our diocese. The fact that we do not even have a curriculum for High School Religion/Theology is outrageous. I believe that High School is the most formative time within a person's life. I think too often we have people (both ordained and lay) teaching Religion who do not have the proper training, or who do have the proper training but have their own agenda. There are some quality Religious educators in our Diocese, but not

enough. I think by the time students are approached by the Diocese about vocations, they are so confused and sometimes angry at the Church because of a misunderstanding of what we believe and stand for and uphold. Before you approach a teenager about becoming a priest, we have to do the best we can to give that person the spiritual tools he would need to recognize a call from God.

- Although I know that a lot of being a part of the church is standing up to societal pressures, you need to take into account the modern day culture. I am by no means a feminist, but the Catholic Church is VERY misogynistic. In my experience with some nuns, they feel slighted. Another huge problem with young people choosing vocations is that they cannot be a part of a family. Maybe there would be less of a problem with priests molesting little boys if they weren't so sexually frustrated.

But, what I say probably doesn't matter anyway, seeing as I don't believe in god.

- Priests always seem to be on a higher pedestal than everyone else. If perhaps more priests would form personal relationships with younger people, so they that get to know them as real people and human beings, it would make a vocation as a career more considerable.
- I don't know
- At the center of the issue is proper religious education. Too often, kids are not stressed the importance of the magisterium and traditional Church views. The media and contemporary society encourage the idea that the Church should adhere to more modern beliefs, as was done at Vatican Council II. However, I feel that this only weakens the desire of America's youths. The largest barrier I have experienced would be teachers and administrators, especially at "Catholic" colleges. In public schools, religion is never mentioned nor given any weight. At "Catholic" colleges, it seems as if the school should be known as "historically Catholic." In my own time, I seriously doubt the strictness to which these schools obey and follow Ex Corde Ecclesia. This document was made for the proper governance of Catholic schools, and I firmly believe that straying away from it or rejecting it weakens the ability of the Church to seriously appeal for vocations among teenagers and college students.

I am not from the New York area, and I am very fortunate and thankful that my diocese, and especially my parish, is very conservative and traditional. Along with the Diocese of Omaha, we were the only other diocese in the country where our Bishop did not allow female altar servers because the provision called for them only if there was an extreme shortage of young men. That has never been a problem with my diocese, but sadly, the Bishop announced the allowance of female altar servers this past year. I strongly believe that women have their place in the Church, but the role of altar server is supposed to be a stepping stone towards the Priesthood. The Church worries about staying modern instead of continuing to teach the same traditional beliefs and ideals that have kept the Church strong for almost 2000 years.

The best advice I have for His Excellency would be to crack down on schools that do not follow Ex Corde Ecclesia. The teachers should either be Catholic, or at least vow to teach their classes in accordance with the Catholic Church, especially since the idea of Catholic schools is to teach and integrate the Apostolic Faith. In the time where people are so afraid to impose beliefs on others, the Church must never step back from proclaiming its teachings. Catholic schools are private--they have no government board with which to comply their curriculum. I firmly suggest that admission standards should be strengthened, and let applying students know that they will receive a Catholic education, not a modern education at a Catholic school. Admissions may lower, but you will have a solid body of students who are willing, trained, and prepared to defend the Church, whether by living their lives in the manner of Christ or by taking up vocations.

Now as much as ever, may the Divine Assistance remain always with us.

- I think it is often hard for young people to relate to priests and nuns. I think that a lot of times there is this overbearing sense of religious righteousness when priests talk and it often alienates

young people. There are better ways to relate to people without throwing bible scriptures in their faces and discussing how they should be more pious.

I remember while spending my first year of college my home in Brooklyn church got a new priest. It was ash Wednesday and it was the first time I went to church in a while. When I went to talk to the priest he remarked that he had not seen me there before. Then he proceeded to call me an "A&P Catholic" the kind of catholic that goes to church only on Ash Wednesday and Palm Sunday.

That statement has stayed with me and it is ideology like that I think that puts people off. Don't alienate people because they don't go to church enough, help them feel invited so that they go to church more often.

- start informing kids at a younger age of religious vocations.
- Well, hierarchy should be demolished in the Christian faith, and try to create a peaceful interaction with other parishes. At the same time, create a better opportunities for the priest, brother or the sister.
- Be more open minded
- I feel that most young people are pushed away from the Church because there is not enough social activities to pull them into the community. I know that my parish does not offer any kind of activities for the youth of the parish, and I believe that if there was something to draw the youth in, then the Church would be more full of young people during Mass.
- I believe it is necessary that the Church begin to consider the this generation and the fact that it is, as it is commonly referred to, "new". Most people do not have an inclination towards service to God because it does not very much "match" the opinion of most of the people I know (as well as myself). Service towards God seems to encompass cutting out any happiness in a person life, when that shouldn't be the case at all. I think most young people can agree that they do want to start a family some day, that they do want to have careers, but that doesn't necessarily mean we wouldn't want to include God in our lives. It's a matter of the Church accepting that people need these familial connections. Most importantly, why wouldn't God be happy seeing his creations flourishing while also committing service to Him?
- I have never been approached about even considering a religious vocation, I think because the focus is to find priests and brothers. It might do well to "recruit" women more, I also think that if more woman became nuns and sisters that more men would become brothers and priests.
- Honestly, I am not a religious person, but because I go to a Catholic University, there are a lot of opportunities that make really shows the meaning of helping and leading in one's society. I am not part of any church nor faith exactly, I believe in God, therefore I sometimes feel like going to church, because its surroundings calm me. I think that many people turn away from the life of becoming a nun or priest because of the rules and the long standing obligations they have. In order to increase the young women and men to consider religious vocation probably to increase the things they do, when it comes to being in contact with young people, make them see what the good is that they can do. Also when they are young before the teenage years, make the parents and kids participate more, that way when they grow up they are more inclined to stay with the church, and participate. My friends do a lot of church work on campus, and I have done some of the activities as well.
- There need to be more opportunities for young people to mingle with YOUNG priests and religious. Most young people feel that priests and nuns are only old people, and that it is very old fashioned. There are many young religious who are savvy to the situation of youth today, and have recently gone through their own discernment processes. These need to be the young men and women on the "front lines" meeting youth and giving encouragement. Many young people are more encouraged to look into something if they see it is something a peer has done.
- The church should creative more activities for youth people involve in community such as helping poor people so the young people have an idea Love God and once another

- i do not believe that people should have to pick the idea of becoming a priest or bishop. i believe that one should want to become a priest and not have to get talked into it. it should be a personal choice
- I would make the douglaston program a bit more publically advertised.
- Considering the distractions the youth of America face in terms of technology, education, and leisure activities, I feel that the Catholic church will continue to have serious problems with convincing young people that a life in the church is fulfilling. Since we are faced with a generation of people who are more self-centered and less likely to give up the luxuries that they have grown accustomed to, the church will find it difficult to sway many towards their vocational direction. I feel that if the church is truly interested in increasing recruits towards religious vocation, it must modify itself for the society at hand. There are many aspects of the Catholic church that directly interfere with things that society tells us are our rights- for example, if women are equal in society, why not in the church? As a female, I can say that the church does not make one feel equal in the eyes of God. I believe the church must eliminate the hypocrisies between the Bible and the social practices in order for the youth to take it seriously. More and more we are finding young people stating that they are Catholic, but do not follow the practices and teachings. While the church cannot go under a huge revamping project to allow for same-sex marriage, contraceptive use, and whatnot, perhaps the threats of "you are going to hell" and the like could be eliminated. Instead of preaching against particular practices on the basis of "God's word" or "the Bible's word," a logical argument for the youth might be more effective. The church still has believers among the young population. Belief in God and Jesus is a leap of faith and does not require reason or logic. Fortunately, for the church, that is the easy part of appealing to the youth. The only problem the church still has is appealing the lifestyle and rules to the youth. Those aspects cannot be supported by faith- reason and logic alone. If the church is to uphold God's image as a logical and kind being, then the rules and guidelines must also follow suit.
- Get to know their interests. Talk to young people abut more than just religious studies to help them realize they can have other interests in a religious life and make them feel comfortable.
- I think more freedoms would need to be allowed for young people to consider a religious vocation. Either that, or spread the word of the different things one can do or accomplish while being in a religious vocation. The image that people my age have about the men and women in the religious vocation is that of unhappiness and solitude. If we were to see the interaction with people and hear about the personal fulfillment these individuals get from their chosen vocation, then I think more people my age would be willing to consider a similar vocation.
- Considering how many secular and personal issues are becoming more relevant than religious ones these days, many young people see the Catholic Church as being out of touch with the values that modern youth hold. Also, probably due to the Philosophy requirements at some universities, young people are questioning Church dogma and teaching, and not getting a satisfactory answer.

I believe in order to solve both of these problems, and giant forum would have to occur. A big discussion in which the Catholic faiths are put up for defense against the cries of the youth. "Why is abortion wrong? Why is premarital sex wrong? Why is contraception wrong?" And they are going to want reasonable, moral answers, that a secular Catholic (or non-Catholic) can identify with. Like, "abortion is wrong because it involves the destruction of the fetus, a human life, and all destruction of human life is inherently evil because it robs us of all of our freedoms; given that you see life as a good to be preserved from a teleological perspective wherein the destruction of all life would be the absolute worst possible end" not "The Bible said so." Something like that.

- I would say that reaching out to the young community a little more by showing the qualilities and benefits of having a life in vocation. I think that the younger society is little aware of the happenings of the church and all that can be attained with a relationship to God and the Church.
- Most of my friends are either Christian or Catholic. However, sometimes they don't want to go to church is because the church interferes too much into their personal life. Some priests or people even tried to stop college students to date within the church. Sometimes they have plans on sunday, and they would give up the time for church and do something else.

- I don't really know what brothers or nuns do. I know a few who teach at schools or are principals. I know they go to mass every day and pray at certain times.
I knew a very evil nun who was a principal; she punished me and isolated me and scared me so much that I got into a car crash with my grandpa and almost died. Then I changed schools and the nun who was the principal was the nicest lady ever, very caring for her individual students, always doing something to better the school. She helped me out a lot and always supported me.
I know the priest says Mass. And that he writes and prepares his homily. And that he does confession, visits sick people, consecrates Communion, organizes and leads special prayers like Rosary on holy days.
I know that they live in a house nearby the church. And sometimes are very busy doing things for the parish people. They greet people outside church after mass.
- Reach out to the homeschoolers; never substitute appeal for the substance of truth. Never renig on teachings of the Church to boost vocations. The Church will always be provided for...
- Rethink the restrictions on birth control for married couples- it seems very excessive
- Let Women become Priests
- I believe that the biggest problem is the decline in morality and faith and as a result there has been a decline in priests and nuns. No one wants to give up their freedoms anymore, and no one wants to give up having a relationship with a member of the opposite sex to become a priest. I am not sure if I support allowing priests to have families and wives, because it seems to me that a man cannot be completely devoted to God unless he is without such daily interferences that the family life can and most of the time provides.
- The best advice will be is that to do more activities where youth can participate and like this they will feel that they are taken into consideration.
- I would ask the Bishop to take into consideration that the teachings we learn in church are still those of our parents and grandparents times, and it make it a little less personal and less appealing to young adults. I would ask for more ideas of how to involve those my age or younger in the religious community. i don't believe we should change the views of the church, including abortion into the teaching, but I do think the teaching should be more modernized.
- First try to strongly develop the young man or woman's faith, then show them how fulfilling the career could be.
- I think one of the essentials ways to increase the interest of young men and women to seriously consider a religious vocation is by having "career" fellowships and introducing them the religious vocation. I think its also very hard to persuade people to do something that should be strictly speaking "God's calling..." If a person does not feel spiritually reasonable enter seminary school and have a religious vocation, then it should be left alone.
- being a priest should be open to womean and they should also be able to get married and able to have a famiy.
- I believe the idea of religious servants not being able to marry and have families is an outdated doctrine that needs to be revised. Considering the fact that many theologists personally believe in the possibility of Jesus Christ being married, I don't think the idea of priests not being able to start a family as a less of a devotion to God.

And while the recent sex scandal has definitely shaken the solid ground that the Catholic Church sits on, I don't think it is going to have any longstanding effects with the public. But it needs to be somewhat patient with the general public concerning feelings towards the problems.

- I doubt there's much to be done, unless becoming a priest/nun puts a Mercedes in the driveway of a mansion. People want money, not religion.
- I would want to discuss the limitations placed upon those with regard to celabacy issues, as well as women's oppression within the church. Those rules were written at a time when the world was in a different place, and I believe that they need to be adapted because times have changed. I generally believe that women in this day and age are more devoted to the church than men, and if women were in fact allowed to be priest we might actually have an increase in the number of those joining the seminary. I think that for the most part a lot of spiritual people that I know, like

myself, are deterred from pursuing any further vocation because they can not have families. I joke about becoming a nun, when in fact it is something that I have truly considered, but I would like to get married and become a mother, and I think it is terrible that I can not have both.

- Female Priests? A Change in the Vow of Poverty and personal freedoms?

I've briefly talked to a few males in my lifetime who wanted to become priests, but, I've never seen any females who wanted to become a nun, I'm guessing because of the restrictions. I've only heard of one adult who wanted to become a Sister.

Coming from an all girls Catholic High School, not many people took religion very seriously (maybe a little) even though we had courses in religion. Maybe because religion was "thrown" onto many of the students.

- not so much focus on religion, although that's important, but more on relationship with God
- I would tell the Bishop to stop presenting a religious vocation as a means of sublimation or a way to channel your repressed energies. I believe that the people who enter a religious vocation should have a chance to work on their demons first rather than pretending that they do not exist and then engage in illicit activities. I believe that honest dialogues about sex, poverty, lifestyle choices should take place in the communities by priests and instead of the normal didactic "don't do these things, they should talk about why people are drawn to these things. In addition, the ways that a religious vocation does not serve as a bandage for these desires but a means of understanding them and accepting them as perfectly normal. People in a religious vocation should then use those repressed energies not to give instruction to the rest of the world but to meet and understand the rest of the world who are engaged their desires and show them how most of their desires will not lead to fulfillment. Then challenge them to really be fulfilled.

On another note, I have a problem with the fact that this survey is being tagged as a chance to win a free raffle drawing for a gift card. Isn't that what Jesus did not want out of the church?

Matthew 21:12-13 "Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. "It is written," he said to them, " 'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it a 'den of robbers.'"

- I attend Mass every Sunday and feel out of touch with what is going on. I feel that attending Mass weekly is important but sometimes the Mass itself seems to be too routine. Some variations to the celebration would be beneficial. I know there is a shortage of priests, but parishes need a larger mass schedule. As far as religious vocation recruitment, I think my parish is making an effort to recruit people, because many of the homilies have been based on the matter.
- I would advise reforming some of the church rules and having a one to one talk with the kids in a manner that they feel they're talking to their friend, not a bishop.
- Since I have been a student of a Catholic University, only once that I have received a brochure stating how wonderful it is to be a part of the religious vocation community. I hardly ever hear my Parish discuss the reasons or the wonders of becoming a part of the religious vocations in America. There is no religious classes in the public schools, and I think that this may hurt the religious vocations in the long run, the children are voluntarily brought into the Parishes for religious education. I understand that there is a separation of church and state, but still, there should be more programs for children who are not able to attend religious education classes in their parishes. It's sad that the Homilies contain no encouragement from the Church's part, from the Pastor's part to call into the religious vocations. I remember my parish in Poland and the dedication of the Priests was on a completely different, but higher level. Everyone knew where the nearest Convent was, who to speak to if you wanted to become a nun/sister/priest/ brother. There was more involvement with the community, with the people, more encouragement. Here, everything seems so "stiff" and "unnatural" that it makes me miss my home parish a lot. The true meaning of religion is dying, and it's a scary thought that by the year of 2020 we are going to be the 1/20 of the world's religion. I feel that I am drifting away from my faith, because no one seems to care anymore about a Sunday Mass, about the Easter Sunday, no one seems to even try to understand what occurs around us through the miracle of Jesus.

As much as I love my University, I believe the Campus Ministry needs to reach out to students, especially freshmen, because their minds are very vulnerable, and they need strong leadership. There should be more emphasis on the religious vocations, on the life of dedicating oneself to faith, to God.

The scandals that have been happening are not helping much either, but the Catholic Church is not trying to exemplify itself. We need stronger leaders, people who exemplify themselves, who are seen and heard. We need someone who speaks for the Church, goes for banquets, public interest group meetings, parents night at school, dances, field trips.

Just like Sister Joan from St. John's University, we need people like Her. She makes students aware of what faith is all about, that God gives meaning, especially when you look at what She has done for our St. John's Community and through the St. John's Community. I am not a part of her organization but I feel that somehow everytime She does something, she does it with me. That's what leadership in faith is all about. And right now, there is no leaders and everyone seems to be getting off the track.

- Try to appeal to young people on their level. Become more active in their lives and show them that you care.
- There needs to be more education and explanation about what entering religious vocations involves. People do not understand the hard work or the fulfillment that can come out of taking these vows.
- I cannot be certain of what could influence our youth to take on this life...I strongly believe this is a calling from God and the only way for them to even get to that point you have to first bring the desire to go to church. Bringing meaningful messages and passages during mass that apply to their community I believe will reinforce their beliefs in God and confidence in the Church.
- I think there should be more youth-related events/programs. If young people have a strong spirituality, they are much more likely to consider a religious vocation. Strong youth groups and diocesan-wide youth programs would be good ways to increase vocations. Also, more effort should be made to encourage female religious vocations. I know that priests are a necessary and vital part of the Catholic Church, but religious sisters and nuns contribute as well. Female vocations should not be ignored.
- I think in today's culture, the general attitude can be summarized as. "What's in it for me?" People, especially youngsters, focus very heavily on their personal wants and needs. Religious vocations represent sacrifice and many people are frightened by the prospect of personal sacrifice. If the rewards are not apparent, they probably see no point in working towards an abstract goal such as helping others achieve spiritual salvation. With most other vocational shortages, the solution is to provide an incentive that will attract more people to respond to that vocation. But the difficulty with religious vocations is that such an incentive will draw a response from people who may not be the best candidates for the job. Even if some traditional Catholic doctrines are compromised to conform to more modern ideas, the shortage of priests and nuns will still exist. The problem will be solved only when people change their selfish attitude or when they discover that the religious lifestyle is not unreasonably demanding. I think this can be achieved if the public is more aware of the nature of religious lifestyles (to be honest, very few people know the daily routine of a priest or a nun) and if people invest more faith in spiritual rewards. So I believe the Church should try to educate people with regards to religious vocations and spirituality.
- <I am currently a sophomore at St. John's University. I am from Virginia- the Diocese of Arlington. However, my father was active duty military my whole life, so I have lived in numerous dioceses throughout the country.>

I came from a very religious family and I attended religious education all throughout my school years. However, I didn't receive much information about considering a religious vocation except from a few annual pleas from the pulpit for parents to pray for their children to answer a call to the religious life. I prayed and discussed it with my parents and found that that was not my vocation.

Having received 13 years of public school education, I would tell the Bishop that more efforts need to be made to reach kids at the middle school age. That is where students in school become much more career-oriented. As kids mature into their teenage years, they're inundated with information about what schooling path to follow and what sort of jobs they might seriously begin to consider as a career. This is also the time, however, that most kids begin to drift away from the church. Parishes need to put a lot of effort into drawing teenagers into positive (and FUN) youth activities, where the discussion of what it means to be a priest/brother/sister/nun can occur.

Also, don't make it sound like it's our generation's fault that there is a decrease in vocations. That's all we've heard about our whole lives, and while we understand the problem, it's not making us run to sign up to join the religious life. A vocation to the religious life should be presented as one of many life choices.

I think awareness (and of course the Holy Spirit) are what it will take to get the needed increase in religious vocations.

- The laws of The Bible are unyielding, but showing young people that the church does keep in mind that human beings have emotions or tragic experiences which steer them to a negative path. Obeying The Bible word for word, and joining a vocation may become an impossible task for many young people because of the emphasis on making money in American culture.
- I think the only thing that could be done is speak the truth. Speak of God's love, mercy, forgiveness, joy and salvation. I do not think the church should try to modernize itself to appeal to the youth; I think the church just needs to be more open about the joy and peace you are overwhelmed with when you walk with Jesus Christ. The only truth in the world comes from the Bible. The Bible and Church will never change in purpose and in truth. I became a Christian when I went to church and heard God's word and saw the living God in people's lives, in their facial expressions and in their acts of kindness. In order to reach out to youth, Christians need to make sure their life song reflects God's Word in everything we say and do. We should not focus on the quantity of people considering a religious vocation but we should focus on the quality of the God's teaching and make sure it is God being glorified and not the actual people who are teaching the Word.
- n/a
- become more Protestant. allow women to become ordained, allow priests to marry and have children. allow for birth control and condoms. everyone is HUMAN. priests/popes etc. are not above the common people..we are human first and THEN leaders. I think if the Catholic church treated its clergy as normal sinners instead of infallible leaders, it would receive more people who decide to live their lives for God.
- If a guy was to constantly see a priest doing his thing, that is not trying to be a follower...then he can say I want to be like him. Even people in the industry (music, fashion, movies) are not admired or looked up to if all they do is be fake. People can read between the lines.
- Start a movement to get the church to allow priests to get married. It is a sacrament and a holy ordeal, there's no harm in it and the church could still simultaneously allow a priest to take vows of celibacy if they wish. Citations of church tradition and obscure biblical references should not carry much weight in this matter, because much of established church tradition is based on the action of ancient power mongers who through violence and misinterpretation of Catholicism started many wars and pursued courses of action that ended many lives all in the name of God, who is supposed to be benevolent and merciful.
- Adjust the strict rules and beliefs that have been strictly pushed upon the youth for centuries.
- I believe that the Church should reach out more to the youth by educating them about the life of Christ and the role of the Catholic Church to spread His word. Once the youth understands what the Catholic Church believes in, it will be easier for the youth to put into action the teachings of the Church.
- Unfortunately I think that the declining numbers entering religious vocation are more a testament to today's youth culture as opposed to anything the Church is doing 'wrong.' For more young

Americans to join religious life the Church probably would have to make changes but I strongly think that this is NOT in the best interest of the Church. Another thing to consider is that in order for young people to join the church I believe that they would have to have a very strong, religious family (parents).

- There are too many rules that are not fitting to today's society. With the society changing every day becoming more and more advanced, the church needs to accept some of the modern views and encourage them instead of staying the same as years and years ago.
- When people think of becoming a priest or nun, they think that they have to give up their lifestyle. Everyone dreams of a family, and if you become a priest or a nun, you have to give up your dream, which women in particular do not want to do. I think the church also needs to be a little more accepting of the changing times. For example, I refuse to believe that a homosexual goes to hell because I don't think it's a choice, just as choosing your eye color isn't a choice. It's a bias, just as racism is. By having such strict view points about everything, it makes people feel excluded and unwelcome. We have these rules that don't apply to today's society. We say we get our rules from the bible, but the bible was written for a certain community in a certain time period. We have to be flexible in how we interpret God's will. What it meant for that culture, may not be identical to what it means for our culture. We have technology now, and all these options and circumstances that a person could not even imagine when the bible was written. And we need to just be careful to not use rules from hundreds of years ago in today's society, but instead consider what God's will really is. Jesus said to love your neighbor as you love yourself... but, if your neighbor is gay then love him anyway because he is a child of God.
- Honorable Bishop,

"What advice would you offer the Bishop in an effort to increase the interest of young men and women to seriously consider a religious vocation?"

To be candid, I'm not exactly sure what means would increase the interest of our youth to seriously consider a religious vocation, if any. With all due respect, we now live in a more secular and "open-minded" society (as you know) where the youth are less attracted to practicing religion; and are especially less attracted to seriously considering a religious vocation. I believe that the advancement of science has proven many religious beliefs (such as when and how the Earth was created) to be "rubbish" or unsound, to an extent. It is very hard for anyone, free from religious obligations (from within the family or culture), to seriously accept certain religious principles or ideals. Especially when you have a religious teacher or priest telling you that "this is the truth because you have to have faith." I'm sorry, I'd rather accept a "truth" that is scientifically proven and evaluated; this is just logical.

I, myself am not a religious person. Through my years of study at St. Johns and through independent research I have come to the conclusion that I am agnostic, or possibly even an atheist. How can one religion be "the truth" when so many others out in the world are saying the same thing? How does the church condemn condoms when thousands and thousands of people in the world are dying of Aids? Why shouldn't a priest be allowed to marry and have a family?

But although I may not believe in God, per se, I do not feel that humans certainly have a moral obligation to act just and ethical towards one anyone. And in this reason alone I respect anyone who is religious or has a religious vocation because religion, in itself, stresses these principles.

I hope my response has helped you in one way or another answer the question that you pose to me in this survey. Thank you for taking the time to read this, and best wishes.

A student,
St Johns University

- I would tell the Bishop the concerns of young adults today. Like I answered before, the Church only follows doctrine and is not in tune with the times of today. If they became more appealing to the young of today, then maybe they would get more people.
- I think that the Catholic Church just needs to keep promoting the need for people who want to enter religious vocations. Our Catholic traditions and faith should not be changed in any way to accommodate those who don't want to become a priest, brother, or sister because of the responsibilities that go along with these vocations. As long as the word is getting out there that we need more people to enter into religious vocations, the Catholic Church will continue to lovingly spread God's word and glorify His name.
- Don't really know, I never really went to church, so I don't think I would be interested regardless.
- Emphasize that entering a religion vocation does not mean that you are cut off from culture and family.
- I would advise to hold perhaps education but fun events where teenagers would like to attend and learn about religion while they have fun.
- I don't think giving advice to a bishop would help young people want to consider a religious vocation. I just think young people don't want to make all the sacrifices it would take to have a religious vocation and they won't want to become involved until they do not have to make those sacrifices.
- Allow marriage and take away celibacy
- I personally feel that the main reason that has always held me back from entering a religious vocation would be missing out on the chance to have a family. Many people feel it's not their calling because they, like me, would rather get married and raise a family.
- Tell young people about the dedicated commitment that is required to be a nun/priest. Explain to young people that other religions that allow members of a religious vocation to marry and live on their own may seem better, but there is just not the same full commitment to the religion as there is with those Catholic priests/nuns. I think young people need to understand the importance of people in religious vocations and I think that more young people need to start going to Church and bring the Catholic religion back to the way it was when our parents were young. With all the violence in the world today, especially from extreme Muslims, I think that young people need to understand the importance of the Catholic Church, and its members including priests and nuns. While this is not the lifestyle for me, in the future, I intend to raise my children as Catholics and attend Church regularly and as a young person, I would be very pleased to see more young people joining the Church in general, but especially as priests and nuns who are willing to completely commit themselves to the Church with the same values the Church has believed in for centuries.
- Find a way to change the requirements to allow women to become priests.
- Dear Bishop DiMarzio, PhD. D.D.

Today very few young women and men consider a religious vocation, as a matter of fact very few teens attend church. Many teens feel useless and ostracized in church. Adults are always blaming teens for things that happen and always point out the negative things that they do, instead of praising the positive. This has left many teens discouraged and with no interest in considering a religious vocation. The church is not in touch with what teens are thinking or feeling these days. Many teens see the Catholic Church as a group of older male, who want to return to mass in Latin and who have the power to make all decisions. The world has changed, but the church has not changed to keep up with the world. I am not suggesting that the church completely change the beliefs that it has held for centuries, but the church needs to make some compromises in order to attract young women and men.

As someone who comes from a Catholic family and who has attended Catholic school all of my life, I personally would not want to become a sister. This is mainly due to the vows that sisters have to take. I also feel that the church is unfair to women because we can not become priests. Before you can get young people to consider religious life, you have to get them back to church. This can be done by having youth groups and other activities for them to attend. Teens like myself like to

feel needed and useful. Being a part of different groups in my church, like the youth group has kept me interested in church. Have teens take leadership roles in the church, such as being a teacher in religious education or lecturing at mass. Once that has been done, begin to talk to them about religious life in school, in the religious education programs or in the church. Have priests and sisters, preferably the younger ones (30s-40s) speak to them about why they chose that road in life and their experiences. I especially found it meaningful to hear why my assistant principal in high school and my former pastor joined a religious community.

It is not only important that you speak to teens about religious life, but the way you choose to tell them is equally important. Young people become bored easily, so if a speaker is not captivating, they will not pay any attention. Another thing that should be done is putting a positive spin on religious life. Many believe that joining a religious community will cause someone to lead a less fulfilled life. Beginning a priest or a sister is not very exciting, nor does it pay well. The speaker should talk about their joy of helping others and show teens that priests and sisters can have regular jobs. Even if they decide that religious life may not be for them, at least they will remain active in the church. Because the older generation is dying and without the younger generation, the church will not survive. I hope that what I have said has helped you.

