Tier 2

The Tier System:

Vocation Ministry introduced a **Tier System** in the 2023 *State of Priestly Vocations* report to categorize dioceses into one of four tiers based on overall Catholic population size. This system allowed for a nuanced analysis of key metrics related to vocations, such as ordination rates and seminarian enrollment, recognizing that dioceses face different challenges and opportunities depending on their size and resources. The tiers were as follows:

Tier 2

- **Characteristics:** These dioceses typically encompass mid-sized metropolitan areas as well as some rural areas and serve Catholic populations ranging from 300,000 to 750,000 Catholics.
- **Challenges**: Balancing resource limitations with the need to reach a diverse range of communities.
- **Opportunities:** Medium-sized dioceses often benefit from a manageable scale that allows for more personalized vocation promotion while still leveraging significant resources.

Purpose of the Tier System:

The tier system was designed to:

1. **Provide Contextual Comparisons**: Comparing dioceses within the same tier helped identify what works for similarly resourced and sized dioceses.
2. **Highlight Best Practices**: The system spotlighted dioceses excelling within their tiers, allowing others to learn from their strategies.
3. **Facilitate Customized Solutions**: Recognizing that a "one-size-fits-all" approach would not be effective, the tier system encouraged dioceses to tailor their vocation efforts to their unique circumstances.

By analyzing data through the lens of these tiers, the report offered actionable insights and practical recommendations that were relevant to dioceses of all sizes.

