

Fruits of Vatican II

I

Observational analysis of the Religious Memberships

A Willful Ignorance of an Ongoing Catastrophe?

“By their fruits you will know them”

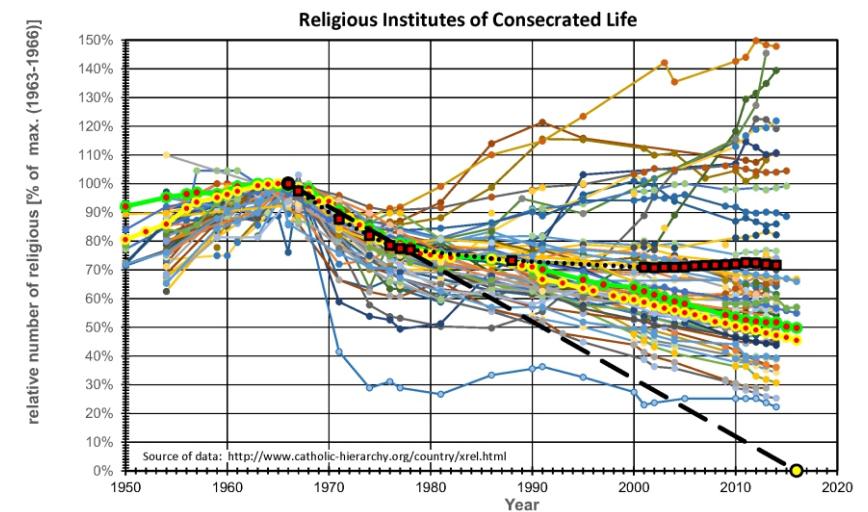
the stakes are too high to simply ignore the ongoing catastrophe

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Redemptorists

	1950	1958	1964	1967	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2013
vocation rate of the religious (priests and brothers) [%/y]	3,60%	2,50%	0,75%	1,00%	1,00%	2,25%	1,75%	2,75%	2,50%	2,50%	1,25%	0,75%	0,75%
vocation rate of the priests [%/y]	4,50%	2,75%	0,75%	0,75%	2,00%	2,50%	3,00%	3,00%	2,00%	2,00%	1,75%	0,50%	0,75%

vocation flow of the brothers is determined by vocation flow of religious minus the vocation flow of priests
vocation flow of the priest comes from the religious only and is therefore limited by the vocation flow of religious
to fit the decline of religious about 1900 resignations has been introduced distributed between 1966 and 1978.

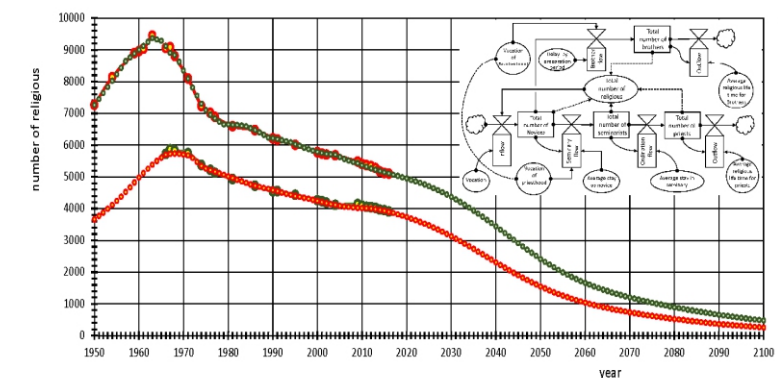
an initial distribution of the religious and priests regarding to the historical growth before 1950 has been calculated:

average religious life time	50	sub-period	
1. novitiate period [year]	3	1. number of sub-groups	1 3,0000
2. seminary period [year]	6	2. number of sub-groups	2 3,0000
3. priestly period [year]	41	3. number of sub-groups	14 2,9286
4. religious period [year]	47	4. number of sub-groups	16 2,9375

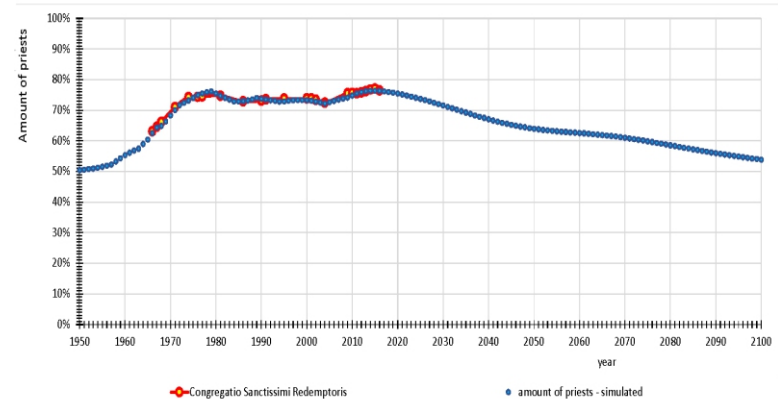
start of the simulation: data taken from data-set:

year of start:	1950	number of religious at start:	7265
		number of priests at start:	3532,5
amount of priest:		N= number of priests/ number of religious [%]:	50,00%

initial distribution	
novices	10,79%
seminarist1	6,96%
seminarist2	6,40%
priests1	5,76%
priests2	5,30%
priests3	4,89%
priests4	4,51%
priests5	4,16%
priests6	3,85%
priests7	3,56%
priests8	3,30%
priests9	3,06%
priests10	2,83%
priests11	2,61%
priests12	2,40%
priests13	2,20%
priests14	2,00%
religious1	2,43%
religious2	1,96%
religious3	1,67%
religious4	1,53%
religious5	1,49%
religious6	1,50%
religious7	1,55%
religious8	1,59%
religious9	1,64%
religious10	1,65%
religious11	1,64%
religious12	1,58%
religious13	1,49%
religious14	1,37%
religious15	1,22%
religious16	1,08%



Redemptorists - Male Religious Redemptorists - Religious Priests total number of religious - simulated number of priests - simulated



Dominicans

	1950	1958	1963	1968	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2013
vocation rate of the religious (priests and brothers) [%/y]	2,75%	4,00%	2,25%	1,75%	1,50%	1,25%	3,00%	1,25%	3,00%	2,25%	1,25%	1,50%	1,00%
vocation rate of the priests [%/y]	1,00%	4,23%	3,00%	1,50%	1,25%	1,50%	2,00%	3,00%	3,00%	1,75%	1,75%	1,50%	0,75%

vocation flow of the brothers is determined by vocation flow of religious minus the vocation flow of priests

vocation flow of the priest comes from the religious only and is therefore limited by the vocation flow of religious

to fit the decline of religious about 3100 resignations (2000 brothers and 1100 priests) has been introduced distributed between 1969 and 1978

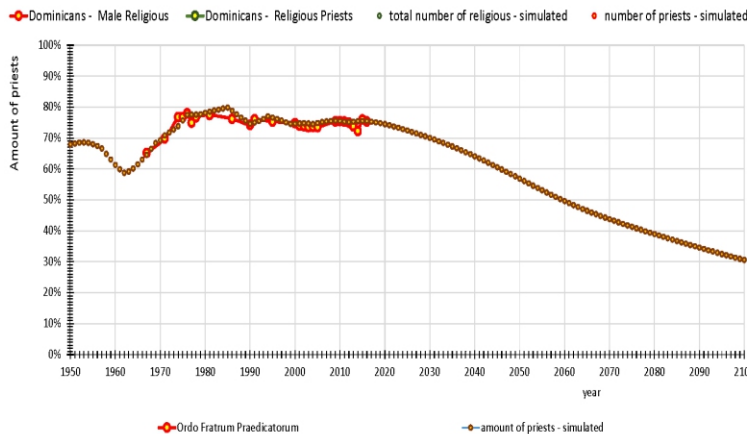
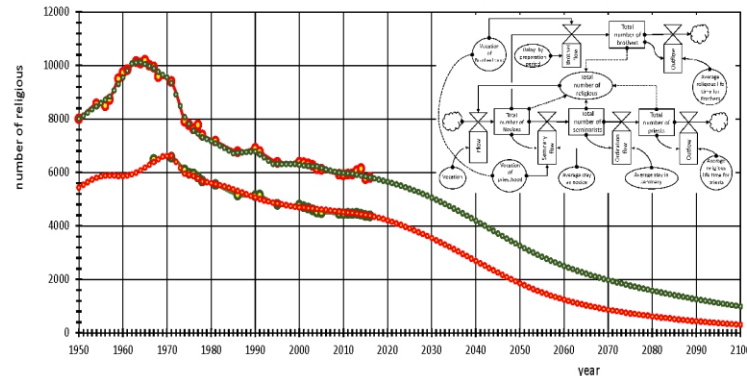
an initial distribution of the religious and priests regarding to the historical growth before 1950 has been calculated:

average religious life time	50	sub-period	
1. novice period [year]	3	1. number of sub-groups	1 3,0000
2. seminary period [year]	6	2. number of sub-groups	2 3,0000
3. priestly period [year]	41	3. number of sub-groups	14 2,9286
4. religious period [year]	47	4. number of sub-groups	16 2,9375

start of the simulation: data taken from data-set:

year of start	1950	number of religious at start	8000
amount of priest		number of priests at start	5600
		amount of priest: Nr number of priests/ number of religious [%]	70%

initial distribution	
novices	8,90%
seminarist1	7,63%
seminarist2	7,22%
priests1	6,67%
priests2	6,32%
priests3	6,00%
priests4	5,69%
priests5	5,41%
priests6	5,15%
priests7	4,90%
priests8	4,67%
priests9	4,44%
priests10	4,21%
priests11	3,97%
priests12	3,73%
priests13	3,49%
priests14	3,27%
religious1	0,54%
religious2	0,40%
religious3	0,34%
religious4	0,34%
religious5	0,38%
religious6	0,44%
religious7	0,51%
religious8	0,57%
religious9	0,62%
religious10	0,65%
religious11	0,67%
religious12	0,66%
religious13	0,62%
religious14	0,58%
religious15	0,53%
religious16	0,48%



Introduction

The subject of the vocations crisis in the Catholic Church, post Vatican II, has been addressed many times in printed and electronic media, academia, and within ecclesiastical circles. Often those addressing the question do so to advance agendas that are not compatible with Catholic doctrine. We confine our discussion to the point of view in which Catholics are seeking a solution within the context of the teachings of the Catholic Church. This analysis has two stages of which the first is reported here. This first stage is an observational analysis of the development of Institutes of Consecrated and Societies of Apostolic Life for male religious from 1950 to the present, according to data available in the public domain.

Although a statistical analysis regarding the number of religious memberships of these institutes and societies is of a quantitative character by its very nature, it provides an indication of the spiritual quality of such religious institutes or societies and the religious themselves: "By their fruits you will know them".

The second part will provide a more substantive analysis of the processes behind the observations that are being made in this first part.

Now that it has been over fifty years since the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council, we can see that some religious groups are surviving while others are stagnant or dying. Some inspire new vocations, resulting in an increase of the number of religious, while others lack such ability to inspire and are suffering a lack of vocations. The latter situation leads to a continual process of aging and declining membership that can ultimately be terminal. What steps can be taken to prevent such religious groups from dying out altogether? The authors assert that internal measures can be taken to strengthen the spiritual quality of these institutes. Observing the rates of vocations of religious groups can indicate the need for such measures. Genuine vocations that potentially seem to be "lost" to one religious group will often find a way into another religious group or even take part in a newly founded group. Herein we seek common traits among various religious groups by categorizing them according to "timelines" from 1950 to the present. By grouping them among others with similar characteristic timelines, we can seek common threads among those which are thriving and those which are heading toward possible extinction.

Background

Statistics dealing with religious life are available on the internet, specifically at ‘The Hierarchy of the Catholic Church’ [1], and additionally in some issues of the *Annuario Pontificio* [2] from which a list has been compiled of 167 Institutes of Consecrated Life and 43 Institutes of Apostolic Life, both for male religious, containing sufficient data regarding 140 of these 210 institutes.

Other databases available in the public domain, such as *Agenzia Fides* [3] (additionally by EWTN [4]), *GCatholic.org* (formerly Giga-Catholic Information) [5] and *CARA* [6], are restricted in the terms of sampling periods and/or geographic location.

Among these databases, *Agenzia Fides* provides the total number of all religious for the period from 2001 to 2014 (**Figure 1**) and thereto additional to ‘The Hierarchy of the Catholic Church’. The *Agenzia Fides* does not distinguish the several religious congregations, but it sets an interesting distinction among various regions of the world for the period from 2001 to 2014.

Kenneth Jones provides some statistics and analysis pertaining to the situation in the US Church in *Index of Leading Catholic Indicators* [7].

One of the first systematic analysis of the sudden and precipitous decline of the clerical population dealt specifically with the Netherlands [8], [9]. The

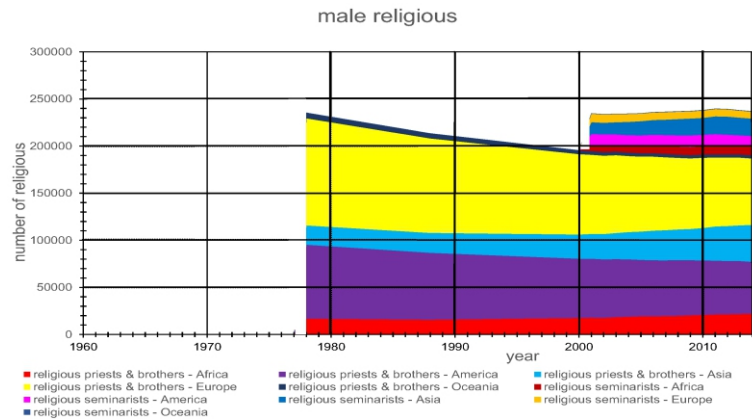
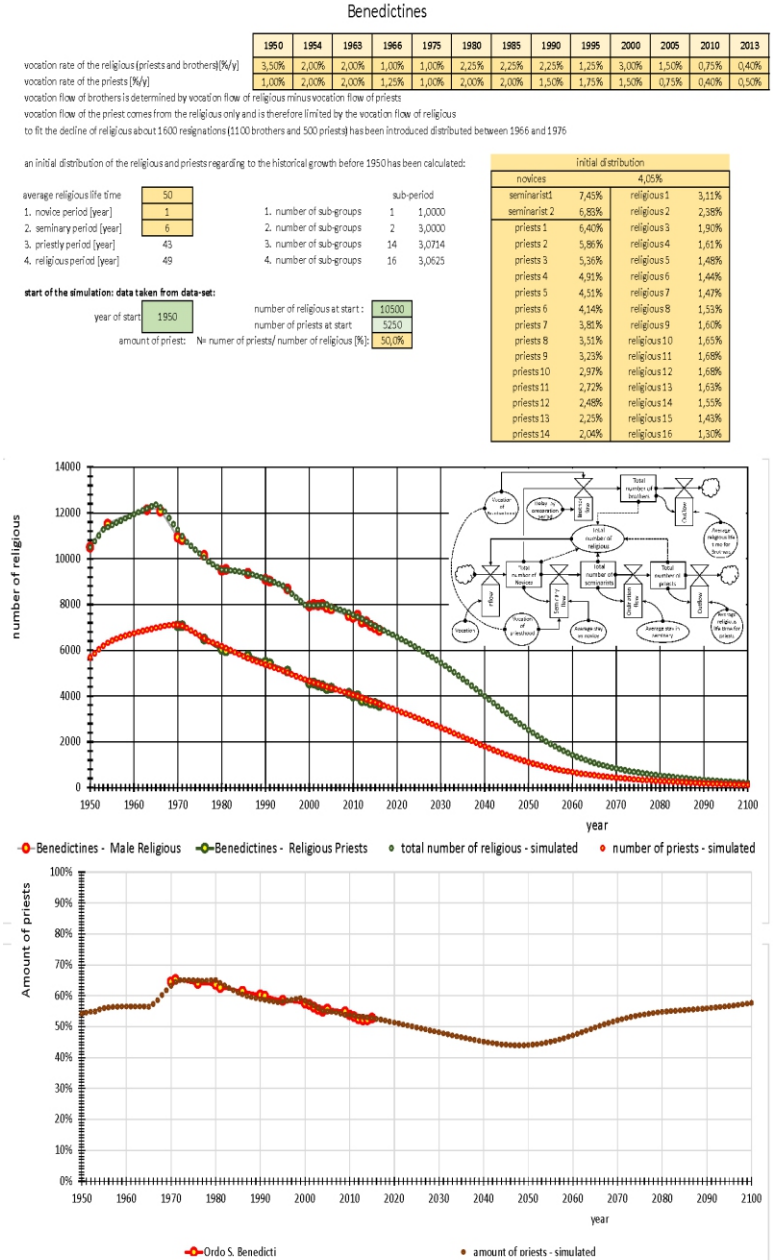


