

Summary of Findings from the 2004 Survey of VOTF Members

Our survey of VOTF members was designed to accomplish a number of goals, which include the following:

1. To complete a demographic portrait;
2. To make a summary of basic religious practices and attitudes of VOTF members;
3. To examine the extent of the members' participation in VOTF activities;
4. To look at VOTF members' participation in Church life, including the parish;
5. To examine their knowledge of Catholic Documents
6. To look at their behavior and attitudes toward Church policies in relationship to VOTF goals
7. Where possible and relevant, to compare VOTF Catholics with recent national surveys of American Catholics.

To obtain this information, we constructed a questionnaire with 85 items, including 15 open-ended items that were placed at the end of the questionnaire. The survey was conducted online, employing the services of *Survey Monkey*, a company that specializes in conducting surveys over the Internet. The format allowed respondents, who wanted to elaborate on a question, to write in comments at the end of each page. While the overall total of completed questionnaires was 1273, the actual number of responses to key variables varied slightly, and the tables provide the actual N for the five key or independent variables used to identify variation among VOTF members.

When relevant we have also provided summary statements of findings from the 2005 survey of the general American Catholic population carried out by the Gallup Organization for D'Antonio, Hoge, Davidson and Gautier.

We now begin our overview of VOTF members with a summary of basic findings. We stress that this is an overview of our findings; we have purposely refrained from suggesting specific conclusions. This is the task for our panels of sociologists and theologians.

The Demographic Overview

Women predominate in VOTF membership 59% to 41%. (Among Catholics nationally, women constitute 54% of the total Catholic population; 2005 Survey)). We invited respondents to indicate their ethnic ancestry including multiple roots; 64% claimed some Irish heritage, followed by English (22%), Italian, French and Eastern European (13%, 11% and 9%, respectively). Two percent were Latinos and 0.2% African Americans.

One of the most distinctive characteristics is VOTF members' high level of education. The vast majority (87%) had at least a college degree; six out of ten had graduate or professional degrees. Furthermore, a majority was educated in Catholic schools, from a high of 70% at the elementary level to a majority of 57% at the college level. Not surprisingly almost all (93%) were cradle Catholics; the great majority (85%) was also registered in a parish (true of 68% of the national population; 2005 Survey).

Almost a quarter of VOTF members had earned a degree in either theology, canon law or scripture studies; half said they had taken an extensive number of theology courses, and almost as many had taken diocesan or parish sponsored theology courses. It is perhaps then not surprising that one in four VOTF members had some experience of formation for priesthood or religious life. Of these 16% of the men were ordained and 22% of the men and women professed religious vows. While these figures may be astonishing, they were supported by figures from the list of VOTF members. Thus, a small but important minority of VOTF members had even deeper roots in the Roman Catholic Church than the deep roots of the general VOTF membership. (It appears from membership lists that about seven percent of those ordained are listed in active ministry.)

An examination of family background affirms VOTF members' strong roots in Catholicism. More than 85% of fathers and 90% of their mothers were Catholic. A third of their fathers and a quarter of their mothers were college graduates. Two out of three

VOTF members were married. Moreover, of those who were married, 92 % said the Roman Catholic Church recognized their marriages. Of the married, three quarters had children, and half of these had children in parochial schools. They estimated that one in three of their adult children attended Mass regularly. Only 8% were divorced. Fifteen percent were single; this may reflect the percentage of priests and professed religious among their members.

Almost half of the VOTF members were employed while one third was fully retired. These figures reflect the imbalance of generations in VOTF, which leans heavily toward the Pre-Vatican II and Vatican II generations. Not surprisingly, given their educational levels, their occupations tended toward the professional (30%), the academic (20%) and the upper levels of business management and ownership (22%). Less than 10% identified clerical, service or skilled trades occupations. The high levels of academic, professional and business achievements were reflected in their income levels, with thirty percent stating annual household incomes of \$100,000 or more, and another 50% with incomes between \$75,000 and \$100,000. Some of the 8% reporting incomes under \$30,000 may reflect the retired members or priests or religious.

Member Participation in Church and VOTF Activities

The next set of items attempts to help us understand how members became involved in VOTF and the degree of their participation in VOTF. A majority went to their first VOTF meeting alone; the rest went with another, some having been invited to do so. More than half of them then invited others to attend VOTF meetings.

A large percentage of VOTF members are not members of an affiliate and gave the following responses to explain this: “I have never attended a VOTF meeting, but have followed the movement by email.” “I joined VOTF from another city and do not know of any meetings here.” And this: “I am a Boston College graduate—a friend who still lives in Boston referred me to VOTF a couple years ago. I have forwarded email

bulletins on to family members and friends.” In a sense, the Internet becomes a kind of affiliate for many.

More than half (60%) said that their parish pastor publicly responded to the sexual abuse scandal; of these pastors more than a third (36%) were supportive of VOTF. Another third of VOTF members (38%) declared their pastors neutral on VOTF, while one in four (26%) said their pastors were unsupportive.

Among the critical comments about pastors’ responses to the scandal are the following: “He said ‘pray for the Church, pray for the priests.’ He did not mention the victims.” From another: “My pastor was supportive of VOTF in the beginning. He subsequently denounced VOTF and all its members as evil and divisive.” Other responses bordered on denial: “Our pastor mentioned it was wrong in the beginning but has avoided any discussion and not encouraged a VOTF.” “My pastor’s response to the scandal was to tell us it was unimportant. He promised never to mention it again from the altar. I thought that was terrible.” And finally, this comment: “At the time that Cardinal Law resigned, my pastor wrote and had published a letter to our local paper in which he supported Cardinal Law. He cited the cardinal as a scapegoat, stated that Cardinal Law would never had [sic] done anything to harm children.”

The following comments reflect those who found their pastor defensive about the scandal and neutral about VOTF. “Yes, the pastor mentioned the scandal in homilies. He also was strongly encouraged by parish members to hold a parish meeting to address sexual abuse that had taken place in the past that had recently come to light. The accused had been a priest that had served under this pastor’s watch.” She added: “The pastor was greatly loved by parishioners but he had to be pushed to publicly address the abuse that had taken place on his watch. He, like so many other priests, was defensive and found it difficult to face the truth and apologize for what had happened.” She concluded that she was unsure about her pastor’s support of VOTF.

From someone who said the pastor was supportive came this comment: “With the cooperation of my pastor, this past spring I organized an exploratory VOTF group, and

after meeting weekly or every two weeks we ultimately voted to become a VOTF affiliate, which I have chaired. It included a multi-week seminar/discussion format for all parishioners.” And from another:”My pastor encouraged our parishioners to meet and the outcome was the founding of VOTF”

Mass attendance and Other Measures of Commitment

One of the most predictive indicators of Americans’ behavior, regardless of religious denomination, has been regular attendance at religious services. This has been no less true for Catholics than for others. Previous research has shown that there are a group of variables related to church attendance that sharpen the focus on religious commitment; we have used them in this study. Regarding Mass attendance, two out of three VOTF members attend Mass at least once a week, while only one in ten said they seldom or never attend Mass. The 2005 national survey reported 34% of Catholics attending at least once a week. VOTF members have active prayer lives with eight out of ten reporting that they pray once a day or more.

