



Tier 4
53 dioceses
<100,000 Catholic Population

ARCHDIOCESE	Diocese Abbrev.	Total Catholics in Diocese in 2022	Priestly Ordinations 2022	Priestly Ordination Avg 2018-2022	Priestly Ordinations Needed 2022*	On Avg % Ordained vs. Need 2022	Total Seminarians 2022	Seminarian Avg 2018-2022	Seminarians Needed 2022**	% of Total Seminarians 2022 vs # Needed	How Many Parishioners Does Each Active Priest Serve In the Diocese in 2022
Burlington, Vermont	BUR	100,000	2	2	2	100%	7	8	18	38%	1,887
Lafayette, Indiana	LAIN	99,034	1	2	2	50%	13	12	18	71%	1,624
Lincoln, Nebraska	LINC	94,428	4	4	3	133%	28	33	27	103%	670
Covington, Kentucky	COV	90,886	1	2	2	50%	6	10	18	33%	1,515
Nashville, Tennessee	NASH	90,390	2	3	2	100%	21	23	18	115%	1,063
Reno, Nevada	RENO	89,622	0	1	1	0%	3	4	9	33%	2,716
Saginaw, Michigan	SAG	86,333	0	1	2	0%	5	6	18	27%	1,919
Davenport, Iowa	DAV	85,437	2	2	2	100%	5	9	18	27%	1,356
Sioux City, Iowa	SCIA	81,402	1	1	2	50%	8	8	18	44%	1,732
Savannah, Georgia	SAV	80,000	2	2	2	100%	12	16	18	66%	988
Belleville, Illinois	BEL	79,643	1	2	2	50%	6	7	18	33%	1,475
Houma-Thibodaux, Louisiana	HUM	76,115	2	2	2	100%	9	12	18	49%	1,359
Jefferson City, MO	JEFF	74,757	0	1	2	0%	7	8	18	38%	1,226
Fargo, North Dakota	FAR	73,697	2	2	2	100%	15	17	18	82%	847
Beaumont, Texas	BEAU	71,458	0	1	2	0%	12	7	18	66%	1,553
Pensacola-Tallahassee, Florida	TALL	71,445	0	1	2	0%	8	12	18	44%	785
Victoria, Texas	VIC	71,332	2	1	2	100%	10	11	18	55%	1,274
Ogdensburg, New York	OGD	71,315	1	2	2	50%	9	10	18	49%	1,297
Knoxville, TN	KNO	71,274	0	1	2	0%	13	14	18	71%	1,188
Evansville, Indiana	EVAN	71,025	0	2	2	0%	16	13	18	88%	1,869
Memphis, Tennessee	MEM	69,863	2	2	2	100%	13	15	18	71%	1,226
Kalamazoo, Michigan	KAL	69,753	1	1	2	50%	8	7	18	44%	1,292
Altoona-Johnston, Pennsylvania	ALT	68,561	1	1	2	50%	5	5	18	27%	1,182
Wheeling-Charleston, West Virginia	WHE	64,231	0	1	2	0%	9	8	18	49%	676
Springfield- Cape Girardeau	SPMO	61,461	3	2	2	150%	5	9	18	27%	976
Bismarck North Dakota	BIS	60,567	5	3	2	250%	13	20	18	71%	932
Tulsa, Oklahoma	TUL	57,533	1	3	2	50%	17	15	18	93%	728
Lake Charles, Louisiana	LCLA	54,917	0	2	2	0%	9	10	18	49%	1,168
Dodge City, Kansas	DODG	54,762	1	1	1	100%	4	6	9	44%	2,190
Biloxi, Mississippi	BIL	54,520	1	1	2	50%	5	8	18	27%	1,048
Superior, Wisconsin	SUP	53,726	0	1	2	0%	6	5	18	33%	1,310
Marquette, Michigan	MARQ	52,337	2	2	2	100%	7	10	18	38%	831
Owensboro, Kentucky	OWEN	51,043	1	1	2	50%	5	7	18	27%	690
Pueblo, Colorado	PUE	48,789	0	1	2	0%	4	5	18	22%	1,284
Cheyenne, Wyoming	CHE	48,393	1	2	2	50%	8	5	18	44%	1,180
Grand Island, NE	GINE	48,363	0	1	1	0%	5	7	9	55%	1,343
New Ulm, Minnesota	ULM	47,417	3	1	1	300%	5	8	9	55%	1,282
Helena, Montana	HEL	46,533	2	1	2	100%	15	10	18	82%	1,193
Jackson, Mississippi	JACK	45,051	1	2	2	50%	8	7	18	44%	704
Gaylord, Michigan	GAY	43,361	0	1	2	0%	5	7	18	27%	748
Amarillo, Texas	AMTX	42,235	0	1	2	0%	4	4	18	22%	939
Duluth, Minnesota	DUL	41,493	2	3	2	100%	11	10	18	60%	902
Salina, Kansas	SAL	38,916	0	1	2	0%	8	10	18	44%	721
Lexington, Kentucky	LEX	38,673	1	2	2	50%	4	6	18	22%	730
Shreveport, Louisiana	AMA	37,986	1	1	1	100%	4	6	9	44%	1,225
Alexandria, Louisiana	ALEX	36,505	0	1	2	0%	7	9	18	38%	429
Baker, Oregon	BAKE	31,211	0	1	2	0%	1	3	18	5%	709
Great Falls-Billings, Montana	BILL	29,422	0	1	2	0%	2	3	18	11%	701
Steubenville, Ohio	STEU	28,339	0	2	2	0%	5	6	18	27%	691
Crookston, Minnesota	CROO	27,395	0	1	1	0%	6	5	9	66%	783
Anchorage-Juneau, Alaska	ANCH	25,634	0	1	1	0%	1	3	9	11%	754
Rapid City, South Dakota	RCSD	23,668	1	1	1	100%	11	8	9	121%	696
Fairbanks, Alaska	FAIR	10,492	2	1	1	200%	0	3	9	0%	699