Figure 1: Male religious 1978 - 2000 (EWTN [4]) and 2001 - 2014 (Agenzia Fides [3])



Capucines

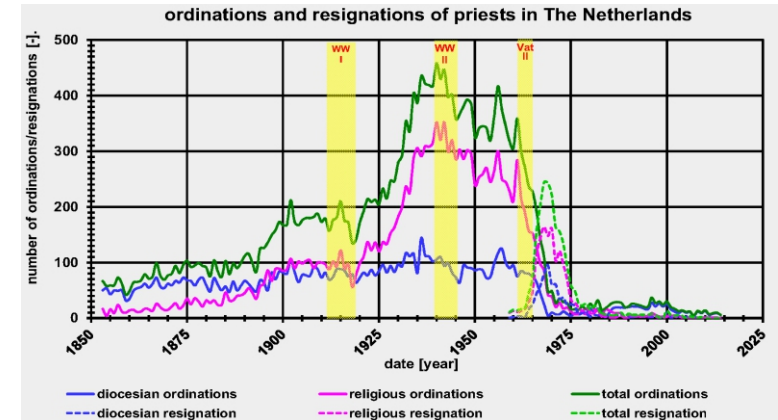
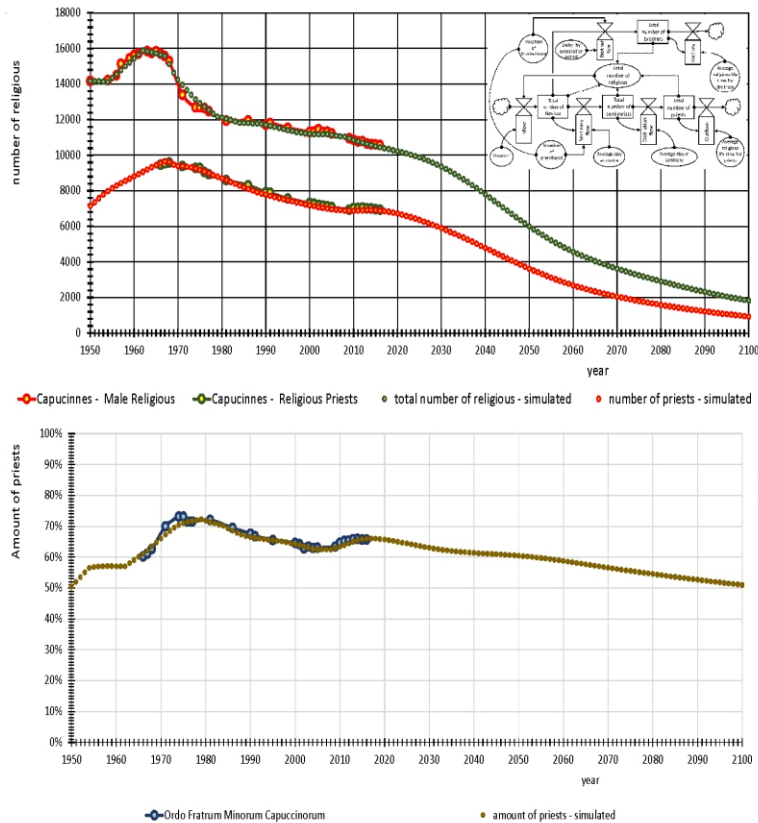
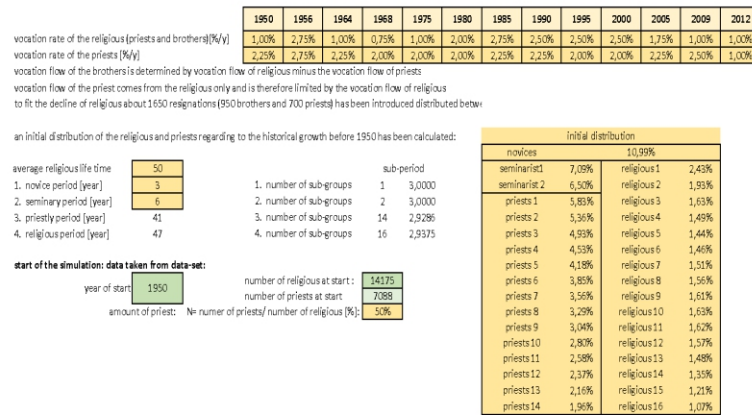


Figure 2: Overview of ordinations and resignations after the restoration of the Hierarchy in The Netherland in 1853 (last update 2014).

beginning of a dramatic decline of ordinations became visible about 1963 for religious and 1965 for the diocesan priests while an exceptional increase of resignations can be observed between 1964 and 1976 with a maximum at 1970 for both religious and diocesan priests.

Through this simple example we can understand the seriousness of the situation, depicted in **Figure 2** to **Figure 5**. Though the Netherlands was neutral during World War I (1912-1918) and therefore not directly involved in this war, the steady growth of vocations was partly interrupted by this war and its aftermath, then again by World War II (1940-1945) and the aftermath and after that there is a visible post-war recovery (**Figure 2**). But throughout this period (1853 to the present) of the Catholic Church in the Netherlands, there is nothing quite as dramatic as the decline that begins in 1963. In other words, the damage caused by World Wars I and II was negligible compared to the devastation beginning with and following the Second Vatican Council.

Coincidentally, the dramatic decline in ordinations of religious started with the publication of the Council Document on the Liturgy '*Sacrosanctum Concilium*', after which, in 1963, liturgical experiments started in the Netherlands that were then still illicit. The most active experimenters were the religious. Here, **Figure 2** shows a decline of religious ordinations of about 300 in 1962 to about 25 in 1970 and less than 5 a year after 1975. These liturgical experiments started in 1965 at the diocesan seminaries, after these experi-

ments became legal. All seminarians were obliged to attend these experiments. They did not just have to observe them; they had to participate in them too. Through numerous witnesses, as well as by statistical data, it is well known that many vocations were lost due to these liturgical experiments. Seminarians lost their vocations to the point that the number of diocesan ordinations went from around 80 to 100 before 1965 to 5 or less after 1969.

Also note that it is during this post 1963 era that, in addition to the sudden high dropout rate of the seminarians, we begin to see mass resignations from the priesthood. All of this results in a serious decline in the number of priests who were active in the Dutch dioceses (**Figure 3**). Comparing **Figure 2** with **Figure 3**, we can see that the decline of the number of priests must be considered as a secondary effect of the dramatic decline of ordinations. In the same way it can be observed in **Figure 4** that the number of baptized faithful was still increasing till the second half of the nineteen-seventies. Serious decline did not begin until the nineties. While the development of the total number of baptized faithful has to be considered as a tertiary effect, we can see a manifest decline in Mass attendance already in the second half of the sixties. The acceleration of this decline during the seventies has to be considered as a secondary effect due to the lack of young people. **Figure 5** shows these effects on the proportionality between the numbers of faithful per priest by comparing the total number of baptized faithful with that of practicing faithful, whereas the stable 1000 baptized faithful per priest before 1965 has

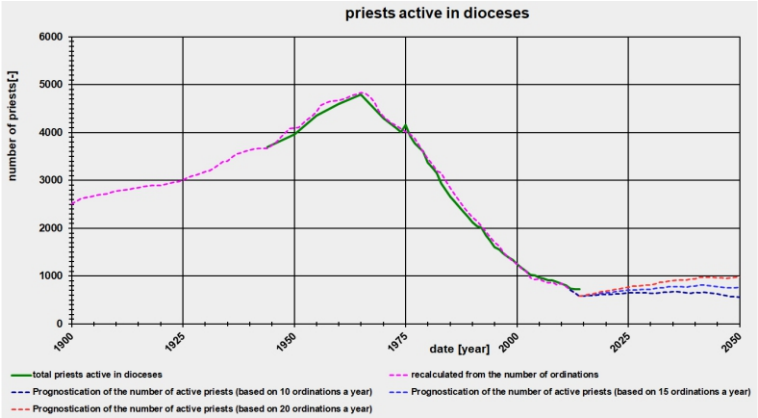
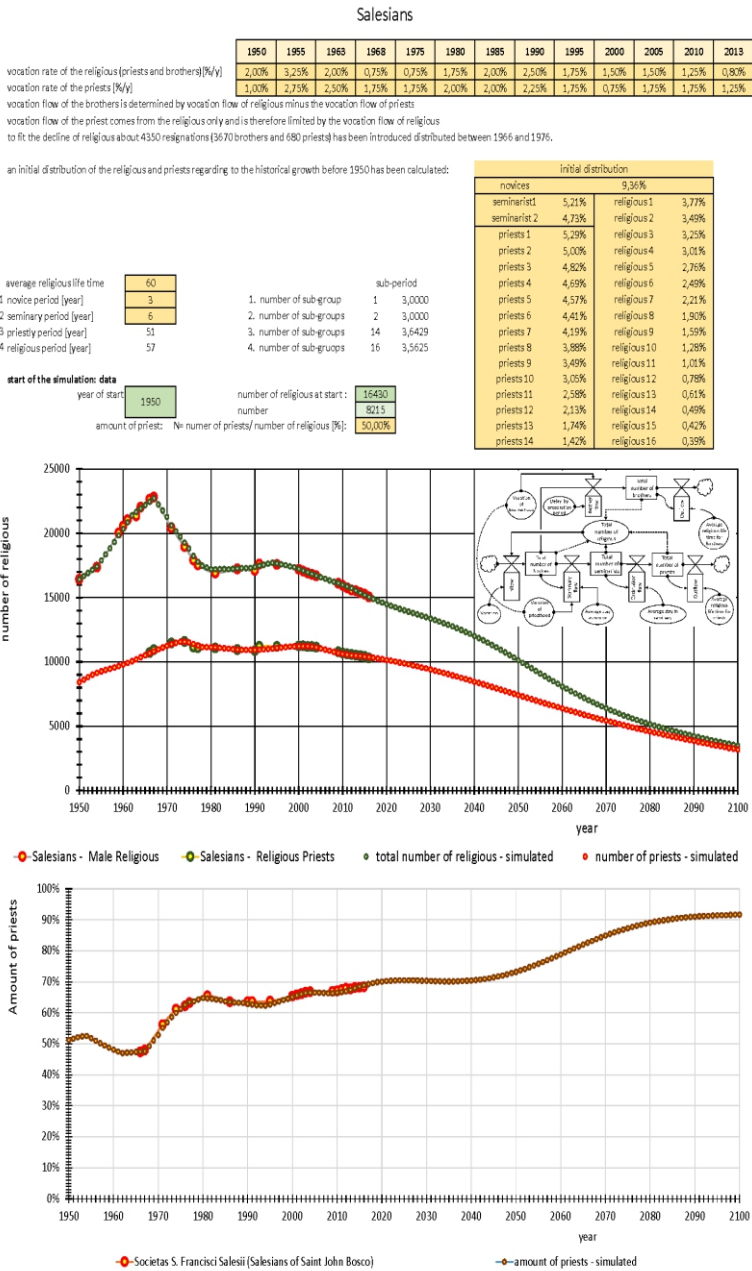


Figure 3: Overview of priests active in the Dutch dioceses since 1900 comparing with an extrapolation based on the number of ordinations till 2050 (last updated data 2014 – last updated extrapolation 2012)



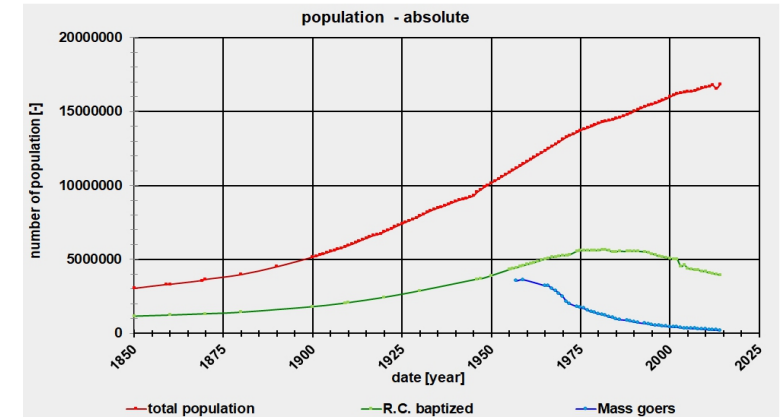
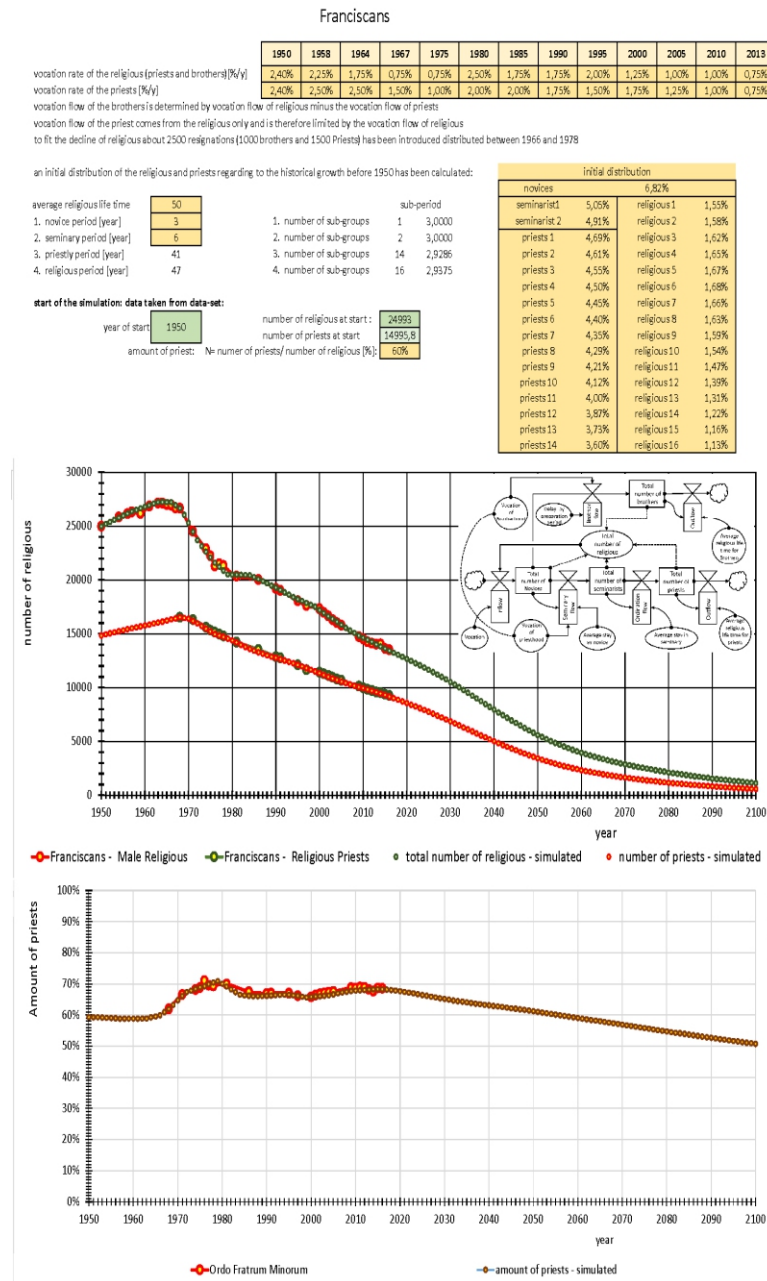


Figure 4: Overview of the Dutch population: total and Roman Catholic from 1850 to the present time as well as the Mass attendance from 1958 (last update 2014).

been followed by a rather stable number of 300 practicing faithful per priest in the present time.