VOCATION MINISTRY

Tier 2
42 Dioceses
300,000-750,000 Catholics in Dioceses

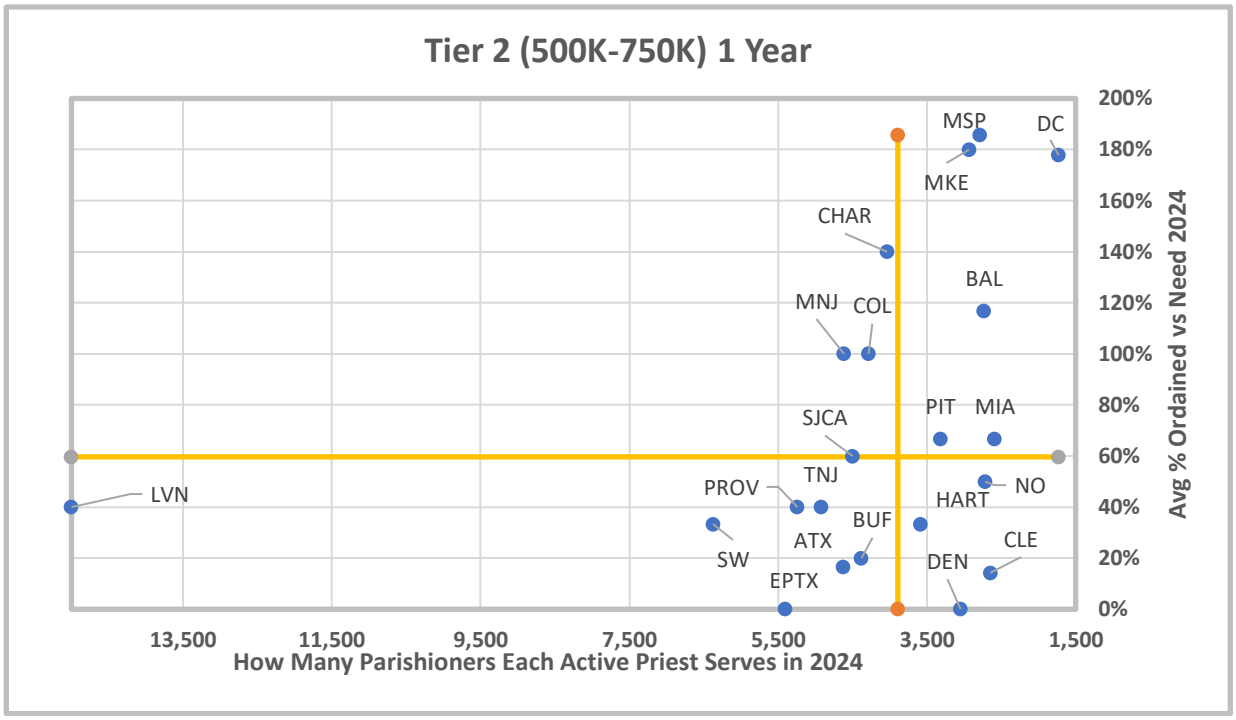
(ARCH)DIOCESE	Diocese Abbrev.	Total Catholics in Diocese in 2024	Total Seminarians 2024	Seminarians Needed 2024**	% of Total Seminarians 2024 vs Need**	Priestly Ordinations 2024	Priestly Ordinations Needed 2024**	On Avg % Ordained vs. Need 2024	Parishioners Each Active Priest Served in 2024
Albany, New York	ALB	316,275	7	33	21%	5	3	167%	3,012
Arlington, Virginia	ARL	432,721	42	52	81%	2	4	40%	2,326
Austin, Texas	ATX	693,624	57	59	97%	1	5	17%	4,624
Baltimore, Maryland	BAL	518,818	54	57	95%	7	5	117%	2,731
Bridgeport, Connecticut	BRPT	370,000	34	38	88%	2	3	50%	3,008
Buffalo, New York	BUF	525,609	6	46	13%	1	4	20%	4,380
Camden, New Jersey	CAM	307,116	11	41	27%	1	3	25%	1,969
Charlotte, North Carolina	CHAR	565,120	49	51	96%	7	4	140%	4,037
Cincinnati, Ohio	CIN	455,788	47	48	98%	7	4	140%	2,922
Cleveland, Ohio	CLE	600,803	53	67	79%	1	6	14%	2,647
Columbus, Ohio	COL	505,455	41	44	92%	5	4	100%	4,284
Denver Colorado	DEN	624,732	29	64	45%	0	5	0%	3,047
El Paso, Texas	EPTX	686,037	13	55	24%	0	5	0%	5,402
Hartford, Connecticut	HART	612,849	10	58	17%	2	5	33%	3,584
Joliet, Illinois	JOL	497,380	23	47	49%	1	4	20%	3,712
Laredo, Texas	LTX	336,220	3	23	13%	1	2	33%	8,406
Las Vegas, Nevada	LVN	750,000	10	46	22%	2	4	40%	15,000
Metuchen, New Jersey	MNJ	636,728	19	54	35%	5	5	100%	4,614
Miami, Florida	MIA	512,608	61	58	106%	4	5	67%	2,589
Milwaukee, Wisconsin	MKE	533,433	44	56	78%	9	5	180%	2,931
Monterey, California	MON	368,150	4	31	13%	0	3	0%	4,781
New Orleans, Louisiana	NO	505,369	19	55	34%	3	5	50%	2,717
Oakland, California	OAK	366,991	13	51	26%	1	4	20%	1,826
Orlando, Florida	ORFL	408,667	20	41	48%	2	3	50%	3,144
Paterson, New Jersey	PAT	400,000	9	45	20%	1	4	20%	2,597
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania	PIT	613,377	31	61	51%	4	5	67%	3,316

