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A Study of Social Backgrounds and Other Factors Associated with Interest of the Chicago Secondary School Girl in the Religious Life

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A STUDY OF SOCIAL BACKGROUNDS AND OTHER FACTORS ASSOCIATED
WITH INTEREST OF THE CHICAGO SECONDARY SCHOOL GIRL
IN THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

During the comparatively short period that sociology has been accepted among the sciences, it has branched out into specialized fields of study covering every human relationship. With the division of labor, increasing rapidly with the growing complexity of society, the Sociology of Professions arose, concerning itself with the social conditions and problems associated with the professions.

One of the professions of ever-increasing importance in the civilized world is that of teaching. As such, it carries with it a variety of social problems, not least among which is the failure of society to supply the demand for teachers. It becomes imperative, therefore, for studies, included under the Sociology of Professions, to be undertaken to discover in as scientific a manner as possible, the social factors which are related to this problem, in order that the resulting generalizations may serve as the basis for predictions on which a movement for overcoming the deficiency can be organized.

In the United States, the Catholic Church through its parochial and private schools, has, from the beginning, shouldered a large share of the responsibility for education. Although the number of Priests, Religious Brothers, and Sisters has never been adequate to cover all the missionary work the Church should like to undertake, yet the shortage of Religious teachers in the

private and parochial elementary and high schools of our large cities did not become an acute problem until within the last two decades. That social factors are involved is obvious; the question is: which ones? and: how are these social factors related to the failure to supply the demand? how are they associated with the reasons for the choice of a profession or state of life?

It is admitted at the outset in focusing on the Religious Sisterhoods that the element of grace is indispensable in the choice of that vocation; however, it cannot be denied that grace builds on nature, and the nature of man is social, and therefore subject to social factors and influences.

Present Need for Religious

The insistent reiteration in a variety of versions of the tremendous current need for laborers in the great harvest,¹ establishes beyond doubt the conviction that the issue is too urgent to be side-stepped: "The Roman Catholic Church gave two indications Wednesday that it is worried about a shortage of young men volunteering for the priesthood."² "The Church in Brazil has been unable to meet the demand for more priests."³ ". . . [T]housands of priests and Religious are needed to overcome the terrific handicap

¹Matt. 10:37

² Barrett McGurn, "Catholic Church Worried by Shortage of Clergymen," Chicago Sun-Times (October 31, 1957), pt. 1, p. 4.

³The New World (Chicago), June 13, 1958, pt. 1, p. 10.

the Church faces in preserving and reaching all nations with the teachings and commandments of Jesus Christ."⁴ "Our Catholic children have the advantages of a Catholic education, but there are not nearly enough Religious to staff the over-populated Catholic schools."⁵ "The vocation picture in this country is usually painted in somber colors. The viewers with alarm need only look about them to find evidence to support their dark forebodings. ... Clearly there are not enough vocations to supply classroom demands."⁶

Statistics substantiate these facts. While Catholics in the United States, Alaska, and Hawaii have increased 39 per cent in the past 10 years, the number of priests and religious has risen only 18 per cent. Of the 3,070 counties in the United States, more than 1000 are without a resident priest.⁷

The local outlook reflects the national picture. In Chicago during the 1955-56 school year, close to 250,000 elementary school children were attending Catholic schools taught by 4,330 Sisters and 710 lay teachers;⁸ for 1956-57, fifty-six Sisters were added to the total teaching staff, an in-

⁴The New World (Chicago), July 4, 1958, pt. 1, p. 1.

⁵Margaret M. Keenan, "Fewer Religious Vocations--Why?" Extension, LIII (January 1958), 11.

⁶Francis Curran, S.J., "Vocations Keep Climbing," America, XCVI (February 9, 1957), 521.

⁷Coadjutor Bishop Thomas J. McDonnell, "U.S. Faces Serious Vocation Shortage," The Register (Denver), August 3, 1958, p. 1.

⁸Archdiocese of Chicago Annual School Report, 1955-1956, 16.

crease of 1.2 per cent over the previous year, while 218 additional lay teachers stepped into the classrooms of Catholic schools,⁹ an increase of 30.4, establishing a ratio of 3.9 to 1 in favor of lay teachers for the increase in that year's staff.

Within the same year, the number of lay teachers added to the faculties of Catholic secondary schools in Chicago was twice the number of Sisters admitted: 14 and 28 respectively,¹⁰ the Sisters marking an increase of 0.9 per cent over the preceding year, and the lay teachers 6.9 per cent.

Proposed Causes and Remedies

In most cases the writers who discuss this problem of vocational shortage also make an attempt to list some causes and to propose a remedy for the problem. Pope Pius XI did this in his Encyclical on the Catholic Priesthood in which he wrote: "It must be confessed with sadness that too often parents seem to be unable to resign themselves to the priestly or the religious vocation of their children. Such parents have no scruple in opposing the divine call with objections of all kinds."¹¹ The renewal of the Christian spirit in the home is the remedy he suggests, calling the Christian family the "first and most natural place where the flowers of the sanctuary should almost spon-

⁹Archdiocese of Chicago Annual School Report, 1956-1957, 20.

¹⁰Ibid., 21

¹¹Pope Pius XI, The Catholic Priesthood (Washington, D.C., 1936), pp.57-58.

taneously grow and bloom."¹²

Many writers, speakers, and educators agree that the home with its degenerated spirit is the chief cause of the deficiency in vocations, and that, consequently, the regeneration of the Christian home is the solution. The Mother General of the Religious of the Sacred Heart phrased it thus: "We are living in a pagan age. It is true to say that the spirit of materialism has invaded Catholic homes so that all too many are out of touch with the spirit of their religion."¹³

A secular newspaper, quoting the official Vatican organ, classifies a number of influences as reasons for the decrease in the number of vocations, but ultimately sees these as contaminating the home, destroying the divine call at the root:

L'Osservatore Romano . . . said many influences have been weighing against religious vocations.

Communist-fostered hatred of religion, moral upheavals at the time of World War II and the "spread of a pleasure-loving concept of life" were factors....

The movies, radio, TV, comics, publications with a loose moral code, and materialism seeping into families were adverse pleasure-encouraging influences. . . .¹⁴

A popular periodical carried a similar, but more detailed analysis, entering into the intimacy of the very thoughts of the child, indicating the recreational and educational factors which inevitably leave their mark on his

¹²Ibid., 56.

¹³Mother Mary Conrad, S.H.J.C., "Fostering Religious Vocations in the Secondary School," The Catholic Educator, XVIII (March 1948), 343.

¹⁴McCurn, p. 4.

desires and attitudes:

Americans, more than the people of any other nation, because of our vast network of public entertainment, are bombarded with the notion that marriage is the most desirable status for a man or woman to attain. Hollywood grinds out a large proportion of movies having to do with love and romance. The theatre concerns itself with courtship, marital affairs, love lost and love found; almost every magazine has stories about married men and women, or people who are about to be married. Turn on the radio, switch on the television. Within an hour you will have heard something about love. Even courses in marriage and child-bearing, once strictly limited to the colleges and universities, have been brought down to the high school level.

Thanks to Freud, sex has become an important word in our vocabularies. We discuss sex, we read about it, we think about it. And we are told we cannot live without it. It follows . . . that he who is not married is sexually frustrated. And he who is sexually frustrated develops mental and emotional problems that married people do not have.

Our children are taught to fear virginity. We are led to believe that complete fulfillment of a person comes only with the satisfaction of the sex inclination. . . .

So the parents are to blame for the lack of vocations. Even Catholics have placed so much emphasis on the material things in life, the physical side of life, that the spiritual is overlooked. We consider our duty as Catholic parents fulfilled if we send our children to Mass on Sundays and to Catholic school during the week. We let them think by themselves, and so very often they think in the wrong directions.¹⁵

Other sources list additional reasons for the decline. In a diocese in the United States in which some twelve hundred Catholic youth were questioned, the main reason given for lack of vocations were: 1) too many worldly temptations and entertainments, 2) not enough knowledge of the religious life, and 3) not enough Catholic schools.¹⁶

¹⁵Keenan, p. 11.

¹⁶John J. Campbell, S.J., "Eighty Per Cent Said No," America, LXXXVI (January 19, 1952), 415

In a public pronouncement made during the past year, the Archbishop of Brazil also emphasized the importance of the Catholic school in fostering vocations: ". . . /T/he Church in Brazil has been unable to meet the demand for more priests. One reason is the absence of the valuable incentives to the religious life inherent in the parochial school system. Brazilian children attend Sunday school where instruction is given by lay teachers. But the value of these sessions, from the viewpoint of stimulating vocations, is negligible compared to that of the parochial school where the child is continuously exposed to Catholicism throughout his formative years."¹⁷

Thus cause becomes identified with effect: a lack of parochial schools results in a lack of vocations; a lack of vocations results in a lack of parochial schools!

Another view was proposed by a recent Vocational Institute which conducted a symposium on vocation-blocking attitudes relating to work. Among those discussed were the following: 1) professional status and growth must be sacrificed in the religious life; 2) the work is too hard; 3) obedience, not choice, decide the work they do; 4) too many Sisters have to do work for which they have little or no professional training and no hope of getting it; 5) they seem so unhappy and irritable, as if they didn't love their work and didn't have the "nerve" to quit.¹⁸

¹⁷The New World (Chicago), June 23, 1958, pt. 1, p. 10.

¹⁸Quincy College Vocational Institute, August 2-4, 1958.