Subsequent analysis specifically correlating the decline to the state of the liturgy can be found at [10], [11] and [12], but confining the discussion to within the Catholic Church in the USA.

Similarly, in France, a correlation has been made between the growth or decline of the religious institutes by the way they manifest themselves as religious especially the way they are recognizable by their dressing as religious [13]. General discussion of the problem can be found at [14], [15] and [16]. The “*Risk analysis of Vatican II*” [17] provides a comprehensive study dealing with the issue on a broader scale, throughout the universal Church, and provides an in-depth and systematic analysis of causes, agents, and consequences.

Obviously, one may separate out regions and find differing trends. Currently, as shown by **Figure 1** from the dataset of *Agenzia Fides*, Africa and Asia show an increase in religious vocations [18]. In this figure, we can see that the growth of the number of religious in Africa and Asia is worldwide compensating somewhat for the decline in Europe and America (North, Central and South). Regarding the growth of the number of religious in Asia it has to be said that such growth was true for India until recently [19].

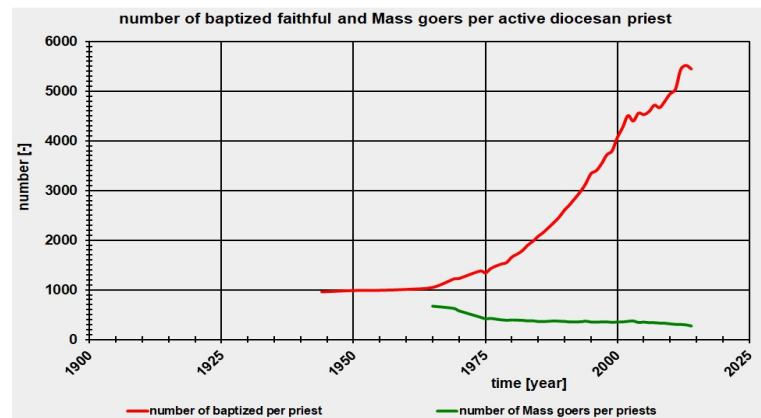
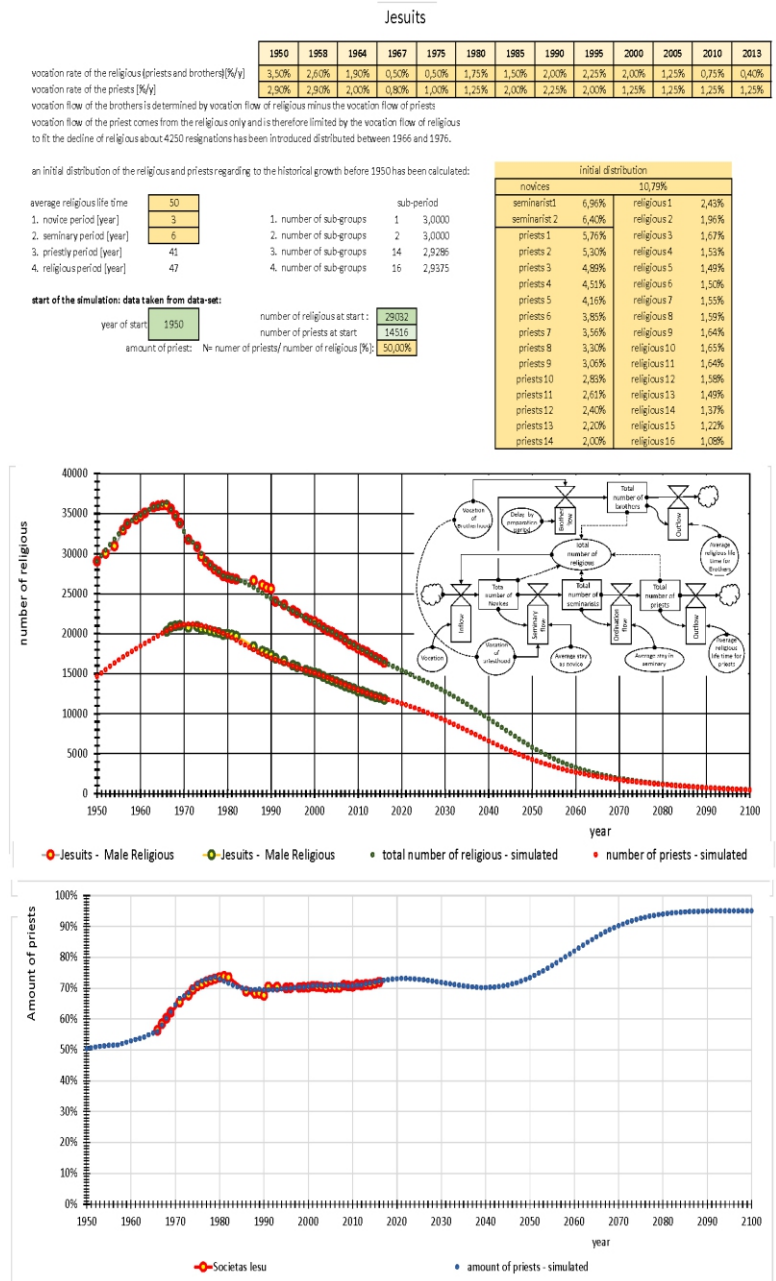


Figure 5: Overview of faithful per diocese priest active in the Dutch diocese since 1950 comparing with the number of faithful attending Mass per priest (last updated 2014).

Both authors assert that the liturgical crisis sets the stage for the doctrinal crisis through the maxim of *Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi* (the law of prayer determines the law of Faith). This timeless principle states that it is the mode of prayer which leads to the seriousness of Faith. The opposite, *Lex Credendi, Lex Orandi* (the law of Faith determines the law of prayer) according to which the seriousness of Faith determines the way of prayer, also holds true. Accordingly, then, weakening of prayer will be followed by a weakening of the seriousness of Faith. If not corrected, then, this weakened Faith seeks a further weakening of prayer in a process that leads to a vicious spiral that can result in an eventual loss of Faith. On the other hand, the strengthening of our prayers results in an increase in the seriousness of Faith. Liturgy governs Faith; this ancient principle is enshrined in the Catholic Catechism and has been held since the earliest days of Christianity and is the primary notion on which this work is founded.

General spiritual qualities that influence the vitality of religious institutes and societies can be categorized as:

1. Teaching and preaching in accordance to the *Depositum Fidei* (Deposit of Faith);
2. Living one's religious life as inspired by the *Depositum Fidei*;
3. The state of the liturgy within the religious institute;
4. The associations of faithful from which vocations are taken.



Category 1, Congregations in Severe Decline - 7 largest Institutes of Consecrated Life

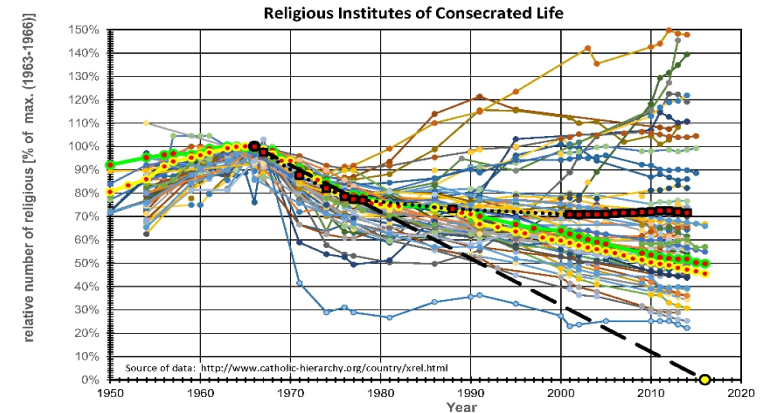
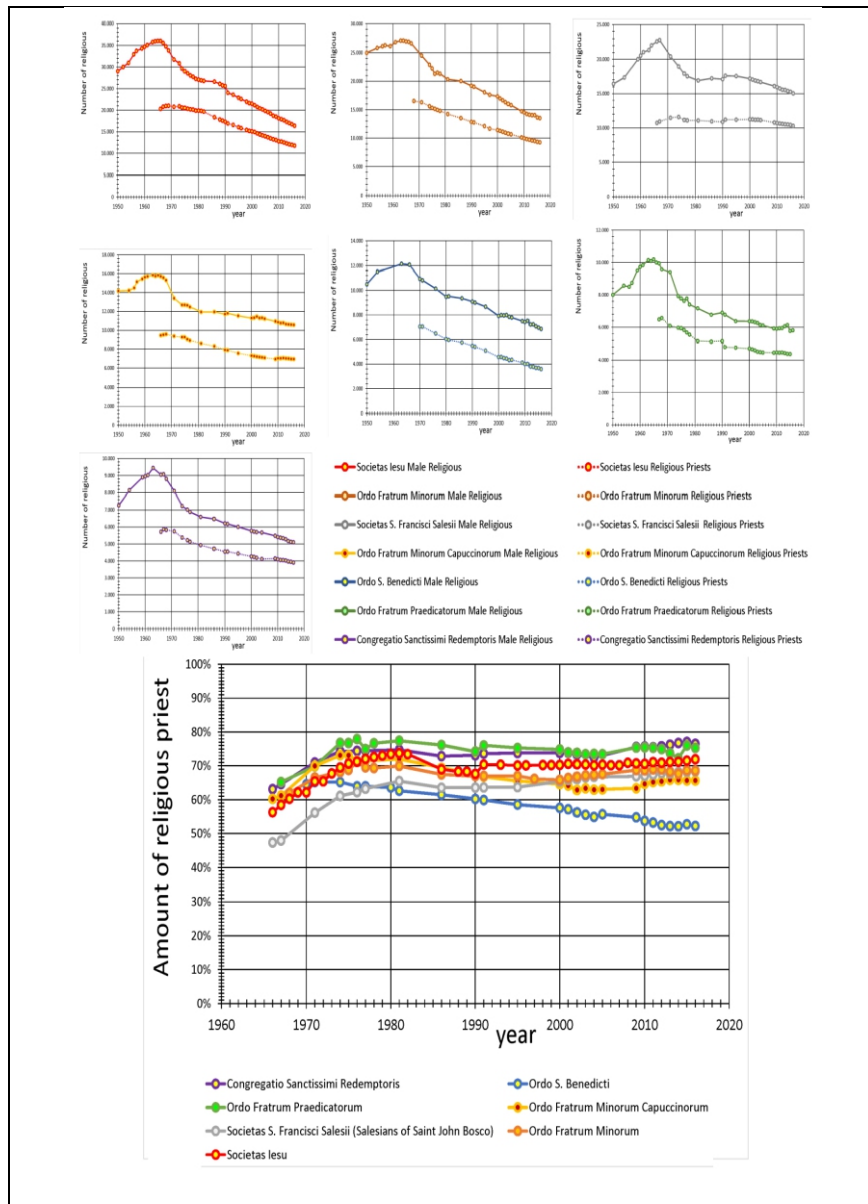


Figure 6: Timelines of 67 Institutes of Consecrated Life

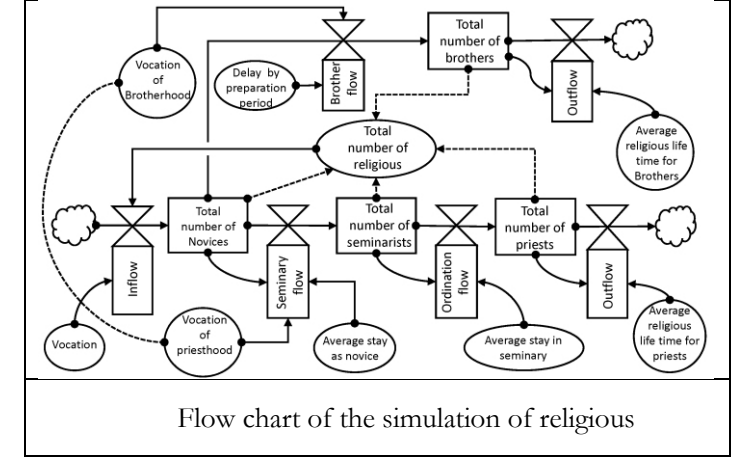
The first category involves the fundamental way in which the full Faith has to be accepted as the law for any expression of Religious Life. The second one concerns the genuine expression of the Religious Life inspired by the Holy Spirit at its foundation. If this expression came from the Holy Spirit, it cannot then be rejected later as being inauthentic. The third category involves in a fundamental way the manner in which the Holy Mass is celebrated and daily prayers are offered as true expressions of the *Depositum Fidei* within the religious institutes and societies in accordance with the principle *Lex Credendi, Lex Orandi*. The fourth category concerns the ability of religious congregations to attract vocations, according to their fulfilment of the aforementioned three categories.

Despite the fact that everyone can observe the lack of vocations and the decline in Mass attendance since Vatican II, Church leaders and theologians still speak about the 'Fruits of Vatican II'. This leads us to ask whether they are guilty a 'willful ignorance of an ongoing catastrophe'?

General Observations

'The Hierarchy of the Catholic Church' [1] contains a well-documented dataset sufficient to determine individual timelines for 134 of 194 religious congregations regarding the period of at least 1966 to 2014.

Appendix 1 and **Figure 6** provide an overview of the several congregations as well as the overall trends in this dataset. Regarding the 62 religious congregations with insufficient data 14 congregations are founded after 1966 while 48 congregations lack data for the period from 1950 till 1966. Appendix 1 provides an overall overview of this dataset combined with the dataset by *Agenzia Fides* [3] that provides the number of all religious for 2014. From this we can see that we have no data for about 21.4% of all religious.



Religious								
source	Institutes / Societies		Number of religious					
			1966		2014		difference 1966-2014	
	C.L.: Consecrated Life	A.L.: Apostolic Life	Abso-lute	rela-tive	Abso-lute	rela-tive	Abso-lute	Rela-tive
Agenzia Fides	all religious		-?-	-?-	236,937	100%	--	--
	religious bishops				1,245	0.5%		
	religious priests				134,495	56.8%		
	religious seminarians				46,638	19.7%		
	religious brothers				54,559	23.0%		
Hierarchy of the Catholic	194	157 (C.L.) 37 (A.L.)	-?-	-?-	168,123	72.1%	--	--
	134	110 (C.L.) 24 (A.L.)	256,137	-?-	162,732	68.7%	-93,406	-36.5%
	14	8 (C.L.) 6 (A.L.)	0	0	1,314	0.6%		
	46	39 (C.L.) 7 (A.L.)	-?-	-?-	4,077	1.7%		
	Undocumented (C.L. / A.L.)		-?-	-?-	50,631	21.4%		

Table 1: Global Comparison 1966-2014 (see Appendix 1)

For this first trial simulation the chosen average residence time of the sub-stages are founded on the suggestion that the average novice and seminarian period is about 9 years, where the average moment of the choice for the priesthood and brotherhood has been set at about 3 years, at which the flow line of the brotherhood started parallel to the flow-line of the seminarian-priest.

