

Priesthood attracts converts



At least one in 10 men training for the priesthood in England and Wales is now from a non-Catholic background, with up to half of seminarians in some dioceses raised outside the faith, according to the latest figures.

This year the number of seminarians was more than 200 - the highest for nearly 20 years.

A further request for information from the dioceses this week revealed that, from the responses we have received, around 10 per cent of the current generation of seminarians are from other denominations or no faith background, including half in the Diocese of Plymouth, more than a third in the Archdiocese of Birmingham and more than a quarter in the Diocese of Brentwood, which covers east London and Essex.

At least ten per cent of men training for the priesthood in England and Wales are now from non-Catholic backgrounds, with up to half of seminarians in some dioceses raised outside the faith, according to figures obtained by The Tablet.

Full details from those dioceses that responded to our request for information can be seen below:

Diocese of Plymouth: Ten seminarians, four of whom are former Anglicans.

Archdiocese of Birmingham: Seventeen men in seminary, seven of whom are not "cradle Catholics".

Diocese of Brentwood: Seven seminarians, three of whom are converts to Catholicism. Two of those converts are former Anglicans.

Hexham and Newcastle: Seven men in seminary - one of whom has converted to Catholicism.

Archdiocese of Southwark: Twenty-two seminarians, five of whom are from non-Catholic backgrounds (of which two are ex-Anglican clergy).

Archdiocese of Liverpool: Nine men in seminary, one of whom is a former Methodist while another is a former Anglican. Two other former Anglicans are currently applying for dispensation in order to be ordained in the diocese.

Diocese of Shrewsbury: Eight seminarians, two of whom are no cradle Catholics.

Diocese of Leeds: Fourteen men in seminary, two of whom are converts from Anglicanism.

Diocese of Salford: Ten seminarians, one of whom is a Catholic convert.

Diocese of Lancaster: Four seminarians, all cradle Catholics.

Diocese of Middlesbrough: Four men in seminary, all of whom are from Catholic backgrounds.

Diocese of Wrexham: One seminarian, who is a cradle Catholic.

Archdiocese of Cardiff: Two seminarians, both of whom are from Catholic backgrounds.

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