Related Studies and Their Significance

To discover in a reliable manner some of the factors involved in the causes for the decline in religious vocations, several studies have been made. One of these concentrated on finding the difference between the domestic backgrounds of the Sisters already professed in a Religious Congregation and those of high school senior girls. The results indicated an increase in the number of smaller families and a corresponding decrease in the number of religious vocations, and a changed attitude on the part of the modern girl in regard to interest in the family and spending evenings quietly at home.¹⁹

Another study, investigating the origins of vocations to the Teaching Brotherhoods, disclosed that the desire for this kind of life originates most frequently from watching Brothers in action; that vocation thinking begins in the elementary grades; that 40 per cent of the aspirants find obstacles, most of which are from their advisers.²⁰

Both of these studies made a valuable contribution to proving that home and school alike hold key positions in the work for vocation, and attempts to foster vocations are frequently built on this information. That many realize the importance of the home in this respect, has already been pointed out. The importance of the school is stressed by those who advocate that the Religious

¹⁹Sister Mary of the Angels Garland, M.H.S., "Certain Domestic Factors in the Choice of a Religious Vocation among Women," Unpublished Master's Thesis (Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., 1951).

²⁰Brother Flacidus Evans, C.F.X., "An Investigation into the Origins of Vocations to the Teaching Brotherhoods," Unpublished Master's Thesis (Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., 1951).

themselves should show more interest in the problems of the prospective aspirants who hesitate because of uncertainty.²¹ The Good Counsel Club for girls has been recommended as a means of attaining this objective.²² Brother Flacidus' study can be used as evidence by those who hold that a Sister who serves as an ideal and inspiration by her prayerful and happy spirit in the classroom or hospital ward is the attracting force necessary.²³

There are others who are of the opinion that besides home and school, relatives in the religious life are a decisive force in fostering vocations.²⁴ Finally, Religious Orders have indicated that they believe ignorance on the part of modern girls may be one of the causes of their shortage of vocations, for they disseminate literature about their life and work and instruct through vocation talks by their members.

The Present Study

How correct are the various diagnoses and how effective the proposed and attempted remedies? The steadily increasing demand for Religious women to carry on the spiritual and corporal works of mercy suggested the present study by questionnaire as a possible means of obtaining some answers to these questions; of discovering some of the influences and/or factors which may directly

²¹Campbell, p. 415.

²²Mother Mary Walburga, C.S.J., "Balancing the Vocational Budget," The Catholic Educator, XIII (November 1951), p. 153.

²³Mother Mary Conrad, p. 345.

²⁴Keenan, p. 36.

or indirectly advance or hinder the cause of vocations, in the hope that this information may serve as a basis on which to construct further vocational work.

Its specific purposes were: to discover 1) whether there are differences between the backgrounds of the girls in the Chicago Catholic secondary schools who are interested in the Religious Life and those who are not; 2) if these exist, what some of them are; 3) which influences contribute most frequently to arouse or hinder interest in the Religious Life; 4) whether coeducation can be considered a factor; 5) the percentage in this group interested in the Religious Life.

This work is confined to the presentation and analysis of data on a regionally and numerically limited number of girls in Chicago Catholic secondary schools, that is, four year high schools, including freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors. To prevent the findings from reflecting local factors, schools were selected from the north, south, and west sides of the city. To check on the influences (if any) of coeducation, two Coeducational Schools as well as two Girls' Schools were chosen from each of the three sections. All of these were used for computing the per cent interested of the total number and of each division.

To keep the number of questionnaires within a reasonable limit, the Archdiocese of Chicago Annual School Report for 1955-1956 was consulted and representative schools with lower enrollments selected. The questionnaires were delivered to the respective schools and administered in April, 1957, all directions being given on the questionnaire, a copy of which is given in the Appendix of this thesis.

Upon return of the completed questionnaires, the per cent interested was

computed on the raw basis of regional responses, first including the total of all twelve schools, then on the division basis. No further work was done with the total number of questionnaires.

To reduce the questionnaires for intensive study to a number which could be adequately handled, regular interval sampling was used, every tenth paper from only one Girls' and one Coeducational high school in each section (north, south, and west) being set aside for tabulation and analysis. The schools retained for this limited regional sampling were selected on the basis of lower enrollment.

"Coeducational high school" as used here is a parish high school in which boys and girls attend classes together and are taught by Sisters in all or most of the subjects. "Religious Life" refers to living together as members of an organized association, in common under a Religious Rule and performing the spiritual and/or corporal works of mercy. "Vocation" implies "religious vocation" unless otherwise specified.

The study carried with it the disadvantages of the questionnaire method: 1) possible misinterpretation of some items by the subjects and 2) no clues as to the subjects' reaction to the questions. To keep the questionnaire within a two-page limit, many pertinent questions had to be omitted. It is left to further studies to inquire more closely into the home relations and associations, happiness of parents, presence of other relatives in the same house, and the amount and extent of freedom to take part in social activities outside the home allowed by the parents to the subjects of the study, to find the relationship between these factors and interest in the Religious Life, if there is any.

The significance of the limited findings of this work is crippled by the fact that the sample was numerically limited and regional.

TABLE I

SUMMARY OF SOURCES OF DATA

Total number of schools answering questionnaire.....	12
Coeducational.....	6
Girls'.....	6
Total number of schools retained for sampling.....	6
Coeducational.....	3
Girls'.....	3
Raw basis of regional responses.....	5995
Coeducational.....	1551
Girls'.....	4444
Number drawn by regular-interval sampling.....	271
Total from Coeducational Schools.....	89
Interested.....	9
Not interested.....	80
Total from Girls' Schools.....	182
Interested.....	24
Not interested.....	158
Total Interested (4.9 per cent of total in survey).....	33
Total Not Interested (4.8 per cent of total in survey).....	238

CHAPTER II

SOCIAL BACKGROUNDS AND OTHER FACTORS IN RELATION TO INTEREST IN THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

All the girls included in the survey were of average high school age: between 14 and 18. Of the total 5995 who answered the questionnaire, 11.2 per cent were willing to express themselves tentatively as interested in the Religious Life, 81.8 per cent as not interested, and 7.0 per cent as undecided about it (Table II, page 14).

Computation by divisions revealed a marked decrease in interest between the freshman and sophomore years, the consistent decline between each of the three remaining divisions being less than one per cent in each case. The drop in interest between the freshman and sophomore years amounted to almost 8 per cent. (Table III, page 15.)

No further work was done with the total number of questionnaires. It was at this point that schools were selected for limited sampling, as indicated in Table I, page 12. Some future study should pursue this to its logical conclusion by inquiring into the number of those who actually entered the Religious Life from among the "Interested."

Of the 33 interested girls who were selected for study by regular-interval sampling, 30 expressed their preference for the active Sisterhoods, 2 for the contemplative, and one was undecided.

TABLE II

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST OF URBAN CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL GIRLS
IN RELIGIOUS LIFE

	Type of High School		Total
	Coed	Girls'	
Number Surveyed	1551	4444	5995
Number Interested	160	514	674
Per cent Interested	10.3	10.7	11.2
Number Not Interested	1324	3577	4901
Per cent Not Interested	85.4	82.0	81.8
Number Undecided	67	353	420
Per cent Undecided	4.3	7.9	7.0

TABLE III

INTEREST IN RELIGIOUS LIFE ACCORDING TO CLASS DIVISIONS

Class Division	Number Surveyed	Number Interested	Per cent Interested
Freshman	1824	234	18.3
Sophomore	1582	172	10.9
Junior	1312	135	10.3
Senior	1275	128	10.0

Education As a Factor in Interest

In studying the differences in the educational backgrounds of the girls in the sample (Table IV, page 17), it can be noted that 2 (the number of interested girls with some public school education) is 6.0 per cent of 33, the total number of interested, and 22 (the number of uninterested with some public school education) is 6.5 per cent of 238, the total number of uninterested in the sample. Thus the per cent with some public school education is about the same in each group; however, there is a difference in the period of time in their lives during which this occurred. Neither of the two girls with some public school education who expressed interest in the religious life, spent any part of their high school years in a public school, nor their entire 8 years of grade school, whereas 8, or a little more than one-third, of the uninterested, did. This might indicate a relationship between interest and the influence of the high school, and the importance of at least some grade school contacts with Religious

In the academic self-evaluation (Table V, page 18), those interested constitute 16.1 per cent of the total "Above Average" group, a larger proportion than in either the "Average" (9.8 per cent) or "Fair" (14.2 per cent) group, whereas the uninterested comprise 90.1 per cent of the "Average" group, a larger proportion than in either the "Above Average" (83.8 per cent) or "Fair" (85.7 per cent) group. The per cent of the "Fair" interested (14.2) rising above the "Average" interested (9.8), may indicate motives apart from education, strong enough to make this secondary in the mind of the respondent. There is a possibility, also, that the very things that make girls "Average" in academic achievement (which category carries 90.1 per cent of uninterested) may be the same ones that influence them against interest in the Religious Life: unrestrained social activities, excess of movies, television, and/or radio, indiscriminate reading,

TABLE IV

AMOUNT OF PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION

<u>Interested</u>	
Total in category.....	33
Total with some public school education.....	2
Grades 1 through 6.....	1
Grades 3 through 7.....	1
<u>Not Interested</u>	
Total in category.....	238
Total with some public school education.....	22
All grade school and first 2 years of high school.....	1
All grade school.....	5
Grades 1 through 6.....	3
Grades 1 through 5.....	3
Grades 1 through 4.....	2
Grades 1 through 3.....	2
Grades 1 through 3 and 7 and 8.....	1
Grades 2 and 3.....	1
Grades 1, 2, 4 through 8 and first 2 years of high school.....	1
Grades 1, 2, 4, 6, 7.....	1
Grade 3.....	1
First 2 years of high school.....	1

TABLE V
ACADEMIC SELF-EVALUATION OF STUDENTS

Level of Achievement	Total	Interested		Not Interested	
		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Above Average	62	10	16.1	52	83.8
Average	172	17	9.8	155	90.1
Fair	28	4	14.2	24	85.7
Unclassified	9	2	22.2	7	77.7
Total	271	33		238	

etc. However, this point is not verified by the present work.