By taking into account the average religious age grouping the distribution of these age grouping over the total group of religious at the start of the simulation in 1950 is important too. This has been constructed by a separate simulation.

The inflow by religious vocation is expressed in percentages regarding the number of religious as an indication of the average religious ‘fertility’ of all religious involved. This inflow has been used as fitting parameter to fit the number of religious. This is also for the inflow of the seminarian-priest flow line, whereas the inflow has been taken from the religious inflow as expressed in percentages of the number of priests. This inflow with a limit determined by the outflow of the first stage of three years whereby the inflow for the brother flow-line is zero, has also been used as fitting parameter to fit the time-line curve for priests. While generally the outflow of religious by resignation is negligible regarding the use of average values, this was not the case between 1963 and 1976. Evidently the time-lines of both, the total religious and the priests cannot be fit without taken into the resignations. However, whereas the available databases do not provide any information about the resignations, the data used has to be seen together with the other input parameters.

The extrapolation of the simulation is founded on the fitting parameters of the last period of the known time-lines.

Referring to those 134 well-documented religious congregations, we find 110 Institutes of Consecrated Life for which the membership has been reduced from 256,137 in 1966 to 162,732 in 2014. We also find 24 Societies of Apostolic Life for which the membership has been reduced from 25,347 religious in 1966 to 14,038 religious in 2014. **This represents a total decline for these congregations of about 36.5% and 44.6% between 1966 and 2014 for the religious of Consecrated Life and Apostolic Life respectively.**

Although we do not have sufficient data to determine the 1966 proportionality of these institutes to the total number of religious, it can be said that these 134 institutes represent about 74% of all religious in 2014. Furthermore 14 documented congregations representing about 1.5% of all religious in 2014 were founded after 1966 and therefore counted zero in 1966. Here it has to

	Religious of Pontifical Right					
	Number of Institutes	1966	2014		difference 1966 -2014	
		absolute	absolute	relative	absolute	relative
Figure 11	39	193,216	108,159	45.6%	-85,057	-44.0%
Figure 12	9	12,433	4,102	1.7%	-8,331	-67.0%
Figure 13	9	19,133	13,669	5.8%	-5,464	-28.6%
Figure 14	3	13,474	14,286	6.0%	812	6.0%
Figure 15	5	1,864	2,035	0.9%	171	9.2%
Figure 16	5	1,087	1,697	0.7%	610	56.1%
Figure 17	5	2,034	6,849	2.9%	4,815	236.7%
sub-sum (Figure 10)	75	243,241	150,797	63.7%	-92,444	-38.0%
not shown	59	38,243	22,671	11.0%	-15,572	-32.1%
Founded after 1966 (Figure 18)	14	0	3,342	1.4%	3,342	--
sub-sum 2	148	281,484	176,770	74.6%	-104,714	-37.2%
Insufficient data	48		11,536	4.0%		
Sum (C.L+A.L.)	196		188,306	78.6%		
no data				21.4%		

Table 2: overview of the timelines 1950-2014 given in figures 3 to 11 for a number of religious institutes of Consecrated Life

be said that these 14 well-documented congregations are not a complete list of those founded after 1966.

Generally, the statistical data available shows that a vast majority of institutes underwent an increase in the number of male religious prior to 1963 with a rate of increase varying from 0.5% to 2 %/year. Considering an estimated average religious lifetime of about 50 years, a natural rate of decline of -2%/year can be expected if there are no new vocations during that time. That would mean that the rate of increase before 1963 can be compared with an effective vocation rate of 2.5 to 4 % per year or an average of 1.25 to 2 religious vocation inspired during the religious lifetime of each religious. Regarding the 134 well-documented religious congregations, this led to a maximum of 281,848 religious in 1966.

Note that an average inspiration of 1 vocation during a religious lifetime for each religious results in a constant number of religious per congregation. In case of growth of the number of faithful, such a vocational growth rate would indicate a relative decline in the religiousness of the congregation.

During and immediately following the Second Vatican Council, a sharp decline began that, with a few exceptions, continues to the present. The turning point at which the decline begins varies typically between 1963 and 1966.

Regarding the 134 well-documented congregations, we can pinpoint the beginning of the decline on the basis of membership. About 32% of the

	number of religious							
	110 Institutes of Consecrated Life [1]		24 Societies of Apostolic Life [1]		134 religious congregations		All religious [2]	
1966	256,137	100%	25,347	100%	281,484	100,00%	326,924	100%
1971	229,630	89,65%	23,393	92,29%	253,023	89,89%	290,145	88.8%
1974	215,268	84,04%	22,079	87,11%	237,346	84,32%	272,736	83.4%
1976	206,192	80,50%	20,485	80,82%	226,676	80,53%	261,827	80.1%
1981	198,287	77,41%	19,449	76,73%	217,735	77,35%	251,354	76.9%
1990	193,154	75,41%	17,602	69,44%	210,756	74,87%	242,386	74.1%
1995	190,276	74,29%	17,567	69,31%	207,843	73,84%	238,750	73.0%
2004	177,513	69,30%	15,909	62,76%	193,422	68,72%	234,459	71.7%
2010	168,460	65,77%	14,686	57,94%	183,146	65,06%	238,141	72.8%
2012	168,192	65,66%	14,649	57,79%	182,841	64,96%	239,344	73.2%
2014	162,732	63,53%	14,038	55,38%	176,77	62,80%	236,937	72.5%

Table 3: Overview of the numbers of religious between 1966 and 2014

General

The following graphics concern first trial-simulations of the 7 largest congregations, all marking a Severe Decline since Vatican II. These simulations are based on a dynamic flow-model and data-sets available. However they have to be considered as a first trial yet because not all necessary initial input-data were available by the internet, like the initial distribution over the several sub-periods of religious and priestly life, the average religious lifetime, etc. Though that thereto rough estimations had to be made, these graphics show the general trend what will happen if the last (post-council) period will continue for a longer term after today.

The dynamic flow model in use here is using averages data of large groups and therefore cannot used for small groups, where small changes caused relative large effects that cannot be neglected. This model gives global insight regarding to the trends of the processes and cannot consider as exact prognoses. Of course the results are still depended on the quality of the model as well as the data used.

Model

The dynamic model exists by a vocation-inflow feeding two flows. A first flow concerns the seminarians-priests line and the second flow is the brothers-line. Both these flows can parallel be distinguished by a chain of 16 sub-(age-) groups. Note that all religious not being ordained concern the Brotherhood, thus also the seminarians that take part of the seminarians-priests line. Hereby the flows are determined by so-called residence-time for each stage in which the religious are. While the ultimate total residence time is determined by the average religious life time from vocation to death, this has been divided by a number of logical stages according the two flow lines. In this case the average religious life-time has been suggested about 50 years which is divided into sub-stages with a residence time of about 3 years. Then the outflow of each stage can be determined by dividing the number of religious by the residence time of that stage, while this outflow is the inflow of the next stage. Due to this method the average religious age grouping can be simulated. Here the inflow of the first stage is determined by the number of average vocations and the outflow of the last stage is the average number of death of the religious. Of course some are dying earlier and others later, but this simulation is based on the averages values.

congregations, representing 118,907 religious (including the Franciscans Minor, Capuchins, Dominicans, Redemptorists and Benedictines) had their statistically registered maximum membership in 1963. About 9%, representing 60,289 religious (including the Jesuits and the Society of Divine Word) statistically registered their maximum in 1966. About 55% of these congregations (including the Salesians) representing 102,548 religious met this maximum membership in 1966. Only a few congregations (5%) were observed to find their maximum membership in the early seventies.

The vast majority of the religious of Consecrated Life were subject to a precipitous vocation decline during the first decade after the Council.

Table 2 contains data from 75 Institutes of Consecrated Life, representing about 63.7% of all religious. This data is displayed in figures 11 to 15. The first two rows show for 48 congregations representing 47.3% of the religious in 2014 a serious average decline of 44% and 67% respectively. Furthermore, looking at the row ‘sub-sum 2’, it is clear that that even though there may be some modest growth among some of the congregations, such as those founded after Vatican II, there is nonetheless a total average decline of 37% of all of the well documented congregations including the congregations founded after Vatican II.

Incremental rates					
Incre- ments	Consecrated Life [1]	Apostolic Life [1]	Total (CL + AL) [1]	All religious [2]	
1966-1971	-2.59%/year	-1.93%/year	-2.53%/year	Extrapolate to be verified	-2.25%/year
1971-1974	-2.08%/year	-1.87%/year	-2.07%/year		-2.25%/year
1974-1976	-2.11%/year	-3.61%/year	-2.25%/year		-2.00%/year
1976-1981	-0.77%/year	-1.01%/year	-0.79%/year		-0.80%/year
1981-1990	-0.29%/year	-1.06%/year	-0.36%/year		-0.40%/year
1990-1995	-0.30%/year	-0.04%/year	-0.28%/year		-0.30%/year
1995-2004	-0.75%/year	-1.05%/year	-0.77%/year		-0.20%/year
2004-2010	-0.85%/year	-1.28%/year	-0.89%/year	+0.26%/year	
2010-2012	-0.08%/year	-0.13%/year	-0.08%/year	+0.25%/year	
2012-2014	-1.62 %/year	-2.09 %/year	-1.66 %/year	-0.50%/year	

Table 4: Average timelines for religious with incremental rates of decline

Simulation of Religious Congregations

As previously mentioned, the vast majority of the 110 Institutes of Consecrated Life and 24 Societies of Apostolic Life (for which we have sufficient data) show vigorous growth before 1963. Between 1963 and 1966 this steady growth stalled and was followed by a decline that continues up to the present.

Table 3 and **Table 4** concern the average timeline of all religious represented by the 134 well-documented religious congregations starting at the maximum number of the religious in 1966 and tracking the decline from there to 2014. **Table 3** distinguishes between the religious of Consecrated Life, Apostolic Life, the total of these religious [1] and the total number of religious as provided by *Agenzia Fides* [3]. **Table 3** also indicates the absolute numbers of religious and the percentage relative to the 1966 maximum.

Table 4 provides the incremental rates regarding the distinctions made in **Table 3** expressed by %/year. The percentages show incremental decline of the number of religious relative to the start of that specific increment. **Table 3** shows an average decline to a level of 55.4% for the Societies of Apostolic Life, and a decline to a level of 63.5% for the Institutes of Consecrated Life. According **Table 4**, the way to these declines differs a lot. While both *data sets indicate a serious decline, they differ somewhat in manner. While the average declining rate for the Societies of Apostolic Life starts from 1966 to 1974, it is moderate as compared to the Institutes of Consecrated Life.*

During the period from 1974 to 1976 the decline for the Apostolic Life appears more extreme. Furthermore, it appears that for both type of religious, the average decline during the first decade after 1966 was about 20% while next 20% decline till the present time took about 40 years. **Table 4** also shows the average decline of the 134 religious congregations to be about -2%/year after December 31th, 2012.

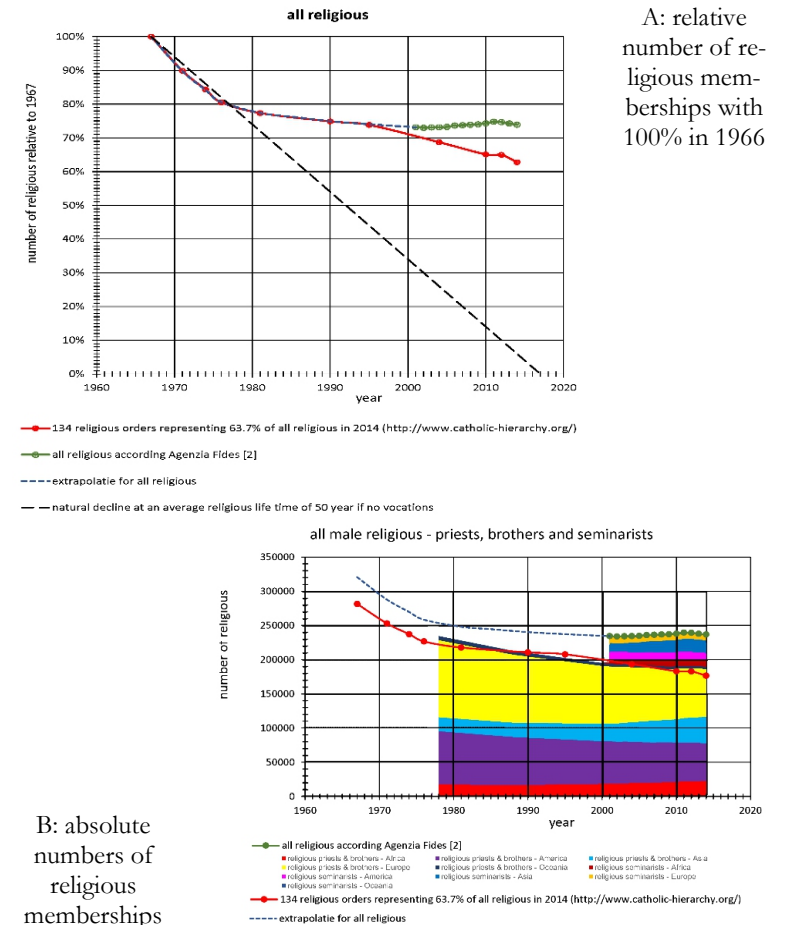
In fact, the rate of decline increases across the board after 2012. To elaborate on this general trend, we note that the “well-documented congregations” show an average decline of about -0.8%/year from 1995, with a short period of stabilization during 2010-2012. The data provided by *Agenzia Fides* [3] regarding all religious shows a small increase of +0.2%/year of all religious from 2001 to 2012.

However, this trend reverses during the period from 2012 to 2014 into a decrease of -0.5%/year, while the average decreasing rate of the well documented congregations during the same period even increases to an alarming rate of -2.1%/year.

The observed changes of the number of all religious is much smaller than indicated by the 134 religious congregations provided by ‘*The Hierarchy of the Catholic Church*’ [1]. Approximately 25% of the religious, including a

number of religious groups founded after the Second Vatican Council, compensate for the average decline of the 134 religious congregations that represent about 75% of all religious in 2014. The average magnitude of such compensation is approximately +3%/year to 4%/year.

Note that the rather constant number of all religious during the period 2001 to 2014 (**Figure 1**) can be compared to the timelines of the restricted 134 well-documented congregations which represented about 74% of the religious in 2014. The dramatic decline from more than 281,484 religious in



It can be concluded that the decline between 1966 and 1976 concerns about 20% of the number of religious in 1966, while during the following two decades, the decline more and more stabilized to about 30% in 2000, where even a slight increase occurred of about 2.5% till 2012. After 2012, again a slight decline of the number of all religious can be observed (Figure 7).

The multiple timelines in figures 10 to 17 of this section group together data from specific congregations for the sake of comparison. By grouping them in this manner, we can discover similarities among the growth or decline of these institutes, which in turn must indicate similarities in their spiritual qualities as described above.

First, regarding the data used for the timelines for the 134 well-documented congregations provided by ‘The Hierarchy of the Catholic Church’ [1] two datasets has been checked by a comparison to data found at various repositories, like the Jesuits (**Figure 8**) and the Salesian (**Figure 9**) [20], [21].