When asked how important the Church is to them personally 62% said it is the most or among the most important parts of their life. At the other end, only 6% said it was not very important to them.* One VOTF member added: The Catholic Church is an important part of my life because I look to it for an example of how to live the gospel, to have the courage and conviction to see truth, to have the opportunity to share and express my faith with others.” At the national level 44% said the Church was the most or one of the most important parts of their lives (2005 Survey).

Two additional questions inquired about their degree of commitment to the Church and its teachings. Since Vatican II, the church has stressed “a preferential option for the poor.” We asked how often, if at all, they served the needy in programs such as soup kitchens, tutoring programs, etc. One in four said they did so weekly, another 25% did so at least once or more a month, while only one in five said seldom or never.

* Another 5% did not answer, or were not sure.

A final question in this set asked about knowledge of the Second Vatican Council. About one in five had read all of the documents, 16% read some of them and 23% had not read any of them. Among those who had read some or all the documents, some 42% said they participated in seminars on Vatican II and its documents.

With regard to activities in their parish we found that half were members of Parish Councils, 45 % were on Liturgy Committees, and one in four served on Parish School Boards or Finance Committees. More than six out of ten reported membership in other parish committees. Their active participation in parish life extended to service as Lectors and Eucharistic Ministers (45% for each), with one in four listing Mass Server, Music Ministry and Greeter/Usher. Some 52% reported teaching in religious education or RCIA; while 25% reported teaching in a Catholic grade or high school. Two out of three were members of small faith sharing groups, including Parish RENEW groups. In sum, VOTF members have an extraordinary amount of knowledge about the Catholic Church, its teachings and its liturgy.

VOTF members were active in a variety of groups beyond the parish level. Five percent were members of organizations under the U.S. Bishops' sponsorship; one in four were members of Diocesan Pastoral Councils; a majority was in some other Diocesan Council or Committee. One in four participated in Marriage Encounter, *Cursillo* and Call to Action (CTA). Smaller numbers were active in the Charismatic Movement, The Christian Family Movement (CFM), The Catholic Worker Movement, and the Right to Life Movement, Young Christian Students, Dignity, and Catholics for a Free Choice.

VOTF members were also part of traditional Catholic organizations: of the men, 31% and 16% respectively were in the Knights of Columbus and Holy Name Society. Thirty-one percent overall were in the St. Vincent DePaul Society. Eight percent of the members had been members of the Jesuit volunteers, most probably in their immediate post-college years. Four in ten were affiliated with organizations such as PAX Christi and Habitat for Humanity. Women were less active in specifically women's groups: only 6 % were members of the National Council of Catholic Women, and only 1% in Catholic Mothers or Daughters of Isabella.

Broad and extensive participation in various aspects of church life have provided VOTF members the opportunity to have strong views about the Church. So it may not be

surprising that fully 85% strongly agreed that the “Hierarchy is out of touch with the laity;” only 19% of the national sample did (2005 Survey). Almost half (44%) strongly agreed: “priests generally see laity as followers, not as leaders;” while only 17% of the national sample did. Another 41% agreed somewhat with that statement. And 1 out of 5 (19%) strongly agreed: “when the hierarchy is unresponsive to the views of the laity on matters which concern the good of the church, withholding financial contributions is an appropriate means of getting their attention.” With regard to the size of parishes only 29% strongly agreed that parishes are too big and impersonal, but an additional 43% agreed somewhat with that statement. While 18 % strongly agreed that priests generally do a good job, an additional 58% agreed somewhat.” Ninety two percent of the national sample gave these responses (2005 Survey).

VOTF members are in almost unanimous agreement (from 99% for the local parish and 90% for the Vatican) that decision-making not involving the doctrine of the faith should allow wider participation by the laity. For example, 99% say the laity should have the right to participate in “Deciding how parish income is spent;” Here there is a strong similarity with the national sample where 89 % say the same (2005 Survey). In regard to selecting priests of their parishes 84% of VOTF Catholics and 71% of the national sample say the laity should have the right to participate. The same number of VOTF Catholics says they should have a role in selecting bishops for their dioceses.

To get an indication of the salience of these beliefs we asked about the amount of time and resources they would be willing to invest to promote meaningful participation by the laity in church decision-making. Forty-five percent said they would devote two to five hours per week of their time, while an additional 7% said they would devote 6-10 hours per week. Another six percent would devote more than 10 hours per week. Only 12% said they were not willing to devote any time. Regarding financial resources, 6% were willing to give more than \$500 a year, while 1 in 5 were willing to donate between \$100 and \$500 a year. Sixty percent were willing to give up to \$100, and only a minority of 14% said they were not willing to give any money to such a cause.

During 2004 two important reports about the Protection of Children and Young People were produced, one by the National Review Board, and the other by the John Jay College of Law. One in four members were not familiar with either report; 11% had a

great deal of knowledge about them, and about 4 in 10 said they had some knowledge of each group and of their respective study and report.

Members gave overwhelming support to the three goals of VOTF: to support victims of clerical sexual abuse (86%), to support priests of integrity (85%), and to shape structural change in the church (91%). Just over half are in an affiliate group, almost half attended an affiliate meeting during the past year, and a third donated money to a local affiliate, while 45% have donated money to the national office in the past twelve months. Half the members (51%) signed the VOTF Petition for Reform. The overwhelming majority (84%) saw the national office as providing effective day-to-day leadership enabling VOTF to persist and fulfill its mission. The same percent said the elective officers and the Board of Trustees were charting an effective direction for VOTF to persist and fulfill its mission. Likewise more than 80% saw the Representative Council doing an effective job.

In response to a question about the reading of Catholic periodicals, the largest percent (39%) subscribed to their local diocesan paper; and in descending order, they subscribed to: the *National Catholic Reporter* (37%); *America* (22%); *Commonweal* (13%); *St. Anthony Messenger* (13%); *U.S. Catholic* (11%); and *In the Vineyard* (10%). Small percentages also subscribed to *Our Sunday Visitor*, *Crisis*, *First Things*, and *The Wanderer*.

Almost half described themselves as politically liberal, economically moderate, and as social-cultural liberals. Just over 1 in 10 described themselves as conservative on any of the three. Almost two out of three identified with the Democratic Party and 18% with the Republican Party.

Evaluating the Impact of Five Independent Variables

Research on American Catholics has found that gender, generation, region of the country, Catholic school education, and regular attendance at Mass have been predictive of differences in Catholic beliefs, practices and attitudes.¹ We have prepared sets of

¹ Other variables like membership in a parish often are predictive, but in the case of VOTF members, with 85% registered, there is little to vary.

tables using each of these variables in turn. We report the results below for each of these variables, with our attention given only to those cases in which differences are significant or indicate a trend in that direction. We begin with gender.

The Role of Gender

There were small gender differences across generations with a higher percentage of men among Pre-Vatican II Catholics and the reverse pattern among Vatican II Catholics. There were no gender differences among the youngest generation, and there were also no gender differences along ethnic lines.

The only difference in level of education was that men were more likely than women (68% to 55%) to have earned a graduate degree. Men were more likely to be married than were the women (80% to 71%), and more likely (50% to 40%) to be employed full time. But they were also more likely (41% to 31%) to be retired. With regard to specific occupations, men were more than twice as likely (24% to 11%) to be found in the managerial-executive group; men also were more likely to have reported household incomes in excess of \$100,000 (33% to 26%), the differences in the other income categories were not significant.