Nationality Backgrounds of Parents

Table VI, page 20, shows the nationality backgrounds of the parents of the subjects studied in the sample. The total number 542 was obtained by counting separately the two parents of each of the 271 students.

Few generalizations can be drawn from this Table, however, because the number in some categories is so small. But it can be seen that the number of Irish descent who are interested in Religious Life ranks among the highest, and this remains true even when the Irish intermarry with Germans. Although the English, French, and Bohemian range among the higher percentages, their small total number precludes estimating their importance in this study. It may be noteworthy, however, that of the 15 who have so adopted the American way of life as to disclaim further relationship with any European-nationality background, simply calling themselves "American," not one is interested in the Religious Life. The same is true of all the mixed-nationality backgrounds with the exception of the Irish-German. The question arising from this provides a field for further investigation: Does Americanization tend to decrease vocations? If so, what factors involved in it are responsible for this?

Size and Composition of Family

The findings in regard to the size of families which have members interested in Religious Life confirm former studies¹ which have concluded that

¹Chapter I of this thesis, p. 7.

TABLE VI
NATIONALITY BACKGROUNDS OF PARENTS

Nationality Group	Number			Per cent of Total Belonging to a Given Nationality Group	
	Total	Interested	Not Interested	Interested	Not Interested
Polish	208	26	182	12.5	87.5
Irish	86	19	67	22.1	77.9
German	72	8	64	11.1	88.9
Italian	57	4	53	7.0	92.9
American	15	0	15	0.0	100.0
Lithuanian	12	0	12	0.0	100.0
Bohemian	11	2	9	18.1	81.9
Polish-German	11	0	11	0.0	100.0
Slovak	10	0	10	0.0	100.0
Irish-German	10	2	8	20.0	80.0
Croatian	6	0	6	0.0	100.0
English	6	2	4	33.3	66.6
Scotch-Irish	6	0	6	0.0	100.0
French	5	1	4	20.0	80.0
*Dutch	4	0	4	...	...
Hungarian	3	0	3	...	...
Swedish	3	0	3	...	...
Czech	2	2	0	...	...
Norwegian	2	0	2	...	...
Austrian	2	0	2	...	...
Greek	1	0	1	...	...
Canadian	1	0	1	...	...
Danish	1	0	1	...	...
Indian-German	1	0	1	...	...
Polish-Irish	1	0	1	...	...
French-Irish	1	0	1	...	...
Danish-Irish	1	0	1	...	...
Italian-Irish	1	0	1	...	...
Hungarian-Indian	1	0	1	...	...
Unknown	2	0	2	...	...
Total	542	66	476		

*Percentages computed for 5 or more cases.

TABLE VII
SIZE OF FAMILY

Number of Children in Family	Total in Category	Number		Per cent	
		Interested	Not Interested	Interested	Not Interested
1	42	3	39	7.1	92.9
2	81	10	71	12.3	87.6
3	56	8	48	7.1	92.9
4	43	4	39	9.3	90.7
5	24	4	20	16.6	83.3
6	12	3	9	25.0	75.0
* 7	5	1	4	20.0	80.0
8	2	0	2	...	...
9	2	0	2	...	...
10	1	0	1	...	...

* Percentages computed for 5 or more cases.

larger families are more likely to give members to Religious Congregations than small ones. Table VII, page 21, indicates that families with six children rank highest in fostering vocations; those with seven, second; and those with five, third. It may be that the family with five, six, or seven children finds itself more willing to give one or more of them to the Religious state, for others will be left to provide for aged or sick parents; or, perhaps, the additional amount of sharing material goods and work that must be done in a large family, and the decreasing amount of special attention and/or indulgence given individual children because of the increasing number, may tend to develop qualities more conducive to thinking in terms of spending a life-time in a Congregation which consistently is based on community life and the principle of sharing all things.

It is possible, also, that parents who are willing (being physically able) to take upon themselves the responsibility of bringing up a larger family, must often necessarily do so with a great trust in Divine Providence for spiritual and material support in so tremendous an undertaking. This attitude is reflected in the home atmosphere which is more productive of vocations than one developing from the anxieties resulting from self-trust, or the limiting of a family (legitimately or otherwise) for fear of financial difficulties.

Table VIII, page 23, shows that the oldest child is least likely to be interested, an only child not much more likely, and the youngest most likely of the three categories.

TABLE VIII

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH INTEREST IN RELIGIOUS LIFE
COMPUTED IN PERCENTAGES OF EACH CATEGORY

Category	Total in Category	Interested		Not Interested	
		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
An only child	42	3	7.1	39	92.9
Youngest child	62	7	11.3	55	88.7
Oldest child	100	6	6.0	94	94.0
Work part-time	81	10	12.3	71	87.6
Have working mothers	101	13	12.8	88	87.1
From mixed marriages	24	2	8.3	22	91.6
Homes broken by di- vorce or separation	12	2	16.6	10	83.3
One parent deceased	15	2	13.3	13	86.6
*Neither parent Catholic	1	0	...	1	...
Own home	184	20	10.8	164	89.2
Rent home	81	12	14.9	69	85.1
No answer	6	3	50.0	3	50.0
*Are poor	1	0	...	1	...
Able to get along, but not well off	140	24	17.1	116	82.8
Well-to-do, but not rich	126	9	7.1	117	92.9
*Rich	1	0	...	1	...
Have relative(s) in Religious Life	131	15	11.4	116	88.5

* Percentages computed for 5 or more cases.

Religion of Parents

That mixed marriages are not conducive to religious vocations can be seen from the fact that from the 24 homes with mixed marriages under consideration (Table VIII, page 23), only two girls were found who expressed interest in the Religious Life. The atmosphere necessary for the growth of the desire to serve and to give, essential to a religious vocation, cannot be expected to flourish in a home where understanding and ideals are divided, although it can be found in some cases. The same can be said, and with a greater degree of validity, of homes in which both parents are not Catholic, although the child might be brought up in the Faith.

Marital Status of Parents

Homes broken by divorce or separation are only half as detrimental to religious vocations as mixed marriages, according to this limited study (Table VIII, page 23), for, of the twelve cases of such broken homes under consideration, two were recorded as having a member interested in the Sisterhood, that is, 16.6 per cent of the twelve cases. More light should be thrown on this factor and its importance by a study to discover how old the interested girl was when the home was broken, which parent she lives with, how many other family members there are, and what prompts her interest in Religious Life: fear of the repetition of this tragedy in her own life? reparation, in the hope of obtaining parental reconciliation? escape from unhappy surroundings? any other?

The percentage of interested are somewhat lower in families broken by the death of one of the parents, as indicated by this study. The responsibility for the remaining parent and/or children, or the financial support of the family without an alimony check, or the freedom from control experienced by

cause the living parent works away from home, may be reasons contributing to this lower rate of interest. However, this factor does not eliminate interest, but lowers its probability.

Economic Factors

Home ownership, as reflecting higher economic standing, favors those who are not interested, according to the sample (Table VIII, page 23). However, the questionnaire failed to set a category for those whose homes are mortgaged, who are making payments in the hope of ownership at some future time.

In making their own evaluation of the economic status of their families (Table VIII, page 23), the majority of the interested classified themselves as "Able to get along, but not well off", whereas the majority of the uninterested indicated that they consider themselves "Well-to-do, but not rich". This, when considered in conjunction with Table IX (page 26), points to the conclusion that in the minds of the respondents, the former category must have meant \$101.00 - \$200.00 a week, and the latter, between \$201 and \$300.00 a week. It is difficult to account for the fact that, although only one had classified herself as "Poor" (Table VIII, page 23), ten families have an income of less than \$45.00 a week, and sixty-six families, between \$46.00 and \$100.00 a week, before tax deductions. A more detailed study, confined to economic factors, would be beneficial to a better understanding of the importance of this factor as related to vocational interest. As these tabulations show it, the generalization can be drawn that from our sample, a lower income, but not poverty, is more productive of interest in the Religious Life than a higher income.

It should be noted, too, that close to one-third of the subjects of the

TABLE IX

ESTIMATED FAMILY INCOME BEFORE TAX DEDUCTIONS

Amount per week	Total Number of Families	Interested		Not Interested	
		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
\$ 0.00 - 45.00	10	1	10.0	9	90.0
46.00 - 100.00	66	6	9.0	60	90.9
101.00 - 200.00	81	13	16.0	68	83.9
201.00 - 300.00	12	1	8.3	11	91.6
Don't know	102	12	11.7	90	88.2
Total	271	33		238	

study could not even give an estimate of the family income, although this was asked separately about the father and the mother to eliminate the necessity of computation. A few wrote on the questionnaire: "I don't have the slightest idea." If it could be ascertained by some future study whether this deficiency in information is due to a lack of interest on the part of the child or to secrecy on the part of the parents, it might serve as a further clue to the home atmosphere in which modern urban high school students live, which creates or hinders interest in vocations.

