

# VOCATIONS IN IRELAND 2006

## APPLICANTS TO THE PRIESTHOOD

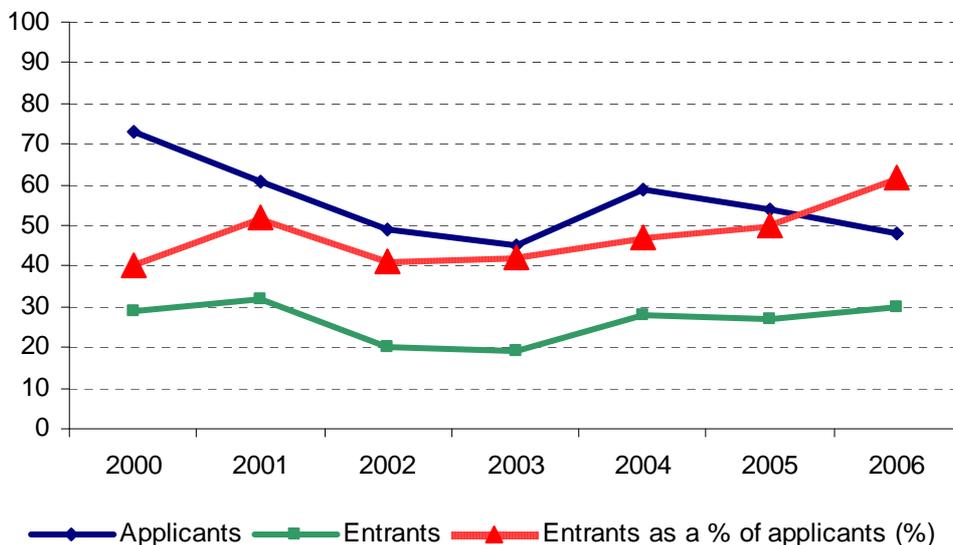
This fact sheet outlines the data reported to the Council for Research & Development (CRD) for the number of applications to the Diocesan priesthood in the year October 2005 to September 2006. These data are sourced from the Annual Vocations and Personnel Survey conducted by the CRD.

In 2004 there were 59 applicants to Irish Dioceses of whom 28 were accepted. This represents 47% acceptance of those who applied. In 2005, 54 people applied and 27 were accepted. This represents a 50% acceptance rate. **In 2006 48 men applied to join the priesthood and 30 were accepted.** These two figures are represented by the blue and green lines in the graph below. This represents a 62% acceptance rate although it should be acknowledged that this increase is related to a multitude of factors.

The acceptance rate for the Diocesan priesthood has been increasing steadily in recent years. The hatched red line below shows this increasing percentage.

Of the 30 men who were accepted, there is age data for 26 of them. 6 of this number are aged 18 to 21, 11 more are aged between 22 to 24 and the remaining nine are aged 25 or above. Additionally, of the 26 for whom there are data, there are four each from the counties of Dublin and Derry, 3 each from counties Cork and Carlow and 2 each from counties Westmeath and Kerry. The remainder are from 8 other counties around Ireland.

**Overleaf: educational attainment and related details.**

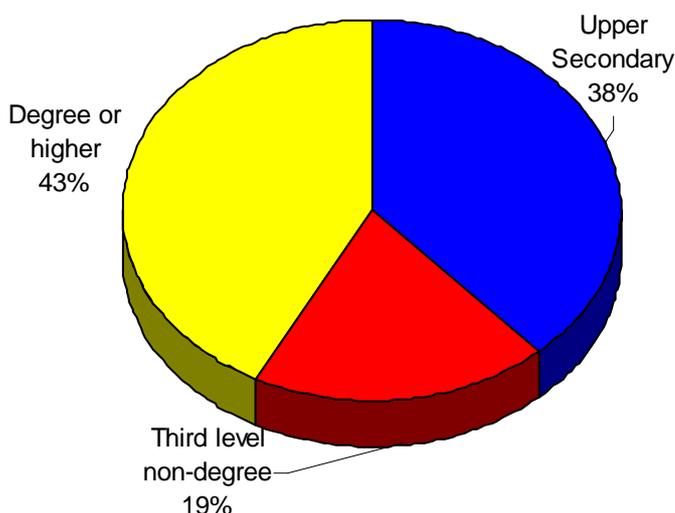


## EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF ACCEPTED APPLICANTS

According to the data derived from the Dioceses, 38.5% of the 26 accepted applicants have achieved an upper secondary education. This is down slightly from the 40% recorded in 2005. 19.2% have attained a qualification up to third level but non-degree. This is up from 7% in 2005. The remaining 42.3% have attained a third level degree qualification or higher. This is an

increase on the 2005 figure of 37%. The pie chart shows this percentage breakdown.

Turning to examine the data on those currently enrolled in Ireland's two seminaries, the data provided to the Council for Research & Development shows that **the average age of those accepted is 28 years old**. There is 'previous occupation' data available for 10 of the 26 accepted applicants. Among



the occupational backgrounds of those accepted there are former teachers, civil servants and from farming as well as IT and engineering backgrounds.

### **The average age at ordination is 34.5 years.**

Between the two seminaries currently accepting students in Ireland (St Patrick's Maynooth and St Malachy's Belfast) there are 74 current students, 71 of whom are for Irish Dioceses. There have been 15 recorded departures from the seminaries in the year to September 2006 representing a similar and recent trend in the number of departures. The Council for Research & Development would like to develop a study to examine the reasons for departure as well as the career path of these departed students and priests.

There were four transfers to other seminaries in the year to September 2006 and there were 9 recorded ordinations in the period.

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