On the extensive series of questions relating to religious practices and attitudes the men and women members of VOTF were very much alike. The only significant difference is that men were more likely than the women (33% to 20%) to have attended a seminary or other religious formation program. However, the number of men who were ordained (16%) was not significantly different than the number of women professed (13%). In addition, 9% of the men were professed to one or another religious order.

There were some differences between the men and women regarding their participation in VOTF activities, and their evaluation of VOTF and its goals. Women were significantly more likely than the men (63% to 44%) to have invited others to attend VOTF meetings. Women were also significantly more likely (49% to 36%) to belong to a VOTF affiliate. Again, women were more likely (55% to 45%) to have signed the VOTF Petition for Reform. While a large majority of both men and women said the Executive Office, the officers and the National Council were doing an effective job, the differences between them averaged 14% (87% to 73%). These differences suggest

different levels of commitment to VOTF. What these differences mean to VOTF's future will need careful exploration.

In a number of areas of participation in church and parish life significant differences were found, many not unexpected, reflecting the traditional church models with which the laity have grown up. Men were more likely to be members of Parish and Finance Council, and Parish School Boards, while women were often found in other parish committees.

In liturgical ministries the old mores were still evident; almost 40% of the men had been mass servers in their youth, but only 7 % of the women had done so. This is not surprising given that females were officially recognized as mass servers only in the 1990s. Again following traditional roles, women were more likely than the men (58% to 45% to have taught CCD or other religion classes, and to have taught in Catholic grade schools (18% to 8%).

There were no differences in the degree of participation in parish groups or Catholic social movements such as CFM, CTA, Right to Life, etc. The men were much more likely to have been members of organizations like the Knights of Columbus than the women were of comparable women's groups.

The differences between men and women were small with regard to the knowledge of the Documents of Vatican II, what they knew about the National Review Board and its Report on the Protection of Children and Young People as well as with the John Jay College Study.

VOTF men and women were united in their attitudes about how they perceived priests to relate to them, the bigness of parishes, the hierarchy's being out of touch with them, that most priests do a good job and that it could be appropriate to withhold financial contributions to gain the attention of the hierarchy. They were also united in their belief that they had a right to participate in decisions affecting parish, diocese and even the Vatican. Perhaps surprisingly, although the percentages were small (10% to 5%), men were twice as likely as the women to say they would be willing to devote at least 6-10 hours per week to participate in church-decision-making.

We asked the members of VOTF about their reading habits regarding religion-related journals and newspaper. Almost half the men (46%) but only 36% of the women

reported subscribing to the local Diocesan paper; The National Catholic Reporter, America, and Commonweal followed in that order, with no gender differences. Less than 10% of the members subscribed to the St. Anthony Messenger, U.S. Catholic and In the Vineyard with no gender differences. There were no other gender differences.

We asked them to describe their ideological orientations (Table 1) while only a small percentage (less than 20%) identified themselves as politically, economically and socially conservative; in all three instances men were almost twice as likely as women to call themselves conservative. At the other end, more than 4 in 10 of both sexes called themselves liberal, with the women just slightly more so. The men were less likely to see themselves as moderate. It was only in economic matters that both sexes saw themselves as more moderate than liberal.

When asked with which political party they identified, more men (22%) than women (15%) identified themselves as Republican; two out of three women (66%) and 60% of the men said they were Democrats, with the remaining calling themselves Independents or Green Party.

We conclude that among VOTF members, gender is not as differentiating a variable on matters Catholic as it is among Catholics in the general population.

The Significance of Generations

Researchers assert that the historical and cultural phenomena to which one is exposed during adolescence and young adulthood affect one's worldview for life (Mannheim 1952, Walrath 1987). Generation is a variable that has been used by sociologists to explain differences between groups. In studies of Catholics, the Second Vatican Council has been used as a reference point to distinguish age cohorts of Catholics (D'Antonio et al. 1989, 1996, 2001, Davidson 1996). There is a difference between Catholics socialized before Vatican II and those socialized during and after the Council.

The pre-Vatican II Church has been described as a culture of authority in which the hierarchy regulated the laws and sacraments that were the means to salvation (Dolan 1985). The church conceived of itself as *the perfect society*: complete in itself and free from the need to interact with secular institutions. In this era American Catholicism formed a parallel society removed from mainstream America (Dolan 1985, Cogley and

Van Allen 1986). Researchers of the 1950's and 1960's maintained that Catholic parents supported intellectual heteronomy (obedience to authority) over intellectual autonomy and emphasized this in their child rearing practices (Lenski 1963, Kohn 1977).

Vatican II precipitated a big shift; tight boundaries were expanded. The church's perception of the world changed. The modern world was no longer considered the enemy of eternal truths, and the church acknowledged modern progress as beneficial to humankind. The church sought to embrace the modern world and enter into dialogue with it (Dolan 1985, Davidson and Williams 1997, Greeley 1998). Since this time Catholics' reliance on external authority has decreased and acceptance of internal authority has increased (Alwin 1986, D'Antonio 1989, 1996, 2001 Ellison and Sherkat 1993).

In the 1987 study of American Catholics (D'Antonio et al) researchers found it useful to consider variations in the beliefs and practices and attitudes of generations of American Catholics in relationship to the proximity of one's birth year to the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). Those born before 1940 are "Pre-Vatican II Catholics" because they came of age well before Vatican II; those born between 1940 and 1960 are called "Vatican II" Catholics because their formative years occurred during the Council. Those born from 1961 on are "Post-Vatican II Catholics." For them the council is a piece of history rapidly receding into the past. This tripartite differentiation is used in this examination of VOTF members.

Research shows that the Pre-Vatican II generation is most loyal, church going and prayerful. They lived through the Great Depression and WWII. Many remember the prejudice and discrimination against Catholics that marked the first half of the 20th century. This was the generation that finally convinced other Americans that it was possible to be a good Catholic and a good American citizen. They were involved in building the Catholic infrastructure of parishes and schools. They have deep roots in the church, and are the most devastated by malfeasance. As one member wrote "The senior set has too many years and too much heart invested to take a hike." Today they are retired, and have the time and resources to devote to reforming the Church. Putnam's *Bowling Alone* (2000) suggests they were the last generation to display high levels of organizational engagement; it is not surprising that they are so well represented in VOTF.

The Vatican II generation grew up during a period of transition from stability to change. Many remember the 1950s when the nation experienced post-WWII tranquility as well the tensions that mounted with the cold war. They watched “Father Knows Best” and trusted strong and fatherly men to lead the nation and the Church. The 1960s brought a change in national and Church leadership. The Irish-Catholic John F. Kennedy was elected president. Pope John XXIII called an ecumenical council. The period that followed was one of radical changes. This generation is committed to the spirit of Vatican II and the importance of conscience and collaboration. Many are disappointed by what they perceive as a deceleration of the reforms of the Council. As one member said: “We are the ‘over the hill gang’ in love with the changes promised in the Vatican II documents only to find that our hierarchy ‘deep-sixed’ them and hoped we would forget.” Such sentiments fuel their participation in VOTF.

