

CLERICAL RELIGIOUS ORDERS IN IRELAND 2006

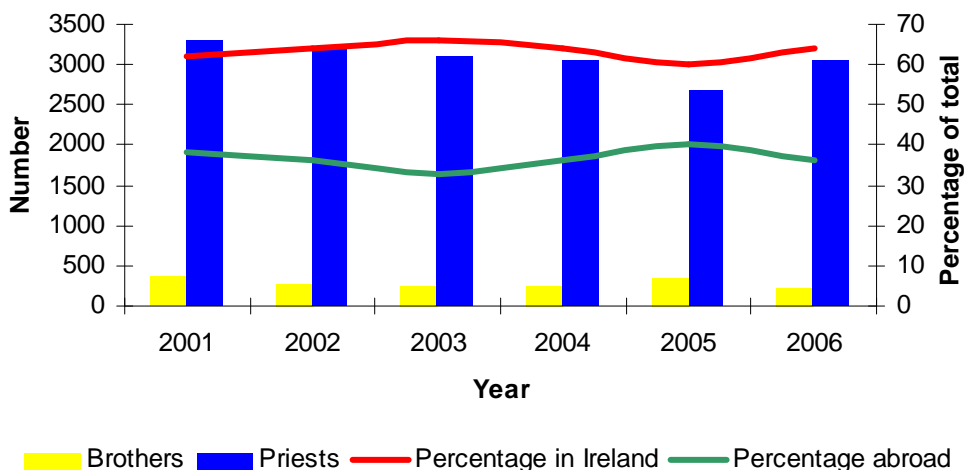
This fact sheet outlines the data reported to the Council for Research & Development (CRD) for the number of men in Clerical Religious Orders (as brothers or as priests) in Ireland for the year October 2005 to September 2006. These data are sourced from the Annual Vocations and Personnel Survey conducted by the CRD. A total of 39 questionnaires were distributed and 37 were returned to the Council.

In total, 3,278 people are enumerated in Clerical Religious Orders (CROs) in Ireland. 93.1% of this figure are priests and the remaining 6.9% are brothers. This is an increase on the 2005 figure of 3,036 although the 2004 figure was 3,298. Differences in the enumeration process may account for this difference between years. There are 3,052 priests in Clerical Religious Orders in Ireland and 226 brothers.

The graph below shows the numbers of priests and brothers in

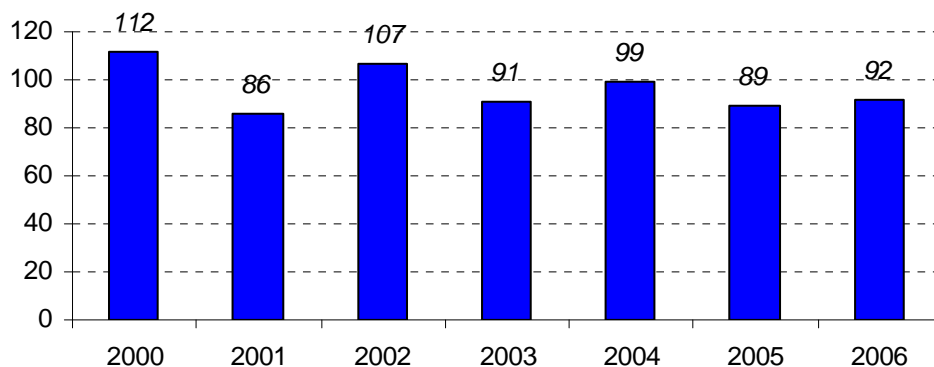
Irish CROs as well as the percentage of each in Ireland and abroad for the years 2001 to 2006. As can be seen, a clear majority of CRO personnel are based in Ireland with consistently about one third of the total figure being based abroad. These data fluctuate in a regularized pattern across time. What is evident however is the continuing falling numbers of people in Clerical Religious Orders. In 2001 there were 3,674 people in CROs and by 2006, this figure had fallen to 3,278—a 10.8% decrease in 5 years. Declining numbers of men in CROs is principally due to deaths amongst orders and not those leaving.

In the year to September 2006, there were 15 departures from the Clerical Religious Orders. This compares with 13 for 2005 and 15 for 2004. This figure is composed of 4 departing priests, 2 departing brothers, four who are finally professed and the departure of three novices. There were also two postulants who departed. **There were 93 deaths in the year to**



September 2006, composed of the deaths of 11 finally professed members of orders, 75 priests and 7 brothers. This total figure is two more than the total for 2005. A net balance for CROs would be composed of 6 of the 15 departures plus 93 deaths giving a total loss of 99 people in all. As there were 2 final professions and 5 ordinations this gives a net balance of 92 fewer people in CROs in the year to September 2006. This compares with a net balance of 89 in 2005 and 99 in 2004. The graph below shows the trend in net balances for the years 2001 to 2006.

Net loss within Clerical Religious Orders 2000 to 2006



The average age for postulants in Ireland is 39 years while the average age for novices for CROs is 32 years. Amongst those finally ordained and professed, the average ages are 47 for Order priests and 42 for Order brothers. In all there were 33 applicants to the Religious Orders in the year to September 2006. Of these, 9 were accepted to apply formally and a further 6 were postponed. These 9 men were from 5 different counties: Dublin, Meath, Roscommon, Antrim and Cork. In keeping with recent years, the highest educational attainment of these accepted applicants—where available—show a distinct trend. In 2003, 36% of accepted applicants to the CROs possessed a Leaving Certificate / GCE only and 41% had attained a university degree. By 2006, these data are polarised further: 10% now attain an upper secondary level education and 70% have attained a university degree. Although these are small numbers, there is evidence to suggest that those applying for the CROs have attained more further education than their equivalents of a few years ago. The table below outlines some of this data.

	2003	2004	2005	2006
Some years at post-primary	0	8	0	0
At least 5 Leaving Certificate subjects / 5 O Levels in GCE	18	8	21	10
Matriculation at Leaving Certificate / GCE	18	8	0	0
Third level diploma	11	23	21	20
University degree / teacher training	41	30	50	70
Postgraduate degree	6	23	7	0
Trade / apprenticeship	6	0	0	0
Total	100 (n=17)	100 (n=13)	100 (n=14)	100 (n=10)

Prepared by
Eoin O'Mahony

The Council for Research & Development

Irish Bishops' Conference

Columba Centre

Maynooth, Co Kildare

Phone: 01 5053024

Email: eoin.omahony@iecon.ie

IRISH CATHOLIC
BISHOPS' CONFERENCE
COMHDHAIL EASPAG CAITLICEACH EIREANN



August 2007