Third, it must be taken into consideration that especially regarding the smaller institutes, the influence of a single charismatic leader can be very strong. If any such charismatic leader should fall away for any reason, it can have a dramatic effect on the timeline.

[illegible][illegible]

	C.L.	Institutes of consecrated life of Pontifical Right (C.L.)
	C.L.	Order of Carons Regular (CarR)
	C.L.	Monastic Order (MoO)
	C.R.	Order of Clerics Regular (CR)
	C.L.	Mendicant Order (MeO)
	C.C.	Clerical Religious Congregation (CRC)
	A.L.	Societies of Apostolic Life of Pontifical Right (A.L)
	C.S.I.	Lay Religious Congregations of Pontifical Right
	C.S.I.	Clerical Secular Institutes of Pontifical Right
	C.O.D.R.	Lay Secular Institutes of Consecrated Life of Pontifical Right
	C.R.	Clerical Religious Congregations of Diocesan Right
	L.R.C.D.R.	Lay Religious Congregations of Diocesan Right
	A.L.-D.R.	Societies of Apostolic Life of Diocesan Right

I	Decrease over 65%; 19 congregations with 729 religious in 2014 (3.1% of all religious)
II	Decrease between 50% and 60%; 20 congregations with 3029 religious in 2014 (12.3% of all religious)
III	Decrease between 30% and 50%; 42 congregations with 10397 religious in 2014 (38.3% of all religious)
IV	Decrease between 10% and 30%; 23 congregations with 19832 religious in 2014 (68.4% of all religious)
V	Increase between 5% and 30%; 25 congregations with 16113 religious in 2014 (6.5% of all religious)
VI	Increase between 0% and 5%; 8 congregations with 1919 religious in 2014 (0.8% of all religious)
VII	Increase between 0% and 5%; 9 congregations with 3214 religious in 2014 (1.1% of all religious)
VIII	Increase between 0% and 5%; 10 congregations with 3524 religious in 2014 (1.2% of all religious)
IX	Fortified after 1987; 14 congregations with 3342 religious in 2014 (1.4% of all religious)
X	48 congregations founded before 1980 without data during 1980-1987 with 6194 religious in 2014 (2.6% of all religious)

Fifth, it should be noted that **Figure 11** to **Figure 17** contain two reference curves, one that is black dashed and the other that is black dotted:

1. The black dashed curve represents the average natural decline with an estimated religious life time of 50 years if there are no vocations. Declines that are structurally steeper than this curve indicate a situation

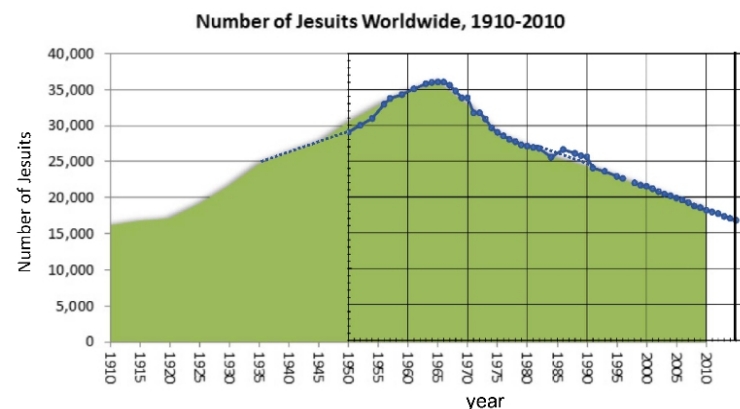


Figure 8: Comparison data concerning the Jesuits [1], [20]

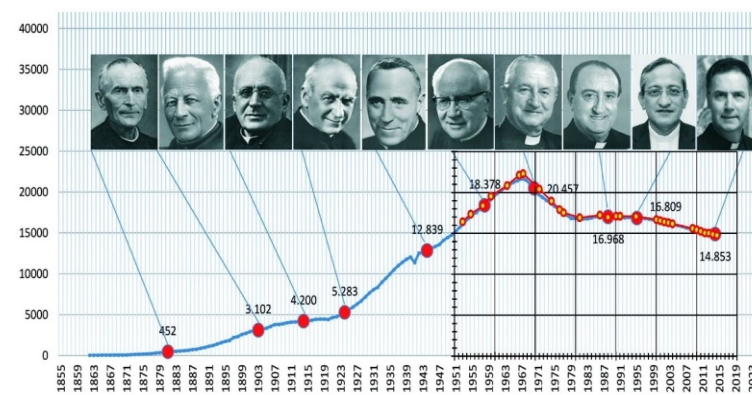
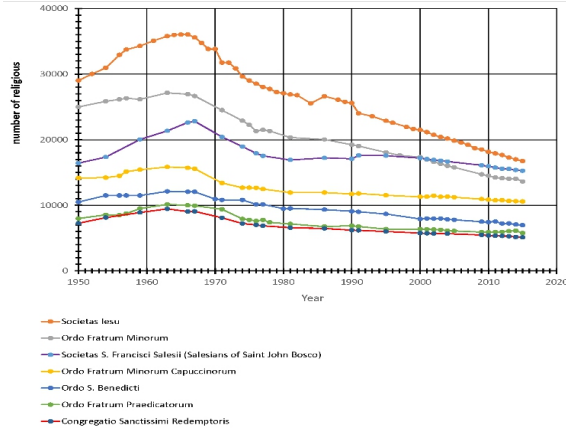
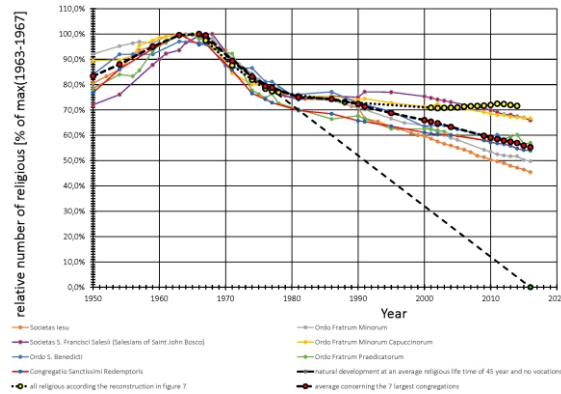


Figure 9: Comparison data concerning the Salesians of Don Bosco [1], [21]



A: by absolute numbers of religious



B: by numbers relative to their maximum

Figure 10: Timelines of the seven largest Institutes of Consecrated Life [1]

where the number of resignations or losses exceeds the number of vocations. A vocation rate of 2%/year, which corresponds to an inspiration of 1 vocation per religious within his religious lifetime, is needed to keep a constant number of religious.

- The black dotted curve represents the average developments of all religious as reconstructed in Figure 7. During the first seven years after Vatican II this curve shows a little more decline than the black dashed curve of the natural decline (-2.25%/year). From between 1974 to 1976 a small decrease of the declining rate (-2.0%/year) can be observed that leads to a more moderate decline between 1976 and 2004 (from -0.8%/year to -0.2%/year). Hereafter during a period of 8 years, from 2004

type of congregation	Name
C.L.	Institutes of Consecrated Life of Pontifical Right (C.L.)
C.L.	Order of Canons Regular (C.R.)
C.L.	Monastic Order (M.O.)
C.L.	Order of Clerics Regular (C.R.)
C.L.	Mercedarian Order (M.O.)
C.L.	Clerical Religious Congregation (C.R.C.)
C.L.	Societies of Apostolic Life of Pontifical Right (A.L.)
C.L.	Lay Religious Congregations of Pontifical Right
C.L.	Clerical Secular Institutes of Pontifical Right
C.L.	Lay Secular Institutes of Consecrated Life of Pontifical Right
C.L.	Secular Institutes of Consecrated Life of Pontifical Right
C.L.	Clerical Religious Congregations of Pontifical Right
C.L.	Lay Religious Congregations of Pontifical Right
C.L.	Societies of Apostolic Life of Pontifical Right
C.L.	Societies of Apostolic Life of Pontifical Right

Abbreviation	Year of foundation	number of religious	number of congregations	year of maximum	max(1963-1967)/2014	max(1963-1967)/1971	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X
S.M.A.	1855	1820	1851	1851	929	49.44%										
S.M.B.	1821	428	425	403	119	24.24%										
C.P.S.	1815	925	940	940	716	75.99%										
P.S.S.	1642	629	671	671	269	40.99%										
S.A.C.	1835	2250	2281	2281	2348	103.81%										
S.F.C.	1887				800											
S.C.V.	1971				246											
M.A.M.	1868	1175	1207	1204	562	46.56%										
S.S.L.	1892	299	307	307	95	30.94%										
S.P.S.	1922	380	470	470	362	77.02%										
C.O.R.C.	1893	115	119	131	154	134										
number of religious		27453	27629	28344	18306											
number of congregations		115	119	131	154											
data inclusive insufficient documented data		1815	1865	19029	18562	16113	1819	3379	7267	3342	8194					

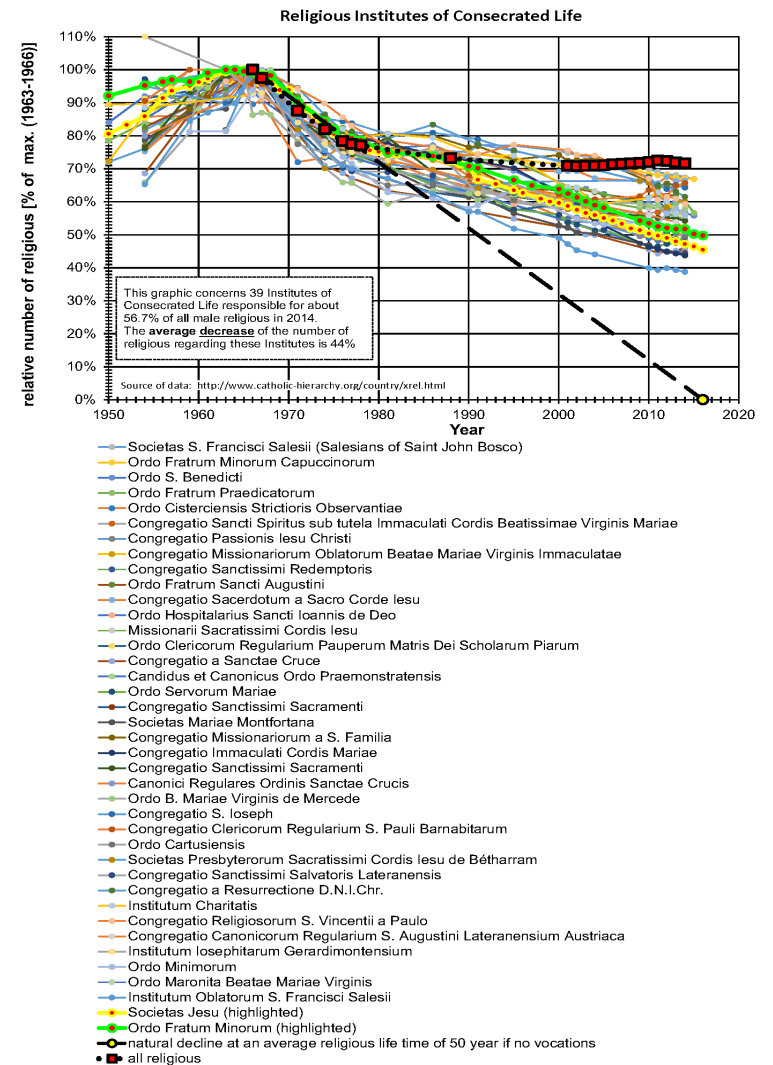
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number of religious		27453	27629	28344	18306											
number of congregations		115	119	131	154											
data inclusive insufficient documented data		1815	1865	19029	18562	16113	1819	3379	7267	3342	8194					

Additional information on Religious Congregations by gCatholic.com

Abbreviation	Year of foundation	number of religious	number of congregations	year of maximum	max(1963-1967)/2014	max(1963-1967)/1971	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X
S.M.A.	1855	1820	1851	1851	929	49.44%										
S.M.B.	1821	428	425	403	119	24.24%										
C.P.S.	1815	925	940	940	716	75.99%										
P.S.S.	1642	629	671	671	269	40.99%										
S.A.C.	1835	2250	2281	2281	2348	103.81%										
S.F.C.	1887				800											
S.C.V.	1971				246											
M.A.M.	1868	1175	1207	1204	562	46.56%										
S.S.L.	1892	299	307	307	95	30.94%										
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C.O.R.C.	1893	115	119	131	154	134										
number of religious		27453	27629	28344	18306											
number of congregations		115	119	131	154											
data inclusive insufficient documented data		1815	1865	19029	18562	16113	1819	3379	7267	3342	8194					

	CL	CL	Ce R	Order of Consecrated Life of Pontifical Right (CL)
	CL	CL	Mo O	Order of Carmine Regular (CeR)
	CL	CL	CR	Marian Order (McO)
	CL	CL	DR	Order of Discal Regular (CR)
	CL	CL	Me O	Mandator Order (Mao)
	CL	CL	CRC	Clerical Religious Congregation (CRC)
	AL	LRC	CS*	Society of Apostolic Life of Pontifical Right (AL)
	AL	LR	CS*	Religious Congregations of Pontifical Right
	AL	LR	CS*	Clerical Secular Institutes of Pontifical Right
	AL	LR	CS*	Secular Institutes of Connected Life of Pontifical Right
	AL	LR	CS*	Clerical Religious Congregation of Diocesan Right
	AL	LR	CS*	Religious Congregations of Diocesan Right
	AL	LR	CS*	Society of Apostolic Life of Diocesan Right
	AL	LR	CS*	Religious Congregations of Diocesan Right

	C.L	Ca R	Order of Carcans Regular (CaR)	Institutes of Consecrated Life of Pontifical Right (C.L.)
	C.L	Mo O	Monsastic Order (MoO)	
	C.L	CR	Order of Clerics Regular (CR)	
	C.L	Me O	Mendicant Order (MeO)	
	C.L	AL	Clerical Religious Congregation (CRC)	
	LRC	CS*	Societies of Apostolic Life of Pontifical Right (A.L.)	
	CS*		Lay Religious Congregations of Pontifical Right	
			Clerical Secular Institutes of Pontifical Right	
			Lay Secular Institutes of Consecrated Life of Pontifical Right	
	MC O P		Clerical Religious Congregations of Diocesan Right	
	LR O P		Lay Religious Congregations of Diocesan Right	
	AL O P		Societies of Apostolic Life of Diocesan Right	



21

Institutes Grouped According to Characteristic Timelines

While **Figure 6** shows the timelines of 67 Institutes of Consecrated Life that have been distinguished here into the categories 1 to 5 (**Figure 11** to **Figure 16**)

Category 1: Institutes in Severe Decline

Figure 11 and **Figure 12** concern 39 and 7 institutes representing respectively 74.2% and 4.7% of the religious represented by the 110 institutes in 1966. In 2014, they represented 63.1% and 2.4% of the religious. Both figures show an initial severe decline during the first decade after Vatican II, and then, around 1975-1976, a moderation of the declining rate. All of them continue to decline until the latest available data obtained for 2014. **Figure 12** shows a more extreme decline than the institutes in **Figure 11**.

Figure 11 includes all large institutes such as Jesuits, Franciscans, Salesians, Benedictines and Dominicans. The timelines of the two largest institutes, Jesuits and Franciscans, are highlighted in **Figure 6** and **Figure 11**. These two institutes together represent 24% of the 110 religious Institutes of Consecrated Life in 1966 and 19% of these religious in 2014 and have therefore a tremendous influence on the average timeline curve. Remarkably, the timelines of the Jesuits and the Franciscans followed the average curve very well until about 1985. After 1985, the timelines of these institutes diverge from the average by an increase of the declining rate to about -1%/year. While the average decline of all these religious in 2014 is about 38.1% of their high point, the decline of these two institutes, Jesuits and Franciscans, have been reduced by 2014 to about 46.5% and 51.8% of the number of religious in 1966, and the decline continues.

