Ministerial Public Juridic Persons in Australia

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Table of Contents

Glossary

Apostolic See	Also known as the Holy See or See of Rome or Petrine See. The episcopal jurisdiction and roles that the Pope (and the various offices within his Roman Curia) exercise across and on behalf of the entire Catholic Church.
Association of Christ's Faithful	Associations of Christ's Faithful are an organisation of laity, clerics or both collaborating for growth in faith and spirituality, and for the works of the Gospel. Associations may be public or private canonical associations or non-canonical. Public associations are PJPs and are an alternative Church structure to a MPJP for sponsoring Church ministries.
Board	The governing body of a company. This project generally uses the term 'Board' to refer to the governing body of MPJP/ACF ministries (e.g. school or school network board, hospital or hospital network board) and uses the term Council to refer to Trustee/Sponsors acting/meeting together.
DICLSAL	Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life - the department within the Roman Curia that also oversees the mission and life of religious institutes. This office has responsibility for authorizing the alienation of church property controlled by religious institutes and public juridical persons (which DICLSAL has established). Prior to the promulgation of _Praedicate Evangelium_ in 2022 DICLSAL was known as Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.
Establishing Authority for MPJPs	The Church Leader who approves the MPJP's Statutes and establishes it as a PJP. The Establishing Authority for MPJPs follows the guidelines for establishing Public Associations, namely: the Apostolic See, for universal and international associations, Episcopal Conference in its own territory, for national associations and the diocesan Bishop, his own territory. (c312)
Member of an MPJP	This project uses the term 'Member' to refers to the person(s) who appoint the Trustee/Sponsors. Some MPJPs use that term others use: Sponsor, Participating Entity
Ministerial PJP (MPJP)	The term commonly used to refer to a public juridical person (PJP) established by a competent Church Authority for the purpose of sponsoring Church ministries (see Canon 116).
Ministry	Ministry means any activity that carries out the works of the Gospel. This project uses the term 'ministry' when referring to the works of ACFs/MPJPs e.g., schools, hospitals, aged care and other services.
Public Juridic Person (PJP)	Aggregate of persons or of things directed to a purpose befitting the Church's mission, which transcends the purpose of the individuals. PJPs are church entities established by law or by decree and act in the name of the Church. Examples of a PJP are: diocese, parish, religious institute or MPJP. This project uses the USA spelling of 'Juridic' rather than the UK spelling of 'Juridical'.
Religious Institute	Religious institute is a gift of the spirit in which individuals make a lifelong commitment to gospel life in community, framed by vows or bonds of chastity, poverty, and obedience and committed to apostolic service. Societies of Apostolic Life are similar. They may also be called orders, institutes, societies or congregations.
Trustee/ Sponsor	This project uses the term "Trustees/Sponsors" to refer to individuals appointed as responsible for the MPJP. This term is used in all the project's papers to enable easy identification of the same role in different MPJPs across the seven countries under consideration. Other terms used by MPJPs include: board Director, canonical steward, Trustee, Sponsor, Trustee Director.

Introduction

This paper provides a brief overview of the context of the Catholic Church and Ministerial Public Juridic Persons (MPJP) within Australia.[2] It seeks to explain why MPJPs emerged, their purpose and their hopes for the future.

MPJPs, alongside dioceses and religious institutes[3], are the Church Authorities responsible for major education, health, aged care and other ministries which impact the lives of millions of Australians. MPJPs are one of the few bodies where lay people can be the decision taker on behalf of the Church. This role responds to the Second Vatican Council's emphasis on Baptism as the foundation for the full and active participation of all the Faithful, both in society and in the Church.

A renewed focus on the possibilities of participation in Church governance on the basis of Baptism has arisen at the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (also known as the Synod on Synodality 2021-2024)[4].

This paper is one in a series of papers on MPJPs in Anglophone countries prepared for the ACU Inclusive Governance in a Synodal Church (IGSC) project. This project is scheduled to run from July 2024 to June 2025 and will deliver: an initial Position Paper, Country Papers, a range of case studies and a final Project Report.

Methodology

This paper draws on publicly available data regarding Australian society and the Catholic Church in Australia. Data on MPJPs, their ministries and their Trustee/Sponsors was obtained in the first instance from the MPJP.[5] MPJPs provided this information via: a survey,[6] participation in a 90-minute online consultation-focus group, and written responses to the summary of the consultation-focus group and to draft versions of this paper. Supplementary information on MPJPs was obtained from their/their ministry's websites and from other publicly available sources.

Australian Societal and Church Context

Australian MPJPs have arisen and developed in the context of particular social and ecclesial characteristics of which the following are significant.

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[2] This project uses the term "Ministerial Public Juridic Person (MPJP) to refer to a public juridic person established by a competent Church Authority for the purpose of sponsoring Church ministries. See Glossary page 3.

[3] This project uses the term "religious institute" to describe the gift of the spirit in which individuals make a lifelong commitment to gospel life in community, framed by vows or bonds of chastity, poverty, and obedience and committed to apostolic service. Societies of Apostolic Life are similar. They may also be called orders, institutes, societies or congregations. See Glossary page 3.

[4] Francis, and XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. *Final Document: For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission.* Vatican: Apostolic See, 2024. https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/news/2024-10-26_final-document/ENG---Documento-finale.pdf.

[5] This project uses the term "Trustees/Sponsors" to refer to individuals appointed as responsible for the MPJP. This term is used in all the project's papers to enable easy identification of the same role in different MPJPs across the seven countries under consideration. Other terms used by MPJPs include: board Director, canonical steward, Trustee, Sponsor, Trustee Director. See Glossary page 3.

[6] See: Appendix 1 IGSC Project survey instrument

First Nations Peoples

People have inhabited the continent that is now known as Australia for more than 60,000 years.[7] The First Nations Peoples have survived British colonisation and its impacts since 1788. However, their place in society and their resources are diminished due to the absence of a treaty.[8] In June 2022, it is estimated that 3.2% of the Australian population are First Nations Peoples.[9] While many First Nations Peoples enjoy a successful life, it is recognised that collectively there is sustained disadvantage.[10] Australian individuals and institutions, including MPJPs, have a role in respecting the continuing place of First Nations Peoples and in developing a national culture of justice and reconciliation

Relatively high social mobility

In 2020, the World Economic Forum Social Mobility Index scored Australia at 75.1 out of 100, which ranked USA overall as 16th out of 82 countries The World Economic Forum Social Mobility Index ranks Australia as 75 out of 100. The Index measures quality of life as well as factors that would enable the population to achieve a higher standard of living. This comprehensive measure has 47 indicators across five determinants: health, education, technology, work, and institutions. Australia's best ratings were: technology access (89/100); health (87/100); education quality and equity (82/100) and inclusive institutions (82/100). Australia's lowest ratings were: fair wage distribution (50/100); working conditions (67/100 and lifelong learning (68/100). The Index shows a relatively high quality of life and social mobility for the Australian population although there are still individuals and groups whose lives and prospects are well below the average.[11]

High levels of migration from increasingly diverse source countries

Australian Census data shows that the population of 27.2 million people is the result of waves of migration.[12] Figure 1 shows that in the first half of the twentieth century Australia's population grew almost exclusively because of natural increase (births over deaths). However, after the Second World War, Australia's natural increase progressively declined and the population has grown mainly due to net overseas migration (NOM).[13] The 2021 Australian Census found that 29.3% of the population were born overseas and

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7   "First Peoples of Australia" Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, accessed December 01, 2024 https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/first-peoples-australia

8   Australia is the only country colonised by the British where a treaty has yet to be negotiated with the First Nations Peoples.

9   "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples," Australian Bureau of Statistics (hereafter ABS), accessed December 01, 2024, at https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples.

10 National Indigenous Australians Agency, *Commonwealth Closing the Gap 2023 Annual Report and 2024 Implementation Plan* (Australian Government, 2024), https://www.niaa.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2024-02/ctg-annual-report-and-implementation-plan.pdf.

11 World Economic Forum, *The Global Social Mobility Report 2020 Equality, Opportunity and a New Economic Imperative.* (Geneva, 2020), 44-45. https://www3.weforum.org/docs/Global_Social_Mobility_Report.pdf

12 "Media release: Australia's Population Grows by 2.1 per cent," ABS, accessed December 12, 2024, https://www.abs.gov.au/media-centre/media-releases/australias-population-grows-21-cent.

13 Australia's birthrate in 2020-2021 was 1.66 babies per woman (2.1 babies per woman is the rate required for a generation to replace itself). "Australia's Future Fertility: A Quick Guide to Potential Impacts on Future Population," Centre for Population, accessed 10 December 2024. https://population.gov.au/sites/population.gov.au/files/2023-03/quickguide-australias-future-fertility_0.pdf.

22.2% of the population have at least one parent born overseas.[14] The period 2016 to 2024 is not in Figure 1, but recent data shows that the pandemic and border closures caused a drop in population growth followed by a migration surge which added 981,000 people in the 2021 to 2024 period.[15] The overall picture is that migration has, and continues to, shape Australian society.