Occupation of Parents

Both fathers and mothers of those interested rate highest in the class of unskilled laborers (Table X, page 28). Significance cannot be attached to the high percentage of mothers among the skilled workers, because the total number in this category is only 4. The fathers of the uninterested rank highest in percentage among the sales workers and semiskilled. This correlates with the general economic level. Analyzed from the social aspect, this last named fact may indicate that the additional prestige and greater amount of social contact attached to sales workers and semiskilled jobs, may be an influence against interest in the Religious Life, creating a desire on the part of the family for living beyond their means and having a share of worldly goods and amusements equivalent to those enjoyed by families with fathers holding better-paying white-collar jobs.

That working mothers constitute a possible factor tending to decrease interest in vocations can be concluded from the fact that none of the mothers of

TABLE X
 DISTRIBUTION OF FATHERS AND MOTHERS
 IN MAJOR OCCUPATIONAL CLASSES
 CALCULATED BY PERCENTAGES

<u>Fathers</u>	Total	Interested		Not Interested	
		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Occupational Class					
Professional and semiprofessional Managers, officials, etc.	34	5	14.7	29	85.3
Clerical	42	6	14.2	36	85.7
Sales Workers	15	2	13.3	13	86.7
Skilled	26	1	3.8	25	96.1
Semiskilled	67	9	13.4	58	86.5
Unskilled	28	2	7.1	26	92.9
Service Workers	11	3	27.2	8	72.7
	26	3	11.5	23	88.5
<u>Mothers</u>					
Professional and semiprofessional Managers, officials, etc.	15	2	13.3	13	86.6
Clerical Workers	6	0	0.0	6	100.
Sales Workers	34	4	11.7	30	88.2
Skilled	9	1	11.1	8	88.9
Semiskilled	4	1	25.0	3	75.0
Unskilled	10	0	0.0	10	100.
Service Workers	14	3	21.4	11	78.6
	7	0	0.0	7	100.
Don't know	5	2	40.0	3	60.0

TABLE XI

LENGTH OF TIME MOTHERS HAVE WORKED OUTSIDE THE HOME

Length of Time	Working Mothers				
	Total Number	of Interested Students		of Uninterested Students	
		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Less than 1 year	12	2	16.6	10	83.3
1 - 5 years	32	4	12.5	28	87.5
6 - 10 years	29	4	13.8	25	86.2
11 - 15 years	14	0	0.0	14	100.0
* 16 - 20 years	4	0	...	4	...
* Over 20 years	4	0	...	4	...
Don't know	6	3	50.0	3	50.0
Total	101	13		88	

* Percentages computed for 5 or more cases.

those interested have worked away from home for over ten years, with the highest percentage (16.6) for those who have worked less than a year (Table XI, page 29), whereas those of the uninterested range from several months to over twenty years, covering the entire life-time of the girls responding. A further study should be made to expose the reasons these mothers have for working and to discover what provisions are made for the care of the home and family needs; to inquire into the effects of unsupervised and unquestioned hours of social life in or outside the home indulged in by youth while mother tries to do in the evening or at night what she could not do while working away from home during the day; to obtain information on the effects of the situation on a high school girl who is left in charge of a house, finding it difficult to keep up with her school work and do mother's work at the same time. Do her thoughts turn to an early marriage, not only to ease her own load, but also to lessen her mother's financial burden of supporting her?

Part-Time Work of Students

Table XIII (page 31) shows the reasons for part time work on the part of students, as these rated in importance by three choices of those concerned. In calculating the cumulative points, a numerical value of 3 points was assigned to a first choice, two points to a second choice, and one to a third choice.

The reasons, as shown by the Table, correlate with the economic level of the families and their estimated income, the outstanding reason among the interested being "I need the money," although this obviously excluded paying for schooling and clothes, since these were listed as separate reasons. "I pay for my own schooling and clothes" does not necessarily imply financial need at

TABLE XII

REASONS FOR PART-TIME WORK OF STUDENTS

Reasons of Interested Students	Choice			Total Times Cited	Cumulative Index of Reasons
	1	2	3		
I need the money	4	0	0	4	12
I pay for my own schooling and clothes	2	1	2	5	10
The Family needs the little help I can give	1	3	0	4	9
I want the experience	3	0	0	3	9
I want extra spending money	0	1	1	2	3
I can get advanced sooner when I begin working full-time	0	0	0	0	0
I have time on my hands	0	0	0	0	0
Reasons of Uninterested Students					
I pay for my own schooling and clothes	16	17	4	37	86
I want the experience	17	6	11	34	74
The family needs the little help I can give	18	8	1	27	71
I want extra spending money	6	7	15	28	47
I need the money	11	6	1	18	46
I can get advanced sooner when I begin working full-time	1	7	0	8	17
I have time on my hands	2	2	0	4	10

home, for parents may use this as a means of teaching young people responsibility, habits of thrift, and an understanding of the cost of things; hence, this reason, although ranking first for the uninterested, does not inevitably imply that they work because they must in order to pay for school necessities, especially in view of the fact that the second reason "I want the experience," and "I need the money" rank lower than "I want extra spending money."

For the interested, all the reasons that relate to financial needs rank first; then the four which are not linked with money except for "extra spending," with the last two carrying not a single citation. There is an obvious relationship between being interested in the Religious Life and not being concerned about promotion in a job, if a girl thinks in terms of entering soon. The job itself, then, is not important, but only as a means of satisfying an immediate need. The interest in getting experience can be accounted for by the value it has in association with people and because it can be a means of developing qualities such as responsibility and self-reliance which are an asset in every state of life.

The relatively large number among the uninterested who are working for the experience and for extra spending money reflects a higher economic level, indicating at the same time, the desire for building the future on the present, obtaining promotions or better jobs because of experience.

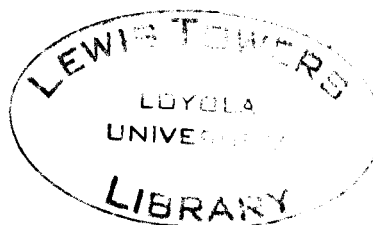
Relatives in the Religious Life

The importance of this factor can be measured more accurately when considered in conjunction with the value attached to it as an influence by the interested who have relatives in Religion. Table XIII in Chapter III of this

thesis reveals that although 15 of the 33 interested have relatives who are Religious, only 4 cited this as an influence, and only two of these 4 gave it first place. This, together with the fact that 116 out of the 238 uninterested (almost 50 per cent), also have relatives in the Religious state, seem to demonstrate that this influence is perhaps over-rated in its vocation-fostering value.

Additional observations on this factor can be found in Chapter III, in connection with the discussion of the influences.

A more detailed inquiry into each of the factors considered in this chapter would make possible a more accurate and complete analysis of their relationship to interest in the Religious Life.



CHAPTER III

INFLUENCES CONTRIBUTING TO OR DEFRACTING FROM INTEREST IN THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

Preliminary Remarks

Before undertaking a consideration of the influences which tend to arouse or hinder interest in the Religious Life, it is imperative, in order to insure proper perspective, to emphasize the fact that marriage, the foremost competitor of the convent novitiate, is also a vocation; nor can it be doubted that the number destined for the married state outnumbers those who are called to be Religious. The purpose of this part of the study is to discover what influences may attract a girl who has a vocation to the Religious Life, to follow it, and which ones may induce her to follow some other vocation. If through a lack of proper influences she follows the natural inclination to marry, in spite of her call to another state, the error is fatally tragic, for it cannot be corrected except in very rare cases. On the other hand, the girl who enters a convent although she is not sure of a vocation to that life, has a period of no less than four and a half years (more in most Congregations) during which time the mistake upon discovery can be rectified without loss. Consequently, it could be expected that the number of undecided, willing to test their vocations, would be much larger.

Although it has not been empirically proved, theological reflection on what we know of the Providence of God leads us to believe that God will insure a sufficient number of vocations to the priestly and religious life to take care of the needs of souls. But those who are called must respond to the vocation. Therefore, when there is a dearth of priests and religious, the fault cannot be with God, but with the men and women who, for a variety of reasons, are not answering the call.¹

The remainder of this chapter presents the results of an inquiry into some of the factors which prompt and some of the factors which inhibit a generous response to the divine call.

Influences Contributing to Interest

An attempt was made to discover, by means of a questionnaire, what motives prompt a girl's statement when she says, "I'd like to be a Sister." To disclose the degree of importance she attaches to her motives, if she had several, she was instructed to number five of the listed ones, in order of importance, if her own were among them. If they were not, she was to add them. In assigning values for the "Cumulative Index of Influences" (Table XIII, page 36), five points were given for a first choice, four for a second, three for a third, two for a fourth, and one for a fifth.

Of the 32 girls that answered this part of the inquiry, 30 cited the "Desire to serve God more perfectly" as one of their reasons, 18 of whom (54.5 per cent) gave it first place. The choice ranking second in frequency was "An

¹ The writer gratefully acknowledges her indebtedness to the Rev. John A. Hardon, S.J., A.M., S.T.D., of the West Baden College School of Theology for advice on the theology and wording of the matter discussed in the first two paragraphs of Chapter III.