This category includes the Benedictines, within which there is not a universal decline. Notable exceptions would be the foundation at Fontgombault and the more recent daughter houses at Barroux and Clear Creek. Our Lady of the Annunciation at Clear Creek, Oklahoma, was founded in 2000 with 12 monks and now has over fifty, with at least a handful of teen-age monks at any given time. So, while they are a part of the larger “Benedictines” of Category 1, by themselves they would belong in another category.

The diversity of institutes in this category is quite alarming. From the reclusive and contemplative Carthusian Congregation (**Ordo Cartusiensis**),

C.L.	C.L.	Institutes of Consecrated Life of Pontifical Right (C.L.)
C.L.	C.L.	Order of Canons Regular (C.R.)
C.L.	C.L.	Monastic Order (M.O.)
C.L.	C.L.	Order of Clerics Regular (C.R.)
C.L.	C.L.	Mendicant Order (M.O.)
C.L.	C.L.	Clerical Religious Congregation (C.R.C.)
C.L.	C.L.	Societies of Apostolic Life of Pontifical Right (A.L.)
C.L.	C.L.	Lay Religious Congregations of Pontifical Right
C.L.	C.L.	Clerical Religious Congregations of Pontifical Right
C.L.	C.L.	Monastic Order of Consecrated Life of Pontifical Right
C.L.	C.L.	Mendicant Order of Consecrated Life of Pontifical Right
C.L.	C.L.	Clerical Religious Congregations of Diocesan Right
C.L.	C.L.	Societies of Apostolic Life of Diocesan Right

I	Decrease over 65%: 19 congregations with 7273 religious in 2014 (3.1% of all religious)
II	Decrease between 50% and 65%: 20 congregations with 30397 religious in 2014 (12.8% of all religious)
III	Decrease between 30% and 50%: 42 congregations with 96823 religious in 2014 (38.3% of all religious)
IV	Decrease between 5% and 30%: 23 congregations with 19882 religious in 2014 (8.4% of all religious)
V	Increase between +5% and -5%: 9 congregations with 16113 religious in 2014 (6.3% of all religious)
VI	Increase between 5% and 25%: 5 congregations with 1819 religious in 2014 (0.8% of all religious)
VII	Increase over 25% and 100%: 19 congregations with 3979 religious in 2014 (1.4% of all religious)
VIII	Increase over 100%: 7 congregations with 7287 religious in 2014 (3.1% of all religious)
IX	Founded after 1967: 8 congregations with 3342 religious in 2014 (1.4% of all religious)
X	46 congregations founded before 1967 without data during 1963-1967 with 614 religious in 2014 (2.4% of all religious)

type of congregation	Abbreviation	Year of foundation	memberships	max(1963-1967/2014)	year of maximum	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X
C.L.	C.L.	122	1963	1967	2014	1963	1966	1967	1971	1974					
C.L.	C.L.	123	1928		548										548
C.L.	C.L.	124	1987		125										125
C.L.	C.L.	125	1983		85										
C.L.	C.L.	126	1983		256										256
C.L.	C.L.	127	1983		75										75
C.L.	C.L.	128	1949	3770	4128	4128									
C.L.	C.L.	129	1918	7570	7890	7890									
C.L.	C.L.	130	1879	430	431	431									
C.L.	C.L.	131	1871	1210	1391	1391									
C.L.	C.L.	132	1919	200	181	185									
C.L.	C.L.	133	1928		97	204									
C.L.	C.L.	134	1943	45	48	48									
C.L.	C.L.	135	1947	209	209	209									
C.L.	C.L.	136	1947	542	533	533									
C.L.	C.L.	137	1947	348	361	361									
C.L.	C.L.	138	1949	303	320	337									
C.L.	C.L.	139	1928	2186	2202	2210									
C.L.	C.L.	140	1928	2186	2202	2210									
C.L.	C.L.	141	1928	2186	2202	2210									
C.L.	C.L.	142	1928	2186	2202	2210									
C.L.	C.L.	143	1928	2186	2202	2210									
C.L.	C.L.	144	1928	2186	2202	2210									
C.L.	C.L.	145	1928	2186	2202	2210									
C.L.	C.L.	146	1928	2186	2202	2210									
C.L.	C.L.	147	1928	2186	2202	2210									
C.L.	C.L.	148	1928	2186	2202	2210									
C.L.	C.L.	149	1928	2186	2202	2210									
C.L.	C.L.	150	1928	2186	2202	2210									
C.L.	C.L.	151	1928	2186	2202	2210									
C.L.	C.L.	152	1928	2186	2202	2210									

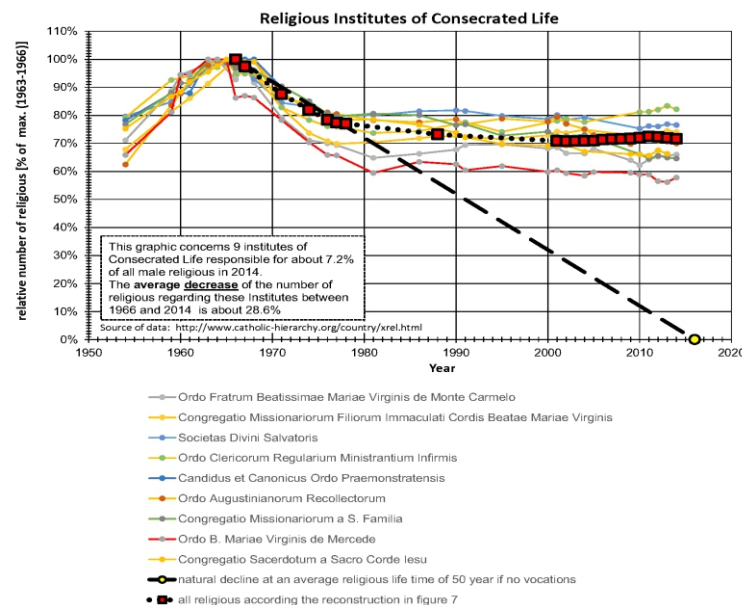


Figure 11 and **Figure 12**, the institutes of **Figure 13** manifest a relative growth for the period after 1976.

Considering the nine institutes depicted in Figure 13, while it may be difficult to find a unifying feature among them, nonetheless, taken individually, some of them offer some tantalizing clues as to why they achieved stability.

The **Salvatorians** (Societas Divini Salvatoris), for example, are engaged in parish, school, and missionary work [22], which would suggest that they have ample access to young people considering a possible vocation to religious or consecrated life.

The same could be said for the **Mercedarians** (Ordo B. Mariae Virginis de Mercede) who, like the Salvatorians, have a strong presence in teen ministry through the Lifeteen program and parish ministry [23]. It is worth mentioning that this congregation maintains the wearing of the habit and a full community life of prayer in addition to their external ministries.

[illegible][illegible]

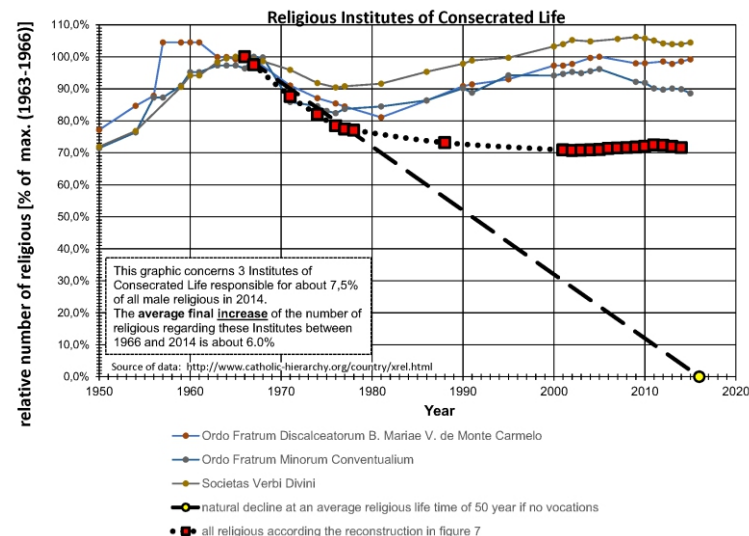
[illegible][illegible]

Figure 14: Institutes in Decline but Eventually Reaching Slow Rate of Growth

Category 3: Institutes in Decline but Eventually Reaching a Slow Rate of Growth

Figure 14 depicts timelines of 3 institutes only representing about 5.2% of the religious of Consecrated Life in 1966 and 8.4% of the religious in 2014. After the post Vatican II decline of the first decade, these institutes stabilized and began to grow at a rate sufficient to reach a rather constant membership in 2000. Then, after 2000, two of these institutes seem to stabilize at that level, while the other one decreases again.

What was said about the eight groups under the preceding heading can largely be repeated in this category. The **Conventual Franciscans** (Ordo Fratrum Minorum Conventualium) are well known for their parish ministry in several shrines and basilicas. They, like the Mercedarians, maintain the use of the habit on a regular basis and may, therefore, attract many vocations among the people to whom they minister.

The **Society of the Divine Word** (*Societas Verbi Divini*) is a somewhat different creature. While its members are certainly engaged in parish ministry, they are not usually assigned in larger groups or communities like the other

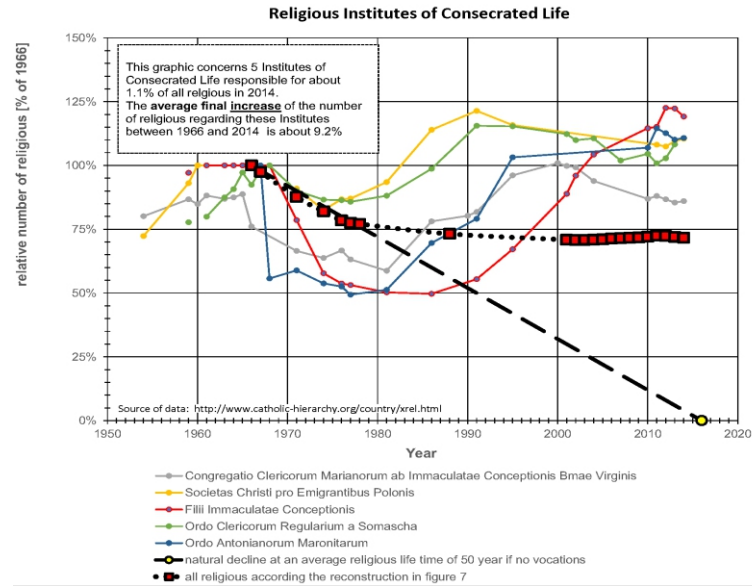


Figure 15: Institutes Eventually Restoring Pre-1965 Membership Level

houses that have been mentioned previously. Nonetheless, they share with them a focus on missionary work, especially in growing areas of the Church such as Africa, Latin America, and Oceania [24]. Along with this, they have a significant lay missionary program, all of which suggest a certain visibility to possible discerners.

Category 4: Institutes Eventually Restoring Pre-1965 Membership Level

Figure 15 shows a very remarkable development of the timelines of 6 institutes representing only 0.8% of the mentioned religious in 1966 and 1.6% in 2014. After the decrease of the number of religious in the first decade for some of these institutes, even to about 50%, they increased rather rapidly by an increasing rate of 2.5%/year until growth had reached a level of about 115% relative to the 1966 numbers. Then after reaching that maximum a sudden decline occurred similar to the average rate of decline.

Institutes of Consecrated Life of Pontifical Right (C.L.)	
C.L.	Order of Canons Regular (C.R.)
C.L.	Monastic Order (M.O.)
C.L.	Order of Clerics Regular (C.R.)
C.L.	Mercedarian Order (M.O.)
C.L.	Clerical Religious Congregation (C.R.C.)
C.L.	Societas of Apostolic Life of Pontifical Right (A.L.)
C.L.	Lay Religious Congregations of Pontifical Right
C.L.	Clerical Religious Congregations of Pontifical Right
C.L.	Lay Secular Institutes of Consecrated Life of Pontifical Right
C.L.	Monastic Orders of Diocesan Right
C.L.	Clerical Religious Congregations of Diocesan Right
C.L.	Lay Religious Congregations of Diocesan Right
C.L.	Societas of Apostolic Life of Diocesan Right

type of congregation	Name	Abbreviation	Year of foundation					memberships					max (1963-1974)	year of maximum				
			1963	1966	1967	1971	1974	1963	1966	1967	1971	1974		1963	1966	1967	1971	1974
C.L.	1. Canons Regular of Saint Augustine of the Congregation of Windesheim	C.R.V.	1386															
C.L.	2. Canons Regular of the Congregation of Saint Victor	C.R.S.V.	1908															
C.L.	3. Canons Regular of the Congregation of the Sisters of Community Life	C.R.V.C.	1350															
C.L.	4. Canons Regular of the Congregation of the Most Holy Saviour of the Lateran	C.R.L.	?	472	474	474	227	47,83%										
C.L.	5. Canons Regular of the Hospitalier Congregation of Great Saint Bernard	C.R.L.B.	1050	90	90	90	40	44,44%										
C.L.	6. Canons Regular of the Immaculate Conception	C.R.L.C.	1868															
C.L.	7. Canons Regular of the Lateran Congregation of Austria	C.R.L.A.	1950	296														
C.L.	8. Canons Regular of the Mother of God	C.R.M.G.	1869															
C.L.	9. Canons Regular of the Order of the Holy Cross	C.R.C.	1211	700	773	773	383	49,55%										
C.L.	10. Confederation of Canons Regular of St. Augustine	C.R.S.A.	350	1188	1190	1190	638	53,61%										
C.L.	11. Rights of the Cross with the Red Star	O.C.R.	1237															
C.L.	12. Order of the Canons Regular of Penitence, Noblesse	O.P.N.	1120	1991	1991	1991	639	64,74%										
C.L.	13. Order of the Holy Cross	O.R.C.	1131															
C.L.	14. Order of the Holy Cross	O.T.	1190	94	90	90	91	96,81%										
C.L.	15. Order of the Holy Cross	C.R.	1849															
C.L.	16. Swiss Congregation of Canons Regular of Saint Maurice of Ajoie	O.A.C.C.	1808	48	80	50	41	88,33%										
C.L.	17. Antonian Order of Saint Ciriaco of the Children (Children)	O.A.	1700															
C.L.	18. Antonian Order (Monks)	O.A.M.	1884	156	156	156	175	110,79%										
C.L.	19. Antonian Order (Monks)	B.S.	1884	156	156	156	175	110,79%										
C.L.	20. Antonian Order (Monks)	O.M.M.	1884	156	156	156	175	110,79%										
C.L.	21. Antonian Order (Monks)	B.C.	1897	87	87	87	44	50,57%										
C.L.	22. Antonian Order (Monks)	O.S.B.M.	1631	311	311	311	528	169,77%										
C.L.	23. Antonian Order (Monks)	O.C.M.C.	1025	136	99	99	57	41,91%										
C.L.	24. Antonian Order (Monks)	O.C.M.	1701	51	49	49	32	62,75%										
C.L.	25. Antonian Order (Monks)	O.S.H.	1373															
C.L.	26. Order of Claretians	O. Claret	1895	1895	1895	1895	1733	104,08%										
C.L.	27. Order of Claretians	O.C.S.O.	1898	4211	3770	3819	1953	46,62%										
C.L.	28. Order of Claretians	O.L.M.	1895	699	560	560	409	87,20%										