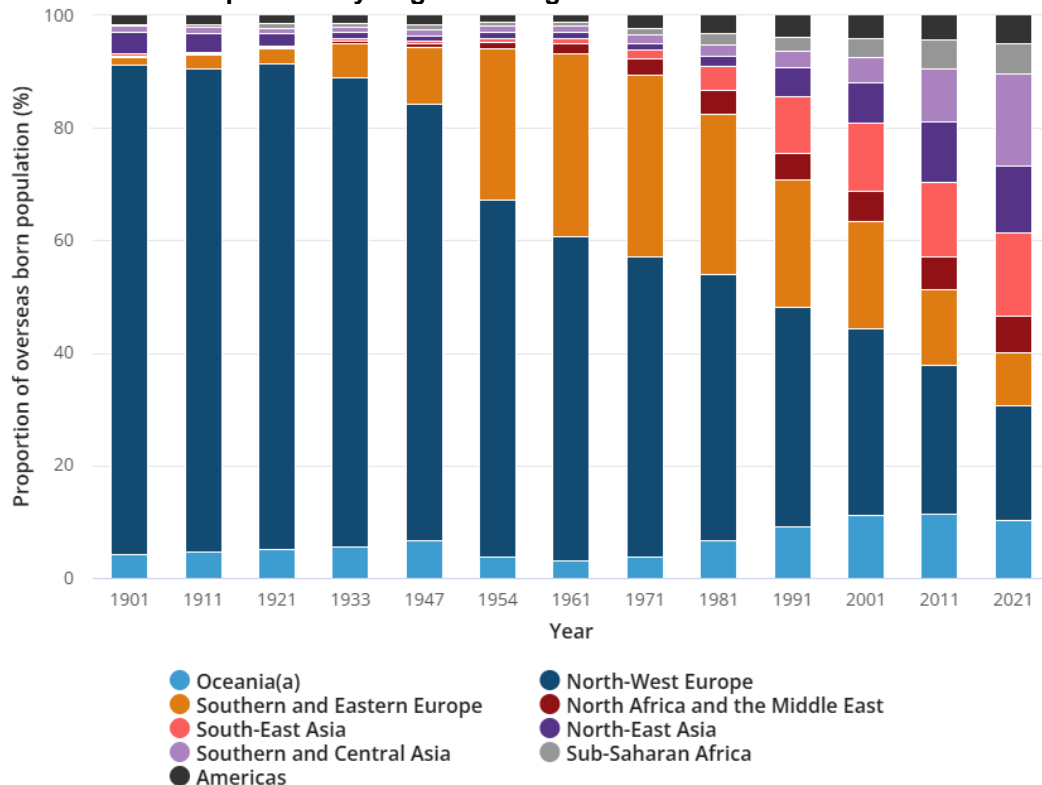**Figure 1. Components of Australia's Population Growth 1932-2022[16]**
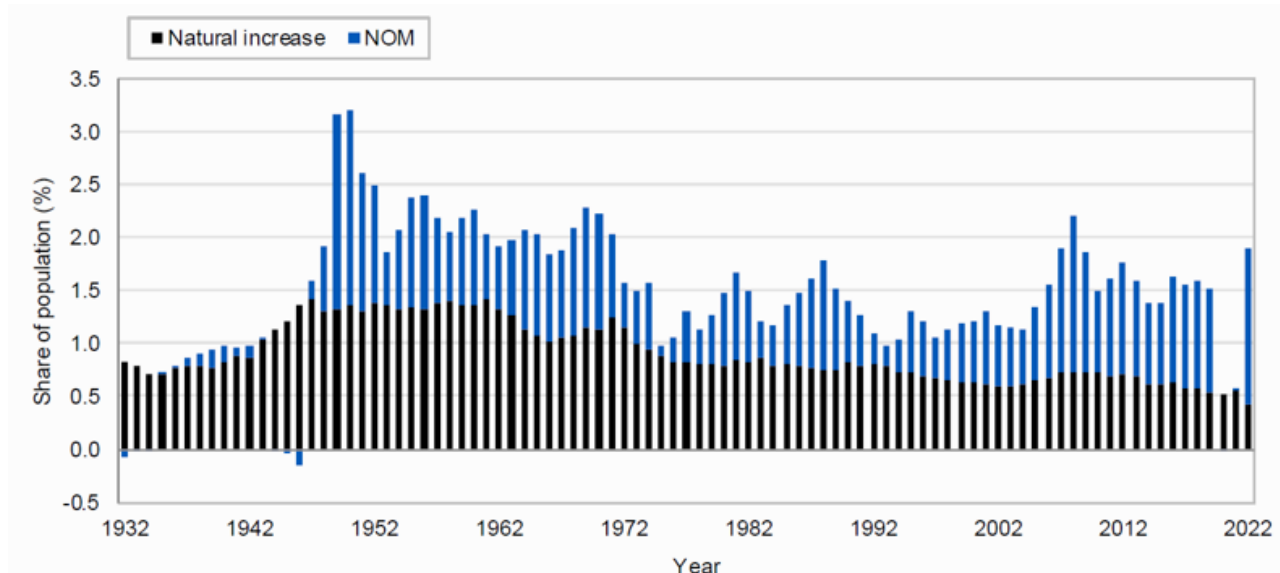
The cultural significance of migration is both in the number of migrants and the source countries. Figure 2 shows significant changes in the migration source countries for Australia. It shows that for the first half of the twentieth century, migrants to Australia were almost exclusively from North-West Europe (predominantly Ireland and the United Kingdom). In the second half of the twentieth century, there were significant number of migrants from Southern-Eastern Europe. From the 1990s, migration has drawn from more diverse regions, increasingly from Southern and Central Asia, South-East Asia and North-East Asia. This cultural diversity is both a challenge and an opportunity for Australian society, including the Church.

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[14] "Census Highlights Australia's Cultural Diversity," Transcultural Mental Health Centre, accessed December 10, 2024. https://www.dhi.health.nsw.gov.au/transcultural-mental-health-centre-tmhc/news-and-events/tmhc-e-bulletin/august-2022/census-highlights-australia-s-cultural-diversity.

[15] "National, State and Territory Population," ABS, accessed December 10, 2024. https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/national-state-and-territory-population/latest-release#:~:text=Australia's%20population%20was%2027%2C204%2C809%20people,net%20overseas%20migration%20was%20445%2C600.

[16] Department of Home Affairs (2023) *Australia's Migration Trends.* (Australian Government, 2023), 23, https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/research-and-stats/files/migration-trends-2022-23.PDF

Figure 2. Overseas Born Population by Region of Origin 1901 to 2021[17]

Proportion of overseas born population (%) — Year axis: 1901, 1911, 1921, 1933, 1947, 1954, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991, 2001, 2011, 2021

Legend:
- Oceania(a)
- Southern and Eastern Europe
- South-East Asia
- Southern and Central Asia
- Americas
- North-West Europe
- North Africa and the Middle East
- North-East Asia
- Sub-Saharan Africa

Greater religious diversity within an increasingly secular society

Migration is a significant factor in the increase in the number of adherents to both Easter-Rite Christians and non-Christian religions. Christians are the largest religious group with 43.9% of population (down from 74% in 1991).[18] Catholics are the largest Christian denomination with 20% of the nation's population (down from its high point of 27.3% in 1991).[19],[20] The data shows that in the five years between 2016 and 2021 there were significant decreases in the number of mainstream Christians.[21] From 2016 to 2021, there was significant growth in the number of Eastern Rite Christians and people who state Christian without a denomination.[22] The Australian Census of 2021 shows that over 2.5 million people reported an affiliation with 'Other religions'.[23] The most numerous of these are in Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism. Migration is a significant factor in this growth.[24]

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[17] "Historical Population" ABS, accessed December 10, 2024, https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/historical-population/2021.

[18] "Religious Affiliation in Australia: Exploration of the changes in reported religion in the 2021 Census,". ABS, accessed July 24, 2024. https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/religious-affiliation-australia

[19] "Cultural diversity: Census Information on country of birth, year of arrival, ancestry, language and religion." ABS. Accessed December, 12 2024. https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/cultural-diversity-census/2021

[20] ABS *Australian Social Trends, 1994 Special Feature: Trends in religious affiliation.* Cat. No 4102.0. (Canberra. 2024). https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/2f762f95845417aeca25706c00834efa/10072ec3ffc4f7b4ca2570ec00787c40!OpenDocument

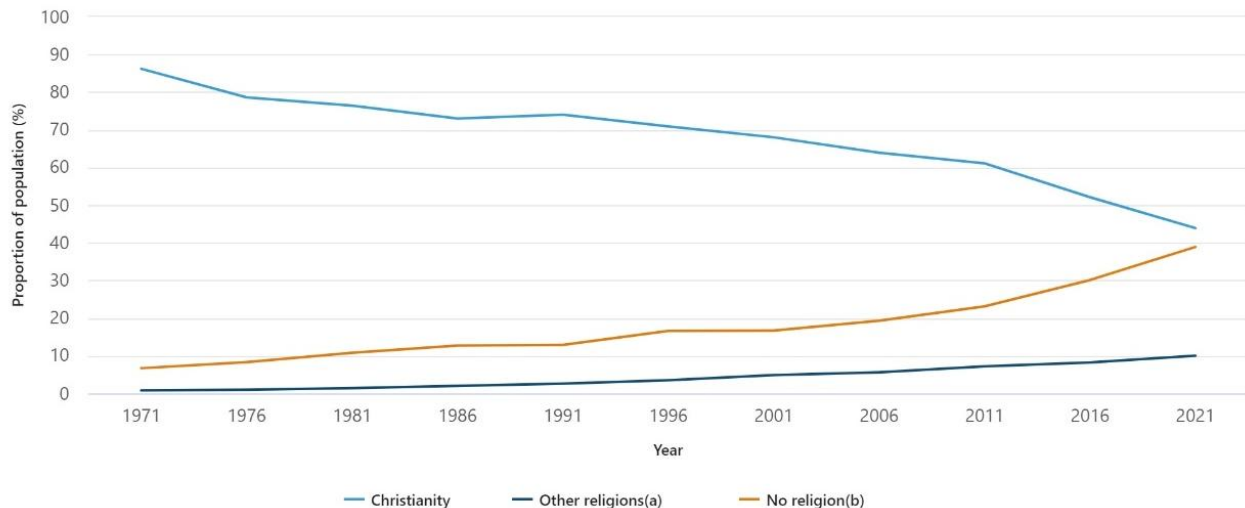[21] "Religious Affiliation in Australia"

[22] ibid

[23] ibid

[24] ibid

Australians are also increasingly deciding to not affiliate with a religion. The 'rise of the nones' is a phrase used to refer to the increasing number of Australians who say they have no religion.[25] In 2021, 38.9% of Australians said they have no religion. If the trend shown in the graph below continues, Christians will soon be outnumbered by Australians with no religion.[26]

Figure 3. Religious Affiliation in Australia, 1971-2021

a. Comprises Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Other Religions.
b. Secular Beliefs and Other Spiritual Beliefs and No Religious Affiliation.
Source: Religious affiliation (RELP).

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Religious affiliation in Australia 4/07/2022

With fewer religious adherents, it is not surprising to see that support for religion is low. A 2018 survey of the proposition that "religion is good for Australian society" found that roughly a third of respondents agreed; another third was neutral or unsure; and a third did not had a negative view of religion.[27] If this survey accurately reflects the entire population, this means that there are some religious adherents who do not believe that religion is good for Australia. The results could be partly explained by the findings of the 2013-2017 Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse which found religious leaders often protected reputation and assets over children.[28] Another factor may be that the moral pronouncements of some religious leaders may conflict with the views of other Australians. A 2024 survey found that social cohesion has declined since 2020 with less than half of Australians having a somewhat positive attitude toward Christians.[29]

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25 Gary Bouma and Anna Halafoff "Australia's Changing Religious Profile—Rising Nones and Pentecostals, Declining British Protestants in Superdiversity: Views from the 2016 Census" *Journal for the Academic Study of Religion.* 30, 2 (2017): 129-143
https://researchmgt.monash.edu/ws/portalfiles/portal/273192370/271386553_oa.pdf

26 ABS *Religious affiliation in Australia*

27 Miriam Pepper and Ruth Powell (2018). *Religion, Spirituality and Connections with Churches: Results from the 2018 Australian Community Survey*. *NCLS Occasional Paper 36.* (Sydney, 2018).
https://www.ncls.org.au/articles/attitudes-to-religion/

28 Royal Commission into Institutional Response to Child Sexual Abuse, *Final Report: Religious Institutions Vol 16 Book 2,* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017)

29 James O'Donnell, Qing Guan, and Trish Prentice, *Mapping Social Cohesion* (Melbourne, 2024), https://scanloninstitute.org.au/publications/mapping-social-cohesion-report/2024-mapping-social-cohesion-report

Catholic Church in Australia

Within this increasingly secular and migration-fuelled society, the Catholic population is undergoing changes that see its membership older, more ethnically diverse, and with the need for governance/leadership reform. The 2021 Australian Census found that the Catholic population was:[30]

- 19.9% aged over 65 years of age (compared with 17.2% of the general population);

- 13.5% provided unpaid assistance to a person with a disability (compared with 11.9% of the general population);

- 6.7% had a disability that required assistance with core activities (compared with 5.8% of the general population);

- 24.6% had a bachelor degree or higher (compared with 26.3% of the general population);

- 9.7% lived alone (compared with 9.3% of the general population); and

- 21.4% born in a non-English speaking country (compared with 19.5% of the general population). Figure 4 shows that the 72% of Catholics were born in Australia. Figure 4 also shows the diversity of migration source countries such as: 6.6% of Catholics born in Europe, 9.3% Asian born, 1.4% from the Middle Eastern and 2.3% from the Americas (with the highest proportion of recent Catholic migrants from Colombia, Brazil and Argentina).