The Post Vatican II generation raised in the 1970s, 1980s and later saw previously accepted forms of discrimination curtailed. Accepting some of this trend in society, Church officials balked when some suggested the need for changes in the central institution of the priesthood. Watergate exposed hypocrisy at the highest levels of power; individuals became less trusting of institutions and even of others, and sought to become more self-sufficient. Church and community experienced the effects. This generation is most affected by the American ethos; they rely more on their own judgment and are less committed to institutions. A portion of this generation seeks comfort in trying to reproduce the security they imagined existed in a 1950s world. These factors do not encourage membership in VOTF.

One VOTF member commented: “All or nearly all are white senior citizens. The youngest person I saw at any of the six meetings I attended was my daughter, age 35. She was completely turned off by (what she perceived as) the applause of dissent from VOTF attendees on the issue of church reform.” Another expressed a desire to have younger members but concluded that most of them “are suspicious of institutions, and are also raising their kids at this time” and thus too busy to join VOTF. Another echoed this sentiment: “VOTF needs more ‘boomers’ and young people. It appeals to upper class not ethnics. The young are not into the reform of institutions—if it’s broke throw it out—they say.”

The Demographics of the Generations

At the first VOTF Convocation in July 2002 it was noted that the heads of the participants formed a sea of silver. So it is with most of VOTF's leaders and national membership. One member wrote "At our regional and parish voice meetings there are mostly 'gray tops'; the young people are absent from our group." The table below shows the generational contrast between the Catholic Church in the U.S. at large, and VOTF members.

	Pre-Vatican II	Vatican II	Post-Vatican II
2005 National Survey of American Catholics	17%	34%	49%
Survey of VOTF Members	41%	48%	11%

Pre-Vatican II Catholics” are now 65 years of age or older while “Vatican II” Catholics are now between 64 and 45; “Post-Vatican II” Catholics are now 18 to 44. There are important implications to these differences. VOTF members are older than Catholics at large. At least 9 in 10 VOTF members are over 40; almost half of American Catholics are under 40.

In regard to ethnicity the predominance of Irish ancestry spreads across the generations. There are few Latinos (2%) but there are a greater number of them in the Post Vatican II generation than any other (5%). “One member wrote: “I’m 44 and clearly one of the youngest members in our group. We have no people of color and no young people.” Another member said: “We need more Hispanics, African Americans and younger members.”

The vast majority of VOTF members across the generations are married; the largest proportion of single members is in the youngest generation. This may reflect modern marital trends in which the young and especially Catholics tend to marry later, in sharp contrast to their Pre-Vatican II grandparents. Across the generations VOTF members are highly educated and 60% have graduate degrees. As expected, the parents of the latest cohort are more highly educated than those of the earlier ones.

Political Party

There is little variation across the generations in terms of political, economic and socio-cultural outlook. About 1 in 10 identify themselves as political conservatives, a third are moderates and 44% identify as liberals. Nearly a fifth across the generations identify as economic conservatives, 44% as moderates and a quarter as liberals. Close to 1 in 10 identify as socio-cultural conservatives, a third as moderates and almost half as liberals. Nearly two thirds identify with the Democratic Party across the generations which is more than the general Catholic populace where about two fifths across the generations identify with the Democrats and more than a third identifies with the GOP; fifth of VOTF does. Around a fifth of VOTF and American Catholics identify with Independent Parties.

Religious Practices and Attitudes

Across the generations, 9 in 10 VOTF members are cradle Catholics coming from families where both parents are Catholic. They have been exposed to relatively high levels of Catholic education at every level. We see a decline in Catholic education between the earlier generations and the latest; 7 in 10 Pre and Vatican II Catholics went to Catholic Grade Schools, 5 in 10 Post Vatican II Catholics did. Six in 10 of the earlier generations attended Catholic High Schools, about 5 in 10 of the latest generation did. This generational gap is also seen in Catholic College attendance. The structural issue of the decreased availability of Catholic Schools over time, as well as significant increases in tuition may have an effect on the latest generation's attendance.

One third across the generations have studied theology. In each of the earlier generations, a quarter of them were at one time enrolled in a seminary or religious formation program; this decreases to 14% in the latest generation. This is still a relatively high number since seminary enrollments and the number of religious sisters and brothers have declined by over half since Vatican II (Froehle, Gautier 2000).

There is no difference across the generations for parish registration (8 in 10). The table below indicates the rates of Mass attendance for VOTF members, and compares them with the rates for the general population of American Catholics (2005 Survey).

At least weekly Mass attendance	Pre-Vatican II	Vatican II	Post-Vatican II
2005 National Survey of American Catholics	60%	41%	20%
Survey of VOTF Members	77%	61%	38%

There is a decline in the mass attendance rates between earlier and later generations for both samples. However there is also a significant difference between the attendance rates of VOTF members and American Catholics. In each generation VOTF members have nearly a 20% higher rate of mass attendance rate.

Across the generations, nearly 8 out of 10 VOTF members pray at least once a day. Seven in 10 of the earlier generations of American Catholics pray at least daily, while 5 in 10 of the latest generation does. This is also a significant difference especially

in the latest generation. Nearly 8 out of 10 VOTF members help the needy at least once a month.

There are significant differences both across generations and in the comparisons of VOTF and Catholics generally. Seventy percent of Pre Vatican II Catholics in VOTF consider the church “among the most important parts of my life.” For the later two generations a little over half say this. Among general American Catholics, 59% of those over 65 say “most important” and only 40% of both later cohorts say this. Across the generations VOTF members give the Church more importance than the general Catholic population.

When asked about the possibility of leaving the Church, 6 in 10 of the VOTF Pre-Vatican II generation say “never leave;” 1 in 10 say “might leave.” The later generation, 42% say “never leave” and in the Post Vatican II generation a third says “never leave.” In the aforementioned generations 3 in 10 say “might leave.” In the general Catholic populace, over 60% of the two earlier generations say “never leave,” while 1 in 10 say “might leave.” Of the latest generation 4 in 10 say “never leave” and only 1 in 10 say “might leave.” In the latest generations there is no difference between American and VOTF Catholics when it comes to “never leave” but more of the youngest VOTF Catholics say “might leave.”

Participation in VOTF

Because earlier generations tend to have higher levels of social engagement (Putnam 2000), as expected Pre-Vatican II VOTF members were most likely to invite others to attend a VOTF meeting (61%) and the Post-Vatican II generation was least likely (38%). Five in 10 members of the middle cohort invited others to attend. Five in 10 of the earliest generation attended their first VOTF meeting “on my own;” 6 in 10 of the later generations did. A third of the earliest group attended with another; of the later and latest cohorts a fifth and a twelfth respectively did so. One in 10 from the earlier cohorts were invited by another; a fifth of the latest cohort was.

People of the earlier generation were also most likely to be members of an affiliate (51%). As expected this declines with later generations; Vatican II membership

is 42% and Post Vatican II membership dips to 26%. Again the question arises of the importance of membership in an affiliate arises.

The Pre-Vatican II generation was also most likely to donate money to the national office (40%), and the Post Vatican II generation was least likely (20%) with the Vatican II generation in the middle (27%). About a third of the oldest generation donated to local affiliates, a fifth of the middle generation did so and only 6% of the latest generation donated money. Two in five of the earliest generation attended meetings, 3 in 10 of the middle generation did so, and barely 1 in 10 of the youngest generation said they attended meetings. In the two earlier generations 1 in 10 attended Regional Conferences; but this was less for the youngest generation. Nearly half of VOTF members across the generations signed the Petition for Reform.