I	Decrease over 60%: 19 congregations with 7273 religious in 2014 (3.1% of all religious)
II	Decrease between 50% and 60%: 20 congregations with 30397 religious in 2014 (12.8% of all religious)
III	Decrease between 30% and 50%: 42 congregations with 90629 religious in 2014 (33.3% of all religious)
IV	Decrease between 10% and 30%: 28 congregations with 19882 religious in 2014 (8.4% of all religious)
V	Decrease between 5% and 10%: 8 congregations with 18113 religious in 2014 (6.8% of all religious)
VI	Increase between 5% and 10%: 5 congregations with 1819 religious in 2014 (0.6% of all religious)
VII	Increase between 10% and 25%: 10 congregations with 3370 religious in 2014 (1.4% of all religious)
VIII	Increase over 25%: 7 congregations with 7237 religious in 2014 (3.1% of all religious)
IX	Founded after 1967: 14 congregations with 3342 religious in 2014 (1.4% of all religious)
X	46 congregations founded before 1967 without data during 1963-1967 with 6184 religious in 2014 (2.6% of all religious)

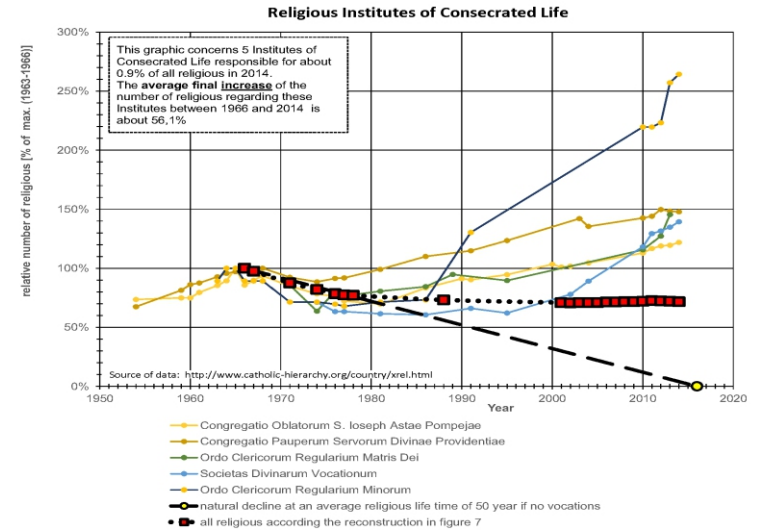


Figure 16: Institutes Eventually Restoring Pre-1965 Rate of Growth

Category 5: Institutes Eventually Restoring Pre-1965 Rate of Growth

Figure 16 concerns a cluster of 3 institutes representing 0.3% of these religious of Consecrated Life in 1966 and 0.6% in 2014. The timelines of these institutes show a development of the number of their religious after a more moderate post Vatican II decline in the first decade leading up to 2014. These institutes have grown to about 140% to 150% of the number of religious they had in 1966.

One thing to be noticed about these organizations is their strong association with nationalities outside of Western Europe. In the case of the **Societas Christi pro Emigrantibus Polonis** (The Society of Christ for Polish Emigrants), for example, a congregation specifically designated for the care of the Polish, it flourished during a period of time presided over by a Polish pope. This is not particularly surprising. It is notable that their most profound period of growth happened at the height of the papacy of St. John Paul II.

At the same time the **Ordo Antonianorum Maronitarum**, a congregation attached to the Maronite Rite, which maintains most of its traditional ritual, shows continual growth, which suggests a growth in congregations at-

Overview of Religious Congregations

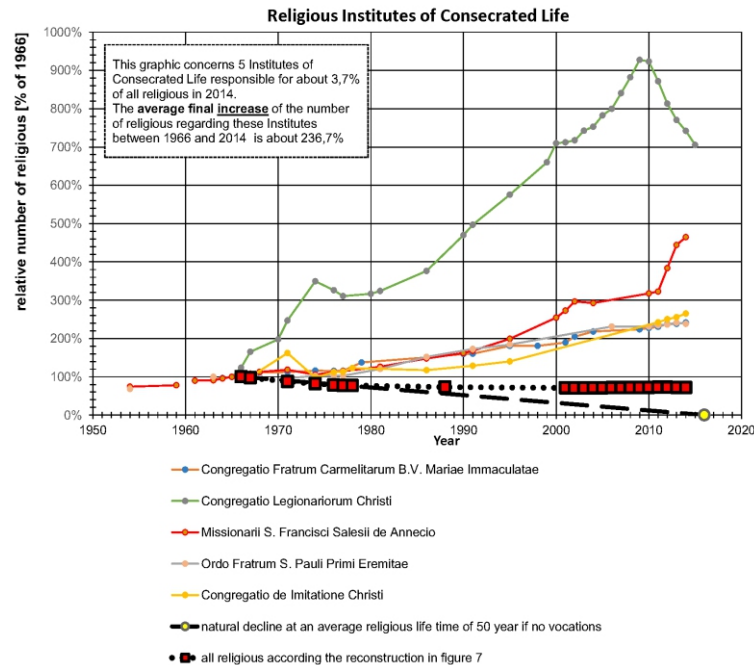


Figure 17: Institutes Suffering no Post-1965 Decline

tached to a more conservative liturgical tradition. In all, the well-known reforms that were implemented so vigorously in the West seem mainly to have benefited Churches in the East that did not change their Holy Liturgy.

Category 6: Institutes suffering no post-1965 Decline

Figure 17 shows 6 institutes representing in 1966 only 0.8% of the religious but in 2014 these institutes has been increased up to 4.3% of the mentioned religious, partly due to the average decline but also due to the increase of the number of religious of these institutes themselves. Evidently these institutes were not subjected to the post Vatican II decline during the first decade after Vatican II. While one of these institutes made a remarkable increase of the number of religious up to about 750% in 2009, the other institutes grew to about 250% to 300% relative to their numbers in 1966.

It has to be commented that this analysis also marks irregularities that can be caused by specific events. Such can be seen in **Figure 17** by timeline of the '**Congregatio Legionariorum Christi**' that shows a sudden collapse

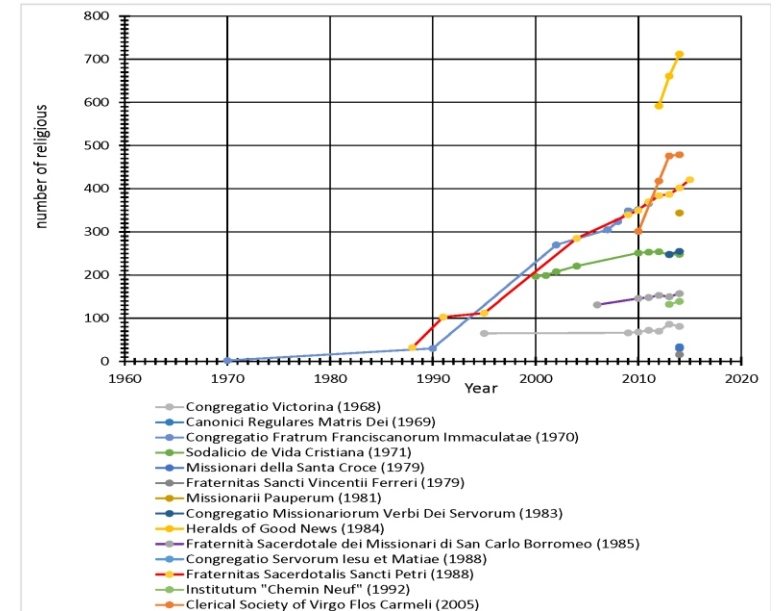


Figure 18: Institutes founded after 1966

after a strong growth of the Institute, where due to some internal problems, a strong decrease can be observed that is much sharper than a free fall without vocations. However, it can also be observed that some other institutes seem to have derived some benefit from this event by a sudden increase in the number of their religious, such as perhaps the **'Missionarii S. Francisci Salesii de Annecio'**

Category 7: Institutes founded after 1966

Finally **Figure 18** gives the timelines in absolute values for both 8 Institutes of Consecrated Life and 6 Societies for Apostolic Life that have been founded after the Second Vatican Council. The membership of these institutes cannot be expressed in relative values regarding a maximum number of religious during the period of the Council. In 2014 these 14 religious congregations represent about 1.6% of all religious.

Analysis

Despite the fact that this report contains objective facts and statistical analysis and is therefore of quantitative character, the numbers still bear out the words of Our Lord: *“By their fruits you shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and the evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can an evil tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits you shall know them.”* (Matt. 7, 16-20).

The quantitative analysis that we have given provides an indication of the quality of the spiritual nature of religious congregations and the religious themselves. The reason for this is that vocations are the primary spiritual fruit of a congregation. Moreover, these figures can also be an objective way to distinguish the work of the spirit of the world from the work of the Holy Spirit in the modern Church, for the Holy Spirit cannot be responsible for a long term continued decline of a congregation.

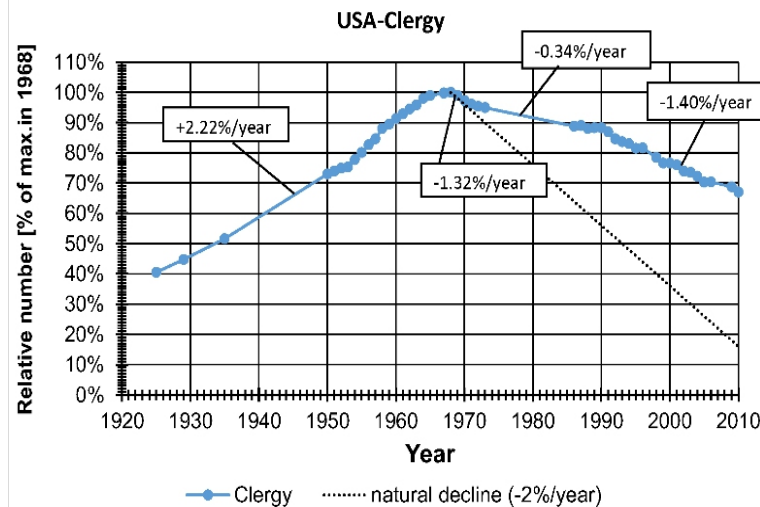


Figure 19: Number of clergy in USA [6]

Considering the magnitude of the loss, one has to wonder: why is there such reluctance among so many of the prelates and Superiors of the Congregations to acknowledge the reason for which the decline began and then to respond accordingly? The ongoing decline does not only pertain to those religious congregations in severe decline; it affects the entire Church and all humanity. The loss of those religious who, for centuries worked in missions worldwide has handicapped the Church. The loss of orders that once ran hospitals and schools has left our inner cities violent and destitute.

The superiors of those congregations that are in continued decline have a heavy responsibility in this, and will be called to account for it.

They can either continue propagating this ongoing catastrophe or they can begin the process of recovery by returning to the original spirituality of their founders. The authors hope that this study will inspire further investigation into the subject. But more importantly, it is our hope that it will inspire action by those responsible for leading the Church into the future. Those institutes which are thriving should be held up as models to be emulated. Those which are slowly dying and show no signs of recovery should be corrected on points of doctrine and liturgy, and if they refuse to conform they should be suppressed. The stakes are too high to simply ignore the devastation of the vineyard.

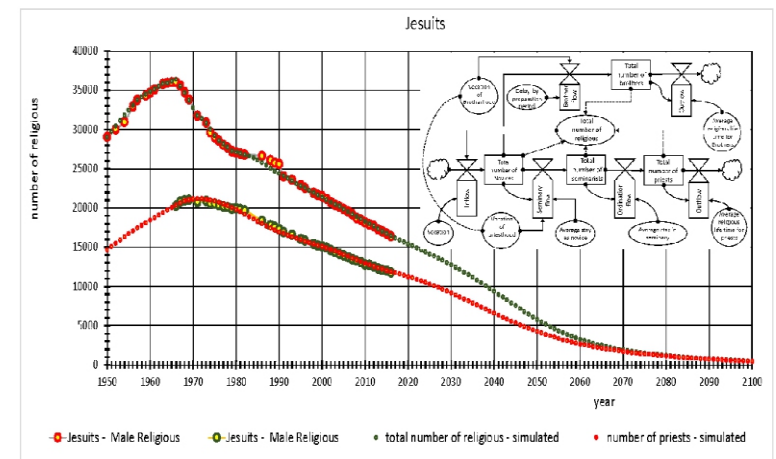


Figure 25: “By their fruits you will know them”

The very existence of the Holy Church in the future has been placed at risk. The loss of understanding of even the nature of the Church is widespread, and it is now possible to find wide swaths of both the USA and Europe in which there is no evidence of any religious influence. **Along with the disappearance of religious sisters and brothers who once ran Catholic Schools and Catholic Hospitals, the Americas and Western Europe have undergone crises in both health care and education. The results seem to be catastrophic for the religious congregations in severe decline (category 1).**

Take for example, the Jesuits, which have decreased in 2015 to about 46.5% of the 1966 memberships. The rate of declining during the last 25 years was rather constant at about 300 Jesuits per year. If this is continuing one could make a linear extrapolation showing a more or less extinct Society at about 2070.

Certainly, one has to realize that a constant declining rate indicates a scenario that gets progressively worse over time. The constant decline of about 300 Jesuits a year reduced their numbers from about 23,000 Jesuits in 1995 to about 16,000 Jesuits in 2015. This is a change from -1.3 %/year to -1.8%/year.

However, based on the fitted data from the past 60 years, more likely is an extrapolation by a 'system-dynamic'-model (Attachment 2) taking into account the multiple in- and outflow of the religious Priesthood and Brothers separately, like inflow by vocation of religious and the ordination to Priesthood as well as the outflow by resigning and dying religious. A continuation of the trends of the past 25 years throughout the coming era would see the largest congregation of religious losing its pride and becoming one of the many small groups with less than 2000 members between 2070 and 2080 (Figure 25). Only a return of the Jesuit spirit to that of their founder St. Ignatius can save them from extinction.

This extrapolation serves as a warning for the future. The stakes are too high to simply ignore the ongoing catastrophe. Therefore, in attachment 2, we provide the results of similar extrapolations for the seven largest congregations. If there is no spiritual conversion among the religious congregations in severe decline, one can expect that the scenarios which these extrapolations predict will certainly eventuate. Not only the Jesuits, but also the Franciscans, Redemptorists, Benedictines and Dominicans will decline into small unimportant religious congregations within a period of 80 years, if no reform takes place.

Period from 1950 to 1976

The statistical data above vividly depicts the dramatic decline of the number of male religious in the post-Conciliar period. After having begun between 1963 and 1966, this decline continues to the present for most religious congregations. For 134 well-documented religious congregations that still represent about 74% of all religious in 2014, the average decline within the first decade after the Council was about 20%, from 281,484 religious in 1966 to about 226,676 in 1976 (Table 4). Only 5 of the 134 previously mentioned congregations did not suffer that first decade post-Council decline (Figure 17).

It appears in Figure 6 that, for several religious congregations, the decline in 1976 varied between 10% to even 50% with an average of about 20%. That means a variation of declining rate between about -1%/year to -5%/year with an average of about -2%/year. In contrast to this sudden decline after the Second Vatican Council, the data shows that there was a pre-conciliar growth rate that varied between +1%/year and +2%/year during the period 1950 to 1963. The same can be found by other sources regarding some of the religious institutes, such as the Society of Jesus (Figure 8) and the Salesians of Don Bosco (Figure 9).