Figure 4. Australian Catholics Country of Birth, 2021[31]
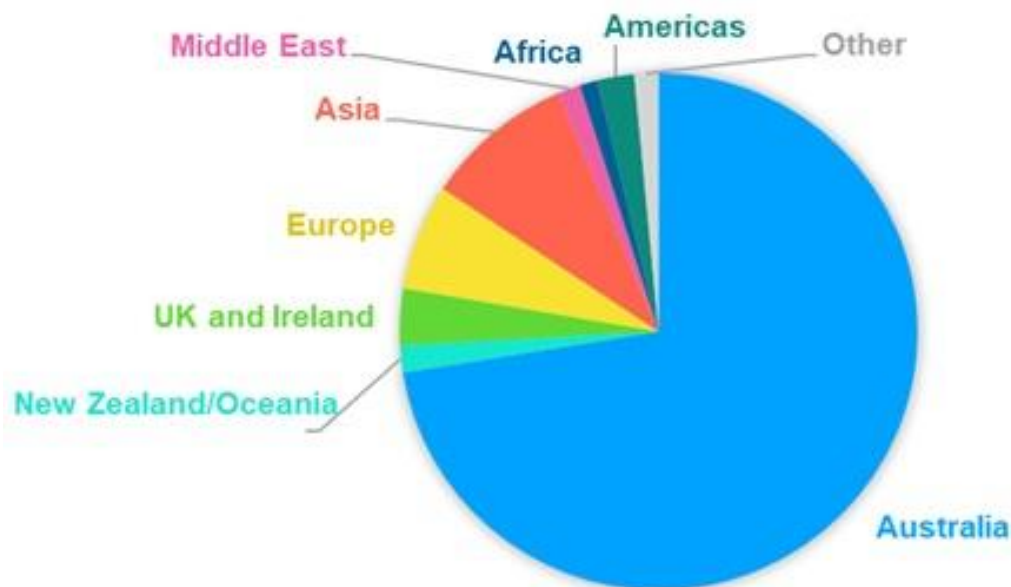
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30 National Centre for Pastoral Research *Social Profile of the Catholic Community in Australia.* (Canberra, 2024) https://ncpr.catholic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/2021-Social-Profile-of-the-Catholic-Community-in-Australia-R.pdf

31 Graph by Lawrence Hallinan with Australian Census data 2021 from ibid

An indicator of Church vitality is Sunday Mass attendance. This peaked at 75% in 1954[32] and Sunday Mass attendance rate has steadily declined to 8.2% in 2021.[33] Data shows that if not for migration of Catholics from overseas, Mass attendance figures would be much lower.[34] Just over one-quarter (25.8%) of attendees were aged 70 and over, with the same proportion being aged 50 to 69.[35] If these trends continue, the number of Mass attendees will rapidly decrease over the next twenty years.

The declining number of people identifying as Catholic and the declining number attending Sunday Mass could justify a consolidation of the current 1,392 parishes across Australia.[36] Even if a reduction in the number of parishes occurred due to amalgamation , clergy will still be overworked as there are fewer than 400 Australian-born diocesan priests in full time parish ministry.[37] Ordinations of new Australian-born priests are not replacing the numbers who die or retire. Across Australia, approximately 51% of priests involved in parish ministry have come from India, Africa, the Philippines, Vietnam, Poland, and elsewhere. The ethnic profile of priests in Australia is increasingly different to that of the Catholic. This raises the likelihood of language and cultural difficulties which can further alienate people from parish life.

There are significant changes in the demographics of religious institutes which will impact their capacity to contribute to the life of the Church in Australia. While there are currently over 5,000 members of religious institutes in Australia, the graph below shows that they are mainly of retirement age.

Figure 5. Catholic Religious Institutes in Australia, Age Profile of professed member, 2018
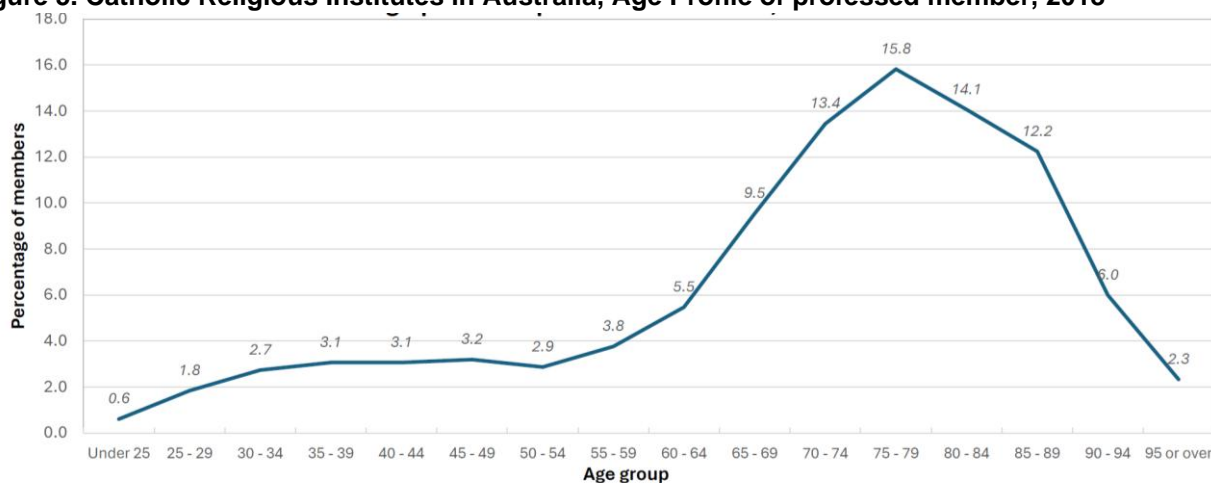
Source: 2018 Survey of Catholic Religious Congregations in Australia

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32 Christina Westmore-Peyton, "A Sociological Investigation of the Religiosity and Spirituality of Australian Generation X Catholics: Who They Are and What They Believe" (PhD Thesis, University of Dinity, 2022), 21, https://repository.divinity.edu.au/divinityserver/api/core/bitstreams/290bdc5d-3d0e-417d-b866-49c9bfee929b/content

33 National Centre for Pastoral Research. *The Australian Catholic Mass Attendance Report 2021.* (Canberra, 2024), 8 https://ncpr.catholic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Mass-attendance-in-Australia-2021-FINAL.pdf

34 Ibid, 7

35 Ibid, 1

36 "Statistics". Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, accessed July 24, 2024, https://www.catholic.au/s/article/Statistics

37 David Timbs "The Priest Shortage and the Elephant in the Room" *Pearls and Irritations,* September, 22 2018, https://johnmenadue.com/david-timbs-the-priest-shortage-and-the-elephant-in-the-room/#:~:text=Saving%20death%20or%20other%20factors,in%20one%20way%20or%20another.

Historically, religious institutes have established and governed many Catholic health, education and social services. The increased age and reduced numbers of members of religious institutes will reduce their ability to do so into the future. This transfer of ministries may occur first among the 58% of religious institutes who in 2022 had only one school in their care.

The Catholic Church is a substantial provider of human services:[38]

☑ One in five Australian students is educated in a Catholic school;

☑ 10% of the nation's hospitals and aged care are provided by Catholic organisations;

☑ 650+ Catholic social services assist about 15% of the Australian population in any given year; and

☑ Catholic development agencies raise approximately $50 million a year within Australia primarily to assist disadvantaged people overseas.

Some parts of the Church are to some extent directly/indirectly shaped by the government funding of hospitals and schools. This funding has enabled dioceses, religious institutes and MPJPs to provide a high number of hospitals and schools to people with varied social/financial situations. These ministries enable the Church to assist a greater number and range of people than would be possible with volunteers and donations alone. Within these well-funded organisations are opportunities for training and salaried positions for faith formators with titles such as: Religious Education Coordinator, School Mission Coordinator, Mission Integration Officer, and Mission Director. The wider Church can benefit from the pipeline of faith formators coming from hospitals and schools. A possible negative impact is that Catholic schools require fees that families might otherwise direct to parishes. Catholic schools also provide age-appropriate faith development/experiences that, in the absence of Catholic schools, could be provided by parish/diocesan children's/youth ministry and sacrament preparation/catechesis. To some extent, Government funding has enabled some parts of the Church to grow and this has both positive and negative impacts on other parts of the Church.

Australian Catholics speak to the Synod on Synodality

Two recent processes enabled the Australian Church to articulate its concerns and hopes.

From 2018 to 2022, 220,000 people engaged in national Plenary Council consultations seeking the views of people within and beyond regular participants at Sunday Mass.[39] The report on the consultations notes that people spoke of:

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[38] "The Catholic Contribution to the Common Good" Public Policy Office, accessed July 24, 2024. https://s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/acbcwebsite/Articles/Documents/ACBC/Catholic%20Contribution%20to%20the%20Common%20Good%202022%20Infographic.pdf

[39] National Centre for Pastoral Research, *Listen to What the Spirit is Saying: Final Report for the Plenary Council Phase 1: Listening and Dialogue* (Canberra, 2022) ,IX https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/FINAL-BOOK-v7-online-version-LISTEN-TO-WHAT-THE-SPIRIT-IS-SAYING.pdf

- different ways to improve the sacraments to increase church attendance and experience of participants;

- greater demonstration of love of God and of neighbour;

- greater involvement of the laity at all levels;

- deeper listening to all voices by Church leadership and governance;

- greater faith formation;

- some wanted church teachings to be updated, while others did not;

- greater outreach and evangelisation, particularly to young people;

- sincere humility and reparation related to sexual abuse by Church personnel; and

- more inclusive of women, LGBTI people, First Nations Peoples, and other vulnerable groups.

The outcome of the Plenary Council was the endorsement of eight Decrees, each comprised of specific commitments to action.[40] These Decrees apply to all parts of the Church and seek to engage more of the faithful in the spiritual, pastoral, missionary and governance activity of the Church. The actions called for in the Decrees seek individual and church repentance/ reform while simultaneously striving to build the reign of God in Australian society. If the Decrees are implemented this will affirm the contribution of consultation participants and could energise the Church around a common agenda.[41]

Australian Catholics expressed their joys, hopes, griefs, anxieties to the universal Church's Synod on Synodality. The 2022 Australian Synthesis Report of these consultations received similar views to those of the Plenary Council.[42]

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[40] The Plenary Council Decrees are:
    (1) Reconciliation – Healing Wounds, Receiving Gifts *(engaging First Nations Peoples)*;
    (2) Choosing Repentance – Seeking Healing *(safeguarding and responding to abuse)*;
    (3) Called by Christ – Sent Forth as Missionary Disciples;
    (4) Witnessing to the Equal Dignity of Women and Men;
    (5) Communion in Grace – Sacrament to the World;
    (6) Formation and Leadership for Mission and Ministry;
    (7) At the Service of Communion, Participation, and Mission: Governance;
    (8) Integral Ecology and Conversion for the Sake of Our Common Home
    (9) The Implementation Phase of the Fifth Plenary Council
    (10) The Decrees of the Fourth Plenary Council of Australia.
See: "Plenary Council Decrees" Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, accessed November, 16 2024, https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/ .

[41] As of 13 March 2025, the Apostolic See has yet to provide its consent for the promulgation of the Decrees (as required by Can 446). Most of the Decrees and their actions accord with existing Church law and priorities, so consent is expected. Some dioceses and other Church bodies have already begun implementing the actions that were within their authority to progress. The lack of action from others, raises fears of a lack of ability and/or lack of commitment to implement the Plenary Council Decrees.