- The calling from God to become a priest or enter into a vocational life is extraordinary. People must willingly and freely choose this lifestyle. Individuals' life events often may lead them toward this calling. At most a bishop can do is enter extra incentives to the process. These incentives must counteract the negatives of never marrying and often a lack of pay.
- allow priests and nuns to marry. I know that they are technically married to God but if you allow them to marry more would join and then their children are more likely to become a priest or a nun.
- I understand today's youth is chaotic; premarital sex, drugs, deceiving each other and lying; and I don't expect Faith based communities to accept this and adopt to its ways. However, I would like to see the Church meet today's youth in the middle and bring them up to the Church's level. The interest spectrum of the young men and women have changed drastically from years ago, the Church however can adopt to this in some way. Possible ways can be a change in music during Mass, more relative Homilies that can capture the interest of the youth.
- Honestly, these days there isn't much that can be done to help young men and women enter into religious vocations. If they don't personally choose to become a priest, sister, nun, etc, there probably is little that anyone can do to persuade them. I say this because people in today's society have a very fast-paced lifestyle and mindset. The "American Dream" or goal of most people is to obtain a stable job that can support a family. People want to get married, have kids, have a career, etc. Living a more subdued life without marriage, kids, luxuries, etc, is hard for some people to accept. I personally know that after having lived my life a certain way for the past 18 years, I would never be able to become a nun or a sister. Switching from my life now to a life of a nun/sister is mind-boggling to me. Not that there is anything wrong with going into that vocation, but I believe that most people want to "live life to the fullest", and experience all that life has to offer. Also, there is definitely a decline in how religious people are these days. Most of the people who go to my church, for example, are older men and women, or young children who come with their parents. There aren't too many young adults my age that attend Sunday mass on a regular basis. Another important factor worth mentioning are the sex-scandals that the church has had to deal with in the past few years. When I first heard about what was allegedly going on, I was mortified. I couldn't believe that men of God, men who devoted their lives to helping God and living an honest, spiritual life free of sins like that, would actually commit ludicrous behaviors like that. Many people probably lost their faith in this religion, especially young adults. So, these are just some of the reasons why I honestly feel that most young people wouldn't want to pursue a career in a religious vocation.
- I believe that in order for more young people to consider entering a religious vocation there needs to be more information available to the people about the entailments of the vocation. I also believe that in some ways the youth of today may not feel comfortable entering into a religious

vocation because of the sexual scandals and its contradiction to the values of the religion. I also believe that more people would consider a religious vocation if marriage was allowed because people feel as though they cannot fulfill their personal dreams of sharing a life with a special person if entering into a religious vocation.

- For the church to be more open to the new evolving times in current culture.
- Unfortunately, the world we live in has become too materialistic and shallow. A religious vocation would help people get away from the mindless distractions that surround us.
- It's simply the cycle of religion. The Baby Boomer generation had the Red Scare, and so people became religious. My generation is a lapse in religious belief, many other people my age do not either believe in God or in organized religion. The next generation, however, is shaping up to be religious. It's just a cycle, and the catholic church is not the only church that is seeing declining numbers in young people interested in religious vocations.
- More freedom in lifestyle. ie. marriage, women having higher roles - priestsLess of an "uptight" role. More in direct contact with the youth, especially junior high and high school teenagers.
- The sex scandals certainly hurt the image of the Church, and probably damaged the chances of a great number of people becoming interested in religious life. I'm honestly not sure how to remedy that, and the damage done will probably only begin to heal in time.

I think, right now, the Church draws new priests, bishops, and nuns from a small portion of the population. That portion of the population, mostly composed of those who grew up actively involved in religion, is dwindling in America, which is certainly not helping recruitment efforts.

To make the priesthood (or other areas of religious life) an attractive vocation for today's young people, the Church needs to address the way in which religious life is perceived. The fact of the matter is, that young people in America are very concerned with common career-association concepts such as income. Without compromising what religious life is all about, I think it's necessary to communicate explicitly that those involved in religious life can enjoy financial security and some degree of material well-being.

I also feel that the fact that religious life prevents the raising a family also plays an enormous role in the dwindling number of men and women considering religious vocations.

- Honestly, I cannot give an opinion.
- I will let him know that young people need their leaders weather state or church to be there for them and to be honest. More religious houses should be open to young people to experience the day to day living of priests, brothers and sisters. Priests need to listen to everyone and not just the few they spirit give with. Just be themselves and young people will see through them and that will give young people a more positive attitude towards priesthoos and religious life in general.
- The church needs to adapt to this changing world including Marriage (which used to be allowed) and the possibility of Women Priests
- dont be so judgemental towards young people and their friends. Be accepting of everyone.
- I would try to infleunce the Church to allow marriage of priests and sex. I believe that many more people would be encoraged to become priests if this was possible. Starting a family is the most important thing to me in my life, and even though spirituality is important, I cannot be happy without a wife and children to brighten my day
- I believe the most important thing to do to reach out to young men and women is to find a way to educate them about the church from a young age. I had very little formal education or experience with the church before attending a Catholic University, so I went all this time without having to consider or learn about faith or God. Also, I think it is important for the church to remain the same but thier relationship with youth to change. I don't think it matters, as I observed in the survey, for certain veiws on current matters to change because the church should stand by what it believes and youth would probably better accept and respect a church that did not alter to accomdate mass society. However, finding ways to educate those members of the religious

vocations to better relate to the youth and speak with them would make young adults feel more welcomed.

- The Church needs to find a way to find a balance between tradition and modern society. I know the Church is concerned with promoting moral behavior, but I think it goes too far in some cases and alienates many of today's youth. Young people today cannot relate to a church that thinks condoms are a sin or that sex is only for procreation. Also, they cannot relate to a Church that forbids sex before marriage in committed relationships. Nor can they relate to the idea that homosexuality is a sin because most people are tolerant and accepting of gays because it is widely believed they born that way. In short, today's youth disagrees with the Church on so many issues that it is not surprising that we do not want to represent such an institution.
- I think the main reason for declining number of people wanted to become a priest is the reason that you can not get married. Also if women were allowed to be priests that would open more doors.
- learn how to connect the teachings of the church to everyday life
- I would advise the Bishop to hold more Vocation Fairs in order for young men and women to learn more about the process and journey that a religious vocations entails. The Bishop, I believe needs to inform the youth about the serious problem of declining vocations and how important it is to talk to someone about a possible vocation. Most importantly, parish priests and nuns need to be exemplary role models for young men and women and perhaps plant a "seed" in their minds regarding a religious vocation.
- The number of young people entering a religious vocation is declining because in this day and age, many people consider themselves "spiritual" not "religious". Young people look at the corruption within religions and question their faith, which in turn defers them from a religious vocation. After all, how can you work for something that you don't really believe in.
Religious vocations are not necessarily glamorous jobs. While, i'm not saying that yound people today are fixated on financial aspects of a career (but that is taken in account when deciding a vocation), but more young people desire the need to work with something that is tangible.
Increasing the interest of young men and women to a religious voaction will be an extremely difficult task. It is not like the military, where you can simply draft people into the vocation. Perhaps you should remove certain stigmas that are attached to religious vocations. When people think of religious vocations, quite honestly, they conjure up images of elderly people whoswear by certain rules that they may or may not follow themselves. If you can get young people to see themselves in the role of a religious career, then they may actually consider it. Retaining the idea that young people today are different in many ways from those people who considered religious vocations in the past, you hav eto realize that times are changing and today's youth believe and desire much different things to sastify themselves.
- I believe that if priests were allowed to marry and have a family that more young people would be drawn to religious voactions. I know young people who are very religious and have thought about becoming a priest, but chose against it because they want to have the ability to have a family. If priests could have families, then I feel they would better be able to relate to those in the community.
- To the Bishop: NoneTo the Pope and Cardinals: Allow more freedom of choice for preists.
- I understand that the act of celibacy is trying to bring you closer to God. But the creation of a family, in my opinion, brings you even closer. Bring LIFE into the world is one of the most beautiful and forfilling things in the world. The act of God true work is something that makes religious vocation unpopular with today's youth. If that was changed, I would consider it more than what I have already done. I believe that is the main reason for the decline of young people wanting to become Priest/brothers or Nuns/sisters
- tell them more aboutthe procedurein how to become a priestor nun, advertise it more. i never hear itsspoken of in the church at all. it would be nice if someone was to tell us about the possiblities and how to go about in doing so, and also a little encouragement to the youth in considering becoming priest or nuns.

- I would advise to reach out and be role models to very young children. As they would grow, they would look up to priests and brothers and want to be them.

Also try helping troubled teens. They make the best advisors. Once someone makes a complete turnaround, they are typically proud to be helping others turn their lives around.

- The Catholic Church should understand the needs of the people in modern time. The priests should be allowed to marry its the 2007 not 1207. There are many things in this world that need to be changed the Church is one of those places that needs fixing.
- Instead of hearing elderly priests and nuns talk in church about entering the religious life, I would prefer to hear younger priests and nuns. I would even appreciate hearing about those who currently undergo the process of becoming priest/nun. It sounds much more insightful when it comes from a younger person. I have even been in churches where the priests preach about joining the religious life. I feel that the very act of preaching causes young people to turn away from a life where they believe that is what they will be doing.
- You can't do this, because a significant number young, educated people do not believe in organized religion. One does not need religion to make life worth living. Knowledge of life in terms of science and evolution is enough to make people grateful to be alive.
- The Catholic Church needs to stop with all the restrictions they place on young people entering religious vocations. Homosexuality, abortion, birth control, etc., are all becoming part of every day life. There is nothing that the Catholic Church can honestly do to change our world today. Instead, they need to adapt to the new world that is developing.
- I feel the number of men and women entering religious vocations might increase if it were presented as a viable career option, like becoming a police officer, doctor, or lawyer. For example, while a person is in school, they are made aware of the educational requirements to become a lawyer. A high school guidance counselor can advise a student who is considering a career in law. Although a student in a Catholic high school would have the opportunity to find out about the requirements from a priest, brother, sister, or nun, a student in a public high school would find it more difficult. However, most view entering religious vocation as the result of a call from God. As a result, I am not sure if having representation at high school career fairs, for example, would make a difference. The only solution might be for God to start calling more people to a life of service to Him. I have attended Catholic school for my entire life, and I can honestly say that the members of the religious community running the school never actively tried to get the students to seriously consider becoming a priest, brother etc... Perhaps the number of people God is calling to a life of religious vocation has not declined, but maybe His church just is not fulfilling its mission of finding those that have been called and showing them how to respond. There are many distractions for young people today. Although most are enjoyable, they also fail to fulfill and are not constructive. The Church should find a way to display the enjoyment of leading a religious life, and do it in a practical way.
- Try to be more open-minded about young people and issues that affect them (in regards to devoting one's life to God). Having to be abstinent, taking a vow of poverty, and living in a religious community is a lot to ask of a young person (considering peer pressure and the fact that a young person has not experienced much). Survey young people (as this survey is doing) and see how you can increase religious vocations. See what their interests are and see where the Church and interested participants can compromise so that both needs can be met.
- More young people my age would consider becoming a priest, if they could get married and have a family, women were able to be ordained as Priests, the Church was more permissive of a woman's right to abortion, the Church was more permissive of homosexual lifestyles, the Church was more permissive of the use of contraception/birth control, and the Church was more permissive of sexual relations between non-married couples.
- The most likely explanation for the declining the number of young people considering a religious vocation is a direct result of its limitations. The limitations are greatly restrictive to those who believe in the aspect of loving another human being here on earth. This aspect of a human's life should not be excluded from vocational life; rather it would only enhance it. To say that it is not an

aspect of vocational life is limiting someone's full potential. We are born with certain qualities that require companionship and love from a person in both a physical and emotional context. Therefore when one must contemplate eliminating that aspect of their personhood, the life of religious vocation is no longer appealing. I am not naïve on the beliefs of the church, such as requiring full commitment to the church hence the no family concept. But I think it would only encourage a stronger community among the church rather than the current division that exists. It would provide members of the church community with experiences that will assist in helping the community because they too have gone through it, such as marriage consoling and pre-cana. I believe this is the most likely reason that young people do not allow religious vocation to become a part of their future.

- For no reason should the Church really tone down its views as mentioned above. If allowing women to kill their babies would add to vocations, then the extra vocations are not at all important. Priests also shouldn't get married because unfortunately those that can help the world and the community have so much trouble helping their own. It would be a disservice to the priest's family to allow them to marry. I don't see the reason for women being disbarred from the priesthood other than tradition, although I don't want to see a surge of whack feminist / liberation theology. The Church must stay true to its roots and not abandon Jesus as the Episcopalians have.
- I think he would need to market religious life in a way that would be appealing to younger people. It would help to be going through the process with people your own age. Emphasis should be placed on the many possibilities for adventure with the many service projects and connections between countries.
- Accept different lifestyles, focusing on the message of Jesus rather than out-dated rules of the Church; reach out to people in need regardless of whether they fit the mold of what the Catholic Church claims is the right one and teach them God's message regardless- they deserve God in their lives too.

RECOGNIZE AND ACCEPT SAME-SEX RELATIONSHIPS and allow these people a respectable place in the Church.

Let women be priests and give them a more prominent place in the Church, instead of as nuns who are not seen in a position of power despite the hard work they do (this will inspire women who want to make a difference to pursue a life in the Church)

Allow priests to get married - this will allow them to experience the difficulties of having a family and will help them better understand the difficulties of married life and raising children

Have priests and nuns available to counsel teens and college-age students on matters of modern relevance to guide them and help them deal with more sensitive issues and find structure in their life- I know that going away to college was very hard and I went to Church and found support in that but if there was more personal involvement it would have been even better

- Raise current issues at hand more so having to do with the youth at a personal level & show them how faith in God can make them feel more alive & help them to reach their true potential & increase motivation.
- We need to be more open minded as a society, adapting to some popular demands will not be so horrible. Our religion is scripture & tradition based, if currently we all practice different traditions shouldn't those be incorporated?
- I feel that if we explained religious vocations to a younger crowd the youth might actually start saying that they want to be priests when they grow up instead of firemen. If we start at a younger age it expands the options for them.
- Mass needs to be a little more personal and less detached. I believe that will allow more young people to want to take part in it and perhaps pursue a vocation. For instance many, like myself, believe in God and pray, but do not go to church because it doesn't do anything for them.
- I see the best way to do that is to show the way the church is moving forward. It can no longer be seen by the younger generations as the conservative "do as I say, not as I do" hypocritical church of days past. Now I do understand that the church does not create laws, it merely interprets them the way they see them meant. So it would be difficult if not impossible for the church to change its long established doctrine. I also see how difficult it is to recruit in a highly secular society. I believe

the best way to do that is to take a new position. Not a position of fighting science and technology as I and many other of my peers see it, but as a collaborator. Not arguing Darwin's theory of evolution, but complimenting it. Since the begging of time people have looked to the church for answers they couldn't come up with themselves. Perhaps it could not dispute stem cell research as godless and such, but perhaps enlightenment on how to fight disease. Now I know I am being quite extreme but I am merely throwing ideas out there, clearly you need them and I'd be happy to help.

- Please clarify on the good things a person should follow and believe in life. Many people are afraid to go to church because their sins may prevent them.
- Many young people do not really know what people who choose to live a life of God do. If they were more understanding of what the job consisted of, they possibly might reconsider it.
- I would tell the bishop that maybe if more personal freedom was allowed, or more people were educated about how fulfilling it is to have a religious vocation, then maybe more Americans would want to consider that option.
- The best thing that you could do is take away the 'veil' of mystery that surrounds religious vocations. The only way to do this is to somehow educated the general population on these types of vocations. The other thing you need to do is reach out at catholic high schools/colleges to personally get your points accross to students.
- Find a way to talk to young adults personally, but don't not pressuring. Talk about the advantages of becoming a priest or nun and explain that they are not giving up their lives, they're gaining one.
- Explain what is being done to bring justice to pedophile priests, they have not been punished enough and it has damaged people's view of the church severely. Explain why entering a religious vocation would be more fulifilling than other careers.
- Give up, God is dead ... let the "brights" run the world.
- 1) encouraging bible studies for young people in the church
- 2) Maybe having the sacrament of communion a little bit later where children can make more informed judgements and understand catholicism more
- 3)Have more youth related programs inthe church, for kids run by kids, gives them more sense of freedom
- I believe that a stronger Catholic education through youth with more emphasis on the religious vocations would at least make young adults more aware.
- Be more fun! and less serious
- I honestly can not think of any due to a person will join if they want to because it is something that they will be active in. It truely depends on an individual.
- i want him to seriously look at the world today and see that we dont need all these rules and guidelines that the church wants us to follow. what young person would want someone telling them that being gay is wrong and that if they are gay they would go to hell??
this is absurd and thats one of the reasons i cant stand the church's hipocrisy
- Please allow women to join the Priesthood. We are in the 21st century and women are equal to men, except for in the Catholic church.
- I think that more young men and women would be more likely to seriously consider a religious vocation if they had better role models in the Church today. Many of the nuns and priests that are in contact with young people don't even believe or teach what the Church stands for. If young people could work with a religous person who was joyful and sincere about his or her vacation, they would be more likely to consider one themselves.
- Reassess your morals. Even further, stop preventing us from having much needed moral discussions. Let science prevail.
- I would tell the Bishop to participate in speaking at more functions in order to attact more individuals.
- Encourage the Pope to allow Priests to get married, then they will be able to help with family issues becuae they have first hand experience if they are married themselves.

- I don't think that anything should be stressed or understressed to try and persuade young people to consider a religious vocation. Instead, I think there should be more information about it given out. I rarely see anything that tries to get people to consider such a choice of a way of life. Also, one does not see people of a religious order just walking around the neighborhood - one has to go to a parish or religious community or school to interact. It would be interesting to see a nun or a priest living next door and showing everyone around them just how they live and how they can help out the community. People of a religious vocation seem very sheltered to me, as if they are in almost another world, with everyone else on the outside and interaction between those two worlds only through education, religious services, and choice to ask for advice.
- Personally I don't really believe that encouraging young people to enter in to a religious vocation is the way to lead them to the truth. However I believe that finding a way to spread the Gospel for young people might actually help save their life and soul. If we are interested in expanding the catholic church by encouraging more young people to become a member, it will be for the benefits of the church. If we are interested in helping young people to know the truth, we can do so by teaching them about Jesus our savior.
- Young people are so easily swayed by the temptations of the culture of today. In order to have people seriously consider a vocation the implications have to be given early in a person's life without being forceful. Furthermore, the implications must be consistent throughout the rest of their lives or at least for a good period during the consideration stages of careers and vocations.
- Educate people more about religious vocations via the use of mass media
- I would tell him that the priesthood can be a lonely lifestyle and priests should have greater freedoms. It can be extremely boring to continuously live with two priests who are not your age and you have nothing in common with.
- Priests need to better identify with the younger community so that they can have a more positive experience with the Church and possibly consider a religious vocation.
- I am a woman and religious vocations for women is extremely limited. I want to have a marry and have a family and I truly believe that that is my calling in life. That is what God wants me to do.
- I will advise the bishop to allow priests and sisters to get marry. And also have children if they so please.
- Providing more frequent opportunities to attend spiritual seminars, conferences, or any other activities, where the young believers can have more spiritual encounters. Also, having prayer/praise meeting once a week at the church.
- I believe you should talk to teenagers not on just facts about religion, but what religion has to offer for them. Teenagers usually turn away from their church because they already know the story of God and of their religion, but do not know what the religion could offer or do to them.
- Try to modernize the church slowly and not too liberally
- Let women become priests and let all priests be allowed to marry. It is as simple as that.
- I would tell the bishop to change the part about the priests not being able to get married because far more young people would want to go into a faith profession.
- These days because of how educated people are and everything going on in the world (including in the Catholic church) faith is diminishing. In entering a religious vocation you need a whole lot of faith. Also I believe there used to be more parents who encouraged such a vocation, but I don't think that is the case as much. In all honesty, I never think that the numbers of people considering a religious vocation will be back to how it was in previous decades. There are just so many other much more appealing possibilities. It is part of human nature to want to get married and have children, so really people who choose otherwise are bit off (no offense). Young people are liberated in this day and age. We know that we can do anything we put our minds to and we don't even have to go about it in any certain way. We can do anything anyway we choose and still end up with a great lifetime career. The Catholic Church would have to majorly modernize and loosen up to get young intelligent men and women interested again, and I really don't see that happening in my lifetime. They also have to stop be so exclusive. For example, my mom is Catholic and my dad is Lutheran. My mom went to Catholic school her entire life and never missed a day in church. They were not married in a Catholic church, instead had a friend pastor marry them. When

my twin sister and I were born the Catholic church refused to baptize us and considered us bastards because our parents weren't married in the church. To this day my mother still resents the church. I'm sure there are many other similar cases. Clearly those bastard children are not going to feel wanted in a religious vocation. And quite frankly, the church doesn't want them, but considering the church and its current reputation it wouldn't shouldn't be so critical.

- Several huge issues the Catholic church faces, in my opinion, are issues concerning women, marriage, and relevance. I believe that it is important for the Church to consider their stance on women in ministry. I think there are a great many women that would want to be in higher up positions in ministry, and the Church, by denying them that right, not only deprives people of the chance to serve God in fullness (with respect to their calling), but also kind of turns off some Catholic females. Marriage is another huge issue. A lot of youth blame the scandals within the Church on the fact that the priests are deprived of natural relations that are actually God-ordained. Marriage is a sacrament- how can the Church continue to deny priests the right to a natural family? I also think its a detriment to young men and women; as much as they may love God, the fear of being "alone" all their lives is almost difficult and sad for many. Especially if they have someone significant in their lives already. Finally, I believe that the Church really needs to start opening their eyes to the world around them, and find more relevant ways to keep people relating to God. God is never-changing, the same yesterday, today, and forever, but people and culture are not in some ways. I'm not suggesting changing the most important things that the Church is based upon- the Word of God and the leading of the Holy Spirit into righteousness- but I am suggesting that they don't let ritual freeze in the place it has been for centuries. There are so many ways to relate to God; our relationship with God should be dynamic and growing and flourishing, so doesn't it make sense that the Church should be also? Tradition is beautiful and important, but not the end all, and if it is outdated, and no longer means anything more than lip service to young people, then it has lost its salt in some respect. Perhaps, the Church should just consider finding new ways to institute old practices, and breathe life into the beauty and awe of them again. Isn't that, after all, in a sense what Jesus did to Judaism? He didn't come to abolish the law, but fulfill it! He shook things up, but in doing so, gave the tenets of the law DEEPER meaning; he didn't destroy the rituals of the past, but He reminded people of why they did them.
- Many people believe in God/ the idea of God, but I don't know if society is as accepting of religion as it once was.
- To seriously consider a religious vocation I truly believe the ability to have marriage and a family would bring many new young people to enter religious vocations.
- Religious vocations are not necessary to have a close relationship with God.
- Allow women to become priests and let them have families. One of the biggest reasons I am no longer Catholic is because of the last popes refusal to revisit the subject. Tradition shouldn't matter if it isn't Biblically supported. I don't want to be apart of something that oppresses women. I believe it would have a huge change in third world countries for the rights of women. The belief on contraceptives also needs to go. It isn't Biblically supported and I think it destroys marriages because it doesn't allow married couples to truly enjoy it the way God created it and defined it in the Bible.
I'm also concerned how Catholics segregate themselves from the rest of the Christian population. Condemnation does not convert, it pushes people apart.
- I believe that the Catholic Church as a whole is out of touch with the younger demographic and needs to open up a greater conversation with young adults. A period in life when most people are trying to understand their faith I think it's hard to get this age group to commit to a religiously affiliated lifestyle. Although I do believe that numbers would increase if priests were able to get married just through conversation with friends. I think that rather than the Church trying to recruit from this age demographic it would be a lot more influential to help people to fully understand what it means to be Catholic as well as what Priests and nuns do on a daily basis, or the mentality will remain, 'that's right for someone else just not me'.
- In order, to recruit someone you must be that person, wherein there is currently a large gap between the ages of the Priests and potential candidates. It is advised to start near home, educate

nieces, nephews, family friends, then expand, otherwise the task becomes very difficult since it is not based a significant research.

- One of the most important things to me is family. I have always dreamed of having my own family and raising my children as practicing Catholics. This personally is the reason I would not consider entering religious vocations. Although, I do participate regularly in Church functions and volunteer opportunities. I am a Catechist at my home parish and part of the campus ministry. I believe this is a major reason many young women do not consider becoming a sister or a nun. Also, there must be an increase in activities that interest the young population. Research is a good tool to find out what young people would like from the church. Young people need to know what the Church can do for them, communication must increase.
- I am currently a seminarian studying at St. John's. When I started discerning for the priesthood I was fortunate in having a great priest encourage me to continue in this vocation. I truly believe that the Church lacks in awareness to the vocation to the priesthood and/or religious life. I strongly believe that more priests need to make vocations more available to the young people of their community within their homilies (and within the homilies emphasize the importance of the priesthood and/or religious life to the parents as well so that they will be able to encourage their children), and/or special events in their parishes. From the youth groups I have attended in different Churches of the dioceses of Brooklyn and New York I've noticed the lack of the presence of the priest within these groups. One of things that has helped me understand and want to continue in this calling to the priesthood is the example of Christ the priest has to offer and witnessing his role in the community as a servant of Christ.
- More publication of the benefits this could bring to young people, as well as informing others of the freedom this would bring.
- Increase awareness about what is involved in becoming a priest, nun, etc. I don't really know anyone my age who truly knows what their life would be like were they to choose to follow that path. Maybe if we knew more about it then more people would become interested.
- Many teens are looking for more structure in their lives than folk Masses and liturgical dancing provides. Parishes tend to try too hard to be "cool" and it turns teens off.
- The youth today are seemingly different than the youth of the past. Youth have constant and immediate access to all types of information, especially American children. In order to increase the interest in these children you have to speak to them about the issues that concern them today. I think it will be increasingly difficult to recruit the Youth of America because of the ideas and values that the Catholic church upholds. Right or wrong, these rules prevent the youth of today from wanting to take part in a religious vocation.
- I am not catholic! I don't like preaching "man's" ideas.
- Entering A religious Vocation is a big decision to make, especially for today's youth in America. Today's youth is mostly concerned with obtaining the proper education to prepare for the future and take the correct steps in financial and spiritual freedom for the rest of their life. If knowing that religious Vocations would not interfere or even possibly help these goals I do think more young people will be willing to enter one.
- Primarily, continue entrusting all young men and women to the protection of Our Lady. Without her care and guidance to her Son, we will never realize our vocations.
I think it is also necessary that more young people have the chance to see and hear from priests and religious. All Catholic schools and CCD programs should have a day (or more) where religious, especially young, joyful religious, can come and speak to students and teach them about religious life. If the only religious that young people come in contact with are ones who seem unhappy and old to them, they will never be able to see themselves as a religious. They must see religious happy in their own consecrated lives before they will ever be able to picture themselves happy in that life. I think there should also be more resources for young people seeking to discern. As a diocese, there should be spiritual directors made available and retreats offered for young men and women who are interested. Discernment can be a very lonely world, so students who are discerning need to be introduced to one another and provided with opportunities for fellowship with one another.

- I think that I personally am not one to give any sound advise to because I am not part of a church outside of my University. I come from a low income neighborhood and until I came to this University I did not know that members of the Church actually went places to help perform acts of service to communities all around the city, state, country and even the world. Especially with the Vincentian followers for whom my university bases its principles on. We tutor people in the local community, we send people on plunges from as close as Philadelphia to New Orleans and even as far away as Panama. There even service opportunities in soup kitchens and other places that would give young people more of an idea of what these poeple actually do. I think that if people were to just be given the opportunity to travel and exchange views on living with other people from other regions then young men and women might find religious vocation more appealing.
- I would advise the Bishop to be more aware of as well as open to understanding the everyday issues young men and women face. As our ways of living change, the church has to adjust to those changes as well. If everyone is to be for the church, the church has to be for the the people in turn.
- Priests should be able to marry and have children and **WOMEN SHOULD BE ORDAINED AS PRIESTS**. Young people do not accept that Jesus would wish for a Church in which only men were ordained. Jesus was revolutionary in his time in his dealings with women. We are aware of the argument that all of the Apostles were men and that the priest, during the Mass, is supposed to fulfill the role of Christ in body. We do not accept that Jesus would separate, for example, Mary Magdalene or his mother, as less than his Apostles. We also do not believe that male anatomy is essential to embody Christ. It is beneath the Church to suggest that such basic inequality would be the design of Christ, and it is unbelievable that it has persisted this long.
- I believe some of the issues stated above have to deal with the decline in the number of young people entering religious vocations. The sex scandal has smeared the name of the Catholic Church on many levels, making the church look like hypocrites. The church discriminates against homosexuality, birth control, pre-marital sex, etc. and yet manage to get caught doing the unthinkable. Women are also dealing with a glass ceiling when it comes to the Catholic Church, being that they cannot be ordained.
- I think the Bishop and priests need to be able to make Catholics more united. Even at church people my age are a rarity to see. So many other faiths have youth groups and young people want to go to church and be with their church community. The Catholic church needs to find a way to bond all ages in a faithful way. Maybe then they'd want to learn more about their religious life and trust priests/bishops to talk to about advice.
- Be more visual in the community. Many see simply the priest who celebrates mass and maybe confession every once in a while, but don't see much else. If they saw and identified more religious and priests out doing something that others will take note of and aknowledge and hopefully respect, more would want to aspire to such positions.
- The church needs to change some of its antiquaited ideas. We need to move forward and they have anknnowledged some mistakes, but are still arrogant about things such as birth control and contraception which in my opinion is an important topic and a necessity in this day in age.
- Having a religious vocation seems so old-fashioned. The sex abuse scandal did not help your case either. You need to consider this when trying to recruit young people.
- I would tell him that the church should try to reach out with people who are younger. Maybe in their early twenties. Teenagers aren't going to want to participate in something if the person talking to them is old enough to be their parent or even their grandparent. The church should also make more of an attempt to speak to the teenage age group. Perhaps they could try giving a message that would apply to today's teens. It's really hard for a teen to want to get involved in the church when they can't understand what is being said.
- There is nothing that can be done on a local level to recruit people in masses. The issue of fixing these declining numbers has to happen at the Vatican. The world is evolving, and society is changing, therefore the Catholic Church should as well. The Church does not have to compromise its values, and won't if it makes some minor alterations. The Catholic Church still acts as if its

targeting a 1920's society still, but it isn't. The Church needs to realize that it needs to be more inclusive, accepting all people (gays, lesbians, etc.) and needs to foster a life that is more appealing to today's society.