TABLE XIII

INFLUENCES CONTRIBUTING TO INTEREST IN THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

Influences	Choice					Total Times Cited	Cumulative Index of Influences
	1	2	3	4	5		
Desire to serve God more perfectly	18	7	1	3	1	30	128
An attraction that I can't explain	7	8	2	1	1	19	76
Present-day need for nuns	1	1	7	4	2	15	40
Nuns in general	1	2	3	1	1	8	25
Sister I like in high school	1	2	0	5	2	10	25
Vocation talk by a nun	0	3	2	0	1	6	19
Literature about a Religious Order	0	2	1	3	2	8	19
Relative in the Religious Life	2	0	1	0	1	4	14
Book or pamphlet read	0	0	4	1	0	5	14
A priest	1	1	1	0	1	4	13
Friend in the Religious Life	0	1	1	1	2	5	11
Home and family	0	0	2	1	1	4	9
Friend who plans to be a nun	0	2	0	0	0	2	8
Convent is safest place in present up-set world	0	0	2	1	0	3	8
Sister I like in grade school	1	0	0	1	0	2	7
Sermon	0	1	0	0	1	2	5
Disappointment in love	0	0	1	0	0	1	3
Mother	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
Father	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
I like the clothes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
I like the dignity	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
To get an education I can't afford	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

attraction I can't explain," and the third, "The present-day need for nuns." The selection of these three as leading reasons indicates the idealism and altruism of the adolescent girl who longs to rise above the commonplace, to give of herself, yet can neither clearly understand nor express the meaning of these yearnings. Her admission of their existence can be used to advantage in vocational guidance work, with both the individual and the group. It is contrary to the belief held by some that modern girls are devoid of the spirit of self-sacrifice, but shrouded in a comfort-mentality.

The two choices next in order of number of citations indicate the influence of the nuns themselves over the high school girls: "Sister I like in high school" and "Nuns in general." It should be observed, too, that whereas the high school teachers rate 25 cumulative points, having scored 10 citations, those from the grade school are cited only twice, with merely 7 cumulative points, establishing a ratio of more than three to one in favor of the high school teachers' influence over that of elementary school nuns in this respect, notwithstanding the finding of Brother Flacidus that "vocation thinking begins in the elementary grades."² One factor may help to explain this: Some of the girls who are interested because they like some grade school nun, enter the convent as aspirants after finishing the eighth grade.

It is interesting to note that the two most common types of vocation propaganda, talks by nuns and literature about Religious Orders, rank equally in cumulative points, although the literature has two more citations. A talk with the attracting-power of a human personality linked to it, would be expected to

²Chapter I of this thesis, p. 6.

be more effective than printed matter and inanimate pictures. This greater response to the literature may be due to the fact that literature is more available, can be studied more thoroughly and referred to more frequently, keeping impressions and desires alive.

Further, the survey shows that a relative in the Religious Life has no more influence in fostering interest in her chosen state than a book or pamphlet; in fact, the written material once again has more citations than the personality. This is contrary to the opinion of those who hold that a Religious in a family is a strong influence for additional vocations among the relatives. Perhaps the explanation for more vocations among relatives after one member takes the veil may lie not so much in the personal influence of the Religious over her family, immediate or remote, as in the power of her daily prayers and sacrifices which may obtain for those among them who have vocations, the strength to follow them; or perhaps the same influences that prompted the Religious to become a nun are acting on other members of the family.

The most disconcerting revelation of this limited survey, however, is the fact that only 4 cited "Home and family" as an influence, and no one gave it either first or second place; "Mother" received one citation, and "Father," none. "A friend in the Religious Life" and "A priest" received more cumulative points than "the nurseries of all vocations."³ There may be two possible ways of accounting for this. It may be that "Home and family" influence was interpreted by the subjects of the questionnaire as meaning pressure of some sort

³The New World (Chicago), July 4, 1958, pt. 1, p. 1.

on the part of the family in an attempt to influence them to become nuns. Or, and this seems more likely, the students probably are not aware of the impact of the family on their personalities. Meeting the members daily under intimate but ordinary circumstances may veil the actual power of this basic social unit for building attitudes, directing desires, and developing, modifying, or stifling inclinations.

Although the number of girls who selected "Convent is safest place in present up-set world" and "Disappointment in love" as reasons for turning their thoughts to Religious Life is too small to have any significance, it does reveal that the idea of convents being places of refuge for the insecure and the broken-hearted is not yet extinct. It is true that in a few rare cases, these were the original motives for interest on the part of Religious who later became canonized Saints; yet it is more likely that such conceptions are kept alive by fiction, which finds this quite an intriguing theme, rather than by a knowledge of the lives of the Saints.

The last three items listed as influences were incorporated into the questionnaire because the writer had heard them attributed to applicants, even in public addresses, as probable motives for interest in the Religious Life.

Influences Detracting from Interest in the Religious Life

In turning to the influences that compete for interest with the Religious Life, it has been found that the vocation to marry and bring up a family heads the list of choices (Table XIV, page 41) of the overwhelming majority of "Uninterested" girls. This is a very healthy response, for it is the most valid reason for not wanting to be a nun, another vocation in life.

However, a number of the other choices indicate incorrect ideas about both the Religious and the married state. Chief among these is "Don't think I'm good enough." It is built on the false notion that lay people in general are expected to be inferior in virtue to Religious; that the higher state automatically guarantees higher sanctity and requires it already at the time of admission; that to get married and rear a family mediocre "goodness", which could not pass the convent-entrance test, is sufficient. This observation becomes even more alarming when coupled with the fact that this reason for lack of interest ranks so high, immediately after the marriage-family reason, in cumulative points. Obviously it is the opinion of this group that genuine sanctity is reserved for convents and not required for those who marry or remain single in the world.

Other distorted views are revealed by the number of citations made for "The life is too hard," "Nuns can't go out enough," "Nuns rise too early," "Nuns pray too much." It becomes evident from these choices that girls do not seriously ponder the life of conscientious fathers and mothers who seriously shoulder the hardships of the married life; who cannot go out freely as teenagers can; who, even when out for an evening, are not free from concern about the charges they brought along or left behind; who must rise early frequently, if not daily; who often feel the need for praying for grace to bear their burdens and their joys in a manner that sanctifies. It can be easily deduced that the respondents do not realize that convents have no monopoly on these phases of daily living, so unattractive to nature, and they will not escape them by avoiding the Religious Life.

Also, these same reasons ("The life is too hard," "Nuns can't go out e-

TABLE XIV

INFLUENCES CONTRIBUTING TO A LACK OF INTEREST IN THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

Influences	Choice					Total Times Cited	Cumulative Index of Influences
	1	2	3	4	5		
Attraction for marriage	116	40	7	8	1	172	778
Desire to bring up a family	42	110	16	5	2	175	710
Don't think I'm good enough	7	10	21	4	4	46	150
Attachment to "good times"	3	3	9	17	10	52	98
The life is too hard	3	8	8	9	7	35	96
Fear of failure in the vocation	3	1	13	4	10	31	76
Attachment to a boy friend	2	3	10	4	6	25	66
Don't think I'm smart enough	1	5	7	6	4	23	62
Attraction for possessing money	0	1	11	6	2	20	51
Dislike for living by schedule	0	6	6	3	2	17	50
Nuns can't go out enough	1	2	6	3	2	14	39
Dislike for taking orders	3	1	2	3	1	10	32
Don't get along with nuns	1	2	3	3	1	10	29
Don't like the clothes	1	1	3	1	4	10	24
Parental opposition	2	1	2	1	1	7	23
Nuns rise too early	1	0	3	3	1	8	21
Disillusionment by incident with a nun	0	1	3	2	1	7	18
Couldn't give up smoking	1	1	1	2	0	5	16
Dependent parent	1	0	3	0	0	4	14
Nuns don't seem to be as happy as married people	0	1	1	2	3	7	14
Couldn't give up some other habit	1	0	2	1	0	4	13
Nuns pray too much	1	0	0	3	1	5	12
Poor health	1	0	1	0	0	2	8
Life of a nun is too easy	0	1	0	0	0	1	4
Dependent younger children	0	0	0	1	1	2	3
Lack of money necessary for entering	0	0	0	1	1	2	3

nough," "Nuns rise too early," "Nuns pray too much") with the addition of "Attachment to good times" (which ranks fourth from the top of the list of choices) and "Attraction for possessing money" (which ranks ninth), point unmistakably to the individualistic philosophy with which young people even in Catholic schools are permeated, avoiding a vocation because they fear it will interfere with their personal comforts and pleasures. It would be worthwhile to inquire further into their understanding of what this implies. Do they presume that in the married state or in the single state in the world people are free to indulge as they are inclined, without being limited by obligations to themselves and to society, which often require restraint and sacrifice?

"Fear of failure in the vocation" points up the factor of social control, gossip about a returning postulant or aspirant being feared more than the tragedy of missing a vocation because of neglecting the opportunity to test it.

If "Don't think I'm good enough" is linked with "Don't think I'm smart enough," ranking eighth in order of importance, it can be seen that the simple requirements for the Religious Life are not clear in the girls' minds, for in reality, the absence of a morally bad habit makes them "good enough" and an average mentality, "smart enough." They are obviously ignorant of the manner in which these are verified before a postulant is accepted: the former through a letter of recommendation from the Pastor, the latter by means of a transcript of credits from the last school attended, sometimes including character qualities as listed in school records. Similar or equivalent requirements are often requested by employment agencies before admission of applicants to positions demanding responsibility and trustworthiness.

The admission by 17 citations that girls are influenced against being nuns either because they "Don't get along with nuns" or because they have been disillusioned "by an incident with a nun" is a further clue to the power over vocation building or destroying that lies with the high school teaching nuns, especially when considered in relation to the number of girls who are favorably influenced because they like some teaching Sister in high school (Table XIII, p. 36).