[42] Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, *Synod of Bishops Australian Synthesis*. (Canberra, 2022) https://s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/acbcwebsite/Articles/Documents/ACBC/Synod_of_Bishops_Australian_Synthesis_-_FINAL.pdf

MPJPs in Australia

The second part of this paper describes the development and nature of MPJPs in Australia. It will become evident that there are many synodal characteristics in the MPJPs internal and external relationships and activities.

The emergence of MPJPs in Australia

It is within this particular Catholic and societal context that we see the development of MPJPs in Australia.

The implementation of the teachings of the Second Vatican Council saw many religious institutes reassess their activities in light of their founder's example, charism and the signs of the times. Some religious discerned the call to new and prophetic ministries rather than continuing with their current ministries.

Religious institutes were also early collaborators with lay people who responded to the Vatican II's call for all the Faithful to be active contributors within the Church and within society. Religious institute schools, hospitals and other ministries had already seen an influx of lay staff working alongside religious. Progressively, lay people were also appointed to executive positions and as mission animators. The next step in this progression was for lay people to be responsible in place of, rather than subordinate to, or in partnership with, the leadership of a religious institute.

The religious institute reliance on lay people in governance was also in response to government funding and regulatory requirements that increased the complexity of governance[43]. Parishes that had also established local aged care/welfare ministries were also straining to meet complex governance requirements.

By the 1980s, two religious institutes had sold Australian hospitals to non-Church entities leading to a concern about the unnecessary alienation of Church ministries and property. The concern being that ministries are an expression of the Church's role to continue Christ's work of healing, teaching, liberating and accompaniment. Catholics had contributed to the development of these ministries and had the expectation that the Church would maintain them. In response, some religious institutes made use of the 1983 changes to Canon Law to petition for the establishment of Public Juridic Persons specifically to continue their ministries.

MPJPs established in Australia

In 1991, the University of Notre Dame (Australia) became the first MPJP in Australia. There are now 14 MPJP's in Australia with their average age being 16 years. Figure 6 shows that the establishment of MPJPs in Australia has been steady, except for a period of rapid growth between 2008-2012.

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[43] Maureen Cleary *When the mission system is the bottom line: The governance of Catholic schools in Australia* (ACU La Salle Academy, 2021). https://www.acu.edu.au/-/media/feature/pagecontent/richtext/about-acu/institutes-academies-and-centres/la-salle-academy/_docs/la-salle-academy---publication-number-8_when-the-mission-system-is-the-bottom-line.pdf?la=en&hash=73DCAB090A67CADB6CCD3AEBD11E9CC6

Figure 6. Establishment of MPJPs in Australia 1991-2023
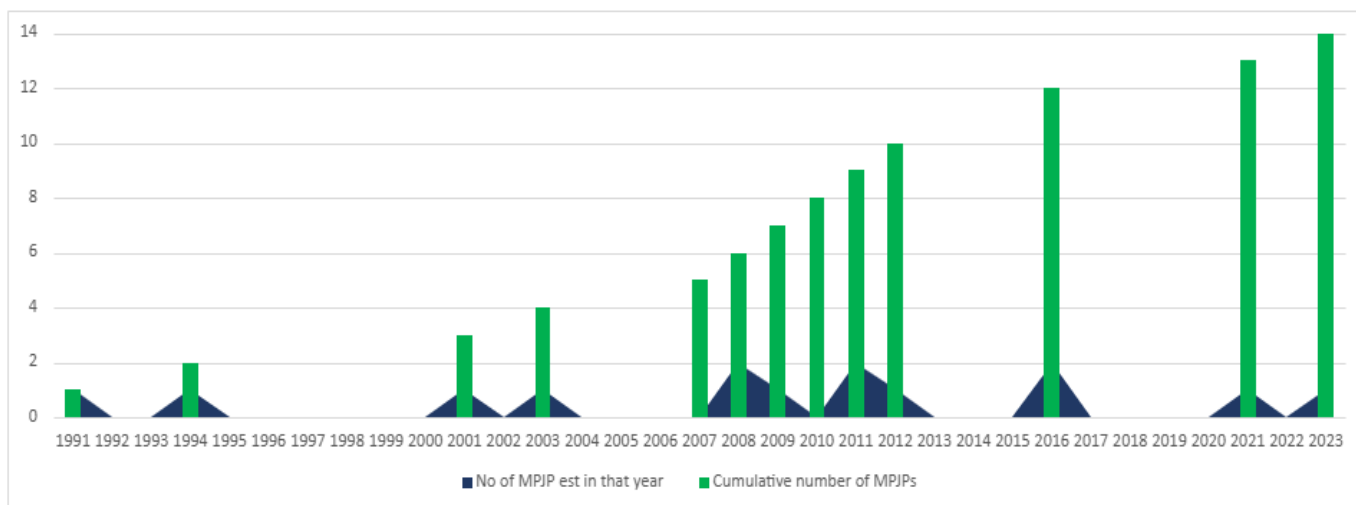
Thirteen of the 14 Australian MPJPs completed the survey offered by this project. Publicly available data on the outstanding MPJP was available for many of the survey questions. Below is a summary of data collected and detailed in Appendix 2.

MPJPs in Australia, have the following significant characteristics:

- Nine MPJPs were established by the Apostolic See: The Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (DICLSAL);

- No MPJPs were established by the national Catholic Bishops Conference;

- Four MPJPs were established by a local bishop (2 x Archbishop of Perth, 2 x Archbishop of Sydney);

- One MPJP was established by the Bishops of the Province of Western Australia;

- Two MPJPs that are based in Australia also sponsor ministries in other countries (one in New Zealand-Aotearoa; and the other MPJP in New Zealand-Aotearoa, Timor-Leste and Papua New Guinea); and

- Nineteen separate religious institutes were founders of the 14 MPJPs[44]:

  - Four religious institutes joined with other religious institutes in founding a MPJP before founding their own MPJP (Sisters of St John of God; Religious Sisters of Charity of Australia; Little Company of Mary – Province of the Holy Spirit; and Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea);

  - Thirteen other women's religious institutes were founders of MPJPs; and

  - Two men's religious institutes were co/founders of MPJPs (Hospitaller Order of St John of God, Holy Family Province and Congregation of Christian Brothers, Oceania Province).

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[44] The project asked respondents to say which religious institutes were founders of their MPJP. Some of these founders have since withdrawn involvement in that MPJP (usually because the ministry that they contributed is no longer part of the MPJP). Conversely, other religious institutes are now Members of MPJPs as a result of their having contributed ministries after the MPJP's establishment.

> ➢ One MPJP was not established by any religious institute, i.e., University of Notre Dame (Australia)

The number of MPJPs in Australia is largely due to the success of the founding religious institutes in accessing government funding, donations and voluntary labour to maintain significant education, health and other ministries. This success meant that the ministries were of a size that was sufficient to enable the establishment of an autonomous new MPJP.

Many of the MPJPs were established by the Apostolic See because their founding religious institute was a Pontifical PJP and these religious institutes usually went to their establishing authority to establish their MPJP. That MPJPs based in Western Australian were established by a bishop(s) in that State could be explained by the culture of self-sufficiency in that State. It is unknown whether the national episcopal conference was ever approached to establish a MPJP.

The possession of a significant number of ministries enabled individual religious institutes, each in their own time, to petition for the establishment of a separate MPJP to sponsor their ministries. Two MPJPs were founded by religious institutes with shared backgrounds (one was of three Dominican Provinces and the other was of two Irish foundations: Brigidine Sisters and Presentation Sisters). Two MPJPs were founded by multiple religious institutes which could indicate that the religious institutes had few ministries and that they were able cooperate due to a sense of trust and shared vision.

Background of Trustee/Sponsors

There are a total of 104 Trustees/Sponsors across the 14 MPJPs in Australia. Thirteen MPJPs provided data on their Trustee/Sponsors via the project's survey. Publicly available data was found for most of the characteristics of the other MPJP's Trustee/Sponsors.

The following are characteristics of the Trustee/Sponsors across the MPJPs in Australia:

- Seven is the average number of persons appointed as Trustee/Sponsor of an MPJP.
- 55% is the average proportion of women appointed as Trustee/Sponsor of an MPJP.
- 100% of Trustee/Sponsors are baptised.*
- 94% of Trustee/Sponsors are lay people.
- 4% is the average proportion of Trustee/Sponsors who are also a member of a religious institute.
- 2% is the average the average proportion of Trustee/Sponsors who are ordained (deacon, priest, or bishop).
- 22% is the average proportion of Trustee/Sponsors who have a theological qualification.*
- 64% is the average proportion of Trustee/Sponsors who have a governance qualification.*

- 87% is the average proportion of Trustee/Sponsors who have experience as a Board Director.*

- 20% is the average proportion of Trustee/Sponsors who have previous experience as a "Trustee/Sponsor" with a different PJP (parish, diocese, religious institute, MPJP).*

The relatively even number of male and female Trustee/Sponsors is common in governance bodies that value diversity. It is worth noting that two of the MPJPs had a much higher percentage of female Trustee/Sponsors. This could be because those MPJPs sponsor all-girl schools and seek to witness to women as leaders and in control of their services.

The lack of religious as Trustee/Sponsors could be a factor of both their long-term fostering of lay people for governance roles and the scarcity of members willing/able to take on these roles. In some MPJPs, the founding religious institute appoints the Trustee/Sponsors. These religious institutes may see the process of appointment as a way of influencing the Trustee/Sponsors – as an alternative to their fellow religious being Trustee/Sponsors. Some MPJPs the founding religious institutes also hold reserve powers over key aspects of the life of the MPJP such as approving the philosophy/ spirituality and mission of the MPJP and determining the content of the initial and ongoing formation for Trustee/Sponsors. In these cases, the religious institute may see its reserve powers as another reason why it does not need to have members as Trustee/Sponsors. The declining numbers of religious will make their presence as Trustee/Sponsors less likely and lead to a review of religious institute roles as appointers of Trustee/Sponsors and as the holders of reserve powers.

The lack of deacons, priests and bishops in MPJP Trustee/Sponsor roles could be due to: none of the MPJPs were founded by a clerical religious institute; the lack of available clerics for Trustee/Sponsor roles and the trust that bishops have in the MPJPs.

The project uses theological qualification as an indicator of a Trustee/Sponsor's depth of knowledge of the Catholic faith. We recognise that it is not perfect indicator. It does not capture personal knowledge and wisdom obtained outside of a credentialled course. It does not reflect personal faith/spirituality, nor does it demonstrate faith expressed in behaviour. Among Trustee/Sponsors in Australia the percentage with a theological qualification is a significant 22%. The presence of a significant number of mainly lay people with theology degrees could assist the MPJP discuss theological issues and understand the theological significance/context of various matters.

The project uses governance qualification and experience as a Board Director as an indicator of the background/experience of Trustee/Sponsors. This is an issue as there is a possibility that the Church is disproportionately appointing people with corporate backgrounds to Trustee/Sponsor roles. This could be on an incorrect assumption that the same skills/knowledge are needed in a MPJP as on a corporate board. Among Trustee/Sponsors in Australia the percentage with a governance qualification and experience as a Board Director is very high (64% and 87%). This could be an asset when

the MPJP Trustee/Sponsors are dealing with their ministry board that is comprised of corporate directors. It could also indicate a vulnerability of the MPJP taking a legal/finance/corporate approach to issues rather than exercising their unique role as ecclesial leaders.[45] The previously noted demographic data indicates that there is a wealth of cultural and life experience among the Catholic population that MPJPs could seek in the Trustee/Sponsors that they recruit/appoint.