- I would ask the Bishop to emphasize to young people of today whom most don't understand why thousands of our U.S. troops are in a foreign land that unlike politics, becoming a priest or nun is joining "God's Army" - there are no ambiguities about our purpose in the war, who our enemy is and who our allies are. Young people are especially aware of the everyday war against the enemy and that it is on our own soil, in our own backyards, in our own homes, among us and within us. The point is, most young people feel that there is nothing they can do to help the effort - government and politics are "taking care of" all that. Emphasize "what about God's army? Join a different frontline without the physical bootcamp." etc. Young people will come out of the woodwork to be "heroes" for a truly worthy cause - God!
- The only way that I can think of would be to stress the community involvement and the giving back that they do for society. Just emphasizing the fulfilling aspects of church.
- You should promote the spirituality and inner-fulfillment that can be provided by a religious vocation to compensate for the loss of wealth that one would inevitably suffer. Young people today are raised in a capitalist society where money and the acquisition of money is made to be the most important aspect of life. A simple, non-materialistic type of lifestyle is incredibly unappealing to youths today, so focus needs to be diverted away from that in some way.
- Sexual desire is probably the most powerful human compulsion. To require it to be suppressed is unhealthy and against our nature. Also, the pope has give special permission for some priests to marry. Moreover, the priesthood is not a religious obligation that originated from Jesus Himself. For these reason, priests should be allowed to marry.

Religions that claim to hold the only possible and absolute truth are doomed to end up in conflict. Christianity believe in Jesus' divinity, but doesn't our unique human ability for complex reasoning lead us to agree that it is POSSIBLE that Jesus was not God? This is why I left the Church-and religion altogether. There is no "absolute truth" in theology because we are talking about the mystery of God, of the universe, and our very own human mystery. The God Without Religion Movement is what I am not discovering, along with universal ethical principles. I don't know if this is possible, but the Church needs to work with all other religions to try to unite all of humanity with the belief in God-a God without religion.

As far as homosexuality is concerned, the Church desperately needs to look at the science. There is increasing evidence that there's a biological component to homosexuality. What if one day there is sufficient scientific proof that homosexuality primarily has a biological bases? Will the Church continue to believe that it is an abomination?

- The idea of "condemning" yourself to a life of chastiy, and poverty that is stereotypically cut off from the rest of the world is pretty scary! I think that teens really need to understand what religious life is about, and what it's really like on a day to day basis. Maybe interested students could spend a day in a convent/abbot, or shadowing a priest? After talking to Sister Joan, who works on my campus, I've been much more open to the idea of being a sister because she is very happy and fulfilled, and leads a "normal" life!

Our culture doesn't really seem to embrace religious life as a viable option. There's something weird about not wanting to get married. That's something kids are told from a very early age, and it's a concern you have to address! They should be taught from a very young age that being single, or accepting a religious vocation are equally viable options that they should fully consider.

- I would make sure young people know that they would not be judged for past mistakes and not feel so confined with stereotypes.
- Young people need respect from their peers and in order to get that they must know where they stand on issues and why. Religion is riddled with all sorts of misinterpretations, scandal, misunderstandings, corruptions etc. Until I had a truly knowledgeable theology professor I thought

myself to be agnostic, but this guy was so good at lecturing I decided to give my faith another look. He was rebellious, knowledgeable about things other than religion that are important to young people (like sports/entertainment, and he was funny. You need people from the faith community that can deliver the message you want to say in a way that appeals to young people. You have to show us what it really is like to do what you guys do and tell us why you like it so much.

- I believe as much as possible is being done to make young people aware of religious vocations -- youth groups, Catholic education, and Altar serving are all very prominent in my community.
- I believe in a way it is out of their reach because many people just don't have a faith or religion to guide them.
- I would tell him that he needs to attract the younger generation by meeting their needs and interests.
- As a young person of today I believe in the church, religious values and spirituality. I live my life day by day letting God guide my way, but many young people of today do not have a focus on religion, feeling that it isn't cool or even if they do, they don't admit it to their peers. I was there in that situation, and then I had a personal experience change it all. And although I agree with the church and many of its values, I do not agree with many people who attend, because they enter the church as though they practice what is being preached to them when in truth they leave church and sin in the greatest ways. This is discouraging as well, when parents drill into their children what religion is and make them go to church everyday, but their homelives are not based on spiritual values at all, many young people of today go through things in life at home that may discourage their religious values. Thankyou.
- Offer encouragement to pursue religious vocations. Give a well rounded view of a religious vocation, the good and the bad.
- I think you need to be aware of the problems that are facing today's youth. We go through many things that we are afraid to talk about in the church, so we just hide it or not attend church as often. In other words, we feel ashamed. The church needs to teach us more about forgiveness and about the fulfillment of a religious vocation.
- Bishop,

This problem has nothing to do with the Catholic Church's teachings. Society has changed and the Church should never give into those changes just because it seems like it should.

The Catholic Church sets a moral standard for America and the World. It should always stay like that.

I am 19 years of age and was educated in public school. But if the Catholic Church began to change its values for what was popular during that time, I would lose faith--not in God, but in the leaders of the Church.

- I strongly believe that more young people would definitely become a priest, nun, or sister if they could get married and have children. I think sexual intercourse is a major thing to give up. I do not see why people who enter vocations cannot do the same things they do now and have a family. I would like an answer to this if possible. Sex is not the only thing humans are made to do, but I think it is a major part of our humanity. I do not understand why the Catholic Church does not allow men and women who enter into a vocation to have sex. I, myself would consider entering a vocation if I did not have to give up the opportunity to marry and have children. I think marriage and children are a wonderful experience that priests and nuns are missing out on.
- I would say that he should accept women into the priesthood as well as allow priests to get married. Those two actions would most likely get a lot more people to enter the vocation.
- to try to understand the youth, and talk about the themes that are important to us, not to the old people. to understand that our music, art and other things are our forms of expression and are not bad and even though some messages are wrong it doesn't mean we will follow it, and telling us the music is from Satan doesn't work anymore. I will tell them to forget about dogmas and focus on

spirituality, you don't have to be on mass every Sunday to be in God's good side, but you have to act accordingly to God's message... most people that go to church go because they feel guilty about what they do during the week. I would also focus on birth control which is a very important subject, it is important to understand today's society, and even though you could say it's more immoral it is important to understand that birth control is important in order to stop all the unwanted pregnancies, abortions and children, it is better to use birth control than having unwanted children that are going to end up suffering the most. The church has to understand that today's society is not the same as the one 100 or 200 years ago, and that as the world evolves they have to evolve with it, because if they stay behind no one will stay with them. They have to try to adapt a little more in order to make us young people feel comfortable in that environment. They have to make us feel welcome, but we, the young people are not a strict dogmatic society, we are a strong self-fulfilling growing society of people that believe in God, but not the mass God, but the spiritual God, the helping God, the one that helps on the street, that cooks for the poor the one that is action instead of words. That is my God and I believe that is most of the young people's God.

- You cannot compromise religion. If a certain aspect of religion is not embraced by young people you work to explain it better through workshops, personal sessions etc. When we compromise religion or make exceptions the religion loses values and structure. Younger people especially feel that religion can be compromised they pick and choose what they want to follow.
- Prove the existence of God, not based on the Bible.
- I would encourage him to show youth how important it is to build a relationship with God and talk to him about any major decisions, especially when choosing a career. A career in religious vocation is a demanding one and should not be entered for convenience or for any other reasons that do not include a caring heartfelt decision. In order to increase the interest in religious vocation the youth should be exposed to careers early on, before they can readily form opinions about any negative aspects that society feels are included when working in this field.
- Consider allowing priests to marry. Most people my age would say that a future family is very important to them.
- There should be more of an awareness to people my age of the large decline of priest and also so friends I know have considered being a priest but the fact that they cannot get married while being a priest is a disadvantage in their eyes.
- To offer more awareness and to offer an understanding of today's generation and be able to apply it to religion and be able to answer these questions why would I want to be a nun/priest esp after such scandal
- Young men and women are growing up in a different atmosphere these days. The church has old traditions that are not as relatable any more. Many sins are accepted by society and the church needs to change the way society thinks in order to make an impact on today's youth. I personally feel that the church should focus more on youth services that are more modern. The music in the Catholic church is wonderful, but it would be nice to sing songs that are more relatable like those that the Christian churches sing.
- In our day in age, lots of young people aren't so perfect, and many in college experience with many things that the Church looks down upon. This is one major factor that turns young people away as well as not really believing. It's hard for teens to realize that God is real, just because our modern day is all about what is real we can see and everything has an explanation, a sort of excuse. They say that they can't see this Godly figure so they don't believe because there isn't an answer for him. Just a little more focus on teens and issues surrounding them maybe helpful as well as letting them decide what religion if any to take instead of being told or born into one.
- As I understand, the hierarchical nature of the Church limits his abilities to increase youth interest to consider religious vocations. Several changes would dramatically increase interest: allowing women into the priesthood, and marriage for priests, sisters and brothers. And taking a more open stance on homosexuals and contraception. As time has progressed we have been bombarded with problems that religion and faith don't seem to answer. As a result we turn away from the

traditional Catholic Church. I have faith and by own beliefs that I have formulated to fit the obstacles I needed to overcome because the traditional bible never helped me.

- Be cool.
- None at all.
- I believe it would be in the churches interest to consider allowing priests to marry, and perhaps even have a "trial period" (sort of like military service) where you sign up for X-amount of years, and after that choose to continue. I have, unfortunately, dealt with many priests in my youth that seemed cold, greedy, and out of touch with the youth.
- I wouldn't because that seems like he would be trying to sell a job to the youth and I do not believe that people should be convinced into joining the ministry. I believe one is called to join the ministry and the only thing I believe a Bishop should do is encourage youth not to be shy and be bold, offer encouragement to follow God's call on their life if it is there. And above all to pray to God to call more for His will.
- Let women be ordained as priests, and allow male priests to marry and have children.
- Just as society evolves, religion evolves over time. Much of the Church's practices stem from tradition and culture, not dogma. The practices and views of the church should mesh with our society. Our society has evolved at such a pace that leaves religious vocations behind. The modern world does not have a place for religions that interfere with the government such as the pursuit to teach creationism and intelligent design in public schools. The media has portrayed the church in such a light that it is the antithesis to everything that society strives to progress towards. Technology and liberalism will only grow as knowledge and information spread. The Church must reach a symbiosis with society if it wants to survive and grow. Traditions of the church are just traditions, not the word of God.
- Religious figures need to connect more with the youth of today by learning more about the new culture and technology. They need to be able to relate to the youth, and to do that, they need to actually see the world and the communities, instead of watching from a distance.
- Maybe you should not go about the business of "recruiting" young people for a vocational life. Maybe the religious vocation should not be promoted and pushed on young people. Maybe, just maybe the church should focus on helping to solve this nations problems of poverty, prejudice, violence, disease, and many other ailments. Take a stand and make a difference. That is what this generation of young people is about. We will change to world and no one, I mean NO ONE, will stop us; not even the church. "Why?", you ask. Well, it is because you are weak and cannot get done what we need to do. So, we will take matters into our own hands.
- The youth today has become driven by such things as technology. Since the world, especially America is usually the first to try things why not when it comes to religion? There is no doubt in my mind I would have thought of becoming a pries if I could marry. I believe there would be a rise in the offers to join the vocation if that rule was changed. Can such a rule be dropped, I hope so for our churches sake!
- I would say that understandably and ultimately, the bible is the law. but in changing times such as these, young people have more modern views of life and some of the rules that worked in the past don't necessarily work anymore. i'm not saying that to attract more candidates, the Church must negate its morals, but I am saying that no one likes to be told what to do and how to think. there's a reason that students go far away to college, and its to gain their independence from control. guidance is ok, but demands are not.
- To clearly outline the moral beliefs of the church and how they apply to the world today eg- homosexuality, abortion , etc

Relate to them on a normal level...tell them why they (bishops etc) became religious leaders and how it has affected their lives, both positively and negatively

- Do not be so traditional. This is the 21st century, not the Counter Reformation. Young people would be so much more accepting if they were only listened to, not just passed off.

- It is difficult because Catholicism in particular is viewed by many as too traditional and strict. The church certainly needs to show that it understands a lot of the problems that youths face in today's world, and possibly offer answers as to how a religious vocation would benefit youths.
- Catholicism is a very touchy subject for me. Everyday I increasingly grow disrespect for the religion because of the sex scandals. Not only to me, but to many people I know, we consider child sex crimes to be THE WORST crime known to mankind. I cannot respect people who take part in it, let alone people who are suppose to represent God. It makes me consider vocation to be a lost cause, because if these people cannot be pure, holy and close to God, it makes me wonder if it's even possible. It upsets me to such a degree that now, I don't even know wether I want anything to do with Catholicism, I am even considering dropping from my catholic university because I do not want to represent an instition that encourages this behavior. And I am afraid that one day I will disregard Christianity altogether. Thank you.
- Perhaps if there were more advertisement of some way, it would be able to inspire people with some positive news. What people need now is a reason to join a religious vocation and I believe what the problem is is that the chruch as not given the proper motivation. Most people believe that the church is more political and controversial than it should be (being involved in scandals, abortion, contraceptives, etc.) and it has affected many people from the want to join. What the public needs is some inspiring news from the chruch to wipe these misconceptions away
- Try to connect with the individual on a personal level and in speaking about whatever personal issues the individual wants to talk about incorporate how faith and religion play a role in that situation.
- I believe that if women were allowed to become priests and priests were allowed to get married there would be a great deal more young people open to entering religious vocations.
- The American society/govt is not against religion but it is not pro-religion either. A lot of people go to church without understanding the message gotten in church. The materialism in the world today deters people from being religious. Ones inclination towards a religious career depends on of they were raised blind to the evil portrayed in todays worlds by the media, govt etc...
- I think that in religion classes, children need to be taught about vocations very early on. I only know that in my case, as a young child, I didn't know anything about being able to be a nun if I had wanted to be. The younger one is when someone enstills ideas, the more open they are to ideas and the more likely they are to accept those ideas. My younger brother has been talked to about being a priest and sometimes he plays priest, but it needs to farther than at home. I think that parishes need to promote vocations to especially the youngest of their youth. The only other option I can think of is to pray.
- I am really not sure that I would know what to say to the Bishop. The youth now-in-days are in to other things and not in to religion. Most do go to church and pray, but on the weekend they are off to the night club to dance and drink. My generation is not ready to commit to anything as serious as becoming part of clergy.
- I am not Catholic, however I am marrying a Catholic next year and the one thing I would probably tell the Bishop is the Catholic Church needs to make it easier to intermarry to other faiths that are not of Christian faith without having to be baptised or having to do the other sacraments, because as we can see society is changing and people are intermarrying and in order for the Church to reach out to young people it also has to adjust slightly to what the community needsaand would like. I also think that the Catholic Church needs to review what rules should be strictly enforced, many religions are against abortion, homosexuality and sex before marriage however you cannot stop people from doing things and because the Catholic Church is enforcing it so strictly, people who are engaging in those acts feel that they are not welcomed in Church, meanwhile I think WE are all Gods children and just because a few people in the world may be doing things the Church disagrees with I don think that they need to be looked down upon or forbidden from being a part of religious vocations.
- I would tell the Bishop to stop being so old-fashioned. A lot of things have changed over the years. The Church can't be completely inflexible, they have to at least attempt to compromise with changes in society.

- I'm not sure. I would suggest, not to change their beliefs on abortion, gay marriage, stem cell, etc., but to be more understanding of others' beliefs. Also, a life of poverty and abstinence does not sound appealing to most teenagers or college students.
- Get them more involved in Church. Increase the payment. And give them some freedom.
- I am not sure of other students, but I honestly would have to say that I do not really have a strong enough curiosity to make the effort to go search for information on religious vocation. Maybe if I had received information about it in some sort of pamphlet or flyer, I would read it.
- In my opinion, the Catholic church is not open enough, or does not understand young men and women's views. There is much more that needs to be done probably at an early age that exemplifies the Church as a more understanding, free, and open organization instead of such a structured old-fashioned institution. I strongly believe that it is too late to convince anyone of my age or older of this, and the only way that they will find spiritual faith is through their own experiences or later views on life. The positions the Church takes on certain issues must also be updated, such as the vows of poverty or chastity. If people knew they could continue a fulfilling social life, such as having a family and some financial stability, they would be more inclined to joining the priesthood. I knew at one point I did consider becoming a priest because I felt it was very noble to preach and reach out to people. That view changed, however, after I learned of the vows that need to be taken, and the Church's closed-minded attitude on many issues that characterize young people's lives.
- I'm not a very religious person, and belong to a religion that does not believe in religion but does believe in God. From what I have seen in movies and in books, Love and the chance to relate to another is a very overwhelming feeling. A feeling that could sometimes cause doubt and temptation for people within the vocational field. I believe that the people in the vocational field should be allowed to Marry and have families. A family is something that strengthens a single individual, which supplies all sorts of happiness and faith. If people in poverty have strong faiths and maintain a family then the people in religious vocations could do the same.

In this modern day and age, Materialism and Money seems to be a driving force for people to reach careers to solely support themselves financially. I guess people should preach to others that happiness, faith and health are the only things that matter in life. When people experience such a fulfilling simple life, it makes the young people head for careers in religious vocation. Such a way of opening up to the youth would be to create clubs, camps or small communities. Within these groups, people should experience the beauty of nature, the reward of helping out others, trips to cathedrals and Ancient monasteries, young people just need to be inspired. I've heard from my friends that going to church is something they just loath to do because it's boring, they fall asleep, they have better things to do, and etc. The youth should be inspired not by straight preaching from the book but through experience, because being young is all about the experience and feelings they face as they mature.

Sorry if this was too long.

- I think it is one of the most unfortunate things that vocations are declining in America. My late uncle was a priest (Archdiocese of Phila.) and my aunt is a nun with the IHM. They, along with the rest of my family, have been my guide to the faith I have today. However, I do not feel as though many religious figures outside of my family have had a strong, direct hand in shaping my faith or my relationship with God. Although my faith was not tainted by the sex abuse scandals, I believe that across America the overall opinion of the Catholic Church was tarnished. To try to increase vocations will not be a simple task and making a drastic push will not help the cause. The overall direction of America is one that is moving away from faith. Americans feel invincible and that they do not need God. To increase vocations would require a change in the mental set of so many people. An overwhelming number of today's youth is influenced by peer pressure... and peer pressure is not pressuring many to really find God's calling for them. If the youth of America were to make real and meaningful relationships with today's priests and sisters (especially the more youthful and motivating ones), the rate of vocations would increase in the future. In elementary school I had a "prayer partner" who was several years older than me, I really looked up to her and

a lot of her views on life were imprinted on me. She wanted to become a nurse. I am currently in college majoring in a health science occupation. Maybe if today's youth were influenced by someone who knew their religious calling, it would have a similiar effect.

- Talk to the youth on their level, from their perspective, maybe through youth guidance counselors or young men who have already committed themselves to a vocation.
- Its declining because of the many rules and the bad press been giving about the Catholic Church. The church must make some changes in order to grow..
- Educate young people on the Church doctrine first. If they do not know the Catholic Church is, then why would they enter religious life? Young people are influenced by their elders and I think a priest or nun can be a role model for someone. If young people know and appreciate the Catholic Church for what it is then they may be more inclined to join a religious order. But at the same time entering religious life occurs through divine intervention. A person just does not "choose" to become a priest. They become one because it is in their plan.
- Make the idea of the priesthood more mainstream. Do not have priests thought of as being so special.
- Make music the center for learning.
- In today's society, especially in the United States, most young people are born in to a world of privilege. Most are more attracted to the prospect of success and happiness gained from education, hard work and minimal sacrifice rather than that of salvation from a "God" that they're not even sure exists. It is difficult, especially for young people to dedicate their life to a faith that would prefer them to give their money to others in need rather than buy an iPod. However, I don't believe this is the only reason young people are becoming less interested in dedicating their life to their faith. With new social issues such as same sex marriage, birth control and abortion, and advances in science involving stem cell research coming to light, the Catholic Church's views and interpretation of them seem to be narrow minded and misguided. It is more than likely that one of these issues has at least a small impact on everyones life and therefore it is difficult to be part of an establishment that forces one to make such difficult choices regarding these issues. Personally, I could not take such an active role in an establishment that rejects the idea of research that could potentially help a person suffering from Alzheimers or Parkinsons disease. It's hypocritical to claim that research of this sort tarnishes the "sanctity of life" when in reality condemning this research is doing just that, though on a much larger scale. Simiilarly, it is duplicitous to claim that God loves all people and grants the same rights to each and every one of them but yet that that same God doesn't believe that those who engage in same-sex relationships deserve those rights as well and that they are sinners as long as they desire to engage in those relationships. The world is changing and young people are becoming more educated and aware. Most are not willing to go on faith and blindly agree with every decision made by the church just because "they said so." Young people, myself included, have questions and opinions about contemporary issues and want logical answers. If the church or other faith's can not provide that for us then our interest in taking an active role in such will continue to decline.
- They can explain what benefits people can get, how they can start it, because I think most yprung people don't have a clear idea about religious vocation.
- While I do not know anyone personally who has lost interest in the prospect of entering a religious vocation, I do not know anyone who has had such an interest in the first place. I believe that interest in such a vocation is a rarity today among young adults because of the predominance of ultra-liberalism in popular culture (and thus a declining sense of the relevance/importance/validity of religion); because of the great role religion has played in the past and actively continues to play in inciting riots, massacres, and wars; because of the Catholic Church's extreme sexism and close-minded patriarchal structure; because of the unfair and incorrect view the Church holds against homosexuality, which instead of promoting human equality, compassion and understanding promotes discrimination and hate; because of the reluctance of the Church towards any type of improvement or change after so many years; and because of the years of misconduct and abuse of power of priests and high Catholic Church officials with regard to the sex scandals.

I believe that the culture in America today does not encourage a non-materialistic lifestyle, a

tendency which would make a religious vocation unappealing to many. Further, because the Church has maintained such controversial views on many issues, many Catholics (or former Catholics) have ceased to take such views seriously much less adhere to these guidelines, and so have stopped looking to the Church as an authority on such matters or for guidance in general.

I guess what I'm trying to get at is that I'm not sure that mere advertising or recruiting will work to increase young adults' interest in joining priesthood, sisterhood, brotherhood, etc. There are more fundamental issues involved beneath the surface that span years in the past and that will continue to stand in the way of increased youth participation in the future if no steps are taken by the Church to reconcile its outdated views with the current views of its lay people.

- N/A
- As society has changed so should some of the rules of the Catholic Church. I feel that a priest can serve his community well, while still marrying and having a family. A woman is also fully capable of being a priest.
- To increase the interest of young men and women would require a radical change in the Catholic Church as a whole. Society and society's youth have changed and this needs to be recognized. We ask more questions and we are not satisfied with 'papal infallibility' as an answer. We want rational answers to our modern day issues, which the Church does not seem to be answering with the conditions of today's world in mind.

Apart from sounding so pessimistic and critical of the Church, I can still manage to offer some sane advice. You can offer shadowing days for teens, so they can see what it is like to be really be a priest/nun. It would shatter prejudicial myths and perhaps be the push that they need to answer God's call.

- to reach out to them. most people today, like me, dont have any idea about the vocation.
- Make the life of a priest/nun/brother/sister a little more exciting and more "for the community" and less "for the rules"! Let them know of activities they could do and how they would be helping out people lead better lives and have the respect & admiration of everybody around you. And when a person is trained in a religious vocation, they should be thought to be a lot more easy-going and friendly...they should be able to talk to people and give them sound advice and not just say "pray!". Praying helps, and they should always encourage everybody to pray, but that shouldn't be the only answer.
- nothing to say
- Considering the fact that I am Jewish I really don't know.
- The idea of vocation is not a limited term. AllVocations need to be discussed in conjunction with one another. One can not discuss religious vocations without addressing marriage and visa-versa. I believe that to have a successful outreach program on vocations to young men and women today, one needs to discuss the idea of love and service of others. One must address a vocation as "searching for one's call to love"-- within the context of a family or within the context of a religious community. Otherwise, the youth of today are too caught up in the fears and anxiety of choosing one vocation over the other. One can not discern properly without the complete freedom and understanding between the beautiful options of the numerous vocations.

Finally, to show the youth of today the true meaning of a religious vocation, the youth must meet young religious men and young religious women who love and live-out thier vows. Also, the youth must meet other women and men who are currently discerning. This collaboration between the religious community and thier youth is vital so that young adults can understand the full life a religious vocation offers.

- I think the biggest reason for the decline in young people entering religious vocations is that priests, brothers, and nuns are not allowed to get married. I know people my age that I could see entering a religious vocation if only they were allowed to get married. I do not think that being married lessens one's love and devotion to God. I even think that being able to get married could enhance their love for God. A loving marriage is a living sign of God's love for us, and married

religious persons would be able to relate better with the people of their Parish. A married priest would simply have to be sure that he balanced his religious life with his family life.

- You must know that today's youth is the most sinnest and modern when compared to other generations. To get us into a commitment w/ a religious life with many restrictions, which ,may benefit us in the long run- there must be a SLOW process. In other words the bible has many restrictions and rules about person's personal life, so encouraging to apply them all at the same time would scare away anyone who is new to this life style. For example giving us a strong and reliable advice when we need itand seeing it come teu is priceless.
- I do not believe that there is a practical way of doing so. The values of the Church are antiquated, and alienate much of the modern youth, if not also the rest of society. I understand that the Church provides guidance and support to segments of society, and that is a very important role. However, to modern sensibility, the Church's hostility towards homosexuality, contraception, and possibly life enhancing medical advancements is a souce of alienation and even anger. The Church seems to have made it clear that it has no intention of softening its position on these issues to more accurately reflect the society to which it would like to reach out. While the strict requirements of a religious vocation may be an issue for some, I strongly believe that the deepest and most vexing issue is the Church's inability to relate to youth on a practical level. As such, I do not believe there is a way to successfully increase youth interest in religious vocations.
- The only thing I can say for sure, is to keep the minds of the old open to new ideas. Don't get stuck in the niche of tradition.
- Based on the sex scandals within the church, many people are objectifying the church as dishonest and having ultimate motivations that do not benefit its members. If this case is resolved, more people would have faith in the church and probably return to or join it. The church also has to be more open-minded about people of all backgrounds, especially of others' prior or current cultural and religious views, so that they may be more sensitive towards others. By eliciting this sort of understanding, the church would seem more appealing and maybe even be viewed as a where sanctuary actually exists.
- **RUN AS FAR AWAYS FROM THE CORRUPT CATHOLIC CHURCH AND GUYS HOLD YOUR ASS, BECAUSE THESE EVIL BISHOPS, PRIEST AND WHATEVER THEY CALL THEMSELVES ARE THE MOST DANGEROUS MOTHERFUCKERS.**
- I would encourage the Bishop to reach out to the community and educate them as to the benefits to considering a religious vocation. It is important to also reach people on a religious basis as well, not only are they rationally thinking about the vocation and its earthy benefits but, they can also see the spiritual, long-term benefits as well.
- Try to be in touch with the needs of young people, and try to understand the perspectives we have on life s as to be better equipped to offer information on religious vocations.
- Promote, promote, promote, I cannot express this enough. I have only been asked by one priest ever, if I wanted to become a priest or brother. I believe many have the calling, but in this world all they need is the final push. I also think that a better explanation of church's moral teachings should be expressed. Just not how, but why.
- Well based on the incentive for this survey, which is the raffle to win money, I would say that if younger people were more aware of the benefits of entering into religious vocations then they would probably be more inclined. Also, the money is important because everyone need money to survive. Life is not free and young people are well aware of that fact.
- There is nothing one can really do. I believe the strict structure of the Church is as it should be. If one wants to seriously consider a religious vocation sacrifices must be made. It is written in the Scripture, especially in the Gospel, that if you truly wish to be a servant of God and follow His holy will, you must leave everything behind. The Church cannot lower its standards because to do so will be going againt what is written in the Bible as a testament of our faith.
- People need to be more aware of the non-spiritual things that people in religious vocations are involved in.
- I seriously have no idea. Sorry.