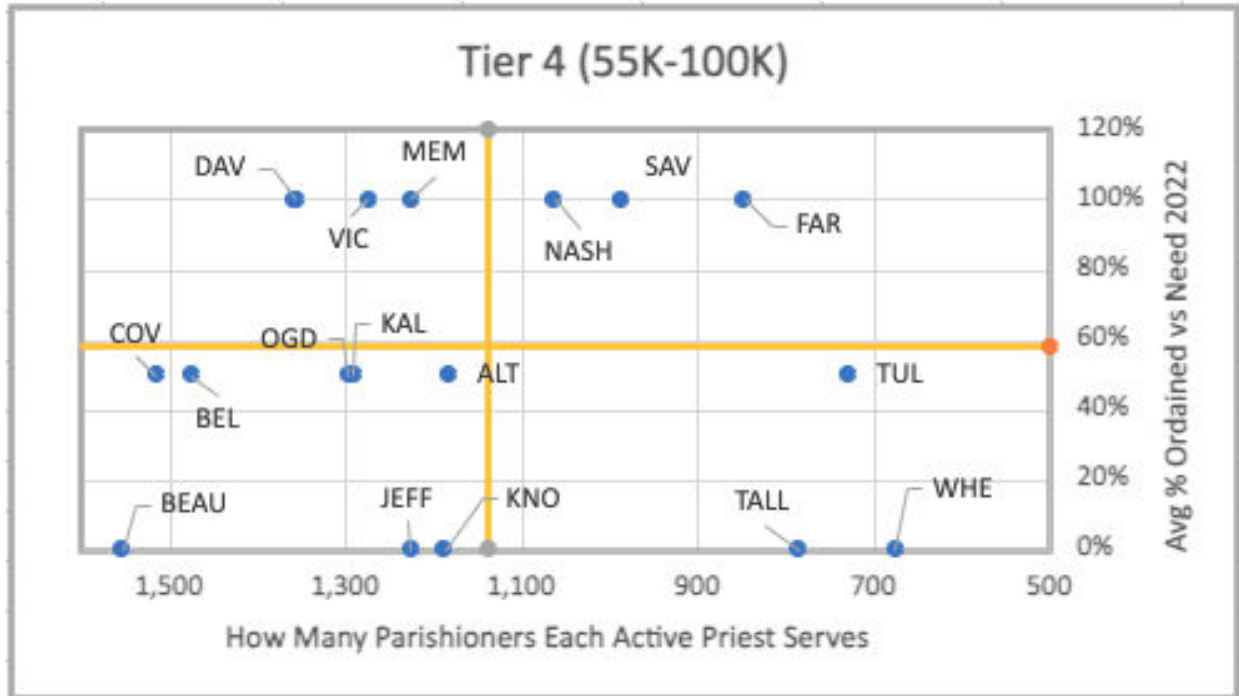
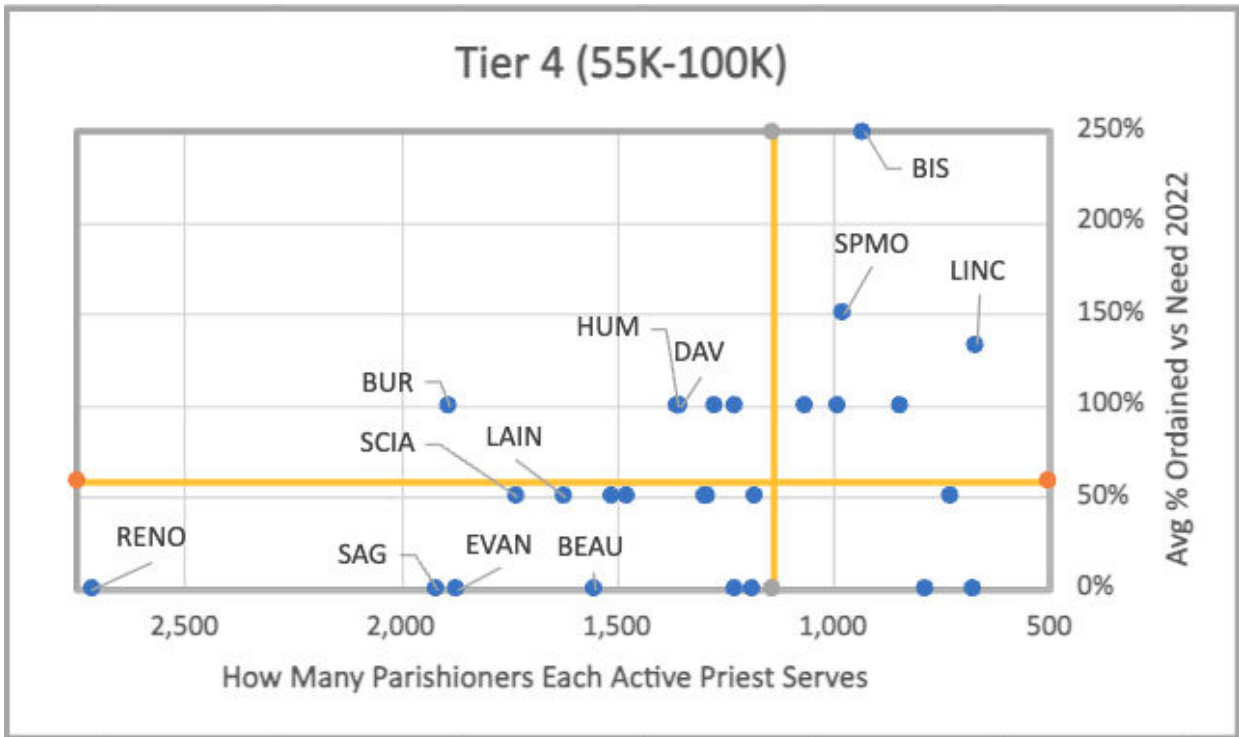
*Priestly Ordinations Needed 2022 = The Average of 2 factors:

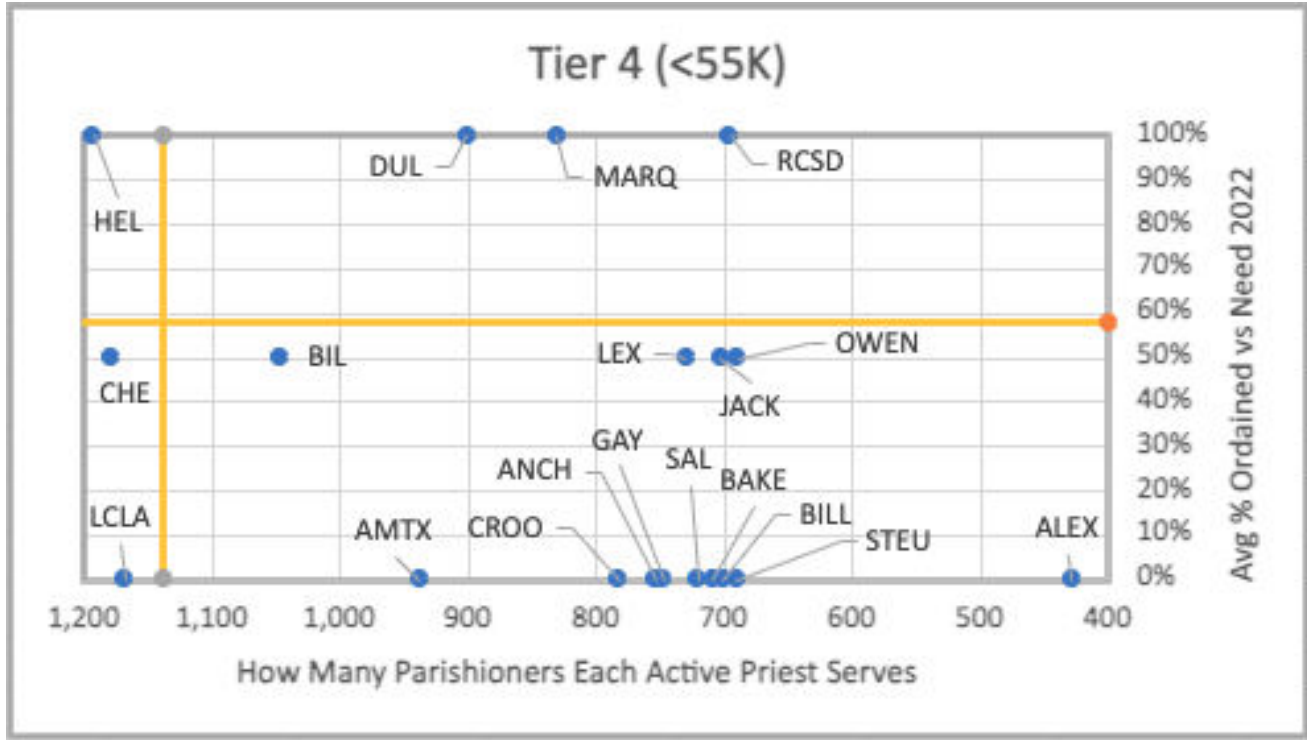
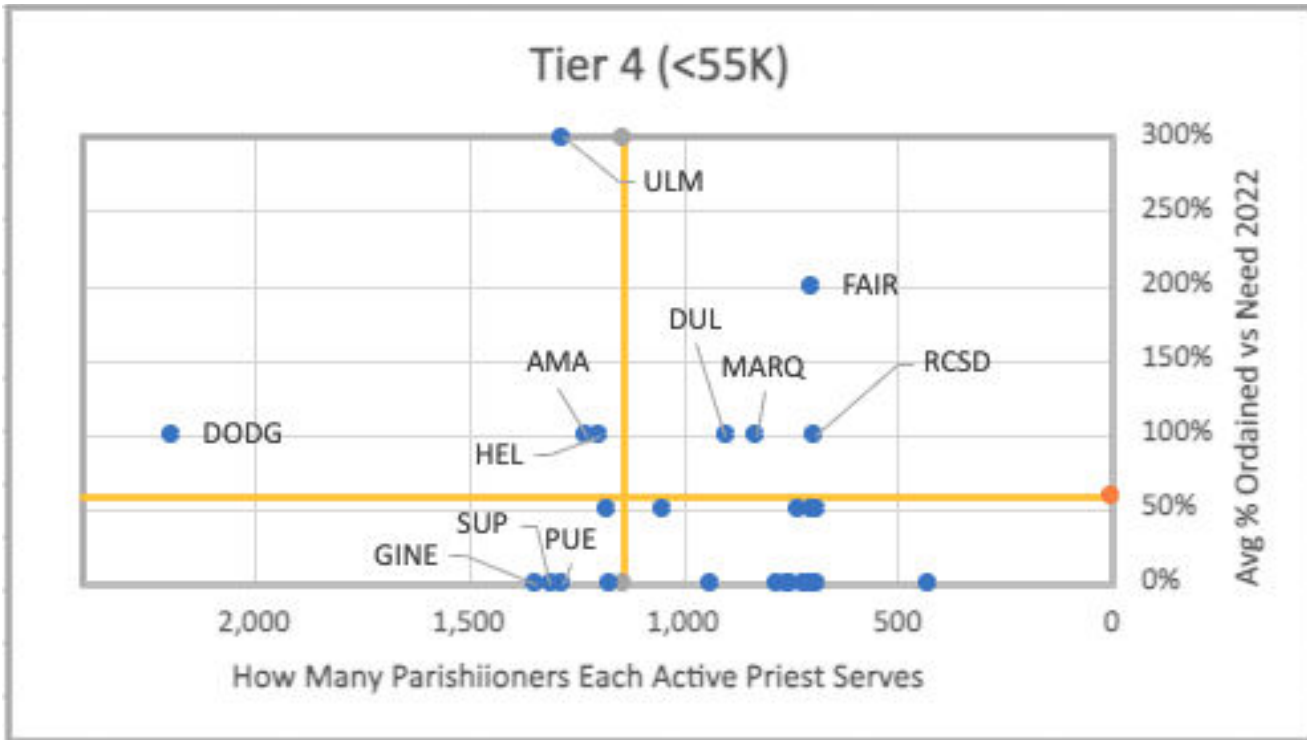
- 1) A Population Factor of one ordination per 120,000 Catholics in a diocese
- 2) The Replacement Rate of Priests. Replacement Rate = 2.7%.