The project is also interested to see whether the Church is appointing to MPJP Trustee/Sponsor roles people who have previous experience as a Trustee/Sponsor of another canonical entity (parish, diocese, religious institute). It is likely that Australia's 20% of MPJP Trustee/Sponsors with previous experience as a Trustee/Sponsor has both a moderately positive and negative impact. This experience could be a benefit to the MPJP in clarity of role and Church context. Alternatively, it could mean that the same people are being utilised and fresh perspectives are missing.

MPJP ministries by diocese

Figure 7 shows that each of the 28 Latin Dioceses in Australia have at least two MPJPs providing ministries within that Diocese.[46] The average number of MPJPs across all Latin dioceses is 4.3 (Sydney has the highest number at 12). Edmund Rice Education Australia sponsors ministries in every Latin diocese except two (Wagga Wagga and Wilcannia-Forbes). MercyCare is the MPJP with the smallest profile, being present in only two dioceses. Catholic Healthcare is the only MPJP that sponsors ministries in an Eastern Rite Eparchy.

Figure 7. Number of MPJPs with ministries in the Arch/Dioceses of Australia, 2024
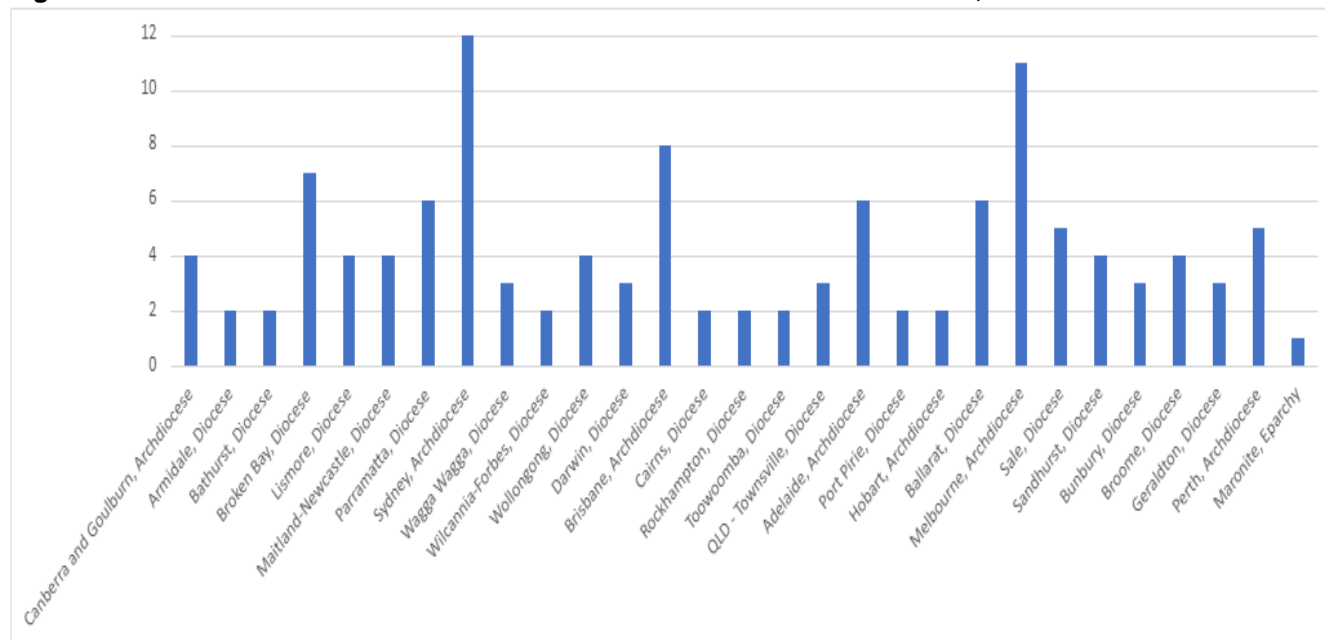
The prevalence of MPJPs in every arch/dioceses, in some cases multiple MPJPs in the same arch/diocese, should mean that bishops and their people are aware of the existence

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45   See Appendix 3 MPJP Trustee/Sponsors describe their experiences as Ecclesial Leaders
46   See Appendix 4 Australian dioceses and the MPJPs with ministries within each diocese

and role of MPJPs. As common providers of services across the Church in Australia, there is also the potential for the faithful to see MPJPs as a positive contributor to the life of the Church. However, the actual awareness of these entities as Catholic forms of governance is quite limited.

MPJP ministry sectors

Australian governments fund the public primary and secondary schools. These schools do not charge tuition fees but do ask for a contribution towards extra-curricular activities. States/Territories and the Federal Government also provide a lesser amount of capital and operating funding to faith-based and independent schools. Parent contributions via school fees and building levy contributions make up most of the funding shortfall in Catholic schools. The amount provided by Government is still sufficient to fund new schools and to make Catholic schools affordable for families (some families are granted reductions in fees based on ability to pay). Approximately 12% of Catholic school enrolments are in MPJP schools (diocesan schools 81% and religious institute schools 7%). The most significant growth in MPJP schools is in Edmund Rice Education Australia who secured government funding to establish a network of flexible-learning schools for students who struggle in mainstream schools. A few MPJPs have increased their number of schools because a religious institute has transferred sponsorship of a school.

Australia has a hybrid health system with the government funding "public" hospitals that provide free services to all citizens and most permanent residents.[47] The government provides inpatient and outpatient physical and mental services at no cost to patients. A minority of public hospitals are owned and managed by charities, including Catholic organisations. The government funds all or most of the cost for Australians to access primary care via general practice services. Diagnostic and pharmacy costs are also heavily subsidised by the government. Dental services are only funded for people on income security payments and waiting lists are very long. Individuals also have the option of paying for private health insurance that largely funds their use of private hospitals and other health services, including some operated by Catholic providers. Australians also have the option of paying for private health insurance which gives them access to additional hospital services and access to surgery and other services without the long waiting lists of the public services. In recent years, MPJP ministries that provide hospitals and health services have advocated strongly for more sustainable funding.

The Federal Government pays most of the cost of aged care. Financial pressures, increased regulation and the need for economies of scale has led to significant consolidation in the aged care sector. Some MPJPs have increased their number of aged care facilities by acquisition or transferred sponsorship from another Church body.

Some MPJPs provide family and community services with most of the funding coming from the Federal/State Government. Further growth in this sector is most likely to result from increased government funding.

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[47] "Public Hospitals" Australian Government, accessed January 01, 2025, https://www.health.gov.au/topics/hospital-care/about/public-hospitals .

The project survey asked MPJPs to identify within which of nine ministry sectors their ministries operate. Figure 8 shows that all nine ministry sectors are serviced by at least one MPJP in Australia. The ministry sector with the most MPJPs is secondary school education (9). Most other ministry sectors were serviced by between 4 and 5 MPJPs. Most MPJPs operate in multiple ministry sectors. Two MPJPs sponsor operate in only one ministry sector (University of Notre Dame (Australia) in tertiary/university education and Catholic Healthcare in Aged care).[48]

Figure 8. Number of Australian MPJPs operating in key ministry sectors
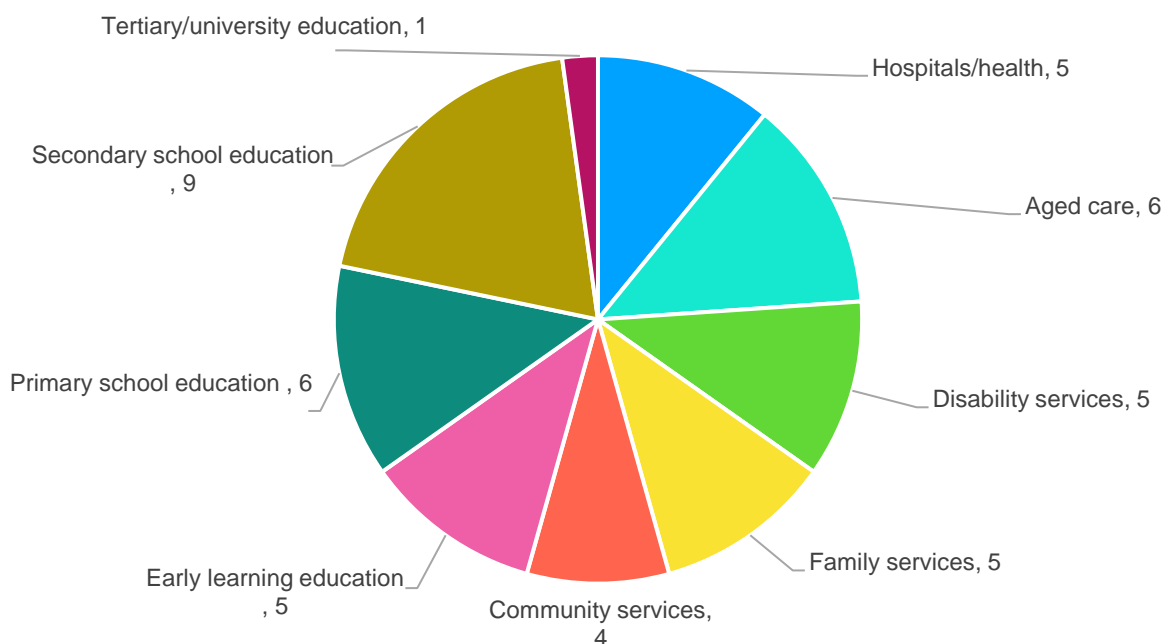
As noted previously, the spread of ministries can be attributed to the successful work of founding religious institutes. Over many years they were able to make the most of the opportunities in the Australian funding context to establish ministries meeting the needs of the time.

The survey did not ask MPJPs to specify the size or scope of their ministries. One of the reasons for not asking about the size of ministries was that the request may have deterred some MPJPs from completing the survey due to complexity of the calculation or for transparency concerns. Ultimately, the project concluded that its focus was the MPJP, so it was more relevant to know the ministry sector rather than the size or scope of the ministries.

Positive and synodal aspects of MPJPs

Trustees/Sponsors identified the following as aspects of their MPJP which are positive and synodal:[49]

a) <u>Attitude</u>

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48 For more information see: Appendix 5 Number of Australian MPJPs operating in key ministry sectors
49 Initiatives identified in the Inclusive Governance in a Synodal Church Project online focus group held on 16 December 2024 with additional contributions from other Trustees/Sponsors

1. MPJPs have a clear intention to seek and hear diverse voices.

2. Collegiality is the MPJP gift to the church – Trustee/Sponsors have a council structure that requires them work through issues together seeking common ground and consensus outcome.[50] Trustee/Sponsors take this collaborative and consensus-seeking way of working into their interactions with their boards and ministries.

3. MPJP Trustee/Sponsors valuing people and see relationship building as crucial to ensuring that others understand and trust of MPJP Trustees/Sponsors.

b) <u>MPJP Trustees/Sponsors</u>

1. Recruitment/succession of Trustees/Sponsors is ongoing. MPJPs seek applicants who reflect demographic diversity and spend time with applicants to ensure that they are committed to hearing diverse voices and are open to change their view, when necessary.

2. In some MPJPs, the Trustee/Sponsors see themselves as a faith community as well as being a group with governance responsibilities. As a faith community, they foster and support the development and expression of their individual and collective spirituality.