- Good luck. Talking to young people in general is hard. I would suggest connecting to them personally, asking about family, and/or other possible career choices. Are they set on a family? Are they unsure about a career? What are they looking for in a career?
- To be much more open minded and understand that today's world does not take the bible so literally, particularly regarding homosexuality. He should also think about accepting it, considering how many scandals emerged within the church. Otherwise the church will only turn itself into a mockery of what religion is truly about being that many within committed a crime much worse than homosexuality and are simply hypocrites.
- The advice I would offer is just to be honest about the current situation of the church. Explain the difficulties of pursuing a religious vocation. In no way force or try to demand joining the faith, just be honest and truthful and leave the decision up to them.
- A granted way to salvation.
- Provide more workshops in all catholic schools to spread the news of how young people can be part of a religious vocation. Going to Catholic highschools and letting students know they have an option of becoming a nun or priest. Becoming a priest/nun is also hard when you can't have a family, but providing assistance for a stable financial life is important. Providing assistance in going to college or finding an appropriate part time job like counseling in schools or clinics.
- To increase the amount of young men and women to join religious vocations, it is a very difficult task. However, I am sure there are people out there who would wish to pursue this. I think it is important to make things more interesting or exciting to the younger generation. That is what catches their eye because I think the young people are very bored of certain things. So I would say, make things more interesting and explain to them how this is a very beautiful job and it is well worth it.
- I would tell him that the culture of America is losing itself in general. As a whole, we feel we're being led blindly through life in many ways, our education is blind, we'll never be rich, we're powerless with regards to our government &c. Generally, we're disillusioned. I think that youth no longer wants to be seen as a whole, and there is a strong pull to be different and the best. The catholic church just seems out of touch. I understand their stances on faith and moral codes, but, the message comes across as a hard line truth, which is what they're trying to achieve - a strong foundation. But, I will also note that the church has, hm, modified its principles over the years.
One should be led to spiritual nirvana. Jainism is the way for me, I hope that others find spiritual awakening under any banner.
- In this day and age, I think that if The Church wants to increase attendance at church and into jobs as priests or nuns, I think the whole process needs to be more appealing and more involving. For example, if I ever wanted to join, I would not know where to begin to go.
- The society is changing rapidly, so the young people of this society today has views which are also different from the Church. In perhaps changing the Church's view, it might also help to bring more young people into entering religious vocations.
- reach out more through more programs at local parishes for the younger kids that would encourage a strong religious foundation. I truly believe that the programs at my parish that I attended when I was in my early teens still have a strong effect on my faith.
- not applicable
- I feel a lot of people are hesitant to enter into a religious vocation because they are not allowed to get married or have children. Also, many women feel that they are seen as second class citizens within the church. In addition, the views on homosexuality are very discouraging because as it becomes more and more accepted in society, many members of the church prove to be unaccepting, and somewhat bigoted. Many young people that I have known are very deeply spiritually connected. They feel a true personal bond with Jesus. However, many of us feel that the strict and sometimes abrasive rules hinder that relationship. For instance, why can't one be in a religious vocation and be a father? There have been men in my family that considered the priesthood but also fell in love. One way of life had to bend and they were not truly happy with either decision. In other instances how can work for a faith that does not accept all of God's children equally? Just

because one is Gay does not mean he or she is promiscuous, lewd or diseased. If one is born that way, why can't he or she love Jesus and be what he or she is.

- The views of abortion, birth control, gay marriage, etc. need to change. The Church is too old fashioned and strict about these things... as well as controversial due to the sex scandals. You also can't yell at teenage mothers for having children so young, and at the same time, say abortion is wrong when they chose no to abortion.
- be less hypocritical. women are equal to men, stop demeaning women as if we're not human. jesus preached equality, yet the church twists his message to put men in power and hold women down. im done with the practices of the catholic church because i have more respect for myself than any priest in any parish will show for me. i don't need to be in a community to pray, i'm doing fine talking to god in my own way, on my own time, without strict obligations.
- My thoughts about the Catholic church are not kind at all. I believe its because of the "church" Christianity has gone below the intentions of what Jesus had in mind. If anything IT IS because of the church the reason i have lost my complete faith in God. Putting the stuff you hear about in the media aside with the sexual molestation of children from a priest, i believe it comes down to one thing; Marriage. Thats something way to big to give up even if it is for "God", if he even exists at all. If you want changes let priests/nuns marry.
- Make the voice heard in the sense that publicity is needed to inform people about the benefits one would get by considering a religious vocation. Many people like me believe that nuns and priests spend the rest of their lives in a church and don't have much of an impact in our society. Another reason is that the morals of our society are deteriorating and we are living at a time when everyone is driven by the desire to earn lots of money so this will make it even harder for the church to recruit people.
- We live in a nuclear age now and more people are starting to realize that it's wrong to emotionally and physically abuse homosexuals. It's not thier fault, they were born that way just as there are people out there who are born straight. Another thing is that the church restricts certain actions like marriage before sex. Let's get real, even parents know that thier kids will most likely have sex before thier married especially when they go off to college, and sex isn't a bad thing as long as your responsible and you do it with the person you love. Helping the poor and needy is something that I respect the religious community for doing which a lot of young people are interested in. I do believe that thier is a God or some strong force out thier but what a lot of stuff that the bible says I disagree with and it makes me upset that some people abuse it and turn into extremists.
- The Catholic Church needs to make religious vocations more attractive to young people. Telling people they must be deprived the joy of a spouse and children is a HUGE deterrent for so many people. It's not fair that you can't both answer your calling to God, and your calling to be a husband/wife and parent. If we are all created Imagei deo - In the image of God - then why can women not be priests? Doesn't this sound like sex discrimination to anyone? Maybe the reason so many priests have been involved with sexual scandals involving children is because they are deprived of having that relationship with a WOMAN OR LIFE PARTNER! These things all seem obvious to me, and I'm not sure why they aren't to the Catholic Church community.
- I'm not a member of the Catholic Church, but I am Presbyterian. We don't have a problem with getting our youth to consider a religious vocation such as a reverend or a pastor. Maybe the problem lies with the fact that the Catholic Church's religious vocation is limited by rules that guard sex, marriage, and the living with a religious community.
- People in NYC need to be more familiar with the Catholic Church, and the Catholic Church should become more conservative like how it used to be before Vatican II. Also, the Catholic Church should do more to reach out to young people about vocations, and should not change its views to go along with that of liberals which we have way to many of in NYC.
- I would tell him this: times are changing. In my Human Relations and Adolescent Deveolpment class I'm learning a great deal about people and their respective views on the world. I'm also learning how to accept people for who they are, mistakes and all. I would suggest that he and all other religious members think seriously about the world in which we live. We cannot bring people

back to traditional ideals and beliefs without first reaching to them -- AS THEY ARE NOW.

Something has to give.

- To consider the possibility of allowing those in religious vocations to get married and have families.
- loosen up and stop touching kids
- I think if priests got more involved in their community and frequently visited with the parish children either through educational classes or CCD classes. I think if children got to know their priests a lot more children would feel more free to open up to them. Children will then see priests as friends and not as someone to say hello to and walk away.
- I think it's difficult to talk to young people about religion. We have access to a lot of information and at times the Catholic church can be viewed as hypocritical. I think that the church should have an open mind. They should make an effort to grow with society instead of insist that society remain in line with them. I am currently sitting in my residence in Rome about a five minute walk from the Vatican and I can't help but be overwhelmed by the extreme beauty of everything in the Vatican. It makes me wonder about the whole poverty concept. I have a very strong faith in myself and God and some times I wish that the Catholic church could be more accepting of individual spirituality and connection with God rather than following the rules.
- While I was raised a Catholic, I am an atheist, and do feel that the Catholic Church would have to more greatly embrace the ideas of modern times more so than they do now, for young people to not only consider religious vocation, but to join the Church at all.
- we need to look at the problems youth face and realize that the world is also part of God. In addition, we need to look at the financial structure of the church and invest more into the youth culture
- I would say that the Church has to change moderately with the times. The tradition is crucial to the structure of the church but, a woman priest or having a family is not so far off from what the true message should be. It's about reaching people and contributing not, giving up on the idea of having family to reach God in the same light. Why can't one enjoy both?
- Allowing people with religious vocations to have a family will give them more knowledge and insight into how most people live, act, and respond. They will understand more issues if they have a family because they will have gone through more of these daily problems. This will make them more approachable, people will trust them more, and their guidance will be accepted as more credible. More freedom will allow people in religious vocations to help people in a way that interests them. This will make each individual more productive and happier.
- America is going to hell, there's nothing you can do about it.
- Listen to the needs of the future generations. The rules are too strict. You should be able to believe in whatever God you want without having to follow a "guideline". I do not agree with the church's views on Abortion, Birth Control and Homosexual Relations. We are all created in the eye of God and the choices made in our life are also done in the eye of God.
- I am of Protestant beliefs. I am not sure what I would tell the Bishop, I used to attend a Catholic Church with my father however, the Church did not do anything really to encourage the youths, or anyone for a matter of fact of gaining a closer relationship with God, let alone pursue a religious vocation. Maybe they need more outreach programs, fundraisers, and Church members need to be more welcoming to outsiders.
- GIVE A LISTENING EAR TO THEIR PROBLEMS AND HELP THEM MEND THEIR WAYS.
- Clearly, stricter religion classes need to be compulsory at a College Level. Now is the time when students actually make a bulk of their own decisions that guidance and spiritual influence should be emphasized the most. Relenting spiritually in today's society is a weakness that must be rectified!
- I would tell him to run activities that the kids want to participate in and put a religious twist to them. I would also tell him to get preachers who are more in tune with this generation and more appealing to the kids.
- The Catholic Church needs to make some big changes. Most importantly, priests have to be able to get married. I believe this would decrease by far the amount of sexual scandals happening in the Church today. The Church needs to accept women in higher levels of authority, then maybe the

Church's opinion on issues such as abortion and contraception may change. If priests and nuns did not have to live in a religious community I feel that this would encourage more young people to consider a religious vocation.

- As a young woman raised Catholic, I can honestly say that I have known some great nuns and members of the clergy. However, I have also encountered some who close-minded regarding social issues. While I understand that they are adhering to Catholic beliefs, and greatly respect that, they should also be respectful of alternative opinions, particularly in university classrooms where academic dialogue is meant to take place.

Most of the reasons I no longer consider myself Catholic are because of the structure or the Church, not the faith itself. For example, I find it incredibly disheartening that women cannot be deacons or priests. I am aware of the traditions of the priesthood, having researched them extensively for a theology paper where I argued that women should at least be allowed to be deacons, if not priests. I feel that this practice is a practice of exclusion, telling women that they are good enough to be nuns, but not good enough to partake more intimately in the Church. In essence, I think that this type of exclusion creates an unnecessary hierarchy of the sexes within a Church that preaches inclusion and respect.

I also think it would be a good idea to stress the importance of deacons to young people, who may be more receptive of that vocation because it allows them to have a family, but still play a large part in the Church.

- Many people say that the Church is not modern because its views are not up to date with the views of society. This is not true. The Church holds views that agree with the teachings of Jesus. These standards can be considered ideal. The views of society on certain issues are based upon immediate gratification and are not necessarily right. As religious faith in society decreases, more and more younger people are agreeing with the opinions of society and feeling like the Church is a voice that can be ignored and not taken seriously. The problem is that the Church cannot change its laws and society is moving further and further away from them. This problem must be addressed before addressing the problem of finding people to take part in religious vocations. If faith continues to decline there will be no one who will want to become a priest or a nun.
- not sure
- Recruit more at University and high schools. Be more open to what young people have to say.
- Generally, the people that are seen that go into this field of study are 'weird' in the eyes of youth today, they are no longer seen like everyone else they are treated differently and are told to behave differently. This creates a barrier from the rest of the youth population and can be discouraging to people who could be interested in getting information.
- i think that the church should really try to understand the youth now. it is different then it was before, we have more problems and more pressure and less people there to support us. times have changed and i think the church should change too not completely but enough to help the youth
- I would tell the Bishop to make religious vocation more appealing to young people. Show the fun and enjoyable aspects of the life--not just the community service and the poverty aspect. Young people feel that this career is boring and a burden. They feel that they do not get anything in return for the good will that they are doing. Young people dream of being rich and famous and having a family (or at least getting married). They do not dream of only being faithful to God and living in poverty.
- Offer payment. Offer free stuff people love free stuff
- Offer a vocation that is truly focused on helping people. Show that the Catholic church takes into account the concerns and issues of current society
- Don't be ignorant of worldly issues. Sex is far more commonplace-if you do it don't be punished but rather offered knowledge about contraceptives, and protection.
- It can't be helped. It is either they choose to or not; nothing we humans do will effect their interest; all we can do is have faith, stop trying to impose our own interpretation of the holy books, stop wasting time on who is right and who is wrong, who is condemned and who is going to be spending the eternity in heaven. In other words, no one has the right to decide or judge others - that is the creator's job, let the creator do it. If you believe that your responsibility to the

creator is to educate people of the good faith, then do it with good faith; don't try to put them in categories, like popes, bishops, good person, or bad person, just EDUCATE! Let the individual decide on what they want. Besides, being a priest or a bishop or even a pope doesn't necessarily guarantee a place in heaven, purgatory, or hell. It just says you have a title of some sort; it just defines your job description. Honestly, that is what bothers me the most about religious educators or leaders; doing the good deed without a title of some sort DO count as a good deed. I'm just glad that my life after death doesn't depend upon what the religious educators have to say about me. Sorry if I said too much. Doubt you will be even reading this.

- I would encourage leaders to talk to young men and women about faith and less about works. Today's religious world is so focussed on what you can't do that it has become so negative. The main reason many young people reject religion is that they only see it as an invisible figure who tells you what you can and can't do. They seldom hear about the freedom that is in living for their faith.
- Consider giving some type of a seminar or something similar in that nature for young people as verbal action in my mind is one of the most effective ways to help those in question consider a religious vocation.
- I believe people choose religious vocations due to God's calling on their lives. I'm not really sure what he could say or do to get people to join.
- I feel that the youth is not attracted to considering a religious vocation due to the lack of connection that the church has with the youth. The parish I assist does not offer any groups for youth, perhaps in these groups there can be a connection with the scriptures to the difficulties teens face. Another issue is the sex scandals that put the young people in doubts about the help offered by the church.
- Talk to them about why they believe people entering religious vocations and get opinions from them. Also, keep praying for those young people!
- There is a great quote by a genius of a man named Kurt Vonnegut that refers to religion, "She was a fool, and so am I, and so is anyone who thinks he sees what God is doing." This is exactly the reason why young people steer clear from religion in general: nobody has any clue what the hell God is up to, and anybody who says that they have the answer is a fool.
- That not all people who are priests are having sex with minors and acting like pedafiles. Try to change the rules on letting women become priests and/or deacons to get more people involved.
- Make the job more appealing to today's youth because at this rate the job does not appeal to many of today's youth.
- A lot of kids look forward to the future and to getting married and having kids. I think that is one of the main reasons people don't even think about it.
- I don't know, I always fall asleep during church I know tradition is important but it needs to be more exciting and maybe if the church showed all of the travel opportunity, and education that is involved in religious vocations they would join the priest hood instead of the army (and let priests have a family) and I think that many more women would be interested in a religious vocation if they could have equal rights with men.
- I think the main reason many young people are not entering religious vocations in America is because they can't start a family if they were to do that. That is a very hard pill to swallow and, in all honesty, I don't know how you can interest more young men and women to join when they have to be celibate for the rest of their life if they were to do that.
- I would tell him that if there were less restrictions on daily living, then young people would consider a career in religious vocations.
- Although I am not Catholic, I would suggest that the Bishop educate young people more about the religious vocations. Because I feel that certain young people just don't know much about the vocations.
- I believe that we need a more modern version of the Bible. We are in 2007 and we should be accept that there are homosexuals. There are people who engage in premarital relations. Hundreds of years ago, it wasn't as much of an issue as it is today. But, if the Church really does

want to "reach out" to everyone, then that would be an excellent start. God is supposed to love all of His children, just because one is gay, doesn't make them any less of a person.

- I would, probably in a loud angry yell, tell him that the Church had better get with the social issues program. I feel sometimes as if this were still the Middle Ages, before the Enlightenment. Rather than hanging people for believing the earth revolves around the sun, we are now telling people that homosexuals are flawed individuals; and that people who cannot afford to have anymore children are sinners for using birth control, especially in already highly populated, poor countries. The Church only stands to lose credibility and vocations when you are telling intelligent people, that we should deny condom use. I roll my eyes when the Church said people should not use condoms in such places as Africa where HIV/AIDS is running rampant. I surely would not want to devote my life to a place that believes that!
- Well I am not knowledgeable of religious vocations in the Catholic faith. I don't know who "the Bishop" is. But if I did have a few honest and uninterrupted minutes with him, I would tell him to focus more on getting young men and women to seriously consider a relationship with God, instead of a religious vocation. That is what is most important. God will take care of the rest by leading the young people by His spirit to do what He has called them to do, whether that would entail considering a religious vocation or not. Instead of trying to recruit young people to any particular parish or religious vocation, you have to first recruit them into the kingdom of God. Young people need to first understand what living a spirit led life is all about and they need to NOT get caught up in religion. It's not about religion, it's about a relationship with God. There are young men and women that do not know about God, and they don't want to hear about religious vocations. They need to know that they need their lives to be changed and the only One that can is Jesus Christ. Then and only then will they know exactly where it is they should be. So my answer is, get kids to recognize their need for God and a relationship with Him. Start with that, NOT with recruitment.
- To change the attitude of the Church towards what happens in today's world.

People are going to have sex, regardless of what the Church says. So let's wiser up and allow birth control/ contraception.

People are going to be homosexual. Whether it's by choice or by preference. Don't condemn and isolate them. Some of these people are more religious and are at least more honest than a lot of "straight" people who are actually bisexual or who are having promiscuous heterosexual sex, raping, etc

It's one thing to be a firm believer in the Bible and God's Word. But sometimes there needs to be some flexibility to adapt to the changing times. No one wants to be a hypocrite, but no one wants to be isolated and ostracized for doing what their heart or mind says.

- I am going to go off topic for a moment because there was no where for me to enter my personal opinion in general. Please continue on to read. I am not apart of the Catholic religion, however I am a Christian. At home I am very involved in my church and the community. Most of the questions I answered thinking about my Reverend at my church. Then some of the questions specified the Catholic religion so I was unsure of how to answer. However I did still take time out to read the entire survey and answer the questions to the best of my abilities. It seems as if this survey was geared towards students of the Catholic religion, in saying that. Not all of the students residing here are Catholic. I'm not sure if my answers to the survey can help you all in your process, but good luck.
- Some of the rules when it comes to the priesthood or the sisterhood need to be updated - perhaps allowing nuns and priests to be married or women to enter the priesthood. If the Church became more modern with its views, it may attract more young people to such a wonderful vocation.
- I really don't know how to answer that question. The young people of America and I am sure everywhere in the world only care about making money. That is the only motivation they have. At least that is what it seems to me.

- I think the main issue is the declining of young people's faith and connection to their church or place of worship. There is too many political problems within many churches that causes many young people to stray away from their church. Some of us are already confused about our faith in God, and we don't want to be mixed in with all the chaos of inter-religious conflicts and problems within the church.
- I am not a catholic. Although, I love and accept all religions, and understand the meaning they have in different people's lives. My advice would be, honestly, let us feel God....stop trying to make it so complicated to be with God, to love God. So many rules, so many dogmas, all created many many years ago. We are living in a different time, it is time for the church to evolve. God is here around us always. Do I really need to go to a church to pray? No. I can walk right into my backyard and do so...the church needs to offer more.
- Talk about the advantages that would interest young people.Talk about role models in the church.Give a tour of what priests, brothers, and sisters do in their community.
- I wouldn't.
- find a way to get the young people more involved.
- Stop trying to convert people. The number of voations is decreasing because people are realizing how silly religion is in and of itself. Nothing you could do can stop the decline. It is inevitable.
- People are starting to see that the church is not modernizing with the trends of the rest of the world. also people are questioning why they need to go to church if everyone has a connection with God.
- To not have to prohibit the necessary, natural parts of our human way of life. To live your life for God does not mean to not live as a normal human being could. In fact that would be better servicing God and his children.
- I think that the church as a whole needs to be a little more progressive regarding certain issues.
- first you have to make them believe it is not a job but an experience
- I would suggest more openness to youth issues such as abortion, sexuality within a non-married couple. I am not for any of these two practices but I wish the Church could adapt to today's society and try to understand the causes of an abortion before condemning it. For example, in the case of a rape, I would personally think twice about abortion if the result of that was a pregnancy. I would not understand an abortion at 6 months in the pregnancy and would condemn it.
- Be more up to date with younger peoples and consider having priests marry.
- I have no comments because I am Lutheran and would rather encourage young men and women to become pastors.
- Decrease in the sex scandals will increase more belief in God. Instead of trying to make people do or believe in unbearable things, through more humanitarian work people can find God.
- When i was in high school, there was this brother that was always on campus and getting involved in every aspect of our school's community. Everything from Amnesty International to Student Council functions, Br. John was there to help and advice us. And the one thing that stood out about him the most was that he wasn't constantly giving us a sermon or quoting the Bible. He actually talked to us like regular human beings but with the kindness and sincerity in his voice that reminded you of Jesus. I believe that the more we are exposed to religious life and humanizing them, then we can begin to break from some of the myths(e.g. it's not fun, all you do is pray all day, there are so many restrictions...etc.).
- Train them well to ultimately have a rewarding and fulfilling life.
- I would tell him that the church should not change any of its policies to encourage enrollment in seminary. The church has certain views on abortion, homosexuality, and the marriage of priest that should not be altered. I believe people become preists, brothers, and sisters because of a calling from God and for no other reason.
- to tell them that life is not about parties, parties, and parties but most of the time a little bit of time to talk to themselves will help them realize that deep in front of them there is something that is helping them to do good and they can still have fun while being part of the religious group.
- I would say that the Church still seems to be stuck in the past, so to speak. If the Church was more in-touch with the younger communities, they may have a better chance of increasing the entry into

a life of God. The future generations are very different and think in very different ways than past generations. The world today, causes individuals to "grow up" quicker than generations in the past. Also, I do not feel that the Church is in connection with younger groups based on many controversial topics, such as, abortion, homosexuality, pre-marital sex, birth control, drug use and abuse, etc. I feel that these issues face the future generations at an earlier age due to the controversy surrounding them.

- Honestly it would be hard to interest young people in entering a religious vocation I think because for most vocations you can't be married. I guess I would tell the Bishop it's important to address this issue and the idea of being married to God. Also I think to consider a religious vocation you have to be strongly religious so I think a Catholic education is important to get that started.
- I think that young people need to be better instilled with Christian values. Possibly if good Christians see this need for people to enter into a religious vocation, they might step up to fill that role. I think that they need to see for themselves that it is a rewarding and fulfilling life and talk with priests, brothers, and sisters/nuns. I think that above all, if they get a calling from God, that would encourage them to consider pursuing a religious vocation so the best thing would be to pray and ask God to provide more workers.
- Increase the amount of priests, nuns, brothers, and sisters people meet on a regular basis, to show them what living a religious vocation is truly about.
- These days (as everyone in contemporary society knows) there's just so much out there in life. You can't really put your finger on just one thing, there's so much out there if you know what I mean. For example, my religious faith is Roman Catholic and so is my entire family, but I haven't been to church in literally about 7 years. I want to go back, but I have so much to do, which I think is a poor excuse, but really with college work, family, friends, work, life, ect I forget that I really should in fact be practicing my faith. I personally don't know of any advice I would give to the bishop. I strongly believe that entering a religious vocation is a calling from God. I wish I could help, but I don't know what to say in terms of giving advice.

All the best...

- The way the mind of a young person has changed is drastic compared to the minds the bible was set up to be. If the rules would become more lenient, people would feel better about joining because they would feel more accepted and welcomed.
- Get rid of the law that says priests cannot marry, because its just a remnant real estate clause from the "enclosure movement" and therefore not truly warranted by god. Second get rid of the women cannot be ordained, because catholicism in its nascency would not have survived if it was not for women hold services in their private homes secretly. This is history and proven facts, when you put man in the helm of such power as the christian church...they will abuse is and manipulate it with their own intentions in mind. Christianity/Catholicism's essence is not in the brick and mortar establishment of the church, but rather it is a faith. A mental faith we all seek to follow and consult. Thank you for your time Mr. Bishop...
- I believe that the men and women of the religious vocation should be allowed to marry and have children because it's in the bible under (family).
- There are a lot of problems in the world and there are people who would like to get involved. There are homosexual people who are very involved in world issues and they could contribute a great deal to the current issues. I'm sure many of them would consider a religious vocation if they could get married. Many people would probably consider becoming priests or nuns if they were able to get married. There are many people now that want money and the vow of poverty would probably discourage them. Also, I never heard about what a religious vocation is and how to become a priest or a nun from anyone close to me. I don't think this type of information is available to the general public.
- I believe if there were more youth programs as well as mass directed toward young people they would become more involved in the Church. As a result they may take more time to consider their faith and possibly a vocation within their faith.

- To be honest, I wouldn't know where to start. I know that I do not attend any masses or services because, as petty as this sounds, my schedule does not allow me to do so. I am full all 7 days of the week. I intern in Manhattan at an advertising agency on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. I have class on Tuesdays and Thursday throughout the day with an hour and a half break to eat/shower/study; and then I go to work serving tables on Tuesday, Thursday nights and spend approximately 24 out of 48 hours on Saturday and Sunday serving tables just to make rent. I wish there weren't such a stigma of guilt for not being able to attend mass on a Sunday morning.
- It is quality that matters, not quantity. The decline in religious involvement by the young people is because young people today are plagued by materialism, consumerism, moral relativism and have no interest save basking in the present. To try to "reach out" to young people would be compromising much of Biblical truth. If there were only 500 Catholics left who follow the Word as It is, not as they want It to be, then that is the Church, not the thousands of "Catholics" who attend Church but go home and pay no attention to the Word and tolerate sin and indecency out of apathy.
- Honestly I believe that only by prayer will young people begin to answer God's call. The secular world is much more appealing and therefore only the Holy Spirit can draw young people into the ministry. Much Prayer must be made!
- you need to strengthen and inspire in them a revived love for the church...then the vocations will make themselves apparent
- I would say to listen to young people in terms of the strict laws within the church regarding homosexuality and abortion.
- I honestly don't know what advice I can offer to get younger men and women involved. I believe that I take my religious beliefs so strongly because I was raised into a family that focused on religion and instilled certain rituals, like going to church every Sunday, in me. Young adults are often confused about themselves and their life and are often afraid to get advice or feel as though turning to their religious faith is pointless. I don't know how to prove to them that it does in fact bring a satisfying feeling. I often have this debate with my friends who are atheists but it's always the same argument. I honestly can not picture my life without my religious values.
- To use the vocation as a way to discuss the issues of adolescents on a spiritual/religious level in order to attract students based on their needs/feelings.
- Priest should be able to be married and women should be allowed to be priests.
- I like many have left the Catholic Church and have joined a Christian community for several reasons. For one, they are willing to forgive sinners and help them change. Another thing that I noticed is that they get to know the people who come to church on a personal level so that when they speak to them it's not like they are speaking to a crowd of people they don't know. Also some people think it is wrong and don't agree with the fact that there are statues all over the place in a Catholic Church. These are all things the Catholic Church should reconsider in changing. In addition, if they are trying to increase the interest of a young man or woman on a religious vocation the last thing you want to mention to them is that they have to take a vow of poverty, especially when talking to women. Most importantly, men and women of today are really opposed to being sexually abstinent for the rest of their lives. Times have changed and there are many sexual temptations in the world today.
- Most people I know my age aren't very concerned with religious issues and hardly ever speak of God. I honestly can't say what would help young people become more engaged in religion. I am not Catholic but I attend a Catholic University; not because it's Catholic, just because it's a good school. I consider myself to be somewhat religious, I am interested in the word of God but I, sadly, can't say the same about almost all of the people I know.
- I think the reason most people are moving away from the religious vocations is mainly the fact that in this day and age, many want to get married or experience a fulfilling love relationship with another individual. According to the Church, a priest or nun is not allowed to participate in such relations. Also, I believe that young individuals see being a Priest / Nun means the restriction of their personal rights -- a restriction on their daily activities. The activities of a Priest, in a general sense, is very different from what teenagers and young adults do today. Though, there will still

be those that go for religious vocations because of personal belief, a calling from God, or the desire to help out their community, I believe the number will still decline due to the changes in today's young adult society.