**See formulas for calculations in appendix.

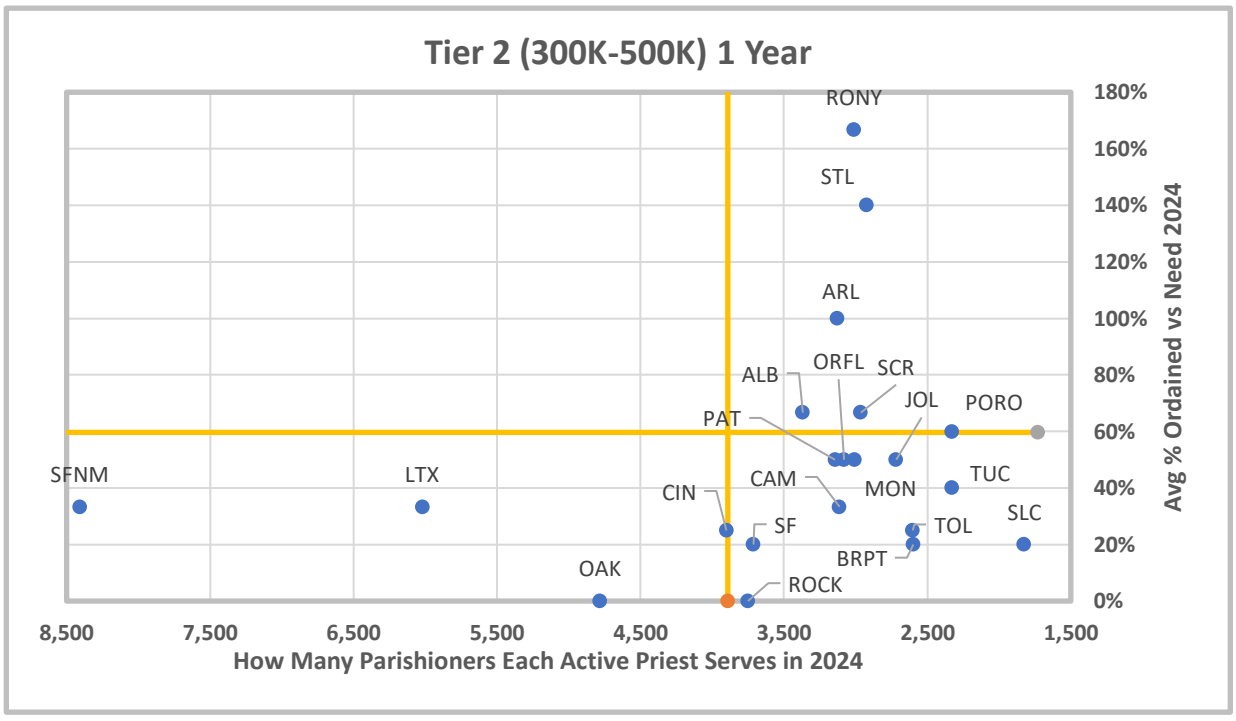
(ARCH)DIOCESE	Diocese Abbrev.	Total Catholics in Diocese in 2024	Total Seminarians 2024	Seminarians Needed 2024**	% of Total Seminarians 2024 vs Need**	Priestly Ordinations 2024	Priestly Ordinations Needed 2024**	On Avg % Ordained vs. Need 2024	Parishioners Each Active Priest Served in 2024
Portland, Oregon	PORO	441,164	42	45	94%	4	4	100%	3,129
Providence, Rhode Island	PROV	597,395	13	48	27%	2	4	40%	5,240
Rochester, New York	RONY	311,182	8	32	25%	1	3	33%	3,112
Rockford, Illinois	ROCK	415,903	13	43	30%	2	4	50%	3,081
Salt Lake City, Utah	SLC	337,137	5	26	19%	1	2	33%	6,020
San Francisco, California	SF	472,000	12	43	28%	1	4	25%	3,901
San Jose, California	SJCA	513,000	6	44	14%	3	4	60%	4,500
Santa Fe, New Mexico	SFNM	328,968	9	34	26%	2	3	67%	2,964
Scranton, Pennsylvania	SCR	317,426	10	36	28%	1	3	25%	2,602
Seattle, Washington	SW	733,208	17	55	31%	2	5	33%	6,376
St. Louis, Missouri	STL	442,468	35	53	66%	3	4	60%	2,329
St. Paul/Minneapolis, Minnesota	MSP	720,000	64	78	82%	13	6	186%	2,791
Toledo, Ohio	TOL	316,581	11	31	35%	2	3	67%	3,368
Trenton, New Jersey	TNJ	640,000	8	53	15%	2	4	40%	4,923
Tucson, Arizona	TUC	431,346	7	40	17%	0	3	0%	3,751

**See formulas for calculations in appendix.

Tier 2 – Quadrant
500,000-750,000



Tier 2 – Quadrant
300,000-500,000



*Abbreviations of dioceses can be found in the spreadsheet on the previous page.