3. Formation. Trustee/Sponsors spend time to form as a group - getting to know each other, each person's perspective and developing their group dynamics, including their processes of listening. Trustee/Sponsors also engage in personal formation.

c) <u>Meetings of</u> <u>MPJP Trustees/Sponsors</u>

1. During meetings the Chair seeks everyone's view, encourages all to look at issues from different perspectives and will ask each Trustee/Sponsor to summarise for everyone their understanding of the issue/conclusion.

2. Decisions are made by consensus so we keep discussing until we reach an outcome that all can support.

3. We allocate sufficient resources for discernment - taking time, getting good advice, and honouring the process.

d) <u>MPJP Trustees/Sponsors and ministries</u>

- Some MPJPs allocate each Trustee/Sponsor the responsibility of visiting twice a year and maintaining an ongoing relationship with a number of their ministries.
- Trustees/Sponsors being present to hear and encourage voices from across ministries e.g., symposiums, board visits, Trustee/Sponsor visits, network of mission leaders, network of boards.

- Consultation with networks – board chairs/business managers/student leaders/First Nations leaders are convened once a term and information is sent out to them for consultation. Time is also given to socialise policies and ideas as it takes time for these documents to be settled upon and embedded.

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[50] Some MPJPs refer to their Trustee/Sponsors as being a board and others use the more ecclesial term council.

- Developing, implementing and monitoring formation program for ministries requires listening and responding to diverse opinions.

- Some MPJPs have staff who have roles in formation in the ministries. In other, often smaller, MPJPs these roles are fulfilled by the Trustees/Sponsors

- Many MPJP ministries have developed Reconciliation Action Plans (or similar) that build relationships, understanding and assistance between the MPJP/MPJP ministry and First Nations Peoples.

e) <u>MPJP Trustees/Sponsors and external stakeholders</u>

MPJPs engage in consultation/relationship building with external stakeholders (scheduled and as needed) – to ensure that their issues are heard and so that they feel safe/comfortable in disclosing issues to the MPJP.

Collaboration among MPJPs

In 2016, most of the MPJPs in Australia formed the Association of Ministerial PJPs Ltd (AMPJP) to assist their collaboration and communication. The AMPJP is funded by annual contributions from its MPJP members. These contributions are calculated according to the size of their ministries (i.e., MPJPs with larger ministries contributing more). Thirteen of Australia's fourteen MPJPs are members of AMPJP, and it is their main vehicle of their collaboration and communication.

AMPJP activities include:

- Regular meetings/communication with the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) and Catholic Religious Australia (CRA is the major Australian Conference of male and female Major Superiors of religious institutes);

- Contributing the AMPJP/MPJP voice to Church Forums and consultative processes;

- Website publication of a list of formation activities/resources of relevance to leaders of Catholic organisations;

- Provision of in-person and webinar formation sessions;

- Annual strategic workshop day where each AMPJP Councillor brings a fellow Trustee/Sponsor from their MPJP; and

- Publications such as: 'AMPJP Governance Principles, Foundations and Applications' and
the 'AMPJP Formation Framework' with corresponding list of formation resources.

MPJP interaction with the other parts of the Church

As more schools were transferred from religious institutes, CRA asked AMPJP if it would host the committee that represents all religious institute and MPJP school authorities. Since 2020, the AMPJP has provided administrative support to the Committee of Religious Institute and MPJP School Authorities Australia. This committee addresses common issues and coordinates religious institute and MPJP input to broader Catholic education structures.

AMPJP has a strong and constructive relationship with both the ACBC and CRA. In mid-2022, AMPJP finalised the ACBC-AMPJP Accord and the CRA-AMPJP Covenant.[51], [52] These frameworks of mutual understanding set out their individual roles, shared roles and how they will work to strengthen their relationship. A previous President of the ACBC regularly used the image of a three-legged stool to describe how leadership in the Church in Australia required the collective participation of the three communities of Church Authorities (bishops, religious institutes and MPJPs).

There are several "whole of Church" initiatives in Australia that are jointly sponsored by AMPJP, ACBC and CRA.

Safeguarding is the most significant of the shared responsibilities of AMPJP,, ACBC and CRA. All three organisations are the foundation members of Australian Catholic Safeguarding Limited (ACSL). AMPJP, ACBC and CRA collect funds from their members to cover ACSL's costs. The ACSL members appoint the governing Board and approve the Standards and Protocols that are intended for all parts of the Catholic Church in Australia.

The previously mentioned national Plenary Council Decrees was an initiative of ACBC. However, the responsibility for the implementation of three strategies of these Decrees (#2.7.f, 7.2, 9.1) was given jointly to AMPJP, ACBC and CRA.[53] Of particular relevance to MPJPs are the Decrees that jointly commission the ACBC, CRA and AMPJP to "foster, assess and report periodically on the development of synodal leadership across the Church in Australia"[54] and of "coordinating the review" of the implementation of the Plenary Council's five year implementation phase.[55] That the bishops agreed to share the this role demonstrates their openness to transparency, accountability and co-responsibility. That they are willing to partner with AMPJP demonstrates their high degree of the trust and respect of MPJPs.

Possible future MPJP activities

The establishment of further MPJPs in Australia is unlikely as there are few religious institutes with significant numbers/size of the ministries. The exception is a religious institute that is pursuing the possibility of establishing an Association of Christ's Faithful[56] to sponsor its significant number of schools. It is possible that some MPJPs may secure ministries from religious institutes and at least one MPJP has a page on its website with information for interested parties. The other path for future growth is government grants to enabling new or expanded services.

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[51] ACBC and AMPJP, *An Accord between ACBC and AMPJP* (ACBC and AMPJP, 2022), https://ampjp.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Accord-between-ACBC-and-AMPJP-2022-05-11-Signatures.pdf

[52] CRA and AMPJP, *Covenant between CRA and AMPJP.* (CRA and AMPJP, 2022), https://ampjp.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/AMPJP-CRA-Covenant_signed-July-2022.pdf

[53] "Plenary Council Decrees"

[54] ibid, Decree 7, Article 2.

[55] ibid, Decree 9, Article 1.

[56] While MPJPs are mainly comprised of the Trustee/Sponsors, an Association of Christ's Faithful has a much larger membership. These members shared a common spirituality and mission. Most members will never be in the Trustee/Sponsor-like positions and yet they choose to be members for an indefinite period. Canon law considers an Association of Christ's Faithful to have the status of a PJP. See Glossary on page 3.

A shared vision for future MPJP directions and development has been articulated by the MPJPs overarching national body, AMPJP. The thirteen MPJPs who are members of the AMPJP share in its 2024-2027 vision:

1. Sustainability - MPJPs governing for Mission, meeting current and future needs;

2. Formation - a pool of formed people to be in Canonical Steward[57] and other key roles;

3. Leadership - demonstrated leadership and a Voice in the Church; and

4. Relationships - cohesive and growing relationships and partnerships.[58]

Trustees/Sponsors have identified the following as future initiatives that will support MPJPs in Australia:[59]

a) <u>Each MPJP</u>

1. Finding suitable Trustees/Sponsors.

2. MPJP coming to a consensus explanation of MPJP roles.

3. Remuneration for Trustee/Sponsors – to attract and retain skilled people who have the time to fulfil this time-consuming role.

4. Formation – each Trustee/Sponsor needs to take personal responsibility for their own formation and each MPJP can arrange appropriate and affordable formation for its Trustees/Sponsors.

5. In some MPJPs, the Trustee/Sponsors see themselves as a faith community as well as being a group with governance responsibilities. As a faith community, they foster and support the development and expression of their individual and collective spirituality.

6. Some MPJPs have found benefit in having an external person as their "spiritual companion" to support the Trustees/Sponsor's spiritual growth and to help them to reflect on God's activity among them.

7. The body that appoints Trustees/Sponsors needs to shift in its identity and membership as MPJP matures. This is particularly the case where the appointing body is a religious institute with an ageing and dwindling membership.

8. Each MPJP needs to build relationships of trust/respect with its stakeholders

9. Educating others in the church (religious, bishops, laity) about MPJP roles.

b) <u>MPJPs supporting each other</u>

1. MPJPs to be collaborative with each other (not being isolationist). Collectively considering changes to ensure the sustainability and optimal functioning of the

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57 Canonical Steward is a term used by some for those persons that this project refers to as Trustee/Sponsors.

58 AMPJP, *Strategic Plan 2024- 2027.* (Killara, 2024) https://ampjp.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/AMPJP-Strategic-Plan-final-version.pdf

59 Initiatives identified in the Inclusive Governance in a Synodal Church Project online focus group held on 16 December 2024 with additional contributions from other Trustees/Sponsors

MPJP model. Also explore how MPJP ministries (education and other) can grow in scale and into new areas to meet unmet needs.

2. Greater exploration of initiatives to identify suitable Trustees/Sponsors. - as the pool of people who are in communion with the Church is increasingly limited.

3. MPJPs collectively coming to a consensus explanation of MPJP roles.

4. MPJP mutual learning and sharing best practice – e.g., an MPJP could invite a Trustee/Sponsor(s) from another MPJP to sit in on one of its meetings and provide feedback at the end.

5. Find a more user-friendly term than "ministerial public juridic person". An alternative that is comparable to the short and 'understandable' descriptor of other PJPs e.g., diocese, parish, religious institute.

6. Collectively educating others in the church (including our schools and parishes) about MPJPs – their purpose, roles and place in the Church. The AMPJP has done a wonderful job in representing the MPJP's however knowledge of what a MPJP is and how it operates in the wider educational and health communities still remains low. This is a further opportunity for growth.

7. MPJP sector continuing to develop relationships of trust, mutual respect and collaboration with ACBC and CRA.

8. Ask DICLSAL to consider how they can best support pontifical MPJPs, including whether they are another Dicastery are the most appropriate body within the Apostolic See for MPJPs.

9. The AMPJP to consider whether it should seek canonical status as a "conference" of MPJPs, similar to the conference of bishops or the conference of religious major superiors.
10. MPJPs can have a role in the facilitating affordable formation for the laity.

The suggestions above will likely change in the future as: some are completed/or found to be ineffective, other priorities emerge, and other strategies present themselves. What is clear is that MPJPs are critically evaluating themselves, their relationships and that they are open to working with others to achieve Christ's mission.

Conclusion

This paper has presented evidence that MPJPs were established in Australia in response to: the Vatican II call for more lay participation in the Church, the need for governance expertise in in certain ministry sectors and the need for dwindling religious institutes to transfer their ministries. The MPJPs in Australia have a successfully continued the ministries entrusted to them.

MPJPs exist within a rapidly changing Catholic Church. The Catholic population is ageing, and more culturally diverse, most religious institutes are moving to completion, and dioceses/parishes are facing a membership that is both decreasing and more diverse. MPJPs are impacted by these changes and have the possibility of also exerting positive influence on other parts of the Church.

MPJPs have inherited something of the prophetic and radical element of their founding religious institutes. MPJPs are a new structure in the Church that, at their best, open up new possibilities for synodal governance. This synodality is evident in their internal functioning, their collaboration with other Church structures and their engagement with the needs of society. In this Jubilee year, MPJPs can be seen to be pilgrims of hope.

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Appendix 1. Inclusive Governance in a Synodal Church, Survey Instrument

About your MPJP/ACF:

The questions in this section seek details about your PJP (i.e., MPJP-ACF).

These details, along with those of other MPJP-ACFs, will be included in the paper that will provide an overview of MPJP-ACFs in your country and the Church and societal factors that impact MPJP-ACFs.

You will see a draft of this country paper and have an opportunity to provide comment and to ask for changes before it is published.