- In the Orthodox faith, men are allowed and encouraged to get married and have a family before becoming a priest. I always felt I was never pressured with "rules" or "obligations" until I went to a Catholic high school. Christians believe good morale is already within, I do not feel it is necessary to be so strict and "unforgiving". It is bad for the conscience and unhealthy. It is nobody's job to judge except for God, and he is all-forgiving.
- I would just tell him to try to make entering a religious vocations more interesting to people and to show the people how fulfilling it is to be close to God and help other people get close to God.
- Eliminate the pedifiles. Eliminate the propoganda being destributed to the children, abandon all prior ignorent claims to the impossibility of both alien existence, as well as scientific evolution. Try convincing Rome to become more spiritual and less of a power driven, secretive, buisness mogal it feels it has become. Those reading this with a clear mind fully understand, and deep down will agree with the minor scrapes in the glass that I have touched upon. All others are blind, ignorant, or part of the corruption. If I know best, this entire survey will be disgarded due to the truths presented which some wish to hide. Enjoy your day and the rest of your lives.
P.S. How many priests do u know are pedifiles? How many of you ignored turning them over to the police? How many priests do not actually adhere to the strict behavioral guidelines? How many priests feel good at night lying to the public and children? How many priests feel they should have a right to be a political entity in womens right to abortion? How many priests feel they have the right to get invovled with human rights and marriages. How many priests truly believe in their cause when their founding fathers castes millions to die in holy wars of the past?I could go on!!!!
- Consider changing some of the "rules" that are offered in question 28a-k above. Encourage parishes to offer retreats or trips to places in which they are able to help needy people directly.
- The Church has more of a focus on the elderly and families. This is somewhat understandable, because they are the predominant donors to the Church, but with little focus on our generation, there will be nothing to build any future relationship on. What little focus we have is not at all in the interests of the teens--you have to present them with spirituality in a way that THEY will enjoy and accept. Anything else will lead many to close their minds to what you are saying.

Also, the culture itself is miles apart from Church teachings. We are taught (in a very Christ-like way) to love ALL of our neighbors, to be fair and kind, and yet the Church is seen doing and saying many things that contradict that. From the non-acceptance of homosexuals, the condemnation of a woman's right to choose (Free Will was given by God, and it would be wrong not to use it), the sex scandals and the gender differences, it is apparent that the Catholic Church is completely out of touch with today's society and its youth. It is sad that it was only when I was a pre-teen that the Church finally allowed girls to be altar servers. My aunt is Director of Religious education at her parish, with a masters in theology. Even though she has taken all the courses required for a priest, with the exception of one (Homiletics), she is not even allowed to be a Deacon, much less anything else. As Americans and teens, we cherish equality and acceptance. There is no equality or acceptance in the Church, and what little is given is coming very late.

I cherished my time in my Catholic High School (St Francis Prep)because of the wonderful staff of brothers, nuns and lay people. Their take on Catholicism was refreshing and geared to keep teens' attentions. I suggest the Catholic Church learn from its successful spiritual guidance for our generation and change its outlooks on many topics. It will increase the Church's relevance to society again.

- Honestly not many young people today are religious and are interested in even learning about their religion. The majority of the people around my age that I know rarely attend church and neither do their families. They are usually surprised when I tell them, I attend church every sunday, then they ask me why because they only go to church around Christmas. Most of the people my

age are only concerned about school, work, boyfriends or girlfriends, and when they are going to hang out next and with who.

- I think the big issue is the ability to get married. I feel that married men should be ordained priests. However, I think if an unmarried man becomes a priest, he should then not be allowed to get married. Positions above being a priest (ie Bishop, etc) should still be reserved for unmarried men. I think there are plenty of men who have strong faith and would make wonderful priests and leaders of a community, but they decline that calling because they want to have a family.
- I believe it is a different world these days. People of today find value in things which in retrospect have no importance. The world of today caused people to be confused about what really matters. I believe once people begin to realize what is important in life, maybe more people will come back to the church, but right now people are far too involved with themselves, rather than God and one another. Until people realize what is pure and good, I believe those devoted to a religious vocation will continue to decline.
- In my opinion, religion should be a matter of choice. It should not be forced upon the youth of the nation so strongly at a young age, it should not be made out to be so rigid and have everything be seen in black and white. As society progresses and evolves people are more and more becoming free thinkers, especially the young people. I believe that if they were presented with the information in a way that shows that they have options more people would make the attempt to follow a religious vocation.
- You stipulate that the number of people in religious vocations is declining.

It is in decadence. Such a remarkably atheistic system is not caused so much by the indifference of the Church to the youth, as it is by ubiquitous bad breeding in our youth altogether. Capably beneficent representatives of the people are all but extinct. An inspiring religious evangelist is one in 300 million in the States and virtually non-existent in Europe and the pagan provinces throughout the rest of the Continents. Unbecomingly femininated opinions and silence of orthodoxy have produced a weakness of character too timid to face the full stringency of competitive religious survival. Seduced into lethargy and self-censorship, Christian apologetics and evangelism have vanished from the public spectrum and been replaced by moral relativistic fascist organizations intent on brainwashing the youth into believing that abominations such as homosexuality and inauguration of females into priesthood are natural, requiring not only toleration, which was the dogma before, but now approval, since Congress is no more supportive of moral legislation anymore than our commonwealth is with the War in Iraq. The connections of Christendom with the hearts of the global population have not been severed or lost altogether, but only timeworn and old hat. Our people have forgotten what a good priest is. It was a mistake for the Church to merely condemn such perversion in dioceses, when the real solution was make its philanthropy popular again and actually ameliorate poverty and other hard conditions where people can not help but take notice. The Church has spare energy and specific talent for such administration, yet where are the men who will take the helm and courageously defend the values that made our nation a city on a hill? Nowhere.

We must cease catering to political minorities and not capitulate that which God has given to us to defend. Vatican II was simultaneously the greatest progress and the most costly mistake the Church could have ever performed. Since then, the Church has not expressed much zeal for Jesus Christ or embarked on any conspicuous evangelical projects. Its moral silence has become notorious. Given the state of things, with hordes of idolatrous masses competing for world domination in religion, the light of Christianity and our glorious Saviour must prevail, and to do so will require a firm spine and an apologist's wit. Ironically, the church desperately needs a revolution back to conservative values. In order to be luminary, it must be incendiary.

I believe that assisting the world to relieve poverty, apotheosis of more saints, controversial stances against popular idolatry and corruption, explicit denunciation of the barbaric Islamic Empire and its violent constituents and bloodthirsty faith, economical assistance to Africa to ameliorate the

AIDS epidemic, condemnation of the moral depravity on television, and more conservative propaganda on universities in a spirit of defense of the Church and not in the mean obstinacy of cowardly religious pluralism under the shroud of ecumenism, will in part re-invigorate the decomposing corpse of religion in the States. We cannot allow our secular politicians to have the platform in defining what is good and evil in America. Legality can be legislated, but morality must not be. The criticism and upbuilding must proceed from the tongues of angels, and not those of venal attorneys already firmly entrenched in faithlessness. America must be summoned back to its religious bedrock at all costs, and not have its Godly roots deracinated by the political mercenaries in power.

America's youth has become disenchanted with Christianity, because they do no longer know exactly what it stands for. Anglicans have damned themselves by forcing homosexuality as a component of liturgy. Catholicism has sterilized itself by ceasing to compete against Islam and Buddhism, and most of all, moral relativism (our current political mood). Consequently, the youth must be re-indoctrinated, because the patriotic virility and moral strength of our nation's citizens rests solely on the religious foundations that were so instrumental in the formation of this splendid nation. For any perennial power to remain continuously potent, an education of the current youth generation must be considered mandatory.

The final war will be not between religions. That is our calling now. The apocalypse will be between politics and Christianity. We must prepare, so that our persecution will have the ears of a lost paradise.

- Nothing
- It's difficult because of the influence of the media, and how demanding society has become for "survival" ie jobs are more demanding and competitive for positions because of academic requirements from tertiary education institutions. Religion is being overlooked by the young people because it is not taken seriously by the majority, and the amount of branches of the church who argue against each other amongst the parents.
- The church very much needs to modernize to the lifestyles of today. You wouldn't tell an organization which hasn't changed since the time of slavery that it is okay to own slaves, much like the church shouldn't be making such accusations about things like women and the gay community. In a world in which STD's are spreading rapidly as well, the idea of contraception needs to be re-thought and a philosophy other than abstinence needs to be taught to college students at catholic universities.
- Find a way to show how it could appeal to them. Show them the advantages and pro's to entering a religious vocation.
- I believe, as it said before, if rules weren't as strict. If priests can marry or nuns can marry I think a lot more people would want to become priests, nuns, or brothers. I also believe that women should be able to become priests. Times have changed in the world and the country. Women have a say in politics, the workplace and everyday life. Women should have the option of becoming priests if they want.
- Have more information disseminated to young people about religious life.
- To be truly honest, if a young person feels the 'call' from the Lord then he without any second guessing should enter into a religious profession, because that's what God intends for him or her. I believe that women should also be allowed to become priests in the Catholic religion. I myself is a Reformed Protestant and I have met some wonderful lady reverends who were, according to my judgement very nice and filled with the spirit and loved to preach and conduct service, and I think that there would be a good amount of women who, if allowed would like to become Catholic priests. Also I think many young people should be more educated religiously, even though those people who receive religious education are sometimes live a life more unreligious than someone who has never had a religious education, but have heard of God and believes in Jesus. I also believe that religious experience is very important to religious education or religiousness. We all have experienced many things in our lives, and I believe that in each of our lives Jesus is knocking at our

heart's door looking, asking us to open it for him and let him fill our selves, our lives with his Love, Faith and Hope. I hope that many young adults will have religious, heartfelt experiences and so they would perhaps be more involved in church activities and religious professions-because it is very important to have religious leaders around us who could educate us, help us and make role models for us by their example, lives and true faiths.

- To let them know that you can still lead a normal life and be "cool"
- Things have to change the way there are in the church because not a lot of young people want to enter into such a career due to the lack of freedoms. That's why in other religions where they have ministers, young people are interested in that because they can still get married and have a family as well as advise the community. Yes, it is a sacrifice your making to God to become a Priest or Nun but I believe that God wants us all to be happy. All of us would truly be happy sharing our lives with people we love.
- in catholic schools, it should have more programs for the youths to get involved in.
- Try to get to know the younger generations not through adults but directly. Start with the young ones and grow their faith so that when they are older it has a big role in their lives. college kids are a bit older and we have the capability to choose and if we were once religious we tend to stay religious throughout college but if we lose that when we are in college we lose our faith as well.
- I THINK THAT YOU NEED TO TRY AND ACCEPT THAT THERE ARE OTHER RELIGIONS OUT THERE AND HINDUISM IS ACTUALLY THE OLDEST RELIGION OUT THERE AND I FEEL VERY DISRESPECTED TO SEE YOU NAME OTHER RELIGIONS OUT THERE EXCEPT MINE PUTTING OTHERS IN ITS PLACE.

I THINK YOU NEED TO ALLOW ALL PEOPLE TO MAKE THEIR OWN CHOICES AND NO MATTER WHAT WAY PEOPLE SEE GOD, HE'S THE SAME GOD.

- Reach out to public school children. I've known more young people from Public schools that are now discerning vocations than anywhere else.
- To reach out to younger crowds, in churches, schools, public places.
- well I don't exactly know what a religious vocation is all about but I love God and He is almighty and everlasting and He sent His son to save me and I am forever grateful and thankful for Him. His mercy is everlasting and His truth endureth forever. I love Him unconditionally just like He loves me and He knows this. If I find out more about it I would be happy to work for Him full time.
- You can't force people to have a vocation. So if vocations are declining God is doing it for a reason.
- The advice I would offer in effort to increase the interest of the youth to consider a religious vocation would be for the Church to be honest and sincere. I mean nothing is more better than the truth so we as the youth do not want to be bought anymore but we do just want to be told the truth and that would really help us find the light.
- Personally, I do not believe in any religious establishment whatsoever. I feel that all religions do is set up boundaries and divide people. If only people would take the time to realize that we do not need religion in our life, but if we were to simply have faith in something, if it is even just ourselves, that we can lead happy lives. Should the Church try to reach out to young people and try to get them to join the would-be cult, they should work on trying to establish the fact that they should not fear God. I feel that the Church, especially the Roman Catholic Church emphasizes too greatly on punishment. I do not fear God. I know God loves me and I love Him. I have no reason to fear Him, and I do not fear damnation because I know that I am a good person and have the strong moral beliefs to back it up rather than to just live in fear of punishment. Also, the Church should become increasingly aware that homosexuality is 100% a curb 2 inches from the ground and get over the fact that not everyone is the same. They should also look back in history and see that women were running the ceremonies before men were when the Christian religion originated because it had to be done in secret. It was only when the mere notion that the Church could lose its precious land and power gained from owning that land (what happened to the poverty vows?) that it established the laws that women could not join the priesthood. All in all, I give you my word that I would sign up to be a priest today if the Church would only how full of hypocrisy it is and maybe rather than even change it, have the balls to just own up to it. Just say, "Yeah, we

know we kinda screwed up in the past, and we're sorry. Here's the deal, we'll compromise to fix it." That would possibly...no, definitely, help in the long run. However, we both/all know that this, sadly will never happen and the Church will remain as close-minded as ever, especially since it has almost completely taken over government in this country and driven people to fear voting for people who see through the facade. Please, Bishop, prove me wrong.

- Catholicism needs to be more flexible. I know there is tradition and history, but modern times are changing things of the past. I know now we are able to have altar girls which is a good thing, but simple things like that make a difference in the long run. We need to continue an open discussion with the youth of today. Provide them with what they need. We need spiritual guidance. Leaders by example. The sexual scandal, put the seed of distrust in the garden of catholicism.
- live by example and trust in God that He will provide
- You can't be so strict on the youth you have to understand how the outside environment is and try to work with them not against them.
- Be more open. The attitude of young people is all about being open minded and free. In contrast a religious vocation is known to be a very strict and demanding lifestyle.
- I would say to stress the fact that you are a human being just like them. You sin, make mistakes, and ask for forgiveness like they do. Emphasize the fact that you are not held higher than they are because of your education and title but that you are merely a person that is called by God to serve others by spreading the His word. The best advice is to live an upright life. Don't portray a positive imagery when you are doing sinful things behind closed doors because people are best viewed by the fruit they bear, their lifestyle outside of the church.
- I think it is hard to take everything from the past and apply it to today's standards. Many of the rules that applied then are overlooked now, for example, sex before marriage, etc. Many people aspire to get married, have kids, etc, and it's hard to show how a life following God is more fulfilling than what they already have instilled in their minds as children and young adults. I'm not sure I would offer him advice but instead, I would ask him why he believes entrance into religious vocations is declining. I believe he knows more about these reasons than I do, and maybe by collaboration for a few minutes, we could establish the problem, then worry about the solution.
- The only thing suggestion I have is that times are changing and it's changing fairly quickly but it seems that the Church is always a step or two behind; and nobody I know (myself included) is willing to be left behind especially when there are so many other choices available to them. So I think that it would be in the Church's best interests to re-examine all the rules and regulations that seem to stifle the youth, in order to keep them in the Church; let alone consider a religious vocation.
- Many students lose interest in religion when they attend CCD because the classes are boring. Many teachers don't worry about making the classes interesting, they are only concerned with presenting the material. Also, I have heard many people say that services are sometimes dull. Perhaps more upbeat services would draw the attention of young people and would eventually lead them to consider entering into a religious vocation. Although it is a drastic change, I do think that some time in the future the church should consider allowing priests and nuns to marry. I do tend to think that this causes many people to reconsider becoming priests/nuns etc.
- Talk to them about the benefits it has and how this will improve their spiritual life.
- I would suggest talking about the sanctity and peace of mind that the vocation would bring along. Also, the bishop could discuss the personal benefit he got from helping those less fortunate and taking a vow of poverty, so that nothing is taken for granted.
- I think religion is an element of lifestyle introduced by parents and is incorporated through one's childhood. The number of teenagers starting families has increased recently, and therefore look for parents for guidance. If a family started without religion, it's often difficult to spark it later on in life. Encouraging the aspect of religion for stability and support among young people is a big selling point. Not forcing religion on young adults is important. We should have the opportunity to take part in religion, not have it forced on us. Constantly having an open door for religion, welcoming and encouraging spirit, but not forcing it. If more young people see how much stability can be found among the religion, they might be more open to it.

- Pay closer attention to the times we're living in now. There are too many things going wrong in this world. I may be inaccurate when I say this but, the focus of the church needs to shift towards what is going on now. You can get many individuals more involved if you showed them how they can make a positive contribution to times like these (the wars, the genocide, the poverty, etc.) The church has become an organized institution for many people who attend mass on Sunday only to better their lives basically. If you want more young people to enter into religious vocations, give them a better sense and educate them about what they can physically and spiritually do to better this world that is in dire need of positive change. When you say Priest, I say Sunday mass, and I think that misinterpretation needs to be changed if you want more young people to join. I know there's more to Priests than preaching at mass and being spiritual guiders.
- The Catholic Church needs to be stronger, it cannot be taken down by the media. It feels that the media is stumping the Catholic Church through Hollywood movies, newspapers, magazines and tv shows. They show no respect whatsoever and there are not that many people protecting the Catholic Church except the Catholic League. The Catholic Church will lose all the youths because being religious is not cool anymore, thanks to the media and what they show. For example, they make fun of Jesus, The Virgin Mary, they promote divorce and a lot of sexual clips. This has to stop. I am very proud of being Catholic, but the Catholic Church cannot be tossed around like an animal. Once the Catholic Church is respected then you will see more people taking it serious, until then Hollywood will belittle the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church must also stop the sexual scandals, it hurts the Church as a religion and financially. The Government should pass laws to protect the Catholic Church from law suits, if not the Church will go bankrupt and then the church will disappear. Yes, have criminal charges for priests that commit sin, but the Catholic church should not be financially liable. The media is changing people's mind and the scandals are hurting the Catholic church. The Catholic Church must step up and be strong. A final note, the Pope should also visit Catholic countries more frequently to show the people that the Catholic Church is with the people and the world.
- I would suggest that there be more information readily available about what a religious life entails. To many people, including myself, get stereotypical ideas from television and movies about religious life.
- The number is declining because faith is declining. This cannot be helped. Whether this is tragic or liberating I cannot decide. Civilization needs religion. The Church must change its doctrine to keep up with a changing society. Do not have us try to believe things that are no longer believable.
- I think the problem with religions whose teachings and moral code are based solely on sacred text and are not adaptive to each successive generation such as more ancient indigenous religions is that over time generations become distant because culture, taboos, etc. change. Issues such as those mentioned earlier such as abortion, premarital sexual relations, contraceptives, etc need to be approached differently with more open mindedness and become more receptive to them so that maybe religion can provide guidance on how to safely manage these issues rather than be strictly against them. Maybe then, the youth may not distance themselves and more youth would consider having a role that provides such guidance. If the youth don't agree with the current standpoint of these institutions they will not want to enter into them.
- The Catholic Church needs to understand that the times are changing, the rules that were made up centuries ago cannot be applied in this century, they are too outdated. The Catholic Church also has to embrace the culture that we live in.
- I would just say that find ways in which we can appeal to the youth. But we also want them to abide by the religion so it should be a joint effort.
- I find it interesting that although the number of young people entering religious vocations is declining, the number of youth, as far as I understand, that believe in Jesus as the one Way to God is on the rise. A possible solution to the Bishop's dilemma is to have a section of mass, e.g. a different room/time versus the regular mass, geared specifically towards youth. Alternatively, one might consider addressing the specific issues that face the Catholic Church today i.e. the issue of homosexuality, gay marriage, and the scourge of sexual abuse that faced the church just years ago. I do understand that the Church probably addressed these issues, but I truly doubt that the Church

addressed these issues with the youth in mind. In fact, I feel that the youth have been largely, if not completely, ignored by the Church. It is really quite simple, if you think about it, to increase the interests of any age group, address the issues concerning that age group. (One thing that you might also realize is that many youth consider the Church to be very...archaic).

And most importantly, the Church might consider conducting surveys such as this one, asking after the interests and concerns of today's youth.

- The church needs to become more liberal in some of their view points not all. Marriage being one of the biggest issues that is needing to be addressed. Even if the church became more liberal about certain issues, students of Catholic institutions learn that a priest/nun/brother takes vow of poverty. In today's age when parents push their children to make a good living by making a lot of money, the church may not be able to support that. I am not saying that the church should just open their wallets when they are having financial problems of their own with the funding of certain schools (which maybe unrelated but I am ignorant about) within the Diocese. A decent living is going to be important especially if the church one day changes its views on marriage for a priest because he will want to start a family and a life of poverty would not be conducive to raising a family.
- You are all faggots who deserve to be burned at the stakes. You and your religion is the cause of all the sufferings in the world. Your intolerance towards other religion is the single cause of global destruction. I hope Asia will be the death knell for evangelical and intolerant religions such as Christianity.
- Lead by example. If you don't enjoy what you're doing yourself, how can you expect others to enjoy what you're doing. And try to abstain from the pleasures of the flesh. Always talk to God for guidance, because if you ask, he will show you the way. And never be afraid to ask God for help no matter where you are. And stick to what God's word says (even if its something people don't like). You cannot be wrong if God's word says it (but you must reveal the ugly parts too to the people)
- In my opinion the Catholic Church has not adapted well to changing times, particularly in reference to scientific views of nature and the physical laws of the universe. I don't think there is an inherent conflict between science and faith. However, I think the ongoing "conflict" between science and faith, particularly over evolution/creation, contraceptives, and stem cell research create a rift between open minded young people and the Church. (I realize many people involved in these arguments are not Catholic but the Catholic stance is very clear on these issues.) In my experience going to a four year Catholic high school, it seemed to me that these issues from the Church's point of view are non-negotiable, period. For these reasons (and in my opinion there are others) these view points turn off young people from considering a life in the ministry, especially those with an interest in science.
- I wouldn't. There is a reason the number of young people entering the Catholic religious vocations is declining, and it is a good thing.
- I can't really tell him much, because people already feel restricted enough by the laws of the government, to add religion is just to add more restrictions to your life, restrictions that people might not agree with. I think people are just becoming more open minded, and religion restricts that by dealing with absolutes, like all abortions are bad, which I don't think is true. Homosexuality has been around for hundreds of years, it's not a FAD, and the Church should embrace people for what they are, not what they want them to be. Homosexuals are not more likely to commit any type of crime over other people, but then again to the church being a homosexual is a crime against the lord. I am not a church goer, my grandma goes every day though, but I just try and live my life by the idea that you don't do to others what you don't wish don't to yourself, so no stealing, no killing and so on. I in fact do a lot of volunteer work with many people from many religions. I think one big step all the religious institutions can make is to collaborate with each other, in other words accept that you all have different views, and show people how they can be helped by following any of the religions. If the religious leaders are working with each other to promote spirituality, I am sure more people would give religion a second chance.
- I would encourage him to end the requirements of a vow of celibacy.

- The Catholic Church needs to be more in touch with its members, and stop chasing new converts. The pews are empty on Sundays because parishioners are weary of a old-fashioned, rigid hierarchy and priests with ulterior motives. The word "catholic" means worldly, and I feel that the Church abandoned that definition years ago.
- Do not decrease the standards that Priests/Brothers/Nun's are held to, but try to increase the outreach into communities and show a lay-persons view of their lifestyle.
- I am not the right person to answer this question.
- The hypocrisy of the Catholic Church is deafening. They need to stop discriminating against gays, protect the environment, denounce violence in all its forms, remove those attempting to make religion a political issue, encourage the use of birth control, and stop passively discriminating against other religions. Maybe then people would take them seriously.

It might not even be the bishop or the priests' fault. The same way that a teacher tells you that you represent the school (and that teacher) when you go on a field trip, the parish reflects upon the priest, the bishop, the church, and the religion. And there are plenty of practicing Catholics out there screwing it up for all of you. Just rent 'Jesus Camp' and hopefully you'll get an idea about what I mean.

- The church at the moment seems to be focused away from people of my age. The church should do more to connect with people of my age in a way that they could accept and not feel forced into.
- i dont know
- I would suggest that the traditions being upheld be revised so that they fit this new century and society. There are some rules and belief that no longer have a place in society. An overall non biased study/review of religion and how many of its traditions started and see whether or not they should still be upheld (ie: priests cannot marry etc.). Stop trying to force certain ways onto others through fear of damnation and be a little more open minded about certain...aspects of life. you cannot advocate God's forgiveness and then turn around and threaten damnation if a person does or does not do something the church sees fit or unfit.
- The Church needs to update its views. Religion is not written in stone, its supposed to grow and change with the times and the people. its something thats supposed to support people, not outcast them.
- If they could be allowed to cook or buy whatever they want to eat instead of having the same food consecutively. Also if they could get more involved with the public.
- The new pope needs breakdancers like the old one had.
- As I assume you are referring to a Catholic Bishop, I would have a hard time offering advice on the subject. As I indicated earlier, I think that the Catholic faith is woefully out of touch with the youth in this country, and I don't think it has very much to do with the recent sex scandals. There is a certain amount of intolerance that is pervasive and institutionalized, and I, personally, feel that excluding women from the ministry or homosexuals from the congregation is incompatible with Jesus' message of tolerance and inclusive love.

Youths pick things up very quickly these days, and it will be difficult to move ahead as a religious faith without creating a clear picture of a God of integrity, who doesn't backtrack or make mistakes.

- Religious vocations help people find meanings in their lives and guide them in the right direction to righteousness.
- Although a student, I am a middle aged woman so I'm sure I have a different perspective than a traditional college student, however, I would recommend that The Church be a little more consistent in its message and less self-doubting. While it is very, very, important to listen to and be responsive to it's "flock" - The Church seems to doubt its teachings, its culture, its rituals, its very faith and foundation which I believe is a turn off for young people considering a vocation. The committment to a vocation, especially in this day and age, is tremendous and at times it can feel

like The Church is not as committed to its own teachings as it would expect a religious to be to his or her vocation.

- - Realize that this is the 21st century and the world that we are living in is very different from the world you want to see. Many of the teachings of the past were based on issues that were relevant in the past... The founding fathers of this country based many of their ideals on religion; however, they also realized that in time there would be change. They created provisions for change... amendments to the constitution; amendments which allow the freedom to move freely in an organized structure.
- i honestly have no idea.
- Religion as it has been for eons is a method of control and discipline that focuses on something, or someone (GOD), outside of the individuals body. Instead, the entire Catholic, Christian, Judaic, Islamic, and every other Religious Organization in the world should encourage the notion that "God" lives in each of you and you must do everything you can to be at a balance with him. Meditation is important as is self-awareness and realistic knowledge.

My personal belief is not religious, but spiritual; I think every person has the strength of "God" inside him, but is confused and manipulated by the physical world into believing they do not!! This is in large part due to church, as well as government, society and even culture.

- I would blame the "freedom" that we all have..freedom is good to a certain extent but people here take advantage of it and misuse it. We misuse it to an extent where we have forgotten as to which religious faith we belong to. I don't think there is any religion out there which allows sexual relationships before marriage and so forth. All religions have some things in common. We need to educate people more about our religion.
- you should be more realistic with the world's views today regarding abortions and contraception use.
- I would probably say to him that he should tell young people that if they want to choose a career that they feel would be fulfilling, help out his/her fellow community, and make them successful and feel good inside, to choose to become a priest, brother, or sister/nun.
- Offer to support the family they will be leaving behind
- Expose TRUTH to the world. Stop putting a mask over religion and explain realities, inaccuracies and being OPEN MINDED about other's people's thoughts. Don't "modify" religion to recruit more people. Keep religion the way it was meant to be (which is now an opinion) and just live and let live.

P.E.A.C.E

God Bless

- I would tell him to explain the pro's and the con's of considering a religious vocation.
- the desire should come from one's own heart after teaching them the love and knowledge of God.
- I would like to talk to the Bishop about different issues that are affecting the youth community, such as dealing with drugs, peer pressure, alcohol, sex etc. There is so much that is misunderstood with teenagers today, and such a great deal of emphasis is placed on what they do wrong, or how they react. It is important to treat teenagers as adults since many of them are struggling to live day-by-day. Also, the catholic church should try to inform the youth of pursuing a vocational lifestyle. It might be helpful to give the youth some insight as to what happens there, and why it is an important and fulfilling career choice.
- Bishops should try to appeal on reason and not on faith in G-d.
- I think people are still very upset by the sex scandal of the Church, the way things were addressed was horrible and have tainted the way many feel. I also think the Church needs to find a way to explain exactly how they feel about topics such as abortion, homosexuality, and sex outside of marriage. Youth know it's wrong but why? I think that's the problem with the Church, or at least at some of the parishes I have been with. There was never a clear understanding or reason, clergy just told us "it's wrong!" When I was with a youth group, luckily they explained it to us, the details and such. Even with explanation, I still have hard feelings towards these topics because I don't

think the Church has really evaluated these situations, I understand that going back on their word and changing how they feel could make people re-evaluate anything the church has said, but its just so difficult.

I've have been able to come to terms with my religions as well as with my personal feelings about those topics. I am a Catholic and love my background, but I have also started to embrace Buddhism and other religions. I don't expect the Church to be happy with my decisions or feelings but the fact is: religion was dictated to man through revelations and other mediums, it was given to us in the spectrum of our knowledge, as humans learn to embrace more then just a book, I have been able to communicate and feel at peace with God and my religion. I live a good religious life, I try hard not to committ sins, I serve the poor, I embrace my neighbors and overall try to live a good standard of life. I feel its hard for an older man to relate to me... the lives we lived were different. Either way, the youth will always have a distant relationship because this is the time where we are all over the place, the fact is the only person/s that could keep our lives entact are our families... so maybe the new angle they should take is "EMBRACE THE FAMILY" not so much an individual. Like my priest used to say, "A family that prays together, stays together."