VOCATION MINISTRY

Tier 2 – Quadrant Analysis

These Quadrant Charts are graphs of "How Many Parishioners Each Active Priest Serves" compared to "Average Ordination Rate vs. Need". Each dot on these charts represents the data for a diocese. The vertical and horizontal orange lines provide the overall averages for all the dioceses in their group. Let's define what each quadrant represents:

Upper Right Quadrant-
Current Situation: The dioceses in this quadrant generally have good numbers of active priests and smaller numbers of parishioners that each priest serves. Ordinations are relatively high compared to the other dioceses in the demographic group. Since each priest serves smaller numbers, access to priests is greater, and relationship potential, necessary for developing vocations, is more possible.

Future Situation: The dioceses in this quadrant, even though it may not be ordaining as many as it would like, is in the best situation of all the quadrants heading forward. Since ordination rates are higher, and the replacement of existing priests is ongoing, as we approach the high retirement rates of baby boomer priests, this group will most likely handle this situation the best of the four quadrants.

Upper Left Quadrant-
Current Situation: The dioceses in this quadrant generally have smaller numbers of active priests and large numbers of parishioners that each priest serves. This reason can be different in the tiers. Some dioceses are Catholic population-dense in a smaller geographic area; others may have a small number of priests serving vast numbers of parishioners. Either way, the result is that access to priests is reduced. We generally see very few dioceses in the quadrant, which means developing a strong, nurturing vocational environment is almost impossible. This doesn't mean that individual parishes cannot do this successfully. Still, dioceses that average high parishioner numbers have found it impossible to generate more than 60% of the ordinations needed in this quadrant.

Future Situation: Since there are very few dioceses in this quadrant, with many parishioners that each priest serves and a high ordination rate, it's hard to see a model that shows us what success looks like.

Bottom Right Quadrant-
Current Situation: The dioceses in this quadrant generally have good numbers of active priests and smaller numbers of parishioners that each priest serves. Ordinations are relatively low compared to the other dioceses in the demographic group. Since each priest serves smaller numbers, access to priests is greater, and relationship potential, which is necessary for developing vocations, is more possible.

Future Situation: If the addressable steps are taken, it will take time to see positive change in these dioceses because of the number of years needed for priestly formation. But this group has all the tools and inputs necessary for revival.

Bottom Left Quadrant-
Current Situation: Dioceses in this quadrant struggle in many cases with a lack of existing priests, and each existing priest serves large numbers of parishioners. Ordination rates are very low compared to the other dioceses in their demographic group. With all the demands of handling these large parishes, priests find it very challenging to create a vocational environment to develop sustaining numbers of vocations to the priesthood. Therefore, very few ordinations are fostered in these dioceses.

Future Situation: The question is what changes can be made to make it possible to create a more vocational environment. The first step is awareness. Changes of some priorities from administrative to vocational are possible. Defining roles where religious priests, lay people, and retired religious can fill gaps to alleviate the situation outlined can help create a vocational environment