This was also true for the diocesan clergy in the Netherlands (Figure 2 to Figure 4), the USA (Figure 19) and Great Britain (Figure 21, England and Wales [23]). These data indicate that this growth rate was not only during

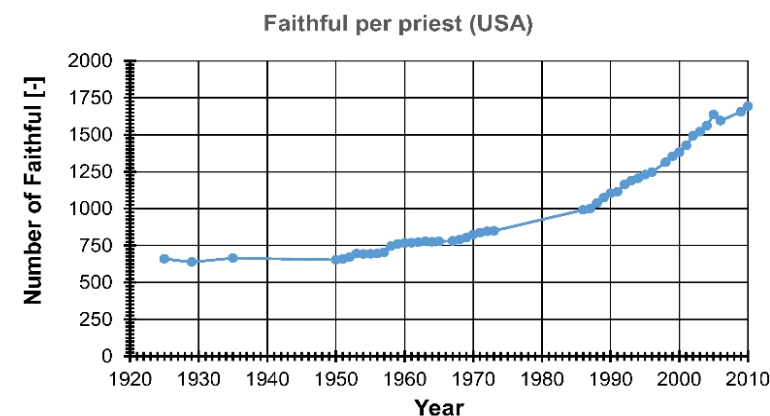


Figure 20: Number of faithful per priest in USA

year (31/12)	Jesuits		Franciscans		Salesian		Capuchins		Dominican		Sum of the four largest congregations	
	Number of religious	Growth or decline a year	Number of religious	Growth or decline a year	Number of religious	Growth or decline a year	Number of religious	Growth or decline a year	Number of religious	Growth or decline a year	Number of religious	Growth or decline a year
1959	34293		26162		20031		15442		9508		105436	
1960	34687	394 1,1%	26151	-11 0,0%	20545	514 2,6%	15624	182 1,2%	9737	229 2,4%	106744	1308 1,2%
1961	35086	399 1,2%	26876	725 2,8%	21048	503 2,4%	15708	84 0,5%	9841	104 1,1%	108559	1815 1,7%
1962	351	351 1,0%	27136	130 0,5%	21355	154 0,7%	15849	71 0,5%	10150	155 1,6%	110278	860 0,8%
1963	35788	351 1,0%	27136	130 0,5%	21355	154 0,7%	15849	71 0,5%	10150	155 1,6%	110278	860 0,8%
1964	35968	180 0,5%	27140	4 0,0%	22042	687 3,2%	15751	-98 -0,6%	10091	-59 -0,6%	110992	714 0,6%
1965	36038	70 0,2%	27009	-131 -0,5%	22042	0 0,0%	15838	87 0,6%	10191	100 1,0%	111118	126 0,1%
1966	36038	0 0,0%	26940	-69 -0,3%	22026	584 2,6%	15710	-128 -0,8%	10003	-188 -1,8%	111317	199 0,2%
1967	35573	-465 -1,3%	26666	-274 -1,0%	22810	184 0,8%	15575	-135 -0,9%	9946	-57 -0,6%	110570	-747 -0,7%
1968	34762	-811 -2,3%		-541 -2,0%		-597 -2,6%		-543 -3,5%		-137 -1,4%		-2629 -2,4%
1969	33828	-934 -2,7%		-541 -2,0%		-597 -2,5%		-543 -3,4%		-137 -1,4%		-2752 -2,4%
1970		-1042 -3,1%		-541 -2,0%		-597 -2,5%		-543 -3,3%		-137 -1,3%		-2859 -2,5%
1971	31745	-1042 -3,0%	24501	-541 -2,2%	20423	-597 -2,4%	13403	-543 -4,0%	9399	-137 -1,5%	99471	-2859 -2,4%

Table 5: Turning point from growth before 1963 to decline after 1966 regarding the largest congregations [1], [2]

the last decade before the Second Vatican Council but had been a reality for several decades before this sudden decline that began between 1963 and 1966.

The data pertaining to the Dutch ordinations (**Figure 2**) as well as the number of clergy in England and Wales (**Figure 21**) do not show any decline of religious membership after the First Vatican Council. The Salesians of Don Bosco (**Figure 9**), founded in 1859, showed for all years through till 1966 a steady growth from about zero in 1859 to 22,810 in 1966, an average growth of about 210 vocation a year.

Table 5 shows the radical shift from a pattern of growth prior to 1963 into a dramatic decline after 1966.

Some of the sources also show that, before 1963, the growth of the number of clergy for decades was linear, coinciding with the growth of the number of faithful (**Figure 4** and **Figure 20**).

A timeline of the number of religious sisters in the USA (**Figure 22**) shows the same trend previously seen in the decline of the number of Jesuit religious (**Figure 8**).

As was previously observed in the Dutch example (**Figure 2** to **Figure 4**), the reversal of a growth rate to a declining rate can only be explained by a sudden and dramatic drop of vocations together with a dramatic increase of resignations. The declining rate is generally a result of a combination of lost vocations, resignation and the natural decrease by dying members. Based on an estimated religious life time of 50 years, the latter can be estimated as -

Regarding the average timeline of the 134 well-documented congregations, the decline due to the congregations of Category 1 has already been compensated to an average decline of about 10% from the average level for all religious in 2014 and evidently this 10% has been compensated by the non-documented congregations. Obviously the contours of the constructed time line necessary to compensate the Jesuits decline can be observed by a lot of the congregations.

Here we can raise some additional questions, such as “*What kind of spirit has caused such a lack of vocations within the congregations mentioned by category 1?*”, “*What do these religious congregations have in common that this decline has continued still after 1976?*”, “*Why can other congregations grow, even such that they compensated to the losses of the category 1 congregations?*” as well as “*What are the differences between these types of congregations?*”

Conclusion

The longer a problem is allowed to continue unchecked, the more difficult it becomes to eventually come to terms with it. By categorizing the various institutes according to characteristic curves, one can find the common traits among those institutes which bear fruit and the common traits among those which bear no fruit. The availability of the data suggesting a link between liturgy and the vitality – or lack thereof – of religious life is not new. Such data has been available for many years now. Herein we have shown that the vitality also relates to the religious life and doctrinal integrity of the various institutes.

At some point the question of willful ignorance must be raised. Those who “bury their heads in the sand” like an ostrich may do so if they would like to avoid some unpleasant fact or news. For the leadership of the Holy Catholic Church to do so when confronted with an existential crisis is intolerable. Saint Thomas Aquinas says

“*It is clear that not every kind of ignorance is the cause of a sin, but that alone which removes the knowledge which would prevent the sinful act. ... This may happen on the part of the ignorance itself, because to wit this ignorance is voluntary either directly as when a man wishes of set purpose to be ignorant of certain things that he may sin the more freely; or indirectly as when a man, through stress of work or other occupations, neglects to acquire the knowledge which would restrain him from sin. For such like negligence renders the ignorance itself voluntary and sinful, provided it be about matters one is bound and able to know.*” (Reference: St. Thomas Aquinas Summa I-II. q.76.a.1.ad.3)

Although the total baptized Catholic faithful in the world (Figure 23) is still growing, even the observed stabilization of religious memberships since 2000 is in fact a relative decline. For this outcome, a high degree of responsibility rests on the congregations of Category 1.

As an example, we can look at the Society of Jesus. After the first decade with a decline of about 20% of the 1966 members the Jesuits shows since 1990 a steady decline by which about 48% left in 2014. So, against these about 48% of the 1966 number of Jesuits left in 2014 about 72.5 % of the 1966 members of all religious congregations were left

This difference in relative decline means that the decline of the Jesuits was compensated by the growth of a large number of smaller congregations representing about the same number of religious as the Jesuits. This is about 7% of all religious in 2014 (Figure 24). This implies an average growth rate of these congregations of about +1%/year, which is comparable to the period before the Second Vatican Council. Evidently, without such compensation for at least five of the seven largest congregations - ~19% of all religious in 2014 - the number of all religious would have been much less, probably 50% to 55% of the 1966 membership level.

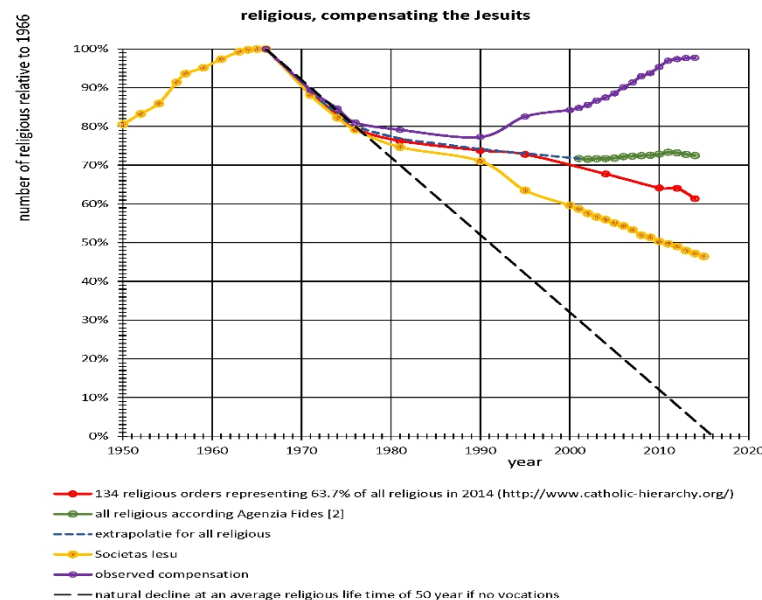


Figure 24: Compensation of Jesuits' decline

Figure 1: Priests and Mass Centres

England and Wales, 1841-2001

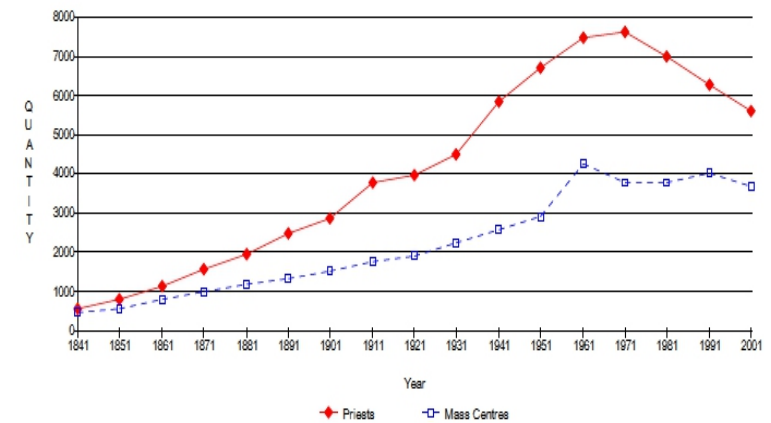


Figure 21: Number of clergy in England and Wales []

2%/year. It has to be concluded that, if the declining rate goes beyond - 2%/year, it must be due to resignations.

At this point the following questions can be raised:

Why this Church-wide sudden lack of ordinations?
Why this Church-wide sudden and dramatic increase in resignations?
Why were the strongest sudden and dramatic decline found in the dioceses of the Cardinals and Bishops that had set the tone during the Council?

Period from 1976 to 2014

After the initial average decline of about 20% in the first decade, an average decline of about 10% of the religious membership followed over a period of the next 25 years. At approximately that point, the memberships stabilized at about 70% of the memberships of 1966. However, looking at the well-documented individual congregations represented by the timelines in **Figure 11** to **Figure 18**, the following categories can be distinguished:

1. Category 1: Institutes in Severe Decline (Figure 11 and Figure 12);
2. Category 2: Institutes in Decline but Eventually Finding Stability (Figure 13);
3. Category 3: Institutes in Decline but Eventually Reaching a Slow Rate of Growth (Figure 14);
4. Category 4: Institutes Eventually Restoring Pre-1965 Membership Level (Figure 15);
5. Category 5: Institutes Eventually Restoring Pre-1965 Rate of Growth (Figure 16);
6. Category 6: Institutes suffering no post-1965 Decline (Figure 17);
7. Category 7: Institutes founded after 1966 (**Figure 18**).

These figures are restricted to a selection of 67 Institutes of Consecrated Life of the 134 well-documented congregations, but still representing about

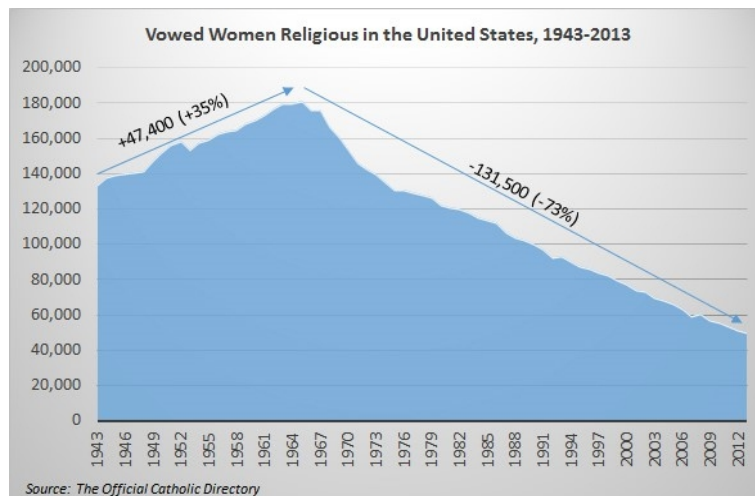


Figure 22: Religious Sisters in US (1943-2012) [20]

63.7% of all religious in 2014. Regarding this selection, approximately 47.3% of all religious belong to Category 1 (**Figure 12** and **Figure 13**) and continued in decline during the years after 1976, reaching to between 20% and 70% of their 1966 membership in 2014. Five of the largest seven congregations, representing 19% of all religious in 2014, are among these congregations, with a decline varying between about 45% and 55%.

However, in contrast to these congregations in continual decline, the other categories do not show a steady decline. While some of these congregations stabilized around the 1976-level, others show after that initial decline a variant of growth.

Within these particular congregations, the membership levels of categories 2 to 7 compensated for the decline within category 1 so that the average decline of the 134 congregations is about 38%. Taking into account also the 14 previously-mentioned congregations founded after 1966, this decline is reduced to about 37%. Due to the fact that, according to the data of Agenzia Fides [3], the total number of religious was rather constant during the last 14 years at an estimated level of about 27.5% compared to 1966 (**Figure 24**), it can be concluded that a majority of the other congregations, representing about 36.3% of all religious in 2014, contributed to the stabilization of the numbers of religious since about 2000, so that the observed average decline reaches 38%, even though the well-documented congregations slumped to 27.5%.

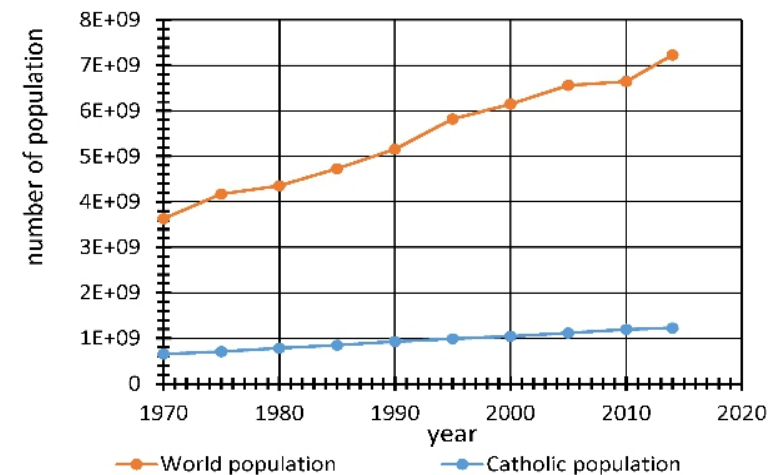


Figure 23: World population and baptized Catholics [3]