Why seven of the girls who were questioned think "Nuns don't seem as happy as married people" remains to be explored by some future study. It would be enlightening to learn 1) what students consider characteristics of happiness which they find in married people and which are absent in Religious; 2) whether this general evaluation of Religious is a superficial impression created by some exceptional incident, or an opinion grounded on observation of repeated external manifestations of an attitude; 3) the number of Religious in whom this "lack of happiness" has been consistently observed. It would be even more enlightening if this were accompanied by a companion-study on "Married people don't seem to be as happy as nuns."

This limited glimpse into the mind of the high school girl provides clues for understanding which and how external influences may cause her to react, which information may serve as a guide for self-study and as a basis for the formation of vocational guidance programs, for those who are able to control these influences. Specific recommendations on these points, as also on building up true and realistic conceptions connected with the material under consideration, will be given in the final chapter of this thesis.

CHAPTER IV

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GIRLS IN COEDUCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOLS AND THOSE IN GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOLS

How does interest in the Religious Life among girls in Coeducational high schools compare with that of girls in Girls' high schools in Chicago? The percentage of those interested, as revealed by the questionnaire, is about the same, differing only by .4 per cent in favor of Girls' schools, as can be seen from Table II, page 14. However, the difference in the number of undecided is worth noting (3.6 per cent). It would seem to indicate that those who think they might have a vocation to be a nun, but hesitate for some reason, prefer to give themselves time and opportunity to decide without taking the risk of swinging the balance against such a step by continual mingling with the opposite sex at this crucial period in their lives when nature, by the steady growth of attraction, gives evidence of physical and emotional development. A girl who is definitely interested, but is compelled to delay for a period for some reason, may not think she is endangering her vocation by attending a Coeducational high school, especially if circumstances make it necessary or more convenient for her to do so.

The higher rate of "Parental opposition" for Coeds (Tables XVII and XVIII, pages 49 and 50) than for Girls' (18 points for Coeds, 5 for Girls') is noteworthy.

The survey also reveals that those who attend Coeducational high schools live nearer to school than those who enroll in Girls' high schools. The Coeds range from a two-minute walk to a 45-minute bus ride for traveling to and from school; those in Girls' high schools, from a five-minute walk to a 65-minute bus ride. Of the 89 Coeds sampled, thirty-six live near enough to walk (40.4 per cent); of the 182 from Girls' high schools, thirty-eight live within walking distance (20.8 per cent).

Since all three of the Coeducational high schools included in the study are parochial, it can be concluded that the convenience of attending a school near home and the savings in time and cost of transportation may frequently be the reasons for choosing to register there. Besides, preference is given to parishioners in these times of over-crowded classrooms. Pastors are known to make exceptions in registrations for members of the parish who have been either too late in applying for admission to other Catholic high schools, or who have been rejected for some reason. This may, to some extent, account for the number of "interested" who find themselves in Coeducational high schools.

The fact that five out of the nine sampled from among the Coeducational interested, live near enough to walk home from school may indicate, too, that the additional association with Sisters after school hours and/or on free days, which can be taken advantage of more conveniently if so desired by those who live nearer, may be a factor in vocational interest. However, this point remains to be investigated by some future study.

In Tables XV, XVI, XVII, and XVIII, with which the remainder of this chapter will be concerned, the "Cumulative Index of Influences" was computed

TABLE XV

INFLUENCES CONTRIBUTING TO INTEREST IN THE RELIGIOUS LIFE
ON THE PART OF GIRLS IN GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOLS*

Influences	Choice					Total Times Cited	Cumulative Index of Influences
	1	2	3	4	5		
Desire to serve God more perfectly	14	6	1	2	0	23	101
An attraction I can't explain	3	7	1	1	1	13	49
Present day need for nuns	1	0	5	3	2	11	28
Sister I like in high school	1	2	0	4	2	9	23
Nuns in general	1	1	1	1	1	5	15
Vocation talk by a nun	0	2	2	0	1	5	15
Literature about a Religious Order	0	1	1	3	1	6	14
A priest	1	1	1	0	0	3	12
Something I read	0	0	3	0	0	3	9
Relative in the Religious Life	1	0	1	0	1	3	9
Home and Family Influence	0	0	2	1	1	4	8
Special Sister I liked in the grade school	1	0	0	1	0	2	7
Friend in the Religious Life	0	0	1	1	1	3	6
A sermon I heard	0	1	0	0	1	2	5
Friend who plans to be a nun	0	1	0	0	0	1	4
I am disappointed in love	0	0	1	0	0	1	3
The convent is the safest place at present	0	0	1	0	0	1	3
Mother	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
Father	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
I like the clothes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
I like the dignity	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
To get an education I can't afford	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

* Total number of girls in sample: 24.

TABLE XVI

INFLUENCES CONTRIBUTING TO INTEREST IN THE RELIGIOUS LIFE
ON THE PART OF GIRLS IN COEDUCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOLS*

Influences	Choice					Total Times Cited	Cumulative Index of Influences
	1	2	3	4	5		
An attraction I can't explain	4	1	1	0	0	6	27
Desire to serve God more perfectly	4	1	0	1	1	7	27
Present day need for nuns	0	1	2	1	0	4	12
Nuns in general	0	1	2	0	0	3	10
Relative in the Religious Life	1	0	0	0	0	1	5
Something I read	0	0	1	1	0	2	5
Literature about a Religious Order	0	1	0	0	1	2	5
Convent is safest place at present	0	0	1	1	0	2	5
A friend who plans to be a nun	0	1	0	0	0	1	4
Vocation talk by a nun	0	1	0	0	0	1	4
Sister I like in high school	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
A priest	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
Home and family influence	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mother	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Father	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sister I liked in grade school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
A sermon I heard	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
I like the clothes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
I like the dignity	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
I am disappointed in live	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
To get an education I can't afford	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

* Total number of girls in sample: 9.

by assigning 5 points to a first choice, 4 to a second, 3 to a third, 2 to a fourth, and 1 to a fifth. It should be noted, too, that some of the girls whose questionnaires were drawn in the regular-interval sample did not answer this part of the survey; others indicated less than 5 reasons; still others marked a second choice without indicating a first one. Hence the total in each column is not equivalent to the total number in the sample.

It is evident from Tables IV and XVI, pages 46 and 47, that the three same influences arousing interest hold the lead in both groups, those in Coeducational and those in Girls' high schools. On the other hand, the attraction for teachers, whether in the high school or in the grade school, stands higher among the students in Girls' high schools. Neither is the home and parent influence nor a sermon cited even once among the Coeds. Nevertheless, they are not living in an unrealistic, imaginary world, for they show their awareness of its present uncertainty by their interest in the security a convent possibly might offer.

Likewise, the same influences contributing to a lack of interest in the Religious Life have scored among the five highest with both groups (Tables XVII and XVIII, pages 49 and 50), in slightly different positions, again indicating the similarity among the girls of the two types of schools. However, here once more in this study's respondents, it can be seen that the attitude of the girls toward the nuns is more favorable in Girls' high schools than in the Co-educational. "Don't get along with nuns" stands ninth in order of importance for the Coeds and sixteenth for the Girls'; "Disillusionment by an incident with a nun" takes eleventh place with the Coeds and drops to the twentieth with the Girls'. Perhaps it is the same attitude that causes Coeds more than

TABLE XVII

INFLUENCES CONTRIBUTING TO A LACK OF INTEREST IN THE RELIGIOUS LIFE
ON THE PART OF GIRLS IN GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOLS*

	Choice					Total Times Cited	Cumulative Index of Influences
	1	2	3	4	5		
Attraction for marriage	83	21	3	2	1	110	513
Desire for bringing up a family	21	79	9	4	0	113	456
Attachment to good times	2	3	6	11	4	26	66
Don't think I'm good enough	2	4	10	3	2	21	64
The life is too hard	2	2	6	3	5	18	47
Attachment to a boy friend	2	1	7	3	4	17	45
Fear of failure in the vocation	1	1	8	3	6	19	45
Attraction for possessing money	0	0	8	5	0	13	34
Dislike for living by schedule	0	4	4	2	1	11	33
Don't think I'm smart enough	0	2	4	4	2	12	30
Nuns can't go out enough	0	2	2	2	1	7	19
Dislike for taking orders	2	0	1	2	1	6	18
Couldn't give up smoking	1	1	1	1	0	4	14
Don't like the clothes	0	1	0	1	4	6	10
Nuns rise too early	0	0	2	1	1	4	9
I don't get along with nuns	0	1	0	2	0	3	8
Dependent parent	1	0	1	0	0	2	8
Poor health	1	0	0	0	0	1	5
Nuns don't seem to be as happy as married people	0	0	1	1	0	2	5
Parental opposition	1	0	0	0	0	1	5
Nuns pray too much	0	0	0	2	1	3	5
Couldn't give up some other habit	0	0	1	0	0	1	3
Dependent younger children	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
Unfavorable information about Religious life acquired from reading	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unfavorable things heard about nuns	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Incident with a nun	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lack of necessary money	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Life of a nun is too easy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

* Total number in sample: 158

TABLE XVIII

INFLUENCES CONTRIBUTING TO A LACK OF INTEREST IN THE RELIGIOUS LIFE
ON THE PART OF GIRLS IN COEDUCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOLS*

Influence	Choice					Total Times Cited	Cumulative Index of Influences
	1	2	3	4	5		
Desire to bring up a family	21	31	7	1	2	62	254
Attraction for marriage	33	19	4	6	0	62	165
Don't think I'm good enough	5	6	11	1	2	23	86
The life is too hard	1	6	2	6	2	17	49
Attachment to good times	1	0	3	6	6	16	32
Don't think I'm smart enough	1	3	3	2	2	11	32
Fear of failure in the vocation	2	0	5	1	4	12	31
Attachment to a boy friend	0	2	3	1	2	8	21
Don't get along with nuns	1	1	3	1	1	7	21
Nuns can't go out enough	1	0	4	1	1	7	20
Incident with a nun	0	1	3	2	1	7	18
Parental opposition	1	1	2	1	1	6	18
Dislike for living by schedule	0	2	2	1	1	6	17
Attraction for possessing money	0	1	3	1	2	7	17
Don't like the clothes	1	0	3	0	0	4	14
Dislike for taking orders	1	1	1	1	0	4	14
Nuns rise too early	1	0	1	2	0	4	12
Couldn't give up some other habit	1	0	1	1	0	3	10
Nuns don't seem to be as happy as married people	0	1	0	1	3	5	9
Nuns pray too much	1	0	0	1	0	2	7
Dependent parent	0	0	2	0	0	2	6
The life of a nun is too easy	0	1	0	0	0	1	4
Poor health	0	0	1	0	0	1	3
Lack of money necessary for entering	0	0	0	1	1	2	3
Dependent younger children	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Couldn't give up smoking	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
Unfavorable information about Religious Life acquired from reading	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
Unfavorable things heard about nuns	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

* Total number of girls in sample: 80.

students from Girls' high schools to think that "Nuns don't seem to be as happy as married people."