VOCATION MINISTRY

Tier 2 – Priestly Availability Index

(ARCH)DIOCESE	Total Active Priests for 2024	Total Catholics in Diocese in 2024	Total Parishes 2024	Priestly Availability Index**
Albany, New York	105	316,275	126	42
Arlington, Virginia	186	432,721	70	30
Austin, Texas	150	693,624	103	22
Baltimore, Maryland	190	518,818	137	50
Bridgeport, Connecticut	123	370,000	73	24
Buffalo, New York	120	525,609	144	33
Camden, New Jersey	156	307,116	62	31
Charlotte, North Carolina	140	565,120	75	19
Cincinnati, Ohio	156	455,788	195	67
Cleveland, Ohio	227	600,803	184	70
Columbus, Ohio	118	505,455	78	18
Denver Colorado	205	624,732	124	41
El Paso, Texas	127	686,037	58	11
Hartford, Connecticut	171	612,849	97	27
Joliet, Illinois	134	497,380	110	30
Laredo, Texas	40	336,220	32	4
Las Vegas, Nevada	50	750,000	31	2
Metuchen, New Jersey	138	636,728	90	20
Miami, Florida	198	512,608	104	40
Milwaukee, Wisconsin	182	533,433	184	63
Monterey, California	77	368,150	46	10
New Orleans, Louisiana	186	505,369	104	38
Oakland, California	201	366,991	82	45
Orlando, Florida	130	408,667	80	25
Paterson, New Jersey	154	400,000	107	41
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania	185	613,377	60	18
Portland, Oregon	141	441,164	125	40
Providence, Rhode Island	114	597,395	119	23
Rochester, New York	100	311,182	86	28
Rockford, Illinois	135	415,903	105	34
Salt Lake City, Utah	56	337,137	48	8
San Francisco, California	121	472,000	92	24
San Jose, California	114	513,000	49	11
Santa Fe, New Mexico	111	328,968	93	31
Scranton, Pennsylvania	122	317,426	106	41
Seattle, Washington	115	733,208	136	21
St. Louis, Missouri	190	442,468	139	60
St. Paul/Minneapolis, Minnesota	258	720,000	186	67
Toledo, Ohio	94	316,581	122	36
Trenton, New Jersey	130	640,000	97	20
Tucson, Arizona	115	431,346	77	21
Washington, DC	377	651,883	140	81

**See formulas for calculations in appendix.

VOCATION MINISTRY

Tier 2

Marriages in the United States in 2024

(ARCH)DIOCESE	Total Catholic Marriages	Marriages Between Two Catholics	Interfaith Marriages
Albany, New York	350	260	90
Arlington, Virginia	1373	941	432
Austin, Texas	1269	1050	219
Baltimore, Maryland	1042	772	270
Bridgeport, Connecticut	433	427	6
Buffalo, New York	574	454	120
Camden, New Jersey	413	264	149
Charlotte, North Carolina	768	620	148
Cincinnati, Ohio	1207	1000	207
Cleveland, Ohio	1317	995	322
Columbus, Ohio	625	449	176
Denver Colorado	1217	947	270
El Paso, Texas	332	301	31
Hartford, Connecticut	638	575	63
Joliet, Illinois	789	674	115
Laredo, Texas	246	234	12
Las Vegas, Nevada	457	392	65
Metuchen, New Jersey	618	522	96
Miami, Florida	1392	1277	115
Milwaukee, Wisconsin	1040	780	260
Monterey, California	539	481	58
New Orleans, Louisiana	1114	928	186
Oakland, California	1517	538	979
Orlando, Florida	957	769	188
Paterson, New Jersey	753	677	76
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania	998	705	293
Portland, Oregon	683	563	120
Providence, Rhode Island	640	526	114
Rochester, New York	325	268	57
Rockford, Illinois	595	493	102
Salt Lake City, Utah	366	304	62
San Francisco, California	267	196	71
San Jose, California	611	494	117
Santa Fe, New Mexico	539	472	67
Scranton, Pennsylvania	381	303	78
Seattle, Washington	967	713	254
St. Louis, Missouri	1140	838	302
St. Paul/Minneapolis, Minnesota	1210	877	333
Toledo, Ohio	559	361	198
Trenton, New Jersey	1138	998	140
Tucson, Arizona	478	428	50
Washington, DC	1237	920	317

VOCATION MINISTRY

Tier 2 - Correlations

Vocation Ministry was interested in knowing if any diocesan information collected from the Official Catholic Directory publications of 2015- to 2024 could be contributing factors affecting vocations to the priesthood and, if so, how significant the effects may be. Understanding these trends may help all understand what creates a more favorable environment to foster vocations.

Pearson correlations are a way to measure the direction and strength of the relationship between two variables. The direction of the effect is indicated by a "+" or "– "sign in front of the reported number. For instance, a "– "sign would indicate the two variables move in different directions, i.e., as one increases, the other decreases. A "+" indicates the two variables move together in the same direction, either higher or lower.