Nine in 10 VOTF members support the goal of “shaping structural change” in the Church. Nearly 4 out of 5, across the generations, support VOTF’s first two goals, and affirm the effectiveness of its leadership.

Participation in Church Life

As a whole VOTF members have a relatively high rate of participation in parish committee work. When you control for generation, the earlier two generations have been more active. For example less than half as many of the Post-Vatican II generation (17%) served on Parish Councils as members of the earlier generations (2 in 5). This proportion is the similar for finance councils, school boards and Liturgy Committees. The proportion is closer for other parish committees (3 in 5 for the earlier generations and 2 in 5 for the later).

When it comes to participation in parish liturgical ministries, across the generations VOTF members are quite involved: 2 in 5 were lectors; it is similar for Eucharistic ministers. Nearly a fifth have served as Usher/Greeters or Mass servers and Music ministry. Nearly 1 in 10 have served in other liturgical ministries.

There is a high level of participation in religious education. Nearly half of VOTF members across the generations have taught Catechism classes. Nearly 1 in 10 has taught in a Catholic high school or grade school. Of the earliest and latest generations about 1 in 10 have assisted in the RCIA, in the Vatican II generation it is 2 in 10. One in 10 of the

earlier generations have served in other educational ministries; it is less for the youngest generation.

A quarter of the earlier generations have participated in RENEW, and 13% of the later generation has. Over a third of the earlier generations participated in a Small Christian Community, and a fifth of youngest generation has. Across the generations nearly 10% participated in the Catholic Worker Movement; 2 in 10 of the earlier generations and nearly 10% of the youngest generation participated in Call to Action. Nearly a fifth of the earlier generations and over 10% of the youngest have been in Marriage Encounter. One in 10 of the earlier generations have been in the Charismatic Movement, and *Cursillo*, it is less for the youngest cohort (6%). Ten percent across the generations have been involved with Right to Life.

One in 3 of the men across the generations were Knights of Columbus, with higher numbers in the earlier generation; 16% of the men in the Pre-Vatican II generation were in Holy Name. For all the generations nearly 1 out of 10 was involved with the St. Vincent DePaul Society. About 2 in 5 of all the generations have been involved with social justice organizations.

Knowledge of Vatican II and other Documents

Knowledge of the Documents of Vatican II and of current matters in the church varies across the generations. Three in 10 of the Pre Vatican II and Vatican II generations have read all of the Vatican II Documents; only 1 in 10 of the Post Vatican II generation has. One in 3 of the earlier cohorts have read some of the Documents, while 2 in 5 of the latest cohort have. Two in 5 of the earlier generations have participated in seminars on Vatican II, while only 1 in 5 of the latest generation has.

At the June 2002 meeting of U.S. bishops in Dallas, measures were taken to respond to the abuse of children by priests. The National Review Board for the Protection of Children and Young People was established. A fifth of VOTF members across the generations had heard of the Board. Two out of 5 members of the earlier generations had some knowledge of the Board, but only 3 in 10 from the youngest generation did. About 1 in 10 VOTF members across the generations claimed a great

deal of knowledge about the Board. A quarter of the earlier generations of Catholics were not familiar with the Board while 42% of the youngest cohort was not familiar.

In February 2004, the National Review Board made a report known as the Bennett Report. 1 in 5 VOTF members across the generations said they had heard of it. Of those claiming some knowledge of the Report, 2 in 5 in the earlier generations did so, and 1 in 5 youngest generation did so. About 1 in 10 across the generations claimed a “great deal of knowledge” about the report. A quarter of the first two generations claimed no familiarity with the report, while nearly 40% of the youngest generation did the same.

At the same time the Bennett Report was released the John Jay School of Criminal Justice also released a report. Across the generations 1 in 5 VOTF members claimed to have heard of it. Nearly 2 in 5 across the generations claimed some knowledge of this report. About 1 in 10 claimed a “great deal of knowledge.” About a fifth of the Pre Vatican II and Vatican II generations had not heard of it, while about a third of the Post Vatican II generation had not.

About two fifths of the earlier generations read their Diocesan papers, and over a quarter of the latest generation does. *The National Catholic Reporter* is the most read of the national periodicals listed in the survey. Thirty nine percent of the Pre-Vatican II and 30 % of the Vatican II generations subscribe; only 13% of the latest generation does. Nearly a quarter of the earlier generations read *America*, the second most read national periodical; about 12 % of the latest cohort do. About 1 in 10 read *Commonweal*. Less than 10% across the generations say they read *In the Vineyard*, VOTF’s online publication.

Behavior and Attitudes toward Church Policy

Across the generations 4 out of 5 VOTF members strongly agree with the statement that the “Hierarchy is out of touch.” It is the same with the statement, “Priests expect laity to be followers.” Nearly a third of VOTF members in the Pre Vatican II and Vatican II generations say that “Catholic Parishes too big and impersonal;” it is only half of that (16%) in the Post Vatican II generation. In the earliest and latest cohorts nearly a fifth “strongly agree” that “Priests do a good job;” in the Vatican II cohort it is only 1 in 10. Regarding withholding financial contributions, nearly a quarter of the earliest

generation “strongly agree” that this can legitimately be done; in the later cohorts it is 1 in 10.

Across the generations VOTF members share common views regarding the participation of the laity in the Church. It is nearly unanimous that at the local level VOTF members favor wider participation by the laity. At the diocesan, national, and international levels 9 in 10 members do.

VOTF members are nearly unanimous in saying that the laity has a right to participate in decisions about parish spending. Eight in 10 say that they have a right to participate in selecting priests for their parishes and bishops for their dioceses.

To measure the salience of their views, we asked how much time VOTF members would be will to give to church decision making. Of the earlier cohorts, 2 in 5 said they would be willing to devote 1 hour per week; in the latest generation 3 in 5 said they would be willing to give an hour. Nearly half of the earlier cohorts would be willing to give 2-5 hours a week, while a third of the latest generation would be willing to do so. Less than 1 in 10 across the generations would be willing to give 6-10 hours per week.

We also asked how much money per year members would be willing to give to VOTF to promote the laity’s role in church. Over a third across the generations said they would be will to give \$50 or less. Across the generations over a quarter would be willing to give \$51-\$100. About a fifth of the earlier cohorts and 1 in 10 of the latest would be willing to give more than \$100 per year.

The Role of Region

Introduction:

The United States is a large country, and its regions reflect variations related to the time of initial settlement, the ethnicity of those original settlers, and the geography and economy of the particular region. The church in these different regions is also affected by these variables.

The cradle of the Catholic Church in the U.S. is the Northeast more specifically the city of Baltimore. Its first bishop, John Carroll was the first in the U.S. Initially he fostered a church with a clear American identity, but he never secured bishop-collaborators to effectively extend his vision. Carroll increasingly was swayed by the

designs of Rome, a factor that moved American Catholicism into a more conservative posture.

Northeastern Catholicism became ghettoized and defensive; the Irish led church lived in the shadow of unfriendly WASP elites and stood apart from society. The largest dioceses such as New York, Boston and Philadelphia were headed by cardinals and were the hubs of feudal empires that permeated the East. By the beginning of the 20th century twice as many Catholics lived in the Northeast as in the Midwest, and it set the tone for Catholicism throughout the country (Morris 1997).