- I have many of the strong values that would suggest to people that I become a priest. However, I truly believe that a relationship with another person allows one to grow in faith (in a different way) in ways that perhaps cannot be imagined through the life of a priest. Do I necessarily want to see married priests? I am not sure of that...I really think it would be such a drastic change that would dilute the role of a priest and make it less significant / trusting... UNLESS, there are two people with such a deep faith that, together, they contribute so much to one another that they are such a strong representation of Catholic values. Perhaps my faith or calling is just not that strong where I could give up a living person – a beating heart that is the physical existence of faith in this world – in favor of a life devoted to God alone. I feel that God is present through that one other person I will give my life to which therefore means I am also giving myself to God.

Of course more people would consider a vocation if the values of the church were altered but that would destroy the church. The only issue of true value and relevance is the issue of marriage and, in this case, I mean a REAL marriage where there is such a strong bond with that one other person because of the values of the Catholic Church. My point is: a person who otherwise would be ideal to become a priest with a person who otherwise would be ideal to become a sister/nun are drawn so strongly together by faith that to give it up for faith seems somehow unfaithful – a part of faith will always be missing.

- who knows???
- make it more open to freedoms
- i would tell him to make more youthful events involving famous people to talk to us and to also hang out with us. this would influence the religious.
- keep doing what you are doing.
- Honestly, for more people to take religion seriously they'd need role models as preists who show them it is a good career. With kids today, the Church needs to take kids interests, whatever they are, and connect them with Jesus, what he did, and the CHurch today.
- I would tell him to tel the young men and woman to do whatever God is asking them to do.
- I would tell the bishop to have more youth group activities. Such as retreats, days of prayer, etc. Maybe one day they might listen to their vocation from god.
- i would tell the bishop to try and understand what the younger society thinks about and what they like and try and teach them what is right and wrong. Try to have more kids enter the parish youth group and have the youth groups adapt to what yuong people think. Youth groups also should have religious activies such as retreats. retreats are a great way to get the the attention of young people. Young people would like that they have a place to act seriously about themselves and other individuals.
- To increase financial support for youth groups and vocation programs in parish communities, especially in urban settings.

- reach out and invest further in youth groups
- The United States is a pluralistic society and the Roman Catholic Church should be reflective of that. The Church in the US should try to reach out to men of more ethnic backgrounds to serve as its priests. In addition, the Church, as a whole, should extend Holy Orders to women as they play an important role in the life of the religious institution. Priestly celibacy, and its role in vocations, should be vigorously debated within all levels of the Church.
The Church, I think should liberalize its positions on who can be an ordained priest, while at the same time keeping to its core social and moral values; aid to the poor, promotion of the dignity of human life, and the like.
- Appeal to them
- Keep on Keeping on
- Dear Bishop,

Personally I believe that the reason to why there is a decrease in vocations is due to a decrease in faith in the Catholic Church. With emotional issues hitting the floor of political debate (ie abortion, homosexual marriage, and contraception), Catholics see what the World considers to be injustices against man's "true" freedoms. In addition to that, people continue to show false assumptions of the Catholic Church and those who aren't well educated in the faith seem to believe them easily due to stereotypicalities of those who minister to the church.

I think it can be said that the only source of vocations is the laity. The Church as a whole has to make sure that the assumptions of the World do not take over the Truth of God's plan of salvation. Personally after all has been said, I believe (coming from the viewpoint of a layman going into college) that the faith has to be revitalized in the Church. Once that is done a interest to learn more about the Church will spark in the minds of young people and from there God has the means to form those he has called to a consecrated vocation. He has done the same to me despite my decision and faith to go to college without the seminary. Overall more people just need to learn about what we're all about and from there curiosity in God's plan will bring them to where God needs them.

- I try my best to encourage my classmates to look to further the relationship with God.
- If I was speaking with the Bishop I would tell him to consider giving more financial funds and support towards the vocation office and to the seminaries in the diocese.
- you guys got your work cut out for you, get on that.. keep on truckin' and just hold down Christ like a monkey on a banana
- If they had the possibility of marriage, you might attract more people into the priesthood. Also if there were more freedoms.
- Have more young people involved around the church or get priest that are more realistic. Also have young people hang around priest in the rectory and to spend personal time with the priest like going shopping or having diner with others.
- I would say that the Catholic Church should allow priests to be married like in the protestant Church, though i can see that some may say that it may take away their focus on God. However, the priest can then understand the problems that the common lay person is going through. I went to a Catholic elementary school for about half of my life and I feel that the priest there does not keep up with the times and does not really have a good analytical sermon. Perhaps its because he simplified it for me as a kid, but i find my pastor in my protestant church to have a bit more depth. What I do like about priests is that they are very humble, which i strive to be, whereas Protestant pastors seem to have a giant ego. Overall, i find that the Catholic church feels a bit antiquated and out of touch with the public, which may turn away potential people from becoming clergy.
- The Catholic Church should allow people to get married!
- There are reasons why young men and women are no considering a religious vocation and in the end, it is up to the individual to decide what they want especially something this serious. One of the main reasons why young men and women are not doing this is because they do not share the same devotion to anyone or anything as people did in the past. I think this is a sign that today's youth is not as easily persuaded as before.

- Adapt Religion to the present life, more freedom and let priest have some open sexual experience to avoid scandals.
- The Wu-Tang Clan is a New York-based, all-star lineup of nine American rappers who are Grammy winners, multiplatinum-selling solo artists, multiplatinum record producers, film stars, screenwriters, TV stars, product spokespersons, business owners and, most recently, major motion picture composers.

The group started with just three members, RZA, GZA and Ol' Dirty Bastard, known as All In Together Now.[1] The group later added six members, and featured nine MCs until the death of Ol' Dirty Bastard in 2004. There is estimated to now be over 200 Wu-Tang Clan affiliates in the United States alone, consisting of rappers, record label CEOs and hit-making record producers.

The Wu-Tang Clan derives its name from the 1981 martial arts movie, Shaolin and Wu Tang. The founders of Wu-Tang Clan were cousins GZA, Ol' Dirty Bastard, and RZA, who had previously comprised the trio Force Of The Imperial Master, who became better known as "All In Together Now" after they had released a popular single by that name. The group had attracted the attention of some in the industry, including Biz Markie.[2], but had never managed to secure a record deal. Since the crew dissolved, GZA (then known as the Genius) and The RZA (then known as Prince Rakeem) had also embarked on separate unsuccessful solo careers with Cold Chillin' Records and Tommy Boy Records, respectively. Their frustration with the workings of the hip hop music industry would provide the main inspiration to Wu-Tang's revolutionary business plan. According to The Wu-Tang Manual, at the group's inception, RZA promised the members that if he had total control of the Wu-Tang empire, it would conquer the hip-hop world within five years, after which he would relinquish his total control.]] Wu-Tang Clan was gradually assembled in late 1992 from friends and accomplices from around Staten Island, with The RZA as the de facto leader & the group's producer [3]. The two cousins (GZA and The RZA) created their new Wu-Tang aliases by mimicking the sound that the words "genius" and "rakeem" would make when scratched on a turntable.

The word Wu-Tang comes from the name of the Taoist holy mountain Wu Dang in northwest Hubei Province in central China; it was also the site of the Ming Purple Imperial City built by Emperor Yong Le during 1404 to 1420. The RZA and Ol' Dirty Bastard adopted the name for the group after seeing the kung-fu film Shaolin and Wu Tang, which features a school of warriors trained in Wu-Tang style. The group's debut album loosely adopted a Shaolin vs. Wu-Tang theme, dividing the album into Shaolin and Wu-Tang sections and using dialogue excerpts as skits.[4]

The group have also developed various backronyms for the name (as hip hop pioneers like KRS-One and Big Daddy Kane did with their names), including "We Usually Take All Niggas' Garments," "Witty Unpredictable Talent And Natural Game" and "Wisdom, Universe, Truth, Allah, Nation, and God". This last reflects the teachings of the 5% nation of Gods and Earths.

[edit] Enter the Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)

Cover of Wu-Tang Clan's 1993 debut, Enter the Wu-TangThe Clan first became known to hip hop fans, and to major record labels, in 1993 (see 1993 in music) following the release of the independent single Protect Ya Neck, which immediately gave the group a sizeable underground following. Though there was some difficulty in finding a record label that would sign Wu-Tang Clan while still allowing each member to record solo albums with other labels, Loud/RCA finally agreed, releasing their debut album, Enter the Wu-Tang (36 Chambers), in late 1993. This album was popular and critically-acclaimed, though it took some time to gain momentum. Though hip hop had long had a gritty texture, the surreal aggression and minimalist production of 36 Chambers nevertheless had a huge impact on the genre, and was to prove massively influential

over the next decade. By the beginning of the 21st century, the album had become a regular fixture on "Best Albums Of The 90s" lists as well as a frequent choice for "Best Albums Of All Time" lists. [5]

The success of Enter the Wu-Tang: 36 Chambers established the group as a creative and influential force in early 1990s hip hop, allowing GZA, The RZA, Raekwon, Method Man, and Ol' Dirty Bastard to negotiate solo contracts.

[edit] First round of solo albums

The period between the release of Enter the Wu-Tang and Wu-Tang Clan's second album is considered to be "the greatest winning streak in rap history." [6] The RZA was the first to follow up on the success of Enter the Wu-Tang with a side project, founding the Gravediggaz with Prince Paul and Frukwan (both of Stetsasonic) and Poetic. The Gravediggaz released 6 Feet Deep in August 1994, which became a well known work to emerge from hip hop's small sub-genre of horrorcore.

Method Man's Tical had always been planned for Method Man to be the first breakout star from the group's lineup, with the b-side of the first single being his now-classic eponymous solo track. In November 1994 his solo album Tical was released. It was entirely produced by The RZA, who for the most part continued with the grimy, raw textures he explored on 36 Chambers. The RZA's hands-on approach to Tical extended beyond his merely creating the beats to devising song concepts and structure. This approach would continue throughout the first round of solo projects from the Clan members. Ol' Dirty Bastard found success in early 1995 with Return to the 36 Chambers: The Dirty Version, which saw the 36 Chambers sound become even rawer and rough-edged.

Raekwon's debut solo, Only Built 4 Cuban Linx...Late 1995 saw the release of the group's two most significant and well-received solo projects. Raekwon the Chef's Only Built 4 Cuban Linx was a diverse, theatrical criminological epic that saw The RZA move away from the raw, stripped-down beats of the early albums and towards a richer, cinematic sound more reliant on strings and classic soul samples. Cappadonna, a close Wu-Tang associate, featured on the album, as did Queensbridge MC Nas on the song "Verbal Intercourse", the first non-Wu-Tang artist to appear on a Wu-Tang album, and marking the birth of the rapper's "Nas Escobar" persona. GZA's Liquid Swords had a similar focus on inner-city criminology to Only Built 4 Cuban Linx, yet it was far darker, both in GZA's grim lyrics and in the ominous, foreboding production that saw The RZA more reliant on keyboards than ever before. The two 1995 solo albums remain widely regarded as two of the finest hip hop albums of the nineties.

Ghostface Killah released his own debut, Ironman, in 1996. It struck a balance between the sinister keyboard-laden textures of Liquid Swords and the sentimental soul samples of Cuban Linx, while Ghostface himself explored new territory as a lyricist. It was critically acclaimed and is still widely considered one of the best Wu-Tang solo albums. Although the 1994-1996 albums were released as solo albums, The RZA's presence behind the boards and the large number of guest appearances from other Clan members (Raekwon and Ghostface's albums only had two or three actual solo tracks each and both included many tracks that included other Clan members) means they are usually considered as important to the group's evolution as the group albums proper.

[edit] Wu-Tang Forever

Cover of Wu-Tang Clan's 1997 album, Wu-Tang Forever. With solo careers firmly established, Wu-Tang Clan came back together to release the enormous highly-anticipated double album Wu-Tang Forever in June 1997. It easily debuted at number one on the Billboard Charts after selling 600,000 in its first week[citation needed] — no small feat for an album that made very little attempt to reach a broader audience. Its first single, "Triumph," was over five minutes long, had nine full-length verses from each member plus Cappadonna, and no hook. The sound of the album built significantly on the sounds of the previous three solo albums, with The RZA using more keyboards and string samples, as well as, for the first time, assigning some of the album's production to his protégés True Master and 4th Disciple. The group's lyrics differed significantly from those of 36 Chambers, with many verses written in a dense stream-of-consciousness form heavily influenced by the teachings of the Five Percent Nation. Around the same time, the group's part in the highly-controversial joint 1997 summer tour with Rage Against the Machine was cut short after numerous legal problems and amid rumors of internal disputes[citation needed].

Wu-Tang Forever also marked the end of The RZA's "five year plan". After Forever's success, The RZA ceased to oversee all aspects of Wu-Tang product as he had done previously, delegating much of his existing role to associates such as Oli "Power" Grant and his brother Mitchell "Divine" Diggs. This move was designed to expand Wu-Tang's reach in hip-hop and take advantage of financial opportunities for the group. In keeping with this move, a large amount of Wu-Tang product (both musical and otherwise; example Wu-Wear) was to be released over the next two years.

Immediately after Wu-Tang Forever, the focus of Wu-Tang was on promoting emerging affiliate artists (referred to by the fanbase as "Wu-Fam") rather than its own members. The group's close associate Cappadonna followed the group project with March 1998's The Pillage. Soon after, Killah Priest (like Cappadonna, a close associate of the Clan, though not an official member) released Heavy Mental to great critical acclaim. Affiliate groups Sunz Of Man (of which Killah Priest was a member) and Killarmy (which included The RZA's younger brother) also released albums while a compilation album, Wu-Tang Killa Bees: The Swarm, was released showcasing these and more Wu-affiliated artists as well as including new solo tracks from the group members themselves.

There was also a long line of lesser-known releases fr

- If i was able to speak with the Bishop i would tell him to start traveling to schools all over the diocese. Spread the word of god to all sorts of age groups ranging from children in grammar school all the way to the college level. It's important that the bishop himself spreads the word in my opinion if the children of this faith see the leaders of this faith speakin to them about the vocation of priesthood and sisterhood it might change there minds just a little bit.
- I would tell the Bishop that young people today are more interested in sex and alcohol. Most of my friends are very interested in both of these topics because young men now a days are right at the age where they are very horny. This may seem very obseen but it is very true and want to experience what the world has to offer them every day. Being a priest you are not allowed to interact with a woman on that type of level.
- Send out newsletters from the younger seminarians explaining their choice for entering the seminary and their experience
- I would offer my personal opinion to the bishop and tell him that I feel the way to get the youth into entering religous vocations is to continue wat they are doing. Have a vocations director I feel has greatly influenced me into the priesthood. I would also tell the bishop that another way to get the youth into entering the priesthood is point out all the benefits of being a religous brother or priest. Some kids are blind to the wonderful things the priesthood has to offer.
- Send out newsletters to more people
- It is very hard to tell young people to join the priesthood because of some of the rules and I feel like the Catholic Church should get more on the issues of current young people.
- educate more about the faith

- I would tell the bishop to advertise more about the Great High School Cathedral preparatory seminary because know one really knows where this school and what we stand for.
- I WOULD TELL HIM THAT CHILDREN THESE DAYS ARE MORE NERVOUS THAN ANYTHING TO TAKE ON THE CHALLENGE OF ANSWERING A RELIGIOUS CALLING. I FEEL THAT IF THE SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS OR PARENTS AT HOME TOLD THE CHILD THAT YOU SHOULDNT BE NERVOUS AND THAT YOU SHOULD DO WHAT GOD IS CALLING YOU TO DO THEN IT WOULD INCREASE THERE THOUGHTS ON THE CALLING.
- I think your great job just have more church singles nights like jewish people do
- A religious vocation is just not the priesthood, brother, or nun. You can have a religious vocation by lecturing, being a minister of the holy communion or an altar/sacristan. Everyone has a vocation life and it is based on their willingness to accept or decline what God offers to that certain individual. Overall young people can be active in various ways but it is up that individual's true relationship with God and helping out his or hers community for the better of everyone else.
- to try and explain to certain men who are unsure about the priesthood that it is a very fulfilling vocation in the eyes of God. If God challenges you to be a priest then you must do that because it is God's will.
- Well, in my opinion, young men and women would consider on taking a role in the religious vocations area, if, they can dress differently, on a daily basis, when they are just shopping. They should be able to live with people their own ages, so they will be able to get to know everyone easier, and relate to each other. Young men and women also are drawn to the extravagance of life. So maybe instead of living in a small place together, they could live somewhere bigger, where there are a lot of rooms, and that they can have their family come visit.
- Try to make it appeal to young people more.
- It is the degradation of American society that has caused a lack of interest in the religious vocations. Catholic bashing and negative slurs about our religion are all too common in the media. I urge you to stand strong in Catholic tradition and do not take on a liberal stance in order to attract American youth. It is those youth, who, called by God, will fulfill their role in a religious order; it is not a climate change of the church that must ensue. I hold much pride in the conservatism of the Catholic religion and hope the bishops and cardinals will maintain this conservatism for my children. It is an overhaul of society that is needed, not an overhaul of the church.
- I will tell him that if they allowed priests and nuns to be able to get married and have a family more people would become priests or nuns.
- Bishop,

I understand the problem the Church is facing today with the decline in interest in religious vocations. I feel this decline is because of the restrictions and requirements the Church enforces. I think that if the Church made a few changes, interest in vocations would increase.

I'm a bit conservative and a bit liberal. I don't want to see all Catholic traditions changed, but I would like to see a little more modernization. For example, I would like to see priests have the option of taking the vow of celibacy. I have considered entering the priesthood, but my parents discouraged it because I would not be able to raise a family and give them grandchildren. If celibacy was an option for religious life, more Catholics would consider religious vocations. Plus, I would be able to explore further the possibility of the priesthood.

I also think that women should be given more freedom and opportunities to profess their faith in the Church. I think women should be allowed to assist at Mass. By that, I mean that women should be allowed to be deacons. Also, some orders of nuns should be formed that allows women to work more in the community and not have to give up so much in their lives.

Also, the Church has painted a grim picture over the years that homosexuality and other forms of sexuality outside of marriage is evil. While I understand that it contradicts what our Lord intended

sexual intercourse to be, I feel that the Church needs to be a bit more accepting. If the Church were to accept homosexuals for who they were and to not say that if a man does it with a man, or if a woman does it with a woman, they will go to hell, then more people would be more accepting of the Catholic Church.

I thank you for allowing me to express my opinion in how the Catholic Church can improve. If my suggestions and those of others are taken into consideration, I know the Church will be able to fix the decline in religious vocations.

- The Church needs to speak out and notify more people about religious vocations. The Church does not reach out to the younger generation to explain the benefits of becoming a priest, brother, sister/nun. The Church needs to start making the church more exciting in a way, it has to attract the youth to come to church and understand our faith on a more mature level rather than just having learned the RULES(what not to do) in school or through our parents.
- I'm sure that there are many young women who would like to become priest but the church does not let them. The church is full of scandal and can sometimes be cult like due to radical extremists. The church should accept that not all people want to be Catholics and believe in some form of a god but not the way Catholics view God. God tells us to accept everyone yet you cannot accept gays as people. They are somewhat shunned yet they are people, too.
- I would suggest to take more time to get the message of what it is to become a priest like, meaning that he should take more time sending the message to the young people out there.
- More recruiting programs and information sessions.
- Stop brainwashing people!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
- Start early. Include what the life of a priest is like in catechism schooling of children so that they are exposed to what it is like and all about. That way people have a base they can work from if they feel that religious vocation may be for them.
- If I spoke to the bishop about the declining number of people my age joining religious vocation the advice I would give him is to make enrollment in the priesthood, brotherhood or sisterhood more publicized because many people my age don't really consider it because it really is not spoken about in public or really in church on Sundays.
- I'm not Catholic, so I will probably not talk to a bishop
- Bring the church more up to date on new societal acceptance (i.e. homosexuals, birth control and woman's more prominent role in society)
- To be aware that issues facing families and young adults of today are not the same as they were 30 years ago. Times and society are rapidly changing and I feel that needs to be taken into consideration in the church as well.
- I think that the key to having a positive outlook on any profession is knowing and admiring the people in that field. I have been lucky enough to have been brought up in a parish run by the Monfort Missionaries. This group of priests has always been deeply involved in the community, in fact most grew up in the parish. They have been spiritual leaders, role models, and most importantly great friends to all the families in our community. I realize that not all parishes are this lucky. Many people I know that go to other parishes have never had that experience to know their spiritual leaders as people also.
- If you truly believe that God loves everyone, then act like it. Stop denouncing people because of sexual preference! There are enough homosexuals within the Catholic church that it should no longer be an issue anyway. Also recognize that today is a new day, and the old rules no longer apply. Abstinence is no longer the only option that applies... You would do more good if you promoted and counseled people on safe sex, and contraception. I'm not going to bring up abortion, cause I know you're not ready for that.....but keep it in mind. It is a necessity for those who find themselves with no other alternatives.
- I have been in religious instructions since I was in Kindergarten. It was called CCD at Saint Simon and Jude in Bensonhurst Brooklyn. My mother was a religion teacher for ten years. I learned many valuable lessons from attending CCD. If you are looking to increase the number of young men and women to join one of these programs, one suggestion would be role playing or more

talk groups where teens can discuss their faith and get questions about their religious beliefs answered.

- Catch them young!!!
Little kids from the age of four should be told about the vocation and taught to know and love God and when they grow, they'll stick to the teachings and have the vocation among their priorities when they start thinkin of a future career.
- If the church does not change with the times the number of people in it will decline. We live in a time where technology and material possessions are introduced to us at a very young age. We experience these things as well as personal relationships. It takes a great deal of maturity to give all of these things up. I do not think this maturity exists in today's society and although it may be unfortunate is reality. It is sad to say that if the Church does not lower it's requirements it will never become at all appealing to young people in today's society.
- Though I am not a practicing Catholic, I believe if the church were more open-minded, as a majority of "young people" today are, they might have more luck recruiting for religious vocations.
- If I had a few minutes with the Bishop, I would urge him to rethink Christian vocations. Namely, I think the Church should seriously consider lifting the vow of chastity. I believe the Church is losing talented and qualified pastors because of celibacy restraints. I think that allowing married priests would bring an energy back to the Church which is sorely needed. The Church's mission, in my opinion, is to embody the Mystical Body of Christ. I believe we're called to love and to union with the divine, and I see nothing wrong with pastors demonstrating this love for others through the bonds of holy matrimony.
- I believe that a life of religious devotion does not appeal to the vast majority of young people today. It's not the fault of the church, it is teh fault of the surroundings of young people. There are more opportunities for finacial gain out in the world now and people have more expressive freedom. I admire priests, nuns, brothers and all individuals who give their life to the service of God. Personally I am Catholic but do not find that lifestyle fitting for me. The task is overcoming the incredible amount of material items that young people venerate which is almost impossible.
- I believe that the Church has, in a certain sense, "gone soft", if you will. In years past, politicians such as John Kerry, Nancy Pelosi, the Kennedy clan, and Rudy Giuliani would have been excommunicated for their positions on abortion and homosexual lifestyles (as well as their own marriage status in some cases). These days, though, some bishops publicly announce that they "might" deny the offenders Communion, while the rest say nothing at all. Additionally, you have many within religious life, such as Sr. Helen Prejean or various members of the Society of Jesus (just to name a few examples), who express opinions on varied topics, such as abortion or homosexuality, that are in direct violation of Church norms. But despite all of this, the Church does nothing; no excommunications for Senators Kennedy or Kerry, no laicization for Gustavo Gutierrez or Hans Peter Kolvenbach, no laicization followed by excommunication for Robert Drinian. If the Church will not step up to the plate and take a firm stance on dissenters within the ranks, and thus present a unified front, what does it expect the youth to think? If Father "A" says abortion is bad, but Father "B" says it is acceptable, how is a youth supposed to know which is right? And furthermore, why should a youth take the Church seriously when seemingly every point of doctrine is going to be objected to by elements within the Church? If there is any reason as to why the youth do not attend Mass or enter religious life, it is because they do not know what to expect from the Church. There are days when we're almost as bad as the Anglican Communion, with persons in positions of leadership within the communities disputing and defying orders from on high and damning the consequences. Can we reasonably expect the youth to enter into a life in the Church if they believe that it will be a lifelong job in which obeying and being obeyed are optional? Can we reasonably expect them to enter into a life in the Church if they believe that things which they will spend years building up could very well be undermined by the next priest or nun? Can we reasonably expect young people who are not quite sure what to do with themselves to seriously investigate a vocation with a Church that is just as confused at to what to do with its self?

- Allow women to become priests it would greatly increase the amount of applicants or eliminate the marriage restriction on priest. In this modern world the youth are more attached to the calling of finding a partner. vocation eliminates any thoughts of that happening.
- In my opinion young people aren't becoming priests/nuns because of the lack of freedom. I also feel that many are unaware of the decline in people entering religious vocations. I would try to hold discussions and the importance of becoming a Priest/Nun
- There needs to be more flexibility and room for disagreement. The only religious people I have ever been able to listen to are the ones who admit mistakes and can take criticism.
- educate my fellow peers guide them to seek out interest of intellectual rather than physical. Mainstream it and people would follow simply explain the pleasures of the mind that derive from a connection with the church.
- I've worked in my local parish rectory for almost 5 years and have not once seen any active efforts made towards recruitment (other than a one-page advertisement in the Tablet). The Church needs to find a way of creating dialogue with young people on the prospect of entering religious vocation without seeming forceful, desperate or oppressive.
- To give more freedom the ability to marry and no vow of poverty.
- I think that with the way society is going, the number of young people choosing a religious vocation will decrease. Peer pressure is too strong and children as young as 2 and 3 year olds are knowing things that before I didn't know until recently. I feel as though the eyes of the youth have been opened by the negative influences of society. The only way to attract them to the religious life is by totally changing the norms of priest and nuns but I think that these changes are too radical and not many will approve.
- Young participants may influence young people. Discussing topics that will relate to young people would be very encouraging. Discussing topics that relate to School and Education- encouraging students to pray for Knowledge, Wisdom and Understanding would be good for both Adults and Children. There are many topics that young people would like to discuss with the priest but are afraid to bring up such topics, such topics deal with their relationships with others - dealing with boyfriends and girlfriends and other types of tough subjects that young adults are going through. Also It would be nice for Priests to have humors, they can be entertaining to be more lively.
- Read my answers so 39a-1
- The church needs to really reach out more, sensitize itself to what young society is all about (its wants and needs.) Also, people in religious careers should only work with young people when it's their passion. I have had teachers in the past who were nun/priests/brothers who gave me a negative opinion of them in a religious role and it turned me off to religion for a time.
- Show the positive signs.
- It would be helpful if people were more educated about religious vocations. Also, a little bit more personal freedom would help people be enticed by the career choice. In today's society, it is very hard to follow the Church's strict rules fully voluntarily.
- On certain issues the Church does not seem to be understanding. For example, if a woman decides to have an abortion or to use birth control. These two methods are not accepted at all and for many young women they are. If a woman thought she is not capable of giving birth to the child than perhaps she shouldn't have had sex - but if she was raped and chose to have an abortion, it is still not accepted by the Church. I personally feel that the woman's role in the Church is not promoted or recognized.

I also feel that if Masses became more interesting that more teens and young adults would attend. Mass seems to have too many "rules" - for example, when to sit, stand or kneel.

- I do not feel the Bishop has a say anything. The Catholic Church is based on traditions that my generation cannot seem to grasp. If we go to church and hear what the people are chanting around us, all it is is a bunch of words, and it doesn't seem to have meaning to anyone. It can also seem that the priests just like to hear themselves talk. Homilies are too long and are not inspirational. I feel the most spiritual when I'm the top of a hill and there is nothing but grass and sky, not when I'm in church. Religion has turned into something that we only look to in times of

sadness and grief, like funerals or when someone is sick, we pray. There are too many things our religion looks down upon that is just a part of life. Okay, be against abortion, but be against contraception and birth control. It's part of the present that people are going to have sexual relations. The church is holding too tightly onto tradition. It makes not only religious vocations unappealing, but religion itself unappealing.