The reported number indicates the strength of the relationship and how perfect it is. All reported numbers are between "0" and "1.0". An ideal relationship would be 1.0, which rarely occurs, and no relationship at all would be "0". To understand the range of reported numbers and their indications, see the table below to describe relationship strengths. While no individual trait should be expected to represent all the variations, those significant ones can be taken as direct contributing factors.

> -0.8	**Very High Negative Correlation**		**> +0.8**	**Very High Positive Correlation**
-0.6 to -0.8	**High Negative Correlation**		**+0.6 to +0.8**	**High Positive Correlation**
-0.4 to -0.6	**Moderate Negative Correlation**		**+0.4 to +0.6**	**Moderate Positive Correlation**
-0.2 to -0.4	**Low Negative Correlation**		**+0.2 to +0.4**	**Low Positive Correlation**
0 to -0.2	**No Correlation**		**0 to +0.2**	**No Correlation**

Tests of significance using *p-values* (*probability values*) of .05, .01, and .001 were applied and are designated as *, **, ***, respectively. To understand the statistical significance, a *p-value* of .05 would indicate a 1 in 20 chance of this outcome being exceeded by chance alone, .01 would indicate 1 chance in 100, and .001 would indicate 1 chance in 1000. Thus, confidence in results increases as reported correlations are strong (in either direction), and *p values* get smaller.

VOCATION MINISTRY

Tier 2 – Correlation Findings

42 Dioceses

Tier 2	Priestly Availability Index	How Many Parishioners Does Each Active Priest Serve	Parishioners per Parish	Total Active Priests per Total Parishes
Total Seminarians 2023	0.59**	-0.33	-0.22	0.16
Seminarian Average 2015-2024	0.77***	-0.44*	-0.34	0.16
% of Total Seminarians 2024 vs Need**	0.50*	-0.34	-0.26	0.06
% of Total Seminarians 2015-2024 vs Need**	0.72***	-0.52*	-0.47*	-0.03
Priestly Ordinations 2024	0.60**	-0.22	-0.16	0.12
Priestly Ordination Average 2015-2024	0.72***	-0.50*	-0.38	0.18
On Average % Ordained vs. Need 2024	0.52*	-0.21	-0.26	0.16
On Average % Ordained vs. Need 2015-2024	0.58**	-0.49*	-0.26	0.06
* P <.05, **p <.01, ***p <.001				

Appendix

Formulas Used for This Report

Base Need Ordination Rate—To determine how many ordinations are needed by dioceses, Vocation Ministry used the average of two factors:

1. Population Factor equals one ordination per 120,000 Catholics in a diocese
2. Replacement Rate of Priests (see below).

Replacement Rate of Priests—The replacement rate of priests is the number of ordinations needed annually simply to replace the current number of priests in a diocese. The rate used in this report is 2.7 percent. This rate was arrived at by determining the average years of ministry for priests in the US.

Subtracting the average ordination age of priests (34) from the average retirement age (71), the average length of ministry is 37 years. Considering a priest's length of ministry to be a unit, divide that unit by the number of years. Thus, the annual rate of replacement necessary to retain the current number of priests over a given time period (1/37 = 0.027 or 2.7%).

Thus, if a diocese has 83 priests, each year they will need to ordain an average of 2.241 (83 * 0.027) new priests yearly just to replace the current number as they retire.
Depending on a diocese's particular need, a higher replacement rate may be necessary. This calculation does not include other factors of attrition which may cause a decrease in priests, such as a higher than the average normal rate of retirement.

Base Need Seminarian Rate—To determine the number of seminarians needed, the Base Need Ordination Rate was multiplied by the average length of seminary formation (eight years), then increased by the average discern-out rate of 50 percent.

Priestly Availability Index- ((Total Active Priests)/(Total Catholics in Diocese/Total Parishes in Diocese))*1000

Total Catholic Marriages—To determine the number of total Catholic marriages, the number of marriages between two Catholics is added to the number of interfaith marriages (one spouse is Catholic, and one is of a different faith).