It is noteworthy that although 80, the number of the uninterested girls from Coeducational high schools used in the sample, is only one less than half of 158, the number in the sample of uninterested girls from Girls' high schools, the number of cumulative points for "I don't think I'm good enough" (86 for Coeds; 64 for Girls') and "I don't think I'm smart enough" (32 for Coeds; 30 for Girls') is in both cases higher for Coeds.

Several other Coed choices for not being interested which exceed in number of points those of the students from Girls' high schools, show they have less understanding of the real meaning of a nun's life, and are more concerned with external comforts, for example: "Can't go out enough," "Don't like the clothes," "Rise too early," "Pray too much."

On the other hand, they seem to have a less emotional and a more realistic outlook in regard to Matrimony; for, whereas those from the Girls' high schools so overwhelmingly chose "Attraction for marriage" as their leading reason, the Coeds made "Desire to bring up a family" their top choice. The two are, of course, very closely related, but the family is the purpose that goes beyond the attraction so glamorized on the screen and at times springing from selfish motives.

It is interesting to note, too, that "Attachment to boy friend" is slightly lower in proportion among the Coeds in this study (45 points for Girls'; 21 for Coeds). This, again, might point to a Coed's greater independence.

From these observations it might be concluded (mindful of the limited sample) that the girl in a Coeducational high school can be expected to be

more independent, decided, determined, and realistic, and less inclined to seek guidance and take advice from her teachers than her neighbor in a Girls' high school, although their ideals are basically the same. Insofar as these characteristics can be made to serve the cause of interest in the Religious Life, vocations will increase in Coeducational high schools.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND PRACTICAL CONCLUSIONS

The findings presented at the beginning of Chapter II reveal that almost 20 per cent of the freshmen surveyed, and a little over 10 per cent of each of the other three divisions, were willing to express a tentative interest in the Religious Life. This information was obtained by means of a questionnaire administered in 12 Catholic High Schools in Chicago, six Girls' and six Coeducational.

The remainder of the chapter presents possible related factors. These conclusions are based on data from a regular-interval sample from six of the above-mentioned high schools, three Girls' and three Coeducational. The following is a summary of the conclusions which can be drawn from the numerically and regionally limited sample including 271 questionnaires:

1. Catholic high school education appears to be a factor in vocation fostering, as none of the "interested" in the sample spent any part of their high school years in a public school.
2. More students with parents of Irish nationality background expressed interest than of any other nationality (not considering those groups which had less than 5 members among the respondents), as computed by percentages on the total number from the nationality group included in the questionnaires under study, i.e., 22.1 per cent.

3. A higher percentage of girls from medium sized families (those with five, six, and seven children) were found to be vocation-minded than from either the small (one to four children) or larger families.
4. Most of those admitting interest belong to the upper division of the lower economic class, this conclusion being based on 1) the weekly family income (\$101-\$200) and 2) occupation of parents (highest percentage of both, fathers and mothers, being unskilled laborers, consideration of "skilled" category being excluded because of the small number in the total).
5. Percentagewise, the uninterested have the highest rate for the income group with between \$200-\$300 per week for the family, as also for the sales workers and semiskilled occupational class for fathers, and the clerical, sales workers, and semiskilled for mothers (excluding the consideration of those with a small number in total category).
6. Mixed marriages were found in this study to be twice as detrimental to vocational thinking as broken homes.
7. Working mothers militate against vocations in a home, all of the working mothers of interested students having worked less than ten years, and those of the uninterested including even such that have worked over twenty years.
8. Most interested students who work do so because they need the money; the uninterested rank higher in working for experience.
9. Relatives in the Religious Life do not appear to be an important factor in fostering vocations, since almost half of the uninterested also have relatives in a Religious Order; besides, of the 15 in-

terested who have one or more, only 2 cited this as the most important influence contributing to interest.

In evaluating the influences that contribute to interest in the Religious life, it was found in this limited sample that:

1. The modern girl is still idealistic, naming as her first reason for interest "Desire to serve God more perfectly."
2. High school teachers rank high as an influence for or against vocations.
3. Vocation literature is slightly more effective than vocational talks.
4. Neither the home nor a relative in the Religious Life ranks high as a vocational influence.

A study of the influences detracting from interest in the Religious Life from the same limited sample reveal that:

1. The attraction for marriage is the most important reason for lack of interest in the Religious Life.
2. Students have erroneous ideas about the requirements for a religious vocation and about the essential purposes of and differences between the religious and married states.
3. Individualism strongly underlies a number of influences militating against religious vocations.
4. High school nuns are among the more important influences.

In considering the differences between girls in Coeducational and those in Girls' high schools in regard to vocational thinking, it was concluded from the data that:

1. There are more undecided girls in the Girls' than in the Coeducational high schools.

2. Coeds have more opportunity for out-of-school contacts with the nuns because many of them live nearer school.
3. Nuns have more influence in Girls' than in Coeducational schools.
4. It appears that Coeds are less attached to boy friends than girls in Girls' schools because this ranks sixth in the Girls' schools as a reason for lack of interest in the Religious Life, and eighth among the Coeds.
5. That they are more decided is indicated by the fact that slightly over 4 per cent expressed themselves as undecided in regard to interest in the Religious Life, as against almost 8 per cent of the girls from Girls' high schools.
6. That Coeds are inclined to be independent is concluded from their lack of attraction for teachers, and the total absence of or very slight influence exerted by such factors as a priest, a sermon, and home and family.
7. That Coeds are realistic seems to be indicated by their choosing as a major influence against entering a convent "I want to bring up a family of my own" rather than "I feel an attraction for marriage," which scored highest with the respondents from Girls' schools.

Predictions and Practical Conclusions

1. Vocations to the Catholic Sisterhoods are likely to increase with the increased enrollment of Catholic girls in Catholic high schools.¹ The importance

¹
The Confraternity of Christine Doctrine has estimated that in 1957-1958 only 25 percent of America's Catholic youth were attending Catholic High Schools, quoted by Mrs. Joseph V. Ryan in "Parents and the High School Student," The Christian Family, III (January 1958), 25.

of a Catholic high school education and the influence of high school nuns, as disclosed by this study, indicate that this is one point for a successful attack on the problem of vocational shortages.

2. Educational programs in high schools and colleges should include in their marriage courses an emphasis on:

- 1) Trust in Divine Providence in accepting more than three or four children into their families, and an emphasis on the value of girls from a small family, going to the convent.
- 2) On the advantages of the unity of understanding and attitudes that can be present only between husband and wife of the same Faith—the unifying force that results in similarity of expectations and values, essential to happiness in marriage.
- 3) The importance of a mother's full-time presence in a home. (In this connection, the educational program should include information on widows' pensions and aid to dependent children. It is possible that some mothers work because of economic needs which could be satisfied by these government aid programs.)

3. High school Religious teachers, taking advantage of their potential influence, should avoid "incidents" that alienate girls, and by their manner of life, speech, and attitudes in and outside of the classroom avoid creating the false impressions that Religious Life is too hard, too cloistered, too exacting, and too abnormal to appeal to the average American girl.

4. Good Counsel Clubs should be organized on a new basis (or new clubs formed under a different name) to include those who are interested in the Religious Life and those who are interested in marriage as a vocation, for

both groups are in need of "good counsel." This will, first of all, have the advantage of reaching the hesitant and/or timid who, out of fear of the consequences of exposing their interest in the Religious Life before the student body, never join Good Counsel Clubs as they are organized at present, and are lost to the Consecrated service of God. Secondly, relationship between the Religious and married states can be made clear, together with the essential requirements for both, their differences and similarities; the identity of their problems in many cases.

This procedure would help to eliminate in the future such reasons for not being a nun as "parental opposition," since those who follow the vocation to marry after membership in the club will have an understanding of both vocations and of the importance of following the vocation to which one is called. On the other hand, those who will eventually become Religious will appreciate the married state as a vocation from God, distinguishing between the perfect state and the perfect life, concepts very often confused. As a more immediate result, a club conducted in this way will give the members a more complete and correct understanding of the lives of the nuns who teach them, increasing further the influence they already have.²

5. Taking into account the strength of individualism as an influence hindering vocational thinking, each teacher should plan her work in her respective subject in such a way that the responsibility of every Catholic, lay and Religious, as a member of the Mystical Body will be kept constantly before the minds of the students. The Mystical Body is the answer to individualism, as also to all the selfishness built on it, such as attachment to "good times."