- -Education is the most important aspect of any career choice. I was born and raised in the church and I have never really learned what it means to be a priest. I don't know what is needed of them, I don't know the educational qualifications needed, I don't know most of a priest's responsibilities. I believe if I were educated young about this I could have considered a career in the church.
- I also strongly believe that if women were allowed to become priests and hold high positions in the church the number of priests in America would double.
- I really wouldn't know, society makes it seem that everything in the ten commandments per se is okay to do. Many young people do not attend church anymore and some of the restrictions of the church are pretty extreme. What happens to the American dream- to get married and get a great job making money to support and multiply. And I believe other than considering a religious vocation young people have other ways to stay close to God without joining a vocation. I was part of the youth group, I did altar serving, member of Legion of Mary and I taught CCD classes.
- I think that most kids my age are not interested in entering a religious vocation because of the perception that money is required to live a happy and fulfilling life. I feel that most kids my age go to school just for the sole purpose of having a degree that will make them the most money. The lack of knowledge about religious vocation is another reason why I think the numbers of young people entering religious vocations in America is declining. It should be promoted not only in churches but also in our schools and communities. To my experience, it is very rare to hear someone my age wanting to become a Priest or a Nun. Other concerns that might be responsible for the decrease in religious vocations are issues dealing with family, personal freedoms, sex and lifestyle changes. Commitment to religious life seems like it could be time-limited and unless an individual gets a calling from God, this might not be something that would cross their minds. Promotion about opportunities and advantages of being part of a religious establishment and an increase of advertisement might help this conflict with the youth. I personally have not ever considered becoming a priest or ever thought about it until now.
PS. I would love to see what my peers think about this issue or the results of this survey.
- I would request the Bishop to be more open minded when it comes to the relations between others and have him understand that by condemning people for their "sins" is not helping to bring them closer within the church.
- Post more ads, need to be more open and active and start program for young people to gain some knowledge regarding religion.
- The Pope should change some of the "laws." Priests should be able to marry. There's even some contradictory news about Jesus being married to Marie-Madeleine... It could be true. Some part of the Bible is so "covered." For example: what happened to Jesus between the age of 12 and 33 (when he died). We need more information, more freedom...
- I would tell him to stop having the church make a minimum number of money to donate.
- Invite members of the parish to consider a religious vocation. Try to emphasize that during a time in society where people are lost morally and spiritually, the Church needs support from the community to stand together, educate one another, and keep the word of God in the hearts of all who are faithful.
- I would have nothing to say.
- I'd advise the Bishop to seriously consider changing a few of the rules that are enforced by the Catholic Church and require sacrifices that are viewed as important elements of life. Also, I'd suggest a bit more leniency on controversial subjects that we, as a whole, have to deal with on a daily basis. Sometimes compromising is one's best bet.
- Try to explain the importance of how it is important to help people when they have problems in their lives or they are going through some difficult times in their lives. Also to tell what can be done and how that faith can make a difference in someone else's life.

God is an inspiror to many people and he is the best role model that sets that example. He can do miracles and that certainly is true if you are a good person with a warm heart and you are able to make a difference in someone's life.

Even a simple thing as listening to a person can help.

Best of Luck!

I hope I helped...

Sincerely!

- Change with the times and try to accept the newer younger generation, not alienate them and chastise them for doing all that they know how. It's a changing world with changing times, so do not be so extreme, try to find a place somewhere in the middle, and stick to it, hard and fast.
- Think of different methods in convincing others for help. For instance, helping others in return for their love and that you can generally have others in need for your help in future. Another example might be that if one help others, you are doing a biggest favor that God would help; if you help others, you are helping God as well in getting people back on their feet. People would look upon you as a wonderful person and even possibility as an icon to the community.
- I feel a lot of young people are unaware of religious vocations are and don't necessarily know what they are about, so I think making programs available at one's Church solely for religious vocations and training would be paramount.
- I feel that the religious life today is not at all the way it used to be. The concepts and ideals of the religious life need to be detailed in a better, more positive light. The opportunities that may be encountered entering the clergy could be quite beneficial, but so few young people know this. If other younger people were to share this, I think the outreach could most definitely gain new vocations.
- I will sincerely say that I believe that if young people are given the option to marry and still lead their usual lives there will be more of us considering the priesthood as a vocation.
- Maybe promote a conference at a church that discusses ways to get into a religious vocation?
- My name is Magdalena. When I was in Poland, I was always in touch with priests and nuns, I went for a religious camps, joined a religious group, played a guitar in Church and I was thinking about becoming a nun and travel to other, poor countries to help people. As I came to United States my faith decreased. I was not close to religious activities anymore. I played and sung in Church for few months, but I don't do that any more. I think that the best way to encourage people to become closer to God is to give them an opportunity in public high schools and elementary schools to meet God, read about God, and what is more important is to teach young people how to look at other people and see them all as children of God. I think that it would be a great idea to organize camps during summer or just for weekend that would bring people together and teach them about God.... It is important to show young people that priests and nuns can are a regular people and can also have fun but on the other side have their spirituality and are close to God.
God Be With You....
- I'm not a religious person. I don't attend Catholic church. I don't attend any church. I've had bad experiences in the church (not of a sexual kind) and consider myself agnostic. I do, however, have a tremendous respect for what the church can do for a community and for the people who dedicate their lives to religious work.

I would tell the Bishop that his life isn't easy, it must've been hard giving up what most wouldn't. That taking a vow of celibacy and poverty are two things that America's youth have a big problem with. Nowadays, nobody wants to be poor and celebate. The thing of is, if you give people an inch, they'll usually take a mile. I'm not sure there is a solution, barring the extremely unlikely chance that America's youth will suddenly stop being so materialistic and over-sexed and start thinking about others instead of themselves. Be happy with what you can get I suppose. I wouldn't know how to make becoming a priest/nun in today's society a "hip" or "cool" thing to become, because that's what the kids want. They want a job that's going to pay big, and the trophy spouse to show off.

I would say that the Church has to show their best assets. What are the benefits of devoting one's self to God? (Because spiritual enlightenment and inner peace doesn't really say "cha-ching") A change has to take place. But it's not going to be easy. It's hard, changing rules that have been seemingly set in stone.

- I think that a majority of young men and women in this country do not take the idea of religion seriously. Religion is just, "something that you have to do..." and not something that he/she would want to do. Also, many young people are skeptics about the existence of a god because of the violent world that we live in, especially after the tragedy of 9/11. The Catholic Church is way too conservative. Young people today are more liberal. In order to increase the interest of a young man or woman, you must prove to them why they should devote their life to god rather than work at a company, make a lot of money, and raise a family. Think of reasons why you chose to become Ordained and try to spread that message to the youth in a way that they will understand.
- In an effort to increase the number of men and women that seriously consider and then enter a life of religious vocation, marriage should be allowed for priests and nuns. Women should also be permitted to lead services such as mass.
- to do it
- the restrictions on becoming a priest are obviously too stringent and no one wants to dedicate their life to a belief that could be false
- To try and convince younger people to consider religious vocations if they want to.
- I would tell the Bishop that young people entering religious vocations in America should have more rights such as getting married
- To make programs about becoming a priest or brother
- I HAVE NO ADVICE
- If you need an increased number of vocations, you should permit female priests as well as allow people who take religious vocations to marry.
- Maybe bring sports or some activity that would connect the young crowd. Maybe bring dance to the church for the girls.
- be able for priest to get married that way they are able to have wife and kids.....
- to be a little less strict with all of the rules. A lot of people would not join because they feel restricted from things they would have to give up.
- Stop recruiting like the army, church if anything should never be the staging ground for priest and religious vocational recruitment. There's enough of that on TV for the army and the marines. Young people obviously know there is a possibility of becoming a priest how else would they have priests to listen to. It's the constant badgering some people get that completely discourages them from participation even if they want to.
- though it may seem nearly impossible to do if you keep certain rules that same or certain things are unchecked then you will keep having a massive decline. For starters the rules on certain matters of life or choices must be altered, even though it probably won't happen because of strong beliefs. It's all that can be expected, the church old ways are dying and new ways of the church must be made. Times are changing and you can't keep old rituals. The church order needs to be more flexible with rules and change with time like the US constitution. If it does not change then certainly the situation will not change unless, the church is changed. Like with gravity when you drop something it falls to earth, you cannot change that, if you expect a different result like the object floating instead of falling is foolish. Just as expecting the church to get new members if it does not change with time then the rates will continue to fall but if you take gravity away then the object floats then the rules change. The church needs a major change in rules or the natural way of things will not survive with the new generation and future generations.
- I would ask him to get kids more involved with campus ministry program to show them what it's like to help the community.
- NONE
- to make it interesting making it more to our liking not making it too strict and doing something that relates to our age group

- I would tell the bishop, that if he wanted to attract younger people to religious vocations, advertising for it should not be so "serious". This makes a religious life seem boring, and not fulfilling. It sends young people the wrong message
- be more open and have less restrictions on the lives of the people you recruit
- To allow priests to get married or have relationships.
- I believe that the way of life is a major factor in becoming a priest or brother today. People want the American Dream. They want a job that pays well, and they want to be able to raise a family. This is why I believe that younger people are not becoming priests and brothers. There isn't that much freedom in the life of a priest or brother, which may bother most people and make them not want to become a priest or brother.
- Offer more money to priests, allow them to marry, give them a lot more freedoms.
- Limit restrictions. It doesn't seem right to do so, but I do believe that when teens are faced with the career choice of becoming a priest or a brother, they are blinded by all the restrictions and how the dedication is so strong that you must live it everyday. I don't believe many teens today are this strong mentally in taking a vow that will be with them for the rest of their life, it seems a bit too extreme. Maybe if priests would come out and talk to teens about how they live their lives just like other people do, and how it's not restricting yourself from the world.
- Be honest with them about the things they must do, in order to help them make the right decision.
- Take a different approach in the way you talk to kids. Don't give them the same speeches that have been used 20 years ago, because society has changed and if you talk the same and say the same things nothing will change because their environment is different from 20 years ago to now, be realistic, don't seem FAKE, because you have to take what society is now and put it in your speech, that way your chances of getting to kids is a far greater chance than the same words from 20 years ago.
- I really cannot think of any advice to give to a bishop because going into religious vocation to a lot of people is very unfulfilling. Not in that it isn't a great career but because it does not meet certain desires that most people have. Most people in America today want families, a lot of money along with their own business. I would say that if people in America are less willing to join religious vocations, than the bishop could maybe start recruiting people in other countries where they are less fortunate than the people here in the U.S.
- To find out all the things on how to become a priest
- I would tell the bishop to be more assertive in his own community and really try to reach out to young people, especially in High Schools. High School I feel like is a place when the students start to think about what they want to do with their lives, and if Bishops can talk to more High School Students about becoming priests than I think there will be more young people entering religious vocations for the Catholic Church.
- That the bishop would need to try and make things a little more interesting for the youth. Most parishes are mainly elderly people, and in order for them to stay around the youth is needed. The bishop should try and make more youth groups and maybe try to get bands that promote God through their music to have more youth get involved in parishes around the diocese.
- I would tell the Bishop that that it is time for a change. It is hard to have faith in something that has rules that are hard to accept as a teenager and even as an adult. To make the vocation more interesting would attract more followers and make the church better. The church does not need to be so stubborn on its rules yes the Catholic Church's rules have sustained the Catholic faith for a long time but today's world is different, there is no fear of God and it is hard to instill that value into today's youth. So instead of making people fear God maybe have them embrace God and make mass more interesting, from something as simple as making the mass shorter to extreme things like having the priest rap the Nicene Creed anything that can attract more followers.
- every young person today thinks about growing up and having a family with a good paying job. If we could make being a priest somewhat similar to that kind of life style I believe the number of people becoming priest will rise.
- For the Bishop to encourage more young people to come into the church maybe the church should reach out more to the youth. They should have at least one young priest inside as many different

church and church communities as possible. There should also be a type of "Church Fair" filled with games and sports and activities to have the youth learn what they would have inside the church community.

- To let people know all the benefits for choosing this career. All the sacrifices, and dedication it takes to become one. Also to make the guidelines for following the Catholic Church a little more liberal. Also, to keep the relationship between the church and politics separate.
- I would ask him if men priests followed the rules of a deacon with the ability to marry
- I think the bishop is doing a good job.
- Try to relate more to teens.
- Show them different aspects of it, and include more choices for them.
- I would tell him to make it more interesting because some young people find the life boring because they are not ready to sacrifice for a life where they don't have enough freedom.
- If I could join a religious vocation I would want the people doing these vocations to be allowed to love and get married. It is what you tell us about and I feel all people have this right even priests.
- To give more freedom after taking the vocation. Being able to marry and have a child would make teens consider to take a religious vocation.
- You guys should make being a priest or nun or whatever...cool. Like it shouldn't be this whole ceremonial thing that only stuck-up people do. I strongly believe that if you pump it up a little bit and make it more exciting. Telling people that a priest can become a doctor or researcher or zoologist and cool jobs like that then people will look into it. Peace priest!
- none
- tell them of their future spiritually
- don't push people will follow
- Try to go to colleges and high schools to help promote.
- to let a priest have a family if that was to change the number of people who will become a priest will greatly increase.
- well honestly and simply, without allowing women to become priests, that eliminates HALF of the population that is able to be a priest. Also, priests being able to marry would greatly open it up to more people. Even though the Church's laws and rules are becoming more archaic, it should NOT back down on its stances concerning promiscuity, abortion, and contraceptives. These are issues that affect teenagers' lives on a daily basis.
- wouldn't matter
- Tell someone that children aren't getting fondered as much anymore.
- Allow the priests and brothers more personal freedom.
- Give them more freedom than they are given, but not too much that will completely violate the rules of obedience.
- tell them of its benefits
- First of all I think a priest should have the right to get married. Second, women should be able to become a priest because they have every right. I believe that there should be more freedoms, for a priest or any other consecrated person. Kids today want freedom and the idea of priesthood and all the restrictions in that life make them turn down this option. I think if we allow a priest to do a little more it will attract more young men and maybe in the future women.
- I honestly could not care less at all about religion and I do not have any advice about religion.
- Priests should be allowed to get married because being a priest is fulfilling but without a wife and kids what is the point of your life.
- I would tell the Bishop that a religious vocation increases faith in God.
- attempt to be more appealing and look further, there are still people my age who are interested in a religious vocation. The only trouble is finding them.
- I do not have any good advice.
- I think that a priest should be able to be married because everyone should have the opportunity to enjoy a family.
- I personally have no idea..

- I think that priests, nuns, brothers and sisters should be allowed to get married because everyone should be entitled to enjoy a family of their own.
- To really share his life experiences before he became a Bishop. For example, to tell young men and women the "mistakes" he did as a child or teen so that young adults do not feel helpless or uncomfortable. Being a teen is not an easy thing especially in today's day and age so the Bishop has to take into consideration that times have changed greatly since his childhood.
- A lot of youth of today seem to be lost in their own endeavours. It is important that parents be taught to encourage their children to participate in spirit building activities. Understanding that the church has its traditional ways, many young people feel because of the possible wrong things they do they will be judged by members of the church and often are actually judged before given a chance. To encourage the youth of today, one has to ask the youth as to what activities would be beneficial to them, encourage them to speak out on issues important to them and to do this is by participating in activities important to them to know the youth of today they have to trust you. You have to closer interact with them to give you the feedback that you need.
- 1. Allow men and women in the Church to marry and eliminate the vow of poverty.
- I wouldn't say a thing because I have nothing to say to a man I have nothing in common with. I feel all religions are on an all time down fall with modern events and technologies. People are finally thinking outside the box, and are not accepting what is on the table put in front of their face anymore.
- I would tell the bishop to make the kids have fun through activities and also make them have a lot more fun.
- Allow some women to have abortion, only those who have been raped and who are too young to have a child.
- I would tell him to allow both men and women priests, as well as allowing priests to marry and have children. There is no reason why this cannot be.
- The Church has to become modern with society. For example priest not being able to marry is extremely outdated. Living accommodations must be more than just a convent. Its views on sex and abortion must be more liberal. If these goals are not met, expect the a very fast decline in the future.
- Try to change some things in the church to give more freedom and choice to priest/brothers. Let them get married and have a family because I think that is what is turning them away from becoming a priest/brother.
- I would tell the bishop that all of these children are children of God and that's why they are here today and if kids think that this is not important then they should talk to somebody because God plays a big role in our lives because he helps us out whenever we need him and we could pray to him everytime something goes wrong.
- Young people today feel that becoming a priest puts too many restrictions on their lives. The church needs to do more to prove that statement wrong and show that priests lives are not that different from others.
- More options within the religious community, more dimensional than the normal religious life
- There's nothing to do to make the church better, it is what it is and always will be.
- He should be able to relate to certain things that are in our world today such as singers and young professionals because that is what most kids our age are still interested in. They need to have a focus point on what they see as role models.
- To talk to them more and to listen to what the people want.
- I would tell the bishop that in order to get a younger crowd you need to promote the view of a young atmosphere and make the church less strict.
- YOU SHOULD ALLOW PEOPLE TO GET MARRIED AND LET THEM PICK SOMETHING ELSE IN LIFE SO THEIR LIFE WON'T BE FULLY ATTACHED TO PRIEST HOOD AND THIS WILL A LOT OF PEOPLE TO CHOOSE PRIEST HOOD.
- I would tell the bishop if he wants younger people to start considering vocations more he should try things that connect with younger people get more involved with the lives of younger people find out what really goes on in their lives.

- I would tell the priest to have more religious parties and outings to increase the interest of young men and women.
- I feel as though many of the issues that prevent young men and women from practicing their religion at all are the same issues which prevent them from considering a religious vocation. I feel that many young adults today have problems with some of the commandments and requirements of certain religions. I believe that the "no sex before marriage" rule prevents many young adults from wholly accepting a certain religion. The issue of homosexual marriage is also one, which I believe hinders one's decision to follow a certain religious path. Basically, I think that many young adults today find that religion is too old-fashioned and needs to be updated to flow with the times. Moreover, I also feel that educating the young adults in the community about the meaning behind these rules and acknowledging that there is a lot of pressure on young adults to have sexual intercourse, or take drugs, or cheat on their significant others will help to reverse the negative stigma that may be on religion.
- Young Americans have very poor spirituality. There is more attention on the money, materialism and being independent. I think that if people as a priests or nuns could have some more freedom would help to consider religious vocations. The church should organize more events for the youth in America in order to increase the exposure of young people to the religious activities.
- To have an open mind and heart about certain issues such as same sex relationships. I thought that God wanted us to love, accept, and respect one another. To judge another or condemn is coming off to young men and women today as hypocritical.
- The only suggestion I would have to get young men and women to consider a religious vocation would be through education. The problem I see with today's society is that they grow up with relativistic ideas so they see anything that has to do with religion as automatically being bad. There are also others, who are religious, but don't understand fully the teachings of their religion and they end up sending out the wrong message. But in the end, it is still only a consideration. You can't force or heavily influence people to consider a religious vocation because they may not be up to it. There wouldn't be a point in changing the rules of living a life like a priest/brother sister/nun, because it wouldn't essentially be the same. People need to learn that the world doesn't revolve around relativistic subjective ideas.
- The reason religious vocation has declined and will continue to decline is intrinsic within the Catholic religion itself. Christianity as a whole has declined steadily since the Enlightenment. Why? Christianity endorses altruism, the idea that man must sacrifice himself for the sake of others. It also endorses faith, the idea that knowledge is gained through divine revelation and that we must believe without evidence. People now have embraced reason and egoism, products of deist and atheist philosophy. Catholicism is incompatible with human nature - its mysticism. Capitalism and egoism have generated wealth on a vast scale and people would rather participate in the marketplace where the major profits and lush, extravagant lifestyles exist. Unless the Catholic Church plans on further watering down its biblical teaching to try and reconcile rational selfishness and self-sacrifice, Catholicism will continue to decline.
- As a young child I wanted to become a nun no one ever spoke to me about becoming one or encouraged me. Now I am 47 years old and at times I wish I would have looked into it, since I entered St Francis I have met many wonderful and dedicated brothers and a father. As for encouraging the young people it would have to begin from they are young, surely exposing them to positive, fun role models that they would one day want to be like. Certainly the way the life of priest and nuns are portrayed such reflect more joy and happiness.
Giselle Ruiz
- I think the Church should seriously consider allowing priests to marry which is a ridiculous rule the Church made as a political move to acquire more land anyway. And in today's times, women should be allowed to have bigger roles in the Church if they should so choose
- I think there is a major sense that only "old" people are priests, etc. and I think that in order to get younger members interested in this particular vocation, something needs to be changed about the image of the priest, etc.

- In all honesty, I couldn't even answer this question because I think it would take so much. Most, but not all, young men and women I know would not even think about considering a religious vocation. Nobody is religious, or spiritual, or anything anymore. They just think about themselves and where they will party on the weekend.

I know this answer probably does not help you out, and that I am sorry for. But as far as our youth culture, many of us are misguided, misinformed, and sometimes doomed. You stumped me on this one. Maybe when I'm older and possibly a Franciscan Brother (something I'm considering) I'll be able to do more research and I'll try my hardest to find a way to enlighten kids in the ways I've been enlightened. But until then, who knows.

This survey was really cool, by the way.

- Be less rigid. The Bible is thousands of years old. I think it is time that we find new ways to interpret and follow through with the word of God. I don't think God minds if we look at things in a new way just as long as we live in harmony and fulfil his work in some sort of way.
- The stop the priest scandal.
- I would tell him, to continue the same progress level that he is working at. However, include more high schools and colleges. Though I feel in the end no matter what the bishop or other priests do to encourage men and women to take up religious vocations, that eventually falls upon the person to decide whether they want to or not. You can not force a person into doing something they do not want to do.
- I believe God calls us to follow him in the way that he chooses and he is always there for us. Remember to listen to HIM and not give up because HE is always there.
- Over time things change whether we want them to or not. The church should embrace the change, and focus more on the community. Even though I am Atheist, I feel the church has an important role to play in society. Helping the less fortunate and the community are two places to start. If all people regardless of religion saw the Catholic church taking an active role in improving the quality of life in their community people would be more open to becoming a member.
- allowing nuns, priests, and brothers to be married and have children
- I would suggest that there be more hands on and personal interaction with young people. In my opinion, people who are younger do not tend to do as much research on subjects as those who are older, especially if it is not required for projects. Moreover I would say that I personally believe young people have more trust and interest in that which they see firsthand.
- Allow priests to marry
Every priest involved in the sexual abuse scandal should be imprisoned for life or exiled
More cooperation between denominations is required
Stay out of politics, your concern should only be mankind's relationship with G-d
offer help and assistance to all those who suffer from famine, war, poverty, and disease without the intention of converting them to your faith (That bothers me more than anything).
- I believe there must be more stability within the church. Although each parish is run by itself, there should be more control by the state church. Perhaps this way there will be less corruption in regards to sexual problems and people wouldn't look away from a church that we should feel we can depend on.
- Try not to be so judgemental when speaking to young people. Ultimately God, is our only judge. Spirituality is based on a personal relationship with the believer and God/Christ.
- Why must there be such a stern rule that a priest cannot be married? How does that make him any less spiritual? If anything, a married man with a family of his own knows more about the might and beauty of God through his children. It's not until you have your first born that you know that it's a miracle everytime. And the rules about how it's sinful to use contraceptives? We live in a new generation where it's not frowned upon to have premarital sex. Contraceptives help reduce spreading of diseases and prevents the possible birth of any unwanted babies. Plus it would be nice if there were sermons expressing the views that all religious groups; ie: Jewish, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, etc., are on different paths and will eventually arrive at the same place in the end. I've

spoken to many people of so-called Christian Youth Groups who feel if you don't worship Jesus and, you are basically doomed. Maybe if these changes were met, we might have a chance. But remember, no matter what happens, faith can never die.

- They should consider modern teen's current lifestyles and try to incorporate their interest and new beliefs somewhat into the religious vocations.
- Give more freedom
- Well, the most appealing way is to (1) focus on the calling of God to spread the Word of God and (2) focus on the helping the community. Those two seem to be the most prominent reasons as to why people consider taking on a religious vocation.
- Allow more widely open rules and not such strict rules to join a religious vocation. I think the Catholic Church is way too strict and that is why many people are not joining a religious vocation.
- Young people today might feel that the duties of entering religious vocations might be overwhelming and something that they cannot handle. However, if they were better informed of the description of a religious vocation maybe they would consider it.
- The Church is taking a decline not because of the thought of a religious vocation itself, but because the Catholic Church has no appeal to my generation. Don't get me wrong, I appreciate a lot of the conservative views and live by many of the words in *Evangelium Vitae*, but the Church seems hypocritical and structured. For example, many Catholic institutions are constantly asking for money and pulling odd strings for it. It parallels itself to the bastard government our country. The Catholic church expects us to jump on the old fashioned bandwagon, but we won't do it. We are a generation who won't accept faith because our parents told us to. We want more.
- I think two issues that I don't feel violate the message of Christ and the Church would be the allowing of women to be ordained, and a compromise on the marriage issue. Love and family are the core of the church; however, those we look to for guidance and counseling are not permitted to get married and have families, and possess that first hand experience. I understand a few of the Church's reasons, dating back to the beginning of Catholicism, but I feel changes in those two areas would help keep the church in touch a little more with their parishioners, and to increase the amount of young people entering the vocation. Yet the core problem with structured religion is that with such a multicultural society, and such a great freedom of ideas, Americans have opted for more of the path of "having faith", but not necessarily accepting the specific structure of religion, such as Catholicism. We saw after 9/11, that Americans have not become Godless, but rather through education, experience, and other factors...have created their own patchwork of faith in God. Whether this is right or not, to have such a relativistic view of religion, is not for me to say, but I think that that is what truly threatens the Church in Western Society.
- My advice to the Bishop would be to create more religious programs and activities for young people to attend. By strengthening their faith they will be more open to the calling they receive from God. Because he is calling on many of us but we can't hear him and we end up being misled by all the messages society is giving us. I would tell him to continue the programs created by Pope John Paul the second and to follow his example. My interest in religious life is not only due to my upbringings and teachings from my parents but by the openness and love I received from my religious community.
- Personally my own parish is losing its parishioners. I think the first step I would tell a Bishop is to advise the priests to get to know the young people. My church elementary school has recently been closed down so the main parishioners at my church are parents and little ones. If the Bishop advised priests to start with the young ones. Have groups, activities, and trips for them to go on that would ensure a future relationship with the youth. A priest cannot expect to simply talk to a few teenagers and change minds, a relationship needs to grow throughout the years. When I was in 8th and 9th grade I would go visit the Sisters of Nazareth in Monroe, CT. I would stay there for a week at a time and I loved it. I built great relationships with nuns who I remained penpals with for many years. I was asked to consider a vocation, and I surely considered it. As the years went on though I did meet someone who I believe I will marry and have had my calling to become a teacher. I love children, my significant other, and God very much. In my spare time I like to share the love I have with God with youngsters in a Saturday religion class. I think a lot of young

people should be introduced to becoming involved in their church in some way, even if it's a religious instructor or whatever. Thank you and Good Luck!

- Stop oppressing women. They teach equality yet women can't give the body and blood of Christ only a MAN can. Only men can run the church because only men are "worthy." Nuns generally have worse living conditions than priests.
- Stop being so strict and closed minded on issues important to youth such as abortion, birth control, and the immorality of being homosexual.
- I believe that people do not need to go to church to be close to God. They can pray and speak to God whenever they want. Also, I feel the church has become a business. I know my nieces can not have their report card at the end of the year if she did not sell \$250.00 worth of candy or other fundraiser items. During mass they also pass out the basket twice, some people do not have the money to put in the basket twice, and people see when you put money in or just pass it on. I believe that taking a religious vocation is a calling from God, nothing he could tell a young person would make a difference.
- To teach them what it really means to have a religious vocation and give them honesty when asked questions about it so that it doesn't seem scary or that you are giving your life away. I don't think young people are given enough information about the day in the life of someone who has answered a religious vocation by becoming a priest or nun, so for young people it can seem like a scary promise to make.
- Nothing, but people should confess to God and not man.
- no
- Women should definitely be allowed to become priests, priests should be allowed to get married (we need to remember that the whole thing about priests not being allowed to get married started for pure economic reasons), more liberal views about sex (recognize reality), more dialogue with other religions and giving up on all dogmas.....
- If we want more young people to consider religious vocations, to be part of the church, and the community, then there must be a conscious effort by the church to reach out to the young people. Today's American society expects a great deal from young men and women, and interest in the community and service to others is also declining because of the demands of society - if we can not persuade our young people to contribute to their neighborhood, community, city, how can we expect them to contribute to religious vocation, and also the community. First the church must contact, spend time with the young people - go out to the city, in numbers (brothers and sisters) to show them they are thought of, cared about, that they have tremendous possibilities to influence and change their world - for the better, to use their faith in God as a tool to help our fellow human beings - that there is a human element to religion; get to know them, then ask for their help, and ideas, they are the ones who know the community the best. Show them you care, and that the church is willing to take the time to understand them and the issues important to them. Show them God is present, and that God works through us, that God loves us, and we should love and care for one another. Not because of our faith, because of our common human bonds - we need each other to survive, that is God's plan.
- Allowing for marriage and family and a more "normal" day to day life.

Being more accepting of homosexuality, both for those within the church and those within the Catholic community.

Being ready and more willing to question the Pope and his actions/words if they seem at odds with the teaching of our faith and the feelings of the community.

- Make it attractive to young people.
- Maybe understand what the young men and women these days are exactly going through and try to relate to them. A lot has changed since then. Also, homosexuality shouldn't be frowned upon. God is supposed to love all of his children, including homosexuals. They should be encouraged with their decisions.