1.   What is the name of your Public Juridic Person (PJP)?

2.   In which year your PJP was established by the Church?

3.   Who was Establishing Authority?
     options:
     ☐ Apostolic See: DICLSAL (previously known as CICLSAL), or
     ☐ National Catholic Bishops Conference or
     ☐ Local Bishop (or Archbishop) or other (please specify)

4.   What is the canonical basis of your PJP?
     options:
     ☐ as per canon 116; or
     ☐ as per canon 298ff; or
     ☐ I'm not sure (we will contact you to clarify)

5.   Which Religious Institute(s) originally petitioned the Establishing Authority to establish your PJP?

6.   What ministries does your PJP sponsor
     options:
     ☐ Hospitals/health care;
     ☐ Aged care;
     ☐ Disability services;
     ☐ Family services,
     ☐ Community services,
     ☐ Early learning education (approx. 5-year-old and younger),
     ☐ Primary school education from (approx. 6- to 12-year-old),
     ☐ Secondary school education (approx. 13 to 18year old),
     ☐ Tertiary/university education,
     ☐ other (please specify)

These next questions ask about your MPJP-ACF's ministries in National and Local Churches.

This information will be included in the country paper to show your, and other MPJP-ACF, contributions to the wider Church and society.

7. In which country(s) does your PJP operate?
   options:
   - ☐ Australia; and/or
   - ☐ Canada; and/or
   - ☐ Ireland; and/or
   - ☐ New Zealand; and/or
   - ☐ Singapore-Malaysia; and/or
   - ☐ UK; and/or
   - ☐ USA; and/or
   - ☐ Other

8. In which Dioceses does your PJP have ministries?
   options:
   Choose from lists of dioceses which will appear based on selected country (and in selected state/province of USA/Canada)

About your MPJP/ACFs Trustee/Sponsors:
The next eight questions will help us develop a profile of MPJP-ACF Trustee-Sponsors within each country. It will help answer questions about the diversity of their backgrounds/qualifications and the perspective/skills that they bring to a governance role in the Church.

9. What is the total number of Trustee/Sponsors in your PJP?

10. What % of Trustee/Sponsors are baptised?

11. What % of Trustee/Sponsors are women?

12. What % of Trustee/Sponsors in Religious life?

13. What % of Trustee/Sponsors are ordained?

14. What % of Trustee/Sponsors have a theology degree?

15. What % of Trustee/Sponsors have a qualification from a governance institute? (e.g., Company Director course from Institute of Company Directors)

16. What % of Trustee/Sponsors have previous experience as a Board Director?

17. What % of Trustee/Sponsors have previous experience as a MPJP Trustee-Sponsor (or parish priest, bishop, Religious Institute General Superior)?

About the person completing this survey:
Providing your contact details in the next questions will assist us should we have any questions about your responses in this survey.

18. Name of person completing this survey

19. MPJP/ACF

20. Contact phone number

21. Contact email

22. Date

Appendix 2. Ministerial PJPs in Australia *as of 13 March 2025*

MPJP	Est year	Establishing Authority	Instigating Church entities	Ministry	Diocesan presence
(1) Calvary Ministries Ltd	2009	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	• Little Company of Mary Region of the Southern Cross (formerly Province of the Holy Spirit)	Hospitals/health care, Aged care, Family services	ACT • Canberra-Goulburn, Archdiocese NSW • Broken Bay, Diocese • Lismore, Diocese • Maitland-Newcastle, Diocese • Parramatta, Diocese • Sydney, Archdiocese • Wagga Wagga, Diocese NT • Darwin, Diocese SA • Adelaide, Archdiocese • Port Pirie, Diocese Tas • Hobart, Archdiocese Vic • Ballarat, Diocese • Melbourne, Archdiocese • Sale, Diocese • Sandhurst, Diocese

MPJP	Est year	Establishing Authority	Instigating Church entities	Ministry	Diocesan presence
(2) Catholic Healthcare	1994	Archbishop of Sydney	• Religious Sisters of Charity of Australia* • Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart (NSW) • Congregation of Sisters of Mercy Singleton* • Little Company of Mary – Province of the Holy Spirit • Sisters of St John of God Province of St Therese* • Hospitaller Order of St John of God Holy Family Province*	Aged care	ACT • Canberra-Goulburn, Archdiocese NSW • Broken Bay, Diocese • Lismore, Diocese • Maitland-Newcastle, Diocese • Parramatta, Diocese • Sydney, Archdiocese • Wagga Wagga, Diocese • Wilcannia-Forbes, Diocese • Wollongong, Diocese QLD • Brisbane, Archdiocese Maronite • Maroun, Diocese
(3) Dominican Education Australia	2016	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	• Dominican Sisters of Eastern Australia and the Solomon Islands • Dominican Sisters of North Adelaide • Holy Cross Congregation of Dominican Sisters Adelaide	Primary school education *(approx. 6- to 12-year-old)* Secondary school education *(approx. 13 to 18year old)*	NSW • Broken Bay, Diocese • Sydney, Archdiocese SA • Adelaide, Archdiocese Vic • Melbourne, Archdiocese

(4) Edmund Rice Education Australia	2012	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	• Congregation of Christian Brothers Oceania Province	Early learning education *(approx. 5-year-old and younger)* Primary school education *(approx. 6- to 12-year-old)* Secondary school education *(approx. 13 to 18year old)*	ACT • Canberra-Goulburn, Archdiocese NSW • Armidale, Diocese • Bathurst, Diocese • Broken Bay, Diocese • Lismore, Diocese • Maitland-Newcastle, Diocese • Parramatta, Diocese • Sydney, Archdiocese • Wollongong, Diocese NT • Darwin, Diocese QLD • Brisbane, Archdiocese • Cairns, Diocese • Rockhampton, Diocese • Toowoomba, Diocese • Townsville, Diocese SA • Adelaide, Archdiocese • Port Pirie, Diocese Tas • Hobart, Archdiocese Vic • Ballarat, Diocese • Melbourne, Archdiocese • Sale, Diocese • Sandhurst, Diocese WA • Broome, Diocese • Bunbury, Diocese • Geraldton, Diocese • Perth, Archdiocese

MPJP	Est year	Establishing Authority	Instigating Church entities	Ministry	Diocesan presence
(5) Good Samaritan Education	2011	Archbishop of Sydney	• Sisters of the Good Samaritan of the Order of St Benedict	Primary school education *(approx. 6- to 12-year-old)* Secondary school education *(approx. 13 to 18year old)*	NSW • Broken Bay, Diocese • Sydney, Archdiocese • Wollongong, Diocese QLD • Brisbane, Archdiocese • Townsville, Diocese Vic • Melbourne, Archdiocese
(6) Kildare Ministries	2011	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	• Congregation of the Sisters of St Brigid • Victorian Congregation of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Community services Secondary school education *(approx. 13 to 18year old)*	NSW • Broken Bay, Diocese QLD • Brisbane, Archdiocese SA • Adelaide, Archdiocese Vic • Ballarat, Diocese • Melbourne, Archdiocese • Sale, Diocese

MPJP	Est year	Establishing Authority	Instigating Church entities	Ministry	Diocesan presence
(7) Loreto Ministries	2023	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	• Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary Australia & Sth East Asia Province	Early learning education *(approx. 5-year-old and younger)* Primary school education *(approx. 6- to 12-year-old)* Secondary school education *(approx. 13 to 18year old)*	NSW • Broken Bay, Diocese • Sydney, Archdiocese QLD • Brisbane, Archdiocese SA • Adelaide, Archdiocese Vic • Ballarat, Diocese • Melbourne, Archdiocese
(8) Mary Aikenhead Ministries	2008	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	• Religious Sisters of Charity of Australia	Hospitals/health care, Aged care, Disability services Family services Secondary school education *(approx. 13 to 18year old)*	NSW • Sydney, Archdiocese QLD • Brisbane, Archdiocese • Toowoomba, Diocese Vic • Melbourne, Archdiocese

(9) Mercy Ministry Companions	2021	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	• Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea	Hospitals/health care, Aged care, Disability services Family services Community services Early learning education *(approx. 5-year-old and younger)* Primary school education *(approx. 6- to 12-year-old)* Secondary school education *(approx. 13 to 18year old)*	ACT • Canberra-Goulburn, Archdiocese NSW • Armidale, Diocese • Bathurst, Diocese • Lismore, Diocese • Maitland-Newcastle, Diocese • Parramatta, Diocese • Wagga Wagga, Diocese • Wilcannia-Forbes, Diocese • Sydney, Archdiocese • Wollongong, Diocese NT • Darwin, Diocese QLD • Cairns, Diocese SA • Adelaide, Archdiocese Vic • Ballarat, Diocese • Melbourne, Archdiocese • Sale, Diocese • Sandhurst, Diocese WA • Bunbury, Diocese • Geraldton, Diocese • Perth, Archdiocese

MPJP	Est year	Establishing Authority	Instigating Church entities	Ministry	Diocesan presence
(10) Mercy Partners	2008	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	• Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy Brisbane • Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea • Missionary Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception • Queensland Presentation Sisters	Hospitals/health care, Aged care, Disability services Family services Community services Secondary school education *(approx. 13 to 18year old)*	NSW • Parramatta, Diocese • Sydney, Archdiocese QLD • Brisbane, Archdiocese • Rockhampton, Diocese • Townsville, Diocese Vic • Melbourne, Archdiocese
(11) MercyCare	2002	Archbishop of Perth	• Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy Perth	Aged care, Disability services Family services Community services Early learning education (approx. 5-year-old and younger)	WA • Broome, Diocese • Perth, Archdiocese

MPJP	Est year	Establishing Authority	Instigating Church entities	Ministry	Diocesan presence
(12) St John of God Australia Ltd	2003	Bishops of the Province of Western Australia	• Sisters of St John of God	Hospitals/health care, Disability Services, Family Services	NSW • Parramatta, Diocese • Sydney, Archdiocese Vic • Ballarat, Diocese • Melbourne, Archdiocese • Sale, Diocese • Sandhurst, Diocese WA • Broome, Diocese • Bunbury, Diocese • Geraldton, Diocese • Perth, Archdiocese New Zealand-Aotearoa Timor-Leste Papua New Guinea
(13) Sophia Education Ministries	2016	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	• ANZ Province of the Society of the Sacred Heart	Early learning education *(approx. 5-year-old and younger)* Primary school education *(approx. 6- to 12-year-old)* Secondary school education *(approx. 13 to 18year old)*	NSW • Sydney, Archdiocese QLD • Brisbane, Archdiocese Vic • Melbourne, Archdiocese New Zealand-Aotearoa
(14) University of Notre Dame (Australia)	1991	Archbishop of Perth		Tertiary/university education	NSW • Sydney, Archdiocese WA • Broome, Diocese • Perth, Archdiocese

Appendix 3. MPJP Trustee/Sponsors describe their experiences as Ecclesial Leaders

Trustee/Sponsors needed to ensure that a ministry undertook a "mission review" to help it see that it was more focused on the founder's story than the more significant Jesus.

Trustee/Sponsors realised that they need to model collegial behaviour to help others shift to this dynamic. At times, this has also meant having a discussion with another Church leaders about how they could be more collegial in their engagement with the MPJP.

Trustee/Sponsors are very engaged in safeguarding – both in ensuring that matters are properly addressed and in ensuring that ministries have appropriate systems/culture to support safeguarding. The Trustee/Sponsors have a key role in dealing with Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd on behalf of all the MPJP's ministries.