**Seminarians Needed 2022 = (Priestly Ords Needed 2022 * 7) + 30% discern out rate)

***Retirement Rate of Priests not factored into data

Tier 4 – Quadrants





*Abbreviations of dioceses can be found in the spreadsheet on page 1



Tier 4 – 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, which has been shown to be necessary for the development of 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 4 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 simply have a small number of priests serving very large 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 it is almost impossible to develop a strong, nurturing vocational environment. This doesn’t mean that individual parishes are not able to do this successfully, but dioceses that average high parishioner numbers have found it almost 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 a high number of 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 has been shown to be necessary for the development of 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 at hand.

Bottom Left Quadrant-

Current Situation: Dioceses in this quadrant are struggling in many cases with a lack of existing priests and each existing priest is serving 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 are finding 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.



Tier 4- Correlations

Vocation Ministry was interested to know if any of the diocesan information collected from the Official Catholic Directory publications of 2014 to 2023 could be contributing factors affecting vocations to the priesthood, and, if so, how important the effects may be. Understanding these trends may be useful to 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 how perfect the relationship is. All reported numbers are between “0” and “1.0”. A perfect relationship would be 1.0, which rarely occurs, and no relationship at all would be “0”. To understand the range of reported numbers and what they indicate, see the table below for a description of relationship strengths. While no individual trait should be expected to represent all the variations, those that are significant 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 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 increase as reported correlations are strong (in either direction) and *p values* get smaller.



Tier 4 – Correlation Findings

53 Dioceses

Tier 4	Priests to Parishioners per Parish	How Many Parishioners Does Each Active Priest Serve	Total Active Priests per Total Parishes
Priestly Ord's Avg 2018-2022	0.34*	-0.12	0.10
Avg # of Seminarians 2018-2022	0.44**	-0.13	0.28*

* P <.05, **p <.01, ***p <.001

- The number of parishioners that each priest serves is much lower in Tier 4 dioceses (1,139). This tier is the only one that does not display a strong relationship between higher ordination rate and priests serving smaller number of parishioners.
- Overall, there are 8 parishes for every 7 priests in the dioceses in this tier. Multiple priests serve at larger parishes in the cities, and the rural priest may cover 3 in his travels.
- In general, these dioceses strike a critical balance using their resources to cover and serve their many smaller parishes. The dioceses that have enough priests to strike this balance are more successful in producing vocations.
- Due to their lower number of parishioners each priest serves, Tier 4 dioceses, in general, can withstand either some parish closures or potential impending retirements.
- Most likely other effects, such as cultural, are in play that, while not documented in the Official Catholic Directory, are influential for vocations, specifically for the dioceses in this tier. We hope that others who read this report will be forthcoming to help us look at information in new and different ways and give greater insight.