- I would tell the Bishop that the Church sometimes needs to be a little more open to the changing times and the views of people in society today. I don't think that they should change everything but they could be a little more lenient.
- Allowing marriage for priests would make a huge impact on the number of young people entering religious vocations.
- I do think the fact that marriage not being allowed is a major factor for this generation. If there were not so many restrictions I do think that more people would consider it. There is also the problems of the sex scandals. This does turn people off and does not give a positive image for the churches and for pursuing a career in religious vocation.
- I would say that the church doesn't reach out to the youth as much as they should. We are the church now and if we don't feel accepted in the church, then we won't go to church. Make us feel important and a youth. And try not to make mass so boring. Having a church that can relate to everyone is important.
- Don't be as strict and you will get more people. Allow women and you will get more girls.
- Reach out. I don't think that young people have much interaction with representatives of their churches, unless it is family influenced. Now-a-days many families don't even attend church. I think that reaching out to young people outside of the church setting would be a great way to increase education about religious vocation. Also, pamphlets with information about religious vocations can be handed out at church.
- I would tell him that it is all about propaganda. That if he wished to at least get more young people interested in religious vocations he should advertise it more at all school levels (pre-K-College), television, radio and the internet. The point is to advertise it more...
- I feel that if people were able to get married the number would increase. In this century society is extremely influential especially towards people our age.
- I believe that the main deterrent for vocations for many young people is marriage and the availability of information and persuasion. Many people growing up, maybe due to society, are taught that the way of life is to go to school, become educated, find a job, a wife, and start a family. There aren't many persuasive factors along the way encouraging students to enter into the religious life. Sure there is church, Catholic schools, and various religious groups and activities, but as far as possibly trying to motivate someone into vocations, that part seems to be missing. The diocese and the church needs to take a more active role in persuading and motivating the youth to the possibility of religious vocations. Influence, persuasion, motivation, and encouragement are key factors that guide youth through life, and currently we are influenced more by society that tells us to grow up, find a job, and start a family. We are taught to set goals, aim high, and that you can be whatever you want to be. Youth see that as becoming a firefighter, police officer, doctor, business person, some sort of career. Those are mainstream views of what someone's future can and should look like. The church needs to present itself stronger in the mainstream view of things where becoming a priest, etc., can be a career and a good choice at that. The church needs to present its opportunity, encourage more, and motivate.
- I believe that many young kids aren't really paying attention to what their faith is and do not really take their religion seriously as we might want them to. What I believe can be done to make religion more a part of a person's life is to combine religion with things that people want to do. Sports and activity groups where people can learn more in depth about their religion. I also believe that, as a Catholic, God forgives those who want to be forgiven. There are people out there that might want to change their ways but are too scared that the Catholic Church would not accept them. I think it is very important to let people know, especially young adults, that it is not too late and that if they really truly repent and want to be forgiven and want to change their life then the Catholic Church is there to help. I also think it is important that the Church lets itself open up to what is happening in the world and can give advice to those who need it. In this case, advertising spiritual groups and even meditation or counseling groups might also help. I am not saying that the Church has to be a person's psychologist (mentally), but an emotional and spiritual psychologist that people can confide in. It is also important to me, as a young adult who goes to church, that all those corrupt priests that are doing so much harm to people be taken out of the

church completely as well as IMMEDIATELY. THOSE are the people that who harm the Church as a whole because the people take into consideration more of the bad things than the good. They shouldnt only be transfered from one parish to another (for what? to continue ruining other people's lives?). I am not saying that every priest is like that but with what is going on in the world... noone can really trust anyone and that is why as a Catholic, we need the church to be a part of our lives even more.

- I would tell him that kids today lack interest in the traditional ways. I think in order to reach kids today they to put a modern spin on some of the things they do.
- Before one could place focus on increasing the amount of young Americans entering religious vocations, one must work at increasing the number of active Catholics. Times have changed and with that, social values, morals, and what's now acceptable have evolved to make this a more liberal era. The Catholic faith is very fulfilling, but too strict in current societal views. Acceptance of unmarried heterosexual couples and planned parenthood would be a great start. Also, even though the Bible states Jesus as being forgiving and all-accepting, the Catholic Church appears to do the opposite: it turns people away and gives the impression that we'll all burn in hell. Another characteristic of this era is that people are seeking feel-good faiths where they feel accepted and the again, the Church seemingly falls short. This is exactly the reason why other Christian faiths are flourishing and the number of Catholics dwindling.

The Catholic Church must adjust its ways to conform with the changing times.

- My only piece of advice would be to allow women to become priests. I believe more women would be interested in a life full of religious vocation if they could become priests.
- The only advice I could offer is that the Catholic Church as a whole needs to change. That change needs to happen soon or the decline of young people entering the church will soon deminish altogether. The fact that women cannot be ordained as priests, and priests are not allowed to be married are two of the Church's many outdated tradtions. These two ideologies along with the more controversial abortion and contraception beliefs have strained the religious beliefs of many young people, often turning them away from the Catholic Church altogether. If the Church cannot catch up with the ever-changing environment around it, I am afraid that its followers may grow fewer and fewer until there are no more left at all. Honestly, this change is the only way the interest of young men and women to consider a reiligious vocation could ever increase.
- I would tell him that not enough information is presented to the youth regarding God and his faith. This is why they have o faith, because they don't believe. They do not have a reason to believe. I grew up in the Catholic church and i learned nothing, through first communion, confirmation, i did it all and only because I had to. When I was through with all of that I lost God somewhere in between everything else, the news about abortions amongst the nuns and the priests molesting young boys was very discouraging. I know better now, because God found me and told me it is not about religion, it is about his glory, his honor. In the beginning, when he created the earth, he said be fruitful and multiply. Why must a priest be lonely and a nun be without and husband, when in fact God created a woman for a man in order for him not to be lonely. We must look at the times right now and realize that it is all about God and no one else. No Catholic, no Jew, no Jehovah Witness etc.; but God. Love God, worship God, Praise him and we receive his blessings.
- Try to connect more with young people because the youth is the future of tomorrow. I think to many times priests are looked upon as very strict men who are supposed to put the fear of God into people. I think that it is important to show that Priests are an important part of the community. They are suppose to be there for support and advice and guidance. I think showing that this is what priests are suppose to do is very important. I also think that nuns too are misrepresented and they should be promoted as religious women who have personality and indiviualistic.
- Inolve more students in parish activities as well as invite students into the life of a priest before hand and describe pros and cons and emphasize on fulfillments

- schools focus too much on telling students to make a lot of money, parents should take their kids to church more often,
- Primarily I think that vocations need to be promoted in a new way. Not only is the vocation material in the Brooklyn Queens diocese look straight out of 1983 but it's in unappealing and unattractive. The vocation material should play up the numerous benefits to a vocation such as community leadership. I think they entire vocation campaign needs a new, modern and sleek look.
- Religion is too traditional and relies on rules that have NEVER been updated for 100s/1000s of years. The world changes, religion doesn't, and gets left behind.
- I think that priests give up too much.
- There should be more freedom to be who you want to be. Those who choose to enter a religious vocation, should be allowed to marry and/or be accepted as a gay individual. God loves EVERYONE... NO MATTER WHAT and it's time that that gets recognized by the church. As long as the person respects God and everyone around them physically, mentally, and spiritually, there should be nothing at all wrong with who that person chooses to be with on an intimate level. I believe that allowing this may help them to perform their jobs better. It may bring them a level of peace which everyone needs in their lives to perform any task to an optimum level.
- With all of the opportunities and things to do, children and teenagers no longer want to become a priest. They feel locked down and taken away from their fun. The church needs to tell kids the positives of being in the Catholic Church.
- Maybe try to turn the lives around of misguided youth living in group/foster homes things of that nature. Mainly b/c it give the child or adolescent a feeling of self-worth and that even though they may not have mother or father, they have God...how about that??
- I would tell him to spend more time on the message of God's love instead of having people talk about fundraisers and other stuff. Also I would tell him to have the homily of the mass relate more to what is going on in the world today.
- Allow sex
- Instead of trying to drill what the Bible says into our heads, and enforcing such notions such as homosexuality is a sin, focus on the word of God. Try to teach about peace and love, and not threaten us with hell or such things.
Oh, and yes, the ritual of mass is a good way to praise God, but some churches thinking that singing and dancing in Church is "inappropriate", need to loosen up. There are many ways to praise God and he listens to all of them. More kids would definitely go if it wasn't so tedious.
- Less rules and restrictions. I feel a more open lifestyle with less regulations and constant requirements would encourage people to be more religiously involved. If there were less rules; more like guidelines instead, more people would be involved than the people currently ordained. This allows for flexibility, because of so many (potentially) people who are acceptable to fill the voids, and the loose atmosphere would then create a beneficial cycle of more and more people joining.
- I have no advice.
- Show more of what sisters and brothers do in helping others and the impact they have on others lives.
- try to learn the life of young men and women.
- I would tell him to consider opening up the priesthood to women.
- I would tell him that I do not agree with the closed-mindedness of the Catholic Church. We are supposed to live a life similar to Jesus Christ. We shouldn't discourage people from living in love, whether it is a homosexual relationship or a relationship involving pre-marital sex.
- Let them experience it first hand and see what it is like, then maybe that would change their minds. Also give them more freedom and not make it so strict
- To be more involved and always strive for your goals, not what people want them to be.
- To share their own stories and experiences of it.
- If you want more priests they should be able to marry, and women should be able to become priests.

- I think that in today's society of love and passionate ideas, I feel that banning marriage in order to become a priest is turning many people away. The idea of living without having a wife and children is anathema in today's society. Children see their families and want that to be their lives, not to be alone with God. Many teenagers don't really understand God yet and don't realize how much God can influence people's lives, so when people come up to them and talk to them about vocations, it scares them away from the very idea of it. I believe that certain changes have to be made to the Church's rules in order for more vocations to start coming in.
- I would tell him to spread awareness of the number of decreasing vocations and to highlight the positive points in becoming a priest or nun.
- allow women to become priests or a big part in the catholic church.
- Go to more schools and talk to classes directly about their decision about becoming a nun or a priest. there are many out there that would like this option but you never really know until you address people directly. this idea would be more beneficial.
- The way the Catholic Church is today, there really isn't anything you can about it. Unless you change the religion, the numbers aren't going to change. The Church is hypocritical and extremely conservative and we're becoming a more liberal nation. If you want increased numbers, go to Europe.
- Talk about religious vocations more often and talk about the good qualities of it and what interested them about becoming apart of the vocation.
- I do not know what could increase the amount of vocations, but what i do know is that the recent amount of scandals in the church has definaltey been bad publicity and has scared many people away from the church.
- Review all the positive influence priests and nuns can have on everyday lives.
- Less strict rules and guidelines for nuns, brother, and priest.
- I would say that the church should make more of an effort in spreading the news about vocations and the way in which it can be fulfilling. When i heard about vocations, I honestly pondered throughtout the whole day wondering "Is this something I could do". I was really touched when i heard the stories of those who went with the calling of God. I also feel that the Catholic church should make changes to the mass to make it more interesting.
- Allow them to know the benefits of becoming a priest, nun or sister. Give examples of how gratifying the life of living in religious life is for you. Also be honest with the yound men and women, and when they see your honesty they will consider it even more.
- I would tell him to talk about topics that the youth can relate to. Also, to create awareness for what religious vocations are all about.
- I would suggest maybe trying to open the possibility of allowing women to become priests. God loves each and everyone of us equally. He would not discriminate against women and tell them that they couldn't worship him in this way just because they are women. It's not fair that just because human beings believe that women can't be priests that women can't serve God in this way. I'm sure many women would love to serve their God as Priests to help reach out to others and help bring people closer to God. God wouldn't say no to this, so who are we to contradict His word?
- I think the rules regulating religious vocation should be loosened. One of the most major suggestions I would have would be to allow religious memebers to have a family of their own.
- To describe the lives of people with vocations more in depth.
- Allow them to know the benefits of becoming someone who helps others.
- I would tewach more people what priest do all day and I think women should have the right to be able to become a priest. What is so wrong with that?
- I think that they should really get to understand how the youth think, instead of just saying that they do understand. Most of them really don't though. You could probably learn more by being with young in an unbiased manner, because most kids probably wouldn't really say what they want with a priest around, because they'd be afraid of getting in troublt or something like that.
- i would say that young men and women need to be educated about religious vocations more because not many people know to much about them. I also would say how people need to be

educated on the lifestyles of religious people, because i think many people feel that a religious life style is very restricting. I would say that the best thing is to inform the young men and women and have discussions so they could get the real veiw of a religious life.

- I think that if there was somebody that was famous the talk ti kids about it they would think more about vocation. I feel that because alot of youth really do what ever people in the music industry say.
- The advice I would offer would be to make the life of a priest, brother, sistuer or nun seem a little more appealing. Also direct honesty helps too. To present pros and cons of both taking on religious life and not taking it on would help.
- I would offer him some ideas in order to gain the interest of youg men and women to seriously condering a religous vocation. I would make them consider to making the rules more lenient and also doing more fun activities which would appeal more to the younger generation. I would also make the Bishop ask young men and women what they would want out of all of this experiance to encourage them.
- I would explain to him that there are still people out there in the world who love and care about God and would be more than willing to consider a life of vocation, if the rules change slightly and become more flexible and open minded to new ideas. Change is not neccessarily a bad thing, and might be just what the Church needs.
- i would say that he should be honest with them and tell them about his life and how he lives and benifits from his life choice
- I believe that they are doing a good job. You cant force kids to lead a religious life. It has to be inside them, but information is being give ver well.
- The advice that I would offer the Bishop is to have more knowledge spread about religious vocation throughout the world.
- I would suggest asking more youth about their desires for the future and what they hope to achieve in life. From their responses, he can exemplify how a religious vocation has things like that to offer and much more. If youth were more educated about the purpose of life under their faith, then they would realize that religion is a great priority in life. I think it's important that more youth know what comes after their lives are over and how to live their lives meaningfully and remember that God gave each and every one of us life for a reason and a purpose.
- A lot more people would consider entering into a religious vocation if the rules were not as strict. We do not live in the 14th century anymore, day-to-day life has chnaged radically. The beliefs held 100 years ago do not necessarily translate into the 21st century. I think priests should be for both men and women and they should be able to get married. I also think the stance on homosexuality should be eased up. If God did not want homosexuals then they would not exist. I also think that the Chursh should take stronger positions in times of war. The church issued a neturality policy during the Holocaust.
- 1-The pastor has to be more open to the youth. They are a lot of priest that doesnt like youth. I have that experiance becuase I am an active member from the Jornada Movement and I had faced that kind of situation.
- I would propose that priests or brothers would have the option of marriage. Also if the vow to take poverty was diminished, this would increase the interest of young men and women to consider a religious vocation.
- put more emphasis on the benefits of priesthood or belonging to a religious order.
- Priests should tell the young people that they have to serve the humanity and this is their aim for rest of their life.
- I DOnt Know
- Give them a chance to see how the life of a priest/brother/nun is and to give them a chance to experiance it. In addition, I think that young people should be taught the true meaning of giving yourself up to God so they fully understand what they are devoting their life to.
- I would tell him to try to explain the life of people in the religious vocation and to ry to make it more appealing to young people.

- Try to get even more involved in youth culture in order to appeal to them and have them consider it with more thought.
- I think Church must change to more religious way because People don't believe "God" As "God"
- maybe this will help you in your life time
- If I could have a few honest and uninterreupeted minutes with the Bishop, I would tell him to get the word out. Go to school and mass services telling the students and kids the benefits of becoming a important part of the Catholic community. I would tell him to just make everything possible and help the kids understand what a religious vocation is really like.
- To increase young men and women to consder a religious vocation I will say that it is very fullfilling and they can help alot of people with there problems.
- I would tell the bishop to try to reach out to the young community by influencing them with more education about the vocation. I would make the vocation more interesting and fun so that more young men and women would consider it in their lives.
- i would strongly advise him that in order for more young people to join religious ceremonies he must promote more religious acts on the t.v and go world wide.
- the answers for question 28 would help
- I would say that the church needs to change with the times because young people are going though different issues
- I would tell the bishop to relate to people and find out why they are not joining and see if he can do anything that appeals to that person to make them want to join a religious vocation.
- I would say that perhaps if they showed more how being a great man of the cloth would help their society, and perhaps if in the future the church could be more leniant with their vows and pledges I'm sure more young people would join.
- I would ask the Bishop to be totally honest with the people and reveal as much secrets as he can on the Roman Catholic Religion, i also would tell him not to push kids to be what they dont wanna be.
- I would tell the bishop that we should have family masses for the family and children mass and invite and encourage young people to be part of religion life and to tell them that religion is important to our life because God is our Father and he is our saviour, friend, helper, listener, and moslty of all our father. Our generation today on earth has not been good because of many evil and bad things, and also we see our children and young teens involve in some what of gangs. We should have clubs or youth talk for our teens and young adults, so that they could know more about their religion life and their faith and their catholic faith. As me growing up we need young people to step up to be a priest or deacon or bishop because in today's world we need more priest so that we could teach and tell our people to not do bad things in us and we should always be on our religion and belive our faith. We need youth community in every village or town in United States so that we could help our teens and young adults. I hope that my suggestion would help out. Thank you!
- Offer more freedom the people who are in religious vocations, the religious vocations life does not appeal to me or some poeple I know because of the limited things they can do. Ofcourse that is the meaning of being a priest or a brother but in this day and age when children are brought up with materialism it just does not appeal to their minds anymore, people interested in religious vocations are rare.
- I would tell him to talk more about the issues of today. Churches today should be more exciting if he wants todays youth to attend church.He might want to relate todays issues with what Jesus had went through.
- I would tell the Bishop that everybody no matter how bad or good they are all deserve a chance. Religious Vocation should offer more excitement to those who would actually want to get into it.
- If I could have a few honest and uninterrupted minutes with the Bishop I would tell him that a religous vocation is something that can a young person do to find what one is missing. The call from God to do work that benefits others can spirtually help a young person and find an ultimate understanding of what it means to be fully human. I would also tell him to have programs/retreat programs to illustrate what the call from God really is. This would allow young people to see what

it means to live in the footsteps of God and set a good example for others. This perhaps can increase the interest of young men and women to consider a religious vocation.

- You must appeal to teens and young adults in general if they have no other options in their lives. Personally, you should make a conscious effort to stay with the modern times and to make religious vocation another form of occupation, allowing those who are eligible to participate good pay and options to take care of themselves and others such as family or close personal friends.
- Give more freedom to the brothers, priests, etc.
- Teach the fear of God again.
- The importance of God and spiritual life itself. Religion is something that is taught in school and makes you wonder if becoming a priest is something you want to do. You should give the priest now and in the future more freedom because Jesus does mention to protect and have a family. But if you don't let priest have freedom now they would never understand the true meaning of happiness and of life.
- To tell them of all the opportunities they would receive to not only aid those in their community but also to be part of the cure to global social crisis and aid in the restructuring of moral ethics of the world especially in third world nations.
- I would say that the Bishop should go out to the people more often and show to them how successful he has become by following the footsteps of God. He can share his feelings on how he faced the challenge of deciding whether or not to consider a religious vocation. As he share his experiences, he might be able to solve many problems that young people are facing as they decide on their own consideration of a religious vocation.
- I would bring up world/real life issues that the Church as a whole need to accept and understand. For one, how Mayor Bloomberg launched free condom stands around New York City in order to promote safe sex. To my understanding the Church wasn't accepting of this plan because of the beliefs in scripture that you shouldn't use contraceptives--that sex should be a sacred thing. However, in today's world these ideals have become null and void, the populace and governments alike in many countries have become almost nihilistic when making decisions. Secondly, it is easy to say things like 'Premarital sex is wrong!' or even 'Abortion is wrong' until it actually happens to you and your own children--in a case of a Bishop they wouldn't have any children to know what these ordeals are like which feeds into the fact that priests and the rest of the Church's hierarchy should be able to marry and have children for the sake of having a larger understanding on topics such as these.

As a student and as a person, I feel that the Church doesn't understand me, nor do they understand what I think seeing as how they just plain do not know. This is why I would rather turn to my parents or friends before I turn to a priest or a bishop.

- The importance of God and spiritual life has to be heard at an early age. Religion has to be something taught in school and really explained so kids grasp the full idea of it. The parents play a major role and I think the quality of parents is decreasing. My mom is the biggest reason for my involvement in the Church today. She has been bringing me to Sunday Mass since I was two years old. Now, that I am an adult, I can think for myself and to the best of my ability will continue to lead my life the way God wants me to. If my parents weren't such a good influence I don't were I would be today. The apple doesn't fall far from the tree.
- Though I am not interested myself I would possibly say, instead of pushing it when children are young and hoping that they follow through in a year, if that basis.
- One way to really increase the interests of the youth to join into a religious vocation is to implement programs that the youth today are interested in and incorporate that together with religion. Make the youth comfortable by putting things in that they are comfortable with.
- I would consider to bring people to a more Christian community of grace by trying to stop difficulties that contradict the Church teachings and as well as God's teachings. Such as Abortion, etc.

- I would tell him to ut out more programs tha tallow for students to learn about brotherhood and what it is like to become a religious. I would advise for him to explain to everybody that becoming a religious is not an easy thing to do, but that it is a very fulfilling thing to do.
- More people would be encouraged to join the ministry if:
 - They could get married and have a family
 - They did not have to take a vow of poverty
 - The Church did not have so many rules of obedience
 - The Church did not require giving up so many personal freedoms
 - Commitments to religious life could be time-limited and less permanent
 - The Church was more permissive of a woman's right to abortion
 - The Church was more permissive of the use of contraception/birth control
 - The Church was more supportive of sexual relations between non-married couples
 - Women were able to be ordained as Priests
 - They were not required to live in a religious community
- I would probably tell him to stop trying to recruit every kid he possibly can simply because many kids this age are more susceptible to suggestion and ideal changes. How about you consider other ideas about the universe, you closed-minded, facist bastards.
- I would offer the bishop the advice that he should go out more and show people how the life of priesthood is and allow people to know what really is happening.
- i would offer the bishop to make the youth look at a religous vocation in a good way something that the youth might think is fun and cool. Also they should show people how the life of a priest is
- I would tell the bishop to make the masses more fun and enjoyable for the younger members of the parish. This I believe will encourage young adults and teens to take the religiuos life more seriously because they will see themselves more in the position of the priest. Thus, they will know that being a priest is not just serving God but also your community. And I think that many young people in New York are willing to help out others.
- I would tell him thaat it would be a good idea for the Catholic Churhc ot be more lieral,. It would bring in more young me and womne if they ahd the privilege and were ble to do more things while they are in the religious vocation.
- help make young people realize even more that religious vocation is important in life. religious vocation helps bring truth and good values in life.
- The Bishop should talk to young people about the benefits of considering a religious vocation.
- I would tell the bishop to keep on trying to get more people to consider a religious vocation by telling them that they would help people both physically and spiritually and would also help preach the Word of God.
- not sure
- let you have a wife/husband and family.
- I would tell him to try to change the rules about women being priests.
- The average U.S. citizen is interested more in material things than helping others. The sacrament of marriage and vocation are both life fulfilling jobs, but for most young adults marriage seems to be the better, more fulfilling choice. It is sad that the human brain these days doesn't understand true faith in God. This is because of the world we live in and the fact that to many the bible is just a story that people believe in. It is hard to tell people otherwise.
- i would say to make it more appealing to the youths
- I would tell the Bishop that he should reach out to the community and let them know what the priesthood and other ministry is all about. Tell him that he should have more information readily available about religious vocations, and offer a program about seeing what the life in a religious vocation would be like to show people how fulfilling it could be.
- I would tell him to have people ask questions and talk about the questions they asked during mass with eachother as a whole and find out what people think God is all about.
- In order for me to consider a religious vocation I would need two drastic things in order to even make it possible
 - 1.Enough money that provides me and my future family with financial security.

2. Women were able to be ordained as Priests.

The subject that makes me honestly mad about the church is the fact that women can not be able to become priests. Its the year 2007 what can a man possibly do for God that a woman cannot? The church does preach that EVERYONE IS MADE IN THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF GOD!!!

- I would tell him to create more awareness of the declining vocation rate and to tell the priests in different parishes bring up the subject during mass. I also think the topic should be discussed in elementary schools and high schools. Children and adolescents shouldn't be forced to pursue a religious life. Instead, they should at least be informed of the problem. From personal experience I can say for a fact that i hear more about the declining rate in church rather that school. The Bishop should tell Catholic schools to hold assemblies to talk about the issue.
- To be more realistic about what is accepted from people and allow more freedoms
- I would tell the Bishop that the Catholic Church needs to be more in touch with the youth and that he should find a way to help young men and women relate to mass.
- Young people need to be provided with more information in order to consider such a thing. I personally am not very religious and am not fully sure what "religious vocation" is. Benefitting others and myself is something I and other young people are interested in so they might be intrigued.
- i believe that if someone chooses to become a priest or nun they should still be allowed to be married and that if they are capable to have children they should be able to many i fear do not choose to go into priesthood or sisterhood because of vow or celibacy and the fact that they may not have any children of their own.
- I would ask him to reconsider the fact that priests can't get married and have a family. I'm sure that if priests were allowed to marry and have kids alot of more people would be interested to become a priest.
- Well Mr. Bishop i think the religious vocations groups of America are too strict and they should lighten up on up and coming brothers,(younger adults) They should allow them to have a family and make it less of a commitment but still a serious job. Many people dream of growing up and having a family and becoming part of a religous order stops them from that dream. So please try to fit the rules so that way younger adults wouldnt be discouraged from joining a religious vocation.
- They should be able to get married, and have a good pay, and pre-marital sex
- The advice I would offer to the Bishop would be to try to integrate younger ways into the church. Whether it be new music, technology or studies. Just bring a new, young vibe to the church, and I would be almost positive that it would encourage younger people to join a religious vocation.
- If i was talking to the Bishop and he wanted advice about gaining men and women becoming a brother or a nun. i will tell him that there are alot of things out there that could express the word of the lord. I will tell them that there's people called God Whispers out there that want to reach out to God but they arent becoming brother's or nuns. ill reach out to them about about and express the feelings that both a God whisper and vocation could be both realated and you could reach out to God in different way. This is probably the strongest way you could people to come. Also, to get young people to be in a religious vocation reach out to the churches alter boys/girls who are interested in this so that they could also realized they could reach out to God and become a brother/ nun
- if i were to offer any advice to the bishop, i would tell him to try to reach out to as many schools as possible because it is there where you will find children. i would also advise him to try to make vocation as interesting as possible, maybe with the trips or group gatherings. another good idea would try to intergrate sports into vocation becuae i feel as though schildren enjoy sports ad the outdoors in general.
- If I were to offer any advice to the Bishop, I would tell him to try to reach out to as many schools as possible because it is there where one will find children. I would also advise him to try to make vocations as interesting as possible, maybe with trips or group gatherings. Another good idea would try to integrate sports into vocations because I feel as though children enjoy sports and the outdoors in general. I would also advise the Bishop to bring someone to talk to the children that

they can relate to, maybe a teenager or a young adult. I believe that kids will listen better to others who are similar in age.

- You allow people to get married, and allow for the use of birth control and also pre-marital sex. You should also increase the pay that the priests, brothers, and sisters get paid, that way people can start seriously looking at religious lifestyle as a career choice.
- why am i here ?
- I would tell him that all the rules and restrictions of becoming a priest, brother, or sister/nun is what is causing the declining number of young people entering a religious vocation. The thought of living in poverty is one thing that turns young people away. Also which is possibly the main reason is not to be able to have sex and have a family of their own. Most young people nowadays wants to have sex or have a strong relationship with someone they care for but, with this rule in effect it does not make it possible. Even if the person wanted to spread the word of the Lord they would find another way in doing so without entering this religious vocation.
- Some advice that I would give the Bishop would probably be to open up new ideas for the church and their community.
- to reach with young people in games because many young people are not interested in God and interested in games and somewhat sports and also they are too young to believe in God.
- I really have nothing to say. The major tenets of the religion are just starkly perpendicular to the wants and needs of youth culture as a whole. The method of strict enforcement is gone, and very few people will volunteer for uninteresting masochism.
- I would tell the bishop that the youth of America is turned off from church, especially when they attend mass. The mass should be more interesting for the youth, while also maintaining the church's spiritual commitment.
- I would say that he should probably inquire for the Pope to allow for women and homosexuals to become priests.
- I would tell the Bishop that he has to make the Church seem more appealing to the youth of today. When Catholic schools start to close it discourages the kids from parishes to become altar servers and even to attend Mass. My old school, Queen of Angels, closed down and now in Church we have almost no altar servers and the attendance to Mass has slowly been dropping.
- Try to reach out to the young children of today's society and show them what good life you have and how cherishing it could be and have sex with your mom.
- Well I would say that many young men and women decide not to enter any of the religious vocation due to the fact that they must take the vows of poverty and chastity. So, I would suggest maybe doing away with those or at least one of the vows in order to attract more young people. Or the Bishop can raise the allowance that the religious get so people can see that it isn't bad to become a religious.
- offer free food
- Refer to 28a-k.
- one advice I would give is to allow for sexual interactions between men and women during a religious lifestyle another would be not to take the vow of poverty
- be more active in the activities of the young people today and do things that will appeal to their interests.
- I would say that if the immigration police came to get these two spics that look exactly alike each other than we would have a better church world and if Joey Wallace would stop hooking up with 13 year old girls
- it is a great way of coming together with God and learning the values of Jesus...be a priest!!!!
- There are many things that need to be changed with the Catholic faith, the world is a nonstop changing world and therefore we need a religion that could in turn change with us. Meaning that there are certain extenuating circumstances that the Catholic faith does not understand. Furthermore I believe that the church should decide as to whether they are going to take a literal or symbolic understanding of the "holy" bible.