Midwestern Catholicism brooked greater pluralism. Germans, Poles and Irish sought to establish their own regions of influence, as did other smaller ethnic groups, so there was a greater toleration of diversity. The largest diocese in the Midwest was Chicago but moderate sized dioceses such as Milwaukee, the headquarters of German Catholicism, and St. Paul also exercised influence in the region. Archbishop Ireland of St. Paul was a champion of a more American style of Catholicism.

The Catholic Church in Chicago was embedded in the social movement culture of the city. From the 1940s Chicago Catholicism's pioneering role in social, liturgical, and ministerial reforms as well as lay activism was expressed in the Catholic Action Movements that cultivated the spirit of participation and activism among the laity.

The seeds of California Catholicism are found in the Spanish missions tended by the Franciscan Friars. Irish and Italian transplants formed the church in San Francisco. A wartime boom affected the development of the area and of the local church. After WW II a typical Catholic family was headed by a professional, educated on the GI Bill and staunchly anti-communist; his wife tended the house and children. Such an upstanding citizen was not the recipient of prejudice, but was welcomed warmly by the Protestant business elite (Morris 1997).

In the Southwest the metropolitan archbishop of Texas, Robert E. Lucey, advocated social justice, by criticizing racism and segregation, and supporting labor. He encouraged a progressive social agenda while he wielded his ecclesiastical authority without qualms (Bronder 1982).

This portrait of Catholic regional diversity contributes to a sense how churches in the regions of the U.S. developed out of differing historical and social circumstances.

The Demographics of Region

Similarities stand out when looking at VOTF members by region; the generations of Pre-Vatican II, Vatican II, and Post-Vatican II are evenly distributed. In regard to ethnicity the only notable variation is that there are fewer members of Irish and Italian descent in the Midwest, and more Latinos in the West. As for education there are no significant variations by region either for members or their parents. Marital status, employment, nature of employment, and income are all about the same.

VOTF members living in the West were more likely to identify as political and social liberals, while in the South they were more likely to identify as political conservatives. Across the regions they tended to identify themselves as economic moderates.

Two thirds of VOTF members identify with the Democratic Party in all regions except the South, and even there it is over half (54%). One quarter identify as Republicans in the South and Midwest compared to less than a fifth in the East and West. About 1 in 10 identify with Independent or Green Parties across the regions, except in the South where it is over a fifth. Compared to the general Catholic populace, in every region VOTF members tend to identify with the Democratic Party. In the south they are more likely to identify as independents; in the Midwest and West they are less likely to do so.

Religious Practices and Attitudes

There is consistency in the religious practices of VOTF member across the regions. In all regions 9 out of 10 are cradle Catholics; eight out of ten have Catholic fathers and nine out of ten have Catholic mothers. Four out of 5 are registered members of parishes. For the general Catholic population the average is a little above 3 out of 5 (2005 Survey).

In the East and West 7 out of 10 went to Catholic Grade Schools, in Massachusetts and the South it is 3 out of 5, and in the Midwest it is 4 out of 5. In the general Catholic population only half went to Catholics schools in the East and Midwest, and 2 out of 5 in the South and West (2005 Survey). In Massachusetts, the South and West over half went to Catholic High Schools, and in the East and Midwest it is nearly

two thirds. This compares with the general population where across the regions less than a third went to Catholic High Schools (2005 Survey). Close to 60% went to Catholic Colleges in Massachusetts, the East and West about half in the Midwest and South. In the general Catholic population across the regions about 1 in 10 went to a Catholic College (2005 Survey).

Across the regions over a third of VOTF members have taken theology courses. In the East, South and West over a fifth have been in a seminary or religious formation program during the course of their lives; in the Midwest it is a third. Across the regions about 10% professed religious vows, in the Midwest and West 10% were ordained and in the other regions it is closer to 6%.

Regarding their marriages and family lives, in Massachusetts, the East, South and Midwest 9 out of 10 VOTF members are in sacramental marriages; in the West it is 8 out of 10. As for church recognized marriages in the general Catholic population, in the East and Midwest 7 out of 10, and in the South and West 6 out of 10 are in such marriages (2005 Survey). In Massachusetts, the South and Midwest 80% or more VOTF members have children; in the East and West it is a little over 70%. Over half of these children, with the exception of Massachusetts, were in Catholic Schools.

In regard to church attendance, in the East and South about 70% of VOTF members attend mass weekly or more, in the other regions it is 60% or more. This is significantly above the attendance rates of the general Catholic population where attendance in the East, South and Midwest is over a third, and in the West a quarter (2005 Survey). Across the regions about 80% of VOTF members pray daily or more. In the general population, over half pray daily or more in the East and West, and over two thirds do in the Midwest and South (2005 Survey).

Across the regions, with the exception of Massachusetts (22%), close to a third of VOTF members help the need on a weekly basis. In all the regions about half or more do so at least monthly.

In assessing the importance of the church for them personally, about two-thirds of VOTF members across the regions say it is the most important or among the most important parts of their lives. This is significantly higher than the general Catholic population's response (2005 Survey).

Leaving and Staying

Respondents were asked to indicate where they stood on a seven-point scale ranging from 1, “I would never leave the Catholic Church” to 7, “I might leave.” Around half of VOTF members across the regions said “never leave,” though they slightly trail the general Catholic population in this response. In the table below we see that by region VOTF members are more likely to say, “might leave” than the general Catholic populace (2005 Survey). How can this be explained?

Response 1-2 “Never Leave”	Total	East	South	Midwest	West
VOTF	48%	55%	54%	45%	44%
General	56%	60	63	52	47

Response 6-7 “Might Leave”	Total	East	South	Midwest	West
VOTF	22%	17%	23%	25%	30%
General	14%	12	7	15	20

We have seen that VOTF members display levels of commitment to the Catholic Church that are higher than those of the general Catholic population. This is shown by their frequency of mass attendance, prayer, active participation in Church life and service to the needy. At the same time it is more likely for a member of the general Catholic population to say I will never leave the Church, and it is more likely for a VOTF member to say I might leave. How do we understand this seeming contradiction between expressed intention and action?

Hirschman’s classic work *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty* (1970) discusses the behaviors of consumers and members in firms and organizations, and he notes these come in two types. Some are inert or non-critical and others are alert and critical. Non-critical consumers are likely to stay with a particular supplier as long as their basic needs are met. There is little need to think about leaving. If a consumer becomes critical and there is a viable alternative, the consumer can leave one supplier and go to another; here exit becomes an option. Stark and other researchers have characterized the American

religious landscape as a vast market, and explain religious switching in just this way. However when one is a member rather than a consumer, the variable of loyalty enters the picture and the exit option becomes more costly. Our study indicates that VOTF Catholics tend to see themselves as members, and thus they are both active and critical.

In his study of political influence Banefield (1961) says “The effort an interested party makes to put its case before the decision maker will be in proportion to the advantage to be gained from a favorable outcome multiplied by the probability of influencing the decision”(p.333). The profile of VOTF members shows that they are highly educated, hold professional positions, have high incomes, and are active in their professions and communities. They are people of influence. This profile is consistent with previous research on loyal members, who remain with troubled organizations in order to reform them. The ability of VOTF members to influence outcomes in other forums have affected their understanding of how one can act as a member of the Catholic Church. Far from giving up on the Church they have demonstrated their belief that as an organization, the Church has the capacity to be reformed.