²Suggestions for conducting meetings are given in Appendix B of this thesis.

Wherever possible, directly or indirectly, the Catholic philosophy about the purpose and duration of life should be presented realistically, as pertaining to each individual in every aspect of his life at all times. One who tries to avoid anything that is unpleasant, like rising early, and is attached to money and "good times", has either lost or never learned the Catholic concept of life as related to eternity. It is probable that our educational system is not entirely guiltless here. A religion that is meaningful and alive inevitably changes the person's perspective in this respect. With an other-worldly outlook, courage will come to follow the religious call if it is present. It is the work of the teacher to help the student develop that point of view.

Recommendations for Further Research

Because research in this field is in its infancy, there are vast possibilities for studies which could be fruitful in practical conclusions. The following are some that have suggested themselves during the present study:

1. A follow-up study to find out how many of the girls who indicated tentative interest in the Religious Life actually became nuns, and why the others lost interest.
2. A more detailed exploration of each of the factors which are considered in a general way in this study in regard to its effects on vocational thinking:
 - 1) Home influences, with details mentioned in this connection in Chapter I, page 11.
 - 2) Catholic education in regard to the relative importance of each period: elementary, secondary, and college.

- 3) "Americanization" and its effects, as suggested in Chapter II, page 19.
 - 4) Reasons why parents oppose their children's vocations.
 - 5) The difference in the reasons for interest on the part of girls from broken homes and those who have both parents living at home.
 - 6) How family attitudes are influenced by father's and mother's occupation, especially in regard to vocational thinking.
 - 7) Relationships between the family income and interest or lack of interest.
 - 8) Reasons why students have no idea of their family income, and whether and how this is related to the financial demands they make on their parents and to their attitude toward property (family and personal).
 - 9) Why mothers work and what provisions are made for the care of the home and children.
 - 10) Reasons why "Nuns in general" and "Sister I like in high school" rank fourth and fifth respectively in a list of 22 reasons for being interested in the Religious Life, discovering specifically what the motivating factors are and how these can be fully capitalized on.
 - 11) Extent and limit of influence on the part of a relative in the Religious Life.
3. Why some girls think nuns are not as happy as married people, as outlined in Chapter III, page 43, in a comparative study including the converse: why some girls think married people are not as happy as nuns.

4. Why some girls think they can be "not good enough" to be nuns, but "good enough" to get married; what "good enough" means to them.
5. The types of incidents that disillusion girls about the Religious Life.
6. The various types of vocational literature, to discover which has the most effective appeal to the girl who has a religious vocation.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

Do not write your name on this paper. Kindly answer each question or check correct answer.

1. This school is: Coeducational ___ or Girls' ___
2. My age ___; Division: Freshman ___ Sophomore ___ Junior ___ Senior ___
3. Underscore the grades and the years in high school you attended a Catholic School: Kindergarten 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior
4. According to your grades in school, are you an average student ___; above average ___; fair ___?
5. How do you usually travel to school: I walk ___; come by car ___; come by bus ___; any other way? How? ___
6. How long does it usually take you to get to school? _____ minutes.
7. Nationality of father _____; alive? _____; religion of father _____
8. Nationality of mother _____; alive? _____; religion of mother _____
9. Occupation of father _____; occupation of mother _____
10. If your mother works outside of the home, about how long has she been working? _____ years; or _____ months.
11. About how much is your mother's salary: per week \$ _____; or per month \$ _____; or per year \$ _____.
12. Are your parents living together? Yes ___ No ___; Step-father ___ Step-mother ___
13. How many brothers are older than you? _____ How many are married? _____
How many are younger? _____
14. How many sisters are older than you? _____ How many are married? _____ How many are younger? _____
15. How old is the youngest child in the family? _____ years.
16. Does your family own the house you live in? _____ or rent it? _____

17. Check one of the following: Would you say your family is poor? _____
 Able to get along, but not well-off? _____
 Well-to-do, but not really rich? _____
 Rich? _____
18. About how much does your father get paid per week? \$ _____ or per month \$ _____
 or his annual income before deductions (if you have a general idea) \$ _____
19. Do you work part-time? Yes _____ No _____
20. If you do work, why? Check, or number reasons in order of importance if you have more than one: 1) I need the money _____
 2) The family needs the little help I can give _____
 3) I pay for my own schooling and clothes _____
 4) I want the experience _____
 5) I can get advanced sooner when I begin working full-time _____
 6) I have time on my hands _____
 7) I want extra spending money _____
 8) Any other reason? _____
21. Do you have any relative that is a priest? Yes ___ No ___; a Nun? Yes ___ No ___;
 a Religious Brother? Yes ___ No ___
22. If you have, how are they related to you? _____
23. Are you interested in the religious life for yourself? Yes ___ No ___ Undecided _____
24. If you are interested in the religious life, is it the life of an active nun _____
 or of a cloistered nun _____ that interests you?
25. Do you have pretty good reasons to think that some day you might be a nun?
 Yes ___ No ___ Can't say _____

If you are interested in the religious life, continue with Part I; if you are NOT interested in the religious life, go on to Part II below.

Part I

What are your chief reasons for being interested in the religious life? Please number in order of importance, if you have more than one. (Do not number more than 5.) Add your own, if you have others that are not listed.

1. Home and family influence _____
2. Mother _____ Father _____
3. Relative in the religious life _____
4. Friend in the religious life _____
5. Nuns in general _____

6. Special Sister I like in the grade school ____ ;
in the high school ____
7. A priest _____
8. A friend who plans to be a nun _____
9. Something I read (book or pamphlet) _____
10. A vocation talk given by some nun _____
11. Literature put out by some Religious Order _____
12. A sermon I heard _____
13. The need for nuns is so great at present _____
14. An attraction I can't explain _____
15. I want to serve God in a more perfect way _____
16. I like the clothes _____
17. I like the dignity _____
18. I am disappointed in Love _____
19. I want an education and can't afford it _____
20. The Convent is the safest place in the present up-set world _____
21. A vocation club got me interested _____
22. Any other reason or reasons? Name them. _____

Part II

What are your chief reasons for NOT being interested in the religious life? Please number in order of importance if you have more than one of those listed below. (Do not number more than 5.) Add your own, if you have others that are not listed.

1. My health is not good enough _____
2. I am responsible for taking care of a parent _____
of younger children _____
3. I'm afraid I couldn't give up smoking _____
some other habit _____
4. I feel an attraction for marriage _____
5. I want to bring up a family of my own _____
6. I couldn't give up my boy friend _____
7. My parents oppose it _____
8. I don't think I'm good enough _____
or smart enough _____
9. I don't get along with nuns _____
10. An incident with a nun disillusioned me _____
11. I don't like the clothes _____
12. I think the life is too hard _____
13. Nuns don't seem to be as happy as married people _____
14. They get up too early _____

15. They pray too much _____
16. They can't go out enough _____
17. I don't like to take orders from others _____
18. I don't like to do things on schedule _____
19. I like good times too much to give them up _____
20. Some one told me things about nuns _____
21. I read unfavorable things about the religious life _____
22. I like to have money of my own _____
23. I don't think I have enough money to enter _____
24. I think the life of a nun at present is too easy _____
25. I'm afraid I might have to come back, and would be ashamed _____
26. Any other reasons? What are they? _____

APPENDIX B

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR CONDUCTING GOOD COUNSEL CLUB MEETINGS

In conducting Good Counsel Club meetings, it is suggested that the first one be confined to a general discussion of both states in life; the second (followed by more, if desirable), to the Religious Life; the third (more, also, if judged beneficial), to the married state; the fourth, a rediscussion of the first meeting in the light of the new information acquired.

Succeeding meetings could include speakers representing all three states, preferably only one at a meeting. The Religious speakers invited should be such that are not exclusively concerned about vocations to the Order of which they are members, but rather representative of a state of life which provides a means of sanctification through performance of definite works of mercy. They should also be men chosen for their practical piety and experience, since this will enable them to concentrate in an interesting and enlightening manner on the realities of Religious life, not on the externals, as is often the case in talks given by novices and/or postulants. Such talks seldom serve any further purpose than the providing of a diversion for the assembly or satisfying curiosity; certainly they fail as vitalizers for vocational growth.

The married people who speak at a meeting should also be rich in experience and have a well-grounded understanding of the Sacrament of Matrimony and all it implies. They should not be slated as speakers simply because of a pleasant personality or because they are friends of the moderator.

Since literature is a good influence, it is advisable to distribute some at these meetings, if it is available.

If more serious subject matter is desired, the encyclical on Virginity can be studied to balance the study of the one on Christian Marriage which is a requirement of the Senior Religion course.

As a final comment the writer should like to emphasize that at no time should any part of a meeting be allowed to deteriorate to a discussion of questions prompted by curiosity and having no bearing on the essentials under consideration. It has occurred that club meetings have wasted their limited time on discussing totally irrevelant trivialities. Vocations neither sprout from nor are they nourished by such information, and it is doubtful that those who advocate the exposure of the minutest details of the personal life of nuns as a means of fostering vocations, could find even one case in which such information produced a vocation. The days in which very little was known about nuns were days when vocations flourished in abundance, for following the call from God to a Consecrated life does not hinge on the satisfaction of curiosity.

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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Sister Mary Theresita, S.S.J. has been read and approved by three members of the Department of Sociology.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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Date

Paul Mundy
Signature of Adviser