According to Hirschman (1970) voice and exit can be complementary, but the former does not rule out the latter. “If customers are sufficiently convinced that voice will be effective, then they may well postpone exit” (p.37). This suggests why VOTF Catholics can on the one hand show a higher level of commitment to Catholicism and on the other express a higher likelihood that they “might leave” the church. Theologian Paul Philibert (2005) predicts: “We can expect to see more examples like Voice of the Faithful and more exasperated defections from the Catholic Community until meaningful lay consultation and participation become a greater part of parish and diocesan life.”

Participation in VOTF Activities

VOTF originated in Boston in response to the clergy abuse scandal and its cover-up. Quickly it spread to other parts of the Northeast, and then to other regions of the country. Boston and the Northeast acutely experienced the initial outrage that was the germ for VOTF. In other regions it is likely that concern about clerical malfeasance in that area, as concern for the survivors of abuse, and church reform would be motivating factors for joining VOTF.

Interestingly enough, in all regions nearly 6 out of 10 VOTF members went to their first VOTF meeting alone. In Massachusetts and the East a little over a quarter went with another person. In the South, Midwest and West being invited by another person was a key factor for one out of five members. To mobilize the groups more than half of the members in Massachusetts, the East and South invited others to join them at meetings; it is less in the Midwest and West.

There are few regional differences in regard to identification with VOTF's stated goals. Over four out of five strongly identify with goals one and two. Nine out of ten strongly identify with the goal of shaping structural change in the church. Half of the members in Massachusetts and the East are members of VOTF affiliates. In the South and Midwest it is over a third, but only 27% in the West. It may be that the availability of more local affiliates encourages increased participation in local groups.

In questions meant to measure the salience of members' beliefs about VOTF, over half have signed VOTF's Petition for Reform and this is consistent across the regions. Under a third have donated money to the national office, and this too is consistent across the regions. In Massachusetts and the East about a third have donated money to local affiliates, in the South and Midwest about 15% and in the West one in ten have done so. Two out of five attend meetings in Massachusetts and the East; this drops to about one out of five in the South, Midwest and West. This mirrors the levels of affiliate membership across the regions and suggests that local affiliates may be a helpful resource for involvement.

In general around four out of five members believe the executive office, and the board are providing effective leadership. Nearly eight out of ten believe the Representative Council is providing effective guidance, but the numbers here are slightly lower in the Midwest (73%) and West (70%).

Participation of VOTF members in Church Life

In general, there is little variation in the participation of VOTF members in the life of the Church by region. When we look at participation in parish groups we see that the level of participation in RENEW in the Midwest is 12 percentage points higher than the national norm (36% rather than 24%); participation in small Christian Communities is

above the national total (34%) in the Midwest (44%) and the West (47%). In the Midwest a third participated in Call to Action, in other regions, with the exception of Massachusetts (12%) it is about a quarter. In the Midwest membership in the Knights of Columbus is 8 points above the national total (14%). Nearly half of VOTF members across the regions are members of Social Justice organizations; in the Midwest it is the highest (54%). This may suggest that social engagement is higher in the Midwest.

Knowledge of Vatican II and Other Documents

When asked about their knowledge of the Vatican II Documents, about 1 out of 10 VOTF members said they read all the Vatican II Documents. In the West, 1 out of 5 said they read some of them; in the other regions it is again 1 out of 10. Across the regions close to half participated in seminars on Vatican II.

About 1 in 5 VOTF members had heard of the National Review Board for the Protection of Children and Young People except in the West where it was only 13%. In the East, Midwest and West nearly half said they had some knowledge of it; in Massachusetts and the South it was about 40%. In almost all regions 1 in 10 said they had a great deal of knowledge of it.

Regarding the Bennett Report, across the regions a fifth or more had heard of it, and 2 out of 5 claimed some knowledge of it; In all regions 1 in 10 said they had a great deal of knowledge of it. Close to 2 in 10 had heard of the John Jay College Study with the exception of the South (14%). In the East over half claimed some knowledge of it with the regions following with about 2 in 5. In all regions with the exception of Massachusetts (6%) 1 in 10 said they had a great deal of knowledge of it.

In the South and Midwest over half read their diocesan newspapers; in the West and East it is over 40%, with Massachusetts at a low of 20%. *The National Catholic Reporter* is the most read national publication. Across the regions round a third read it, and in the East it crests to 40%; only Massachusetts is low with a readership of 21%. Over a quarter read *America*, with the exception of the South and Massachusetts where it is 1 in 10. Across the regions, 1 in 10 read *Commonweal*. Less than 1 in 10 read *In the Vineyard*.

Behavior and Attitudes toward Church Policy

The profile of VOTF members shows them to be people who are accustomed to actively participating in professional, community and church life. It is expected that those who are more highly committed will also be more concerned and critical about shortcomings in the institutions in which they are committed. Because they see themselves as part of the organization this can be a form of self-criticism focused on a sense of responsibility to reform an unsatisfactory status quo. This is displayed by the responses of VOTF members to questions about Church policy.

Few would dispute that the clergy abuse scandal and its cover-up exposed serious deficiencies in the values placed on children and families. When asked if the hierarchy was out of touch with the lives and experiences of the laity, across all regions 4 out of 5 VOTF members strongly agreed. In the general Catholic population only about 1 in 5 displayed such a strong response (2005 Survey).

A second area where VOTF members were critical of Catholic polity concerned their relationships with priests. When asked if “priests expect the laity to be followers,” in the East, South and West nearly half responded, “Strongly agree;” in Massachusetts and the Midwest it was over a third. By contrast, in the general Catholic population less than a fifth strongly agreed, with the exception of the South where a quarter strongly agreed.

When asked about the size and atmosphere of Catholic parishes, over 1 in 5 in Massachusetts, the East and Midwest strongly agreed: “parishes are too big and impersonal.” In the South and West about a third strongly agreed. Again this contrasts with the general populace where only 1 in 10 strongly agreed.

Because they are highly educated and committed participants in the Church, VOTF members are likely to have higher expectations of priests than the average Catholic. When asked if priests do a good job less than a fifth across the regions strongly agreed. In the general population about half strongly agreed. VOTF members claim a right to actively decide whether and to what extent they will use their resources to support the church. Nearly a fifth of the membership throughout the country strongly agreed that it was legitimate to withhold financial contributions when the hierarchy is

unresponsive. Among VOTF members across the regions more than half agreed that it was appropriate to do so.

More than 9 in 10 across the regions strongly agreed that there should be wider participation by the laity at the local level. It is the same at the diocesan and national level and just slightly lower at the international level. VOTF members nationally are almost unanimous in strongly agreeing that the laity has a right to participate in decisions concerning parish spending. Here VOTF members and the general Catholic population are in agreement about 9 in 10 of the general population feel the same. Regarding the selection of priests for their parishes, in all regions 8 out of 10 VOTF members strongly agree that they have a right to participate in the selection. In the general Catholic population about 7 out of 10 strongly agree.

Regarding the salience of their beliefs in the East and South a third of VOTF members across the regions say they would be willing to devote an hour a week to church decision making; in Massachusetts, the Midwest and West it is over 40%. The same figures apply to those who would devote 2-5 hours. A high of 11% in the West are willing to devote 6-10 hours a week; in the other regions it is single digits. Between a quarter and a third of members nationally would be willing to donate up to \$50 a year to VOTF to promote the laity's role in church decision-making. In Massachusetts, the East and the South a quarter are willing to donate \$51-\$100 per year, in the Midwest and West it is 17% and 18% respectively. Across the regions 1 in 10 is willing to donate over \$100 per year.

Formal Catholic Education: A Key Feature of VOTF Membership

One of the most striking ways in which VOTF members differ from the general population of American Catholics is in their level of formal Catholic education. Among Catholics generally, half (49%) attended Catholic elementary schools, 29% Catholic High Schools, and only 12% a Catholic college or university (2005 Survey). By contrast, 70% of VOTF members had a Catholic elementary school education, 62% a Catholic high School education, and 57% attended a Catholic college or university. In this section we examine the question whether VOTF members who had a Catholic college education (57%) differ in important ways from those VOTF members who did not.

With regard to the three generations of Catholics, we see that the earlier generations were more likely to receive a Catholic College education than the later generation. Attendance at a Catholic College correlated with significant differences in the study of theology, and rates of going to a seminary or center for religious formation.

A key question has to do with whether there were important differences in religious practices and attitudes between those who graduated from Catholic colleges and those who did not. Church attendance is a key variable named in the media as differentiating levels of religious commitment. Catholic college graduates attended mass somewhat more frequently, but their personal prayer practices did not differ. Catholic college grads were more likely than others to participate in programs or activities to help the needy on a weekly basis. They were also more likely to say the Church was the most or among the most important parts of their lives, and somewhat more likely to say they would never leave the Church. It made no difference at the other end of the scale; about one in four of both groups said they might leave the Church.

The influence of Catholic education is more evident in their differential participation in church life. For example, the Catholic college grads were significantly more likely to have been members of some parish committees like Liturgy and the School Board, and to be Lectors and Eucharistic ministers, CCD teachers, Catholic grade and high school teachers, RCIA leaders, as well as members of small Christian communities, and Call to Action.

The Catholic college grads were twice as likely to have read all the documents of Vatican II, and less likely to have read none of them. They were also more likely to have some or a great deal of knowledge about the National Review Board and its Report and about the John Jay College Study. Religious reading habits also varied significantly by whether or not members went to a Catholic college. Those who did were significantly more likely to subscribe to the *National Catholic Reporter*, and *America*, and slightly more likely to get the Diocesan Paper, and *Commonweal*.

Differences on the ideological items and party identification were very small. They were more liberal and moderate on political and social matters, and more moderate on economic matters, and a majority of both educational groups were Democrats.

Regarding “Behavior and Attitudes toward Church Policy.” There were no significant differences between those who went to Catholic Colleges and those who did not. Nor did this distinction impact participation in VOTF. However, Catholic college grads were a bit more likely to have invited others to VOTF meetings, and to be members of a VOTF affiliate. Overall, while there is evidence that formal Catholic school education makes a difference, even among VOTF members; the differences are not great perhaps because of the goals of VOTF, and the impact of the scandal.

Mass Attendance as a Control Variable

Church attendance is consistently claimed to be the single most predictive variable in measuring the impact of religion on values, beliefs and practices; this was especially stressed in the analyses of the 2004 election. In this section we will examine if frequency of Mass attendance is correlated with differences in the values, beliefs and practices of VOTF members. While more than 8 out of ten VOTF members were registered in parishes, 84% of those who attend at least weekly are registered in comparison to 16% of those who seldom or never attend. While more than 9 out of ten members’ marriages are recognized by the Catholic Church, even those who seldom or never attend have a percentage of 80% which is higher than the norm for all Catholics. Regular mass attendance correlates with Catholic school attendance (53%, weekly and 37%, seldom/never). Eighty eight percent of weekly attendees pray at least once a day, but even 60% of those who seldom go to Mass pray daily. Half of those who attend Mass at least weekly help the needy at least once a month. With those who attend seldom or never it is a third.

Three-fourths of VOTF members who go to Mass regularly say the church is the “most” or “among the most” important parts of their lives. Only 27% of those who attend seldom or never gave that response. Again while 2 in 3 regular Mass goers say they would never leave the church, only one in five of the seldom or never attendees say this; 2 in 3 of the latter say they might leave. Only 14% of the regulars acknowledge the possibility.

Higher levels of Mass attendance correlate with membership on the Parish Council, the Liturgy Committee, and other parish committees. But those who attend

monthly or seldom also claimed participation on the Parish Council (25%), and Finance Council (10%). One VOTF member reflected: “I have been in a state of flux since 2002. I took a break from being a Catechist, and I don’t attend Mass as often as I did. The Church was very important at one time, but that is no longer true.”

The regular Mass goers were most active in the liturgical ministries, although 42% and 37% of those who answered that they attend Mass monthly or seldom claimed they were lectors or Eucharistic ministers. The regular Mass goers were significantly more active than the other two groups in CCD, and RCIA activity. Small percentages of all three groups were teachers at both grade and high school levels. Regular Mass attendees were most likely to have participated in RENEW, small Christian communities, and *Cursillo*.

Do Catholics with different patterns of Mass attendance differ in their knowledge of the events of Vatican II? We inquired about knowledge of Vatican II, and as expected, regular Mass attendees were more likely (36%) than monthly (19%) or the seldom(28%) attendees to have read all the documents, and significantly less likely to have not read any. With regard to the National Review Board and its Bennett Report, 3 in 5 of the regular Mass attendees claimed to have at least some knowledge about them; less than half the monthly and 2 in 5 of the seldom attendees said the same. This pattern held regarding the John Jay College Study.

Regarding VOTF members’ attitudes and behavior toward Church policy, seldom attendees were more likely to see the priests as expecting the laity to be followers. All three groupings saw the hierarchy as out of touch with the laity; seldom attendees were nearly unanimous in this. They are less likely to agree that the priests do a good job and most likely to say that the laity can withhold financial contributions to gain the attention of the hierarchy. Mass attendance rates had no effect on attitudes toward wider participation in church decisions. They all insisted on that right.

Over half of the regular Mass goers were willing to give at least two hours a week to promote church reform; that was not the case with the others. Weekly and month attendees were about the same in terms of giving money to promote reform. Weekly Mass attendees are more likely to subscribe to the local Diocesan Paper, the *National Catholic Reporter*, and *America*. A majority of all three groups identified themselves as

Democrats. How does Mass attendance affect VOTF participation? Regular attendees were most likely to invite others to attend meetings.

Perhaps the one feature that emerges through this comparative reading of Mass attendance is that the 10% of VOTF members who seldom if ever go to Mass now were at one time active in the Church. One VOTF member wrote: "I stopped attending Mass on a regular basis because the pastor who married us four years ago went to jail as part of the scandal and the church basically swept it under the carpet after the initial outcry." Another wrote: "After a couple of years of regular church attendance, I have fallen away, very much discouraged by developments in the Church. It doesn't help that we moved away from our old parish; we have been desultorily looking for a good new one." VOTF sustains for some of them at least a minimal level of interest in the church.