Our Trustee/Sponsors had a gradual dawning of recognition that the founding religious institute was no longer responsible for the ministries and that this responsibility was ours alone. For one MPJP this shift in responsibility was most obvious when the property was transferred from the founding religious institute to the MPJP.

One of our ministries had a crisis that made its way into the media. There was a reaction from people within the Church and from the public. This was a moment when the Trustee/Sponsors were most aware that we are "the responsible people" – we are the leaders in the name of the Church.

A local diocese had an issue with one of our ministries which they were unable to resolve. The Trustee/Sponsors needed to meet with the bishop and that meeting resolved the matter.

We Trustee/Sponsors could see the need for networks and committees to help our ministries: better understand mission, keep the focus on mission and to roll out mission with locals taking responsibility for mission. This involved us working with people at all levels – board chairs, principals, school communities etc. This was a time that we saw ourselves as ecclesial leaders.

There was a time when some members of our founding religious institute were interfering in the ministry. We, Trustee/Sponsors, needed to intervene and be the bridge between our ministry and these religious. We needed to help them understand their role so that they could continue to be a positive influence in the ministry.

People rarely relate to Trustees/Sponsors with the difference that other Church leaders receive (this is a positive and a challenge). Our Trustees/Sponsors see our ecclesial leadership as involving five "C's":
1. Clarity of role – we take the time to ensure that Appointers/Members, Trustees/Sponsors, ministry, and externals are clear of own role and that of others.
2. Courage – this is not a role for the feint-hearted, Trustee/Sponsors need to step-up and often make the first move and open-up complex and conflictual issues.
3. Confidence – Trustee/Sponsors need to act with confidence (even when it is low).
4. Compassion– we listen to people to hear their perspective/concerns, we express empathy for their situation and we help them to see other perspectives and the long-term and MPJP needs (it is compassion encouraging compassion).
5. Cajoling – we recognise that coercion and forcing people to a particular decision is not effective so we use persuasion and appeals to higher values and better natures to bring about a consensus.

Appendix 4. Australian dioceses and the MPJPs with ministries within each diocese
as of 13 March 2025

Diocese		*MPJP with ministries in this diocese*
Latin Rite Dioceses		
ACT - Canberra and Goulburn, Archdiocese	4	• Calvary Ministries Ltd • Catholic Healthcare • Edmund Rice Education Australia • Mercy Ministry Companions
NSW - Armidale, Diocese	2	• Edmund Rice Education Australia • Mercy Ministry Companions
NSW - Bathurst, Diocese	2	• Edmund Rice Education Australia • Mercy Ministry Companions
NSW - Broken Bay, Diocese	7	• Calvary Ministries Ltd • Catholic Healthcare • Dominican Education Australia • Edmund Rice Education Australia • Good Samaritan Education • Kildare Ministries • Loreto Ministries
NSW - Lismore, Diocese	4	• Calvary Ministries Ltd • Catholic Healthcare • Edmund Rice Education Australia • Mercy Ministry Companions
NSW - Maitland-Newcastle, Diocese	4	• Calvary Ministries Ltd • Catholic Healthcare • Edmund Rice Education Australia • Mercy Ministry Companions
NSW - Parramatta, Diocese	6	• Calvary Ministries Ltd • Catholic Healthcare • Edmund Rice Education Australia • Mercy Ministry Companions • Mercy Partners • St John of God Australia Ltd
NSW - Sydney, Archdiocese	12	• Calvary Ministries Ltd • Catholic Healthcare • Dominican Education Australia • Edmund Rice Education Australia • Good Samaritan Education • Loreto Ministries • Mary Aikenhead Ministries • Mercy Ministry Companions • Mercy Partners • St John of God Australia Ltd • Sophia Education Ministries • University of Notre Dame (Australia)

Diocese		MPJP with ministries in this diocese
NSW - Wagga Wagga, Diocese	3	• Calvary Ministries Ltd • Catholic Healthcare • Mercy Ministry Companions
NSW - Wilcannia-Forbes, Diocese	2	• Catholic Healthcare • Mercy Ministry Companions
NSW - Wollongong, Diocese	4	• Catholic Healthcare • Edmund Rice Education Australia • Good Samaritan Education • Mercy Ministry Companions
NT - Darwin, Diocese	3	• Calvary Ministries Ltd • Edmund Rice Education Australia • Mercy Ministry Companions
QLD - Brisbane, Archdiocese	8	• Catholic Healthcare • Edmund Rice Education Australia • Good Samaritan Education • Kildare Ministries • Loreto Ministries • Mary Aikenhead Ministries • Mercy Partners • Sophia Education Ministries
QLD - Cairns, Diocese	2	• Edmund Rice Education Australia • Mercy Ministry Companions
QLD - Rockhampton, Diocese	2	• Edmund Rice Education Australia • Mercy Partners
QLD - Toowoomba, Diocese	2	• Edmund Rice Education Australia • Mary Aikenhead Ministries
QLD - Townsville, Diocese	3	• Edmund Rice Education Australia • Good Samaritan Education • Mercy Partners
SA - Adelaide, Archdiocese	6	• Calvary Ministries Ltd • Dominican Education Australia • Edmund Rice Education Australia • Kildare Ministries • Loreto Ministries • Mercy Ministry Companions
SA - Port Pirie, Diocese	2	• Calvary Ministries Ltd • Edmund Rice Education Australia
TAS - Hobart, Archdiocese	2	• Calvary Ministries Ltd • Edmund Rice Education Australia
VIC - Ballarat, Diocese	6	• Calvary Ministries Ltd • Edmund Rice Education Australia • Kildare Ministries • Loreto Ministries

Diocese		MPJP with ministries in this diocese
VIC - Melbourne, Archdiocese	11	• Calvary Ministries Ltd • Dominican Education Australia • Edmund Rice Education Australia • Good Samaritan Education • Kildare Ministries • Loreto Ministries • Mary Aikenhead Ministries • Mercy Ministry Companions • Mercy Partners • St John of God Australia Ltd • Sophia Education Ministries
		• Mercy Ministry Companions • St John of God Australia Ltd
VIC - Sale, Diocese	5	• Calvary Ministries Ltd • Edmund Rice Education Australia • Kildare Ministries • Mercy Ministry Companions • St John of God Australia Ltd
VIC - Sandhurst, Diocese	4	• Calvary Ministries Ltd • Edmund Rice Education Australia • Mercy Ministry Companions • St John of God Australia Ltd
WA - Bunbury, Diocese	3	• Edmund Rice Education Australia • Mercy Ministry Companions • St John of God Australia Ltd
WA - Broome, Diocese	4	• Edmund Rice Education Australia • MercyCare • St John of God Australia Ltd • University of Notre Dame (Australia)
WA - Geraldton, Diocese	3	• Edmund Rice Education Australia • Mercy Ministry Companions • St John of God Australia Ltd
WA - Perth, Archdiocese	5	• Edmund Rice Education Australia • Mercy Ministry Companions • MercyCare • St John of God Australia Ltd • University of Notre Dame (Australia)
Eastern Rite Dioceses		
Chaldean		
Maronite	1	• Catholic Healthcare
Melkite		
Syro-Malabar		
Ukrainian		
Ordinariates		

Appendix 5. Number of Australian MPJPs operating in key ministry sectors
as of 13 March 2025

Ministry sector		MPJP/ACF sponsoring these ministries in Australia
Hospitals/health	5	• Calvary Ministries Ltd • Mary Aikenhead Ministries • Mercy Ministry Companions • Mercy Partners • St John of God Australia Ltd
Aged care	6	• Calvary Ministries Ltd • Catholic Healthcare • Mary Aikenhead Ministries • Mercy Ministry Companions • Mercy Partners • MercyCare
Disability services	5	• Calvary Ministries Ltd • Mary Aikenhead Ministries • Mercy Partners • MercyCare • St John of God Australia Ltd
Family services	5	• Calvary Ministries Ltd • Mary Aikenhead Ministries • Mercy Partners • MercyCare • St John of God Australia Ltd
Community services	4	• Kildare Ministries • Mercy Ministry Companions • Mercy Partners • MercyCare
Early learning education *(approx. 5-year-old and younger)*	5	• Edmund Rice Education Australia • Loreto Ministries • Mercy Ministry Companions • MercyCare • Sophia Education Ministries
Primary school education *(approx. 6- to 12-year-old)*	6	• Dominican Education Australia • Edmund Rice Education Australia • Good Samaritan Education • Loreto Ministries • Mercy Ministry Companions • Sophia Education Ministries
Secondary school education *(approx. 13 to 18year old)*	9	• Dominican Education Australia • Edmund Rice Education Australia • Good Samaritan Education • Kildare Ministries • Loreto Ministries • Mary Aikenhead Ministries • Mercy Ministry Companions • Mercy Partners • Sophia Education Ministries
Tertiary/university education	1	• University of Notre Dame (Australia)

Ministerial Public Juridic Persons in Canada

Bonnie McLennan[1] and John Ruetz [2]

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[1] Bonnie MacLellan is the General Superior of The Sisters of St. Joseph of Sault Ste. Marie and holds a PhD in Human and Organizational Systems and a Doctorate in Canon Law (JCD). Her research focus was canonical sponsorship of Ontario Catholic hospitals. She has served as a board member for ministerial PJPs in Ontario and Saskatchewan for over twenty years. She also provided board and staff education related to the rights and obligations of canonically sponsored ministries in the Catholic Church.

[2] John Ruetz is the President & CEO of the Catholic Health Alliance of Canada and has held a variety of health and social services senior leadership roles over thirty-five years. He holds a MHSc in Health Administration, is a Chartered Director, and a Senior Fellow in the Faculty of Theology at St. Paul University, Ottawa, Canada.

Contents

Glossary

Apostolic See	Also known as the Holy See or See of Rome or Petrine See. The episcopal jurisdiction and roles that the Pope (and the various offices within his Roman Curia) exercise across and on behalf of the entire Catholic Church.
Association of Christ's Faithful	Associations of Christ's Faithful are an organisation of laity, clerics or both collaborating for growth in faith and spirituality, and for the works of the Gospel. Associations may be public or private canonical associations or non-canonical. Public associations are PJPs and are an alternative Church structure to an MPJP for sponsoring Church ministries.
Board	The governing body of a company. This project generally uses the term 'Board' to refer to the governing body of MPJP/ACF ministries (e.g. school or school network board, hospital or hospital network board) and uses the term Council to refer to Trustee/Sponsors acting/meeting together.
DICLSAL	Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life - the department within the Roman Curia that also oversees the mission and life of religious institutes. This office has responsibility for authorizing the alienation of church property controlled by religious institutes and public juridical persons (which DICLSAL has established). Prior to the promulgation of *Praedicate Evangelium* in 2022 DICLSAL was known as Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.
Establishing Authority for MPJPs	The Church Leader who approves the MPJP's Statutes and establishes it as a PJP. The Establishing Authority for MPJPs follows the guidelines for establishing Public Associations, namely: the Apostolic See, for universal and international associations, Episcopal Conference in its own territory, for national associations and the diocesan Bishop, his own territory. (c312)
Member of an MPJP	This project uses the term 'Member' to refer to the person(s) who appoint the Trustee/Sponsors. Some MPJPs use that term others use: Sponsor, Participating Entity
Ministerial PJP (MPJP)	The term commonly used to refer to a public juridical person (PJP) established by a competent Church Authority for the purpose of sponsoring Church ministries (see Canon 116).
Ministry	Ministry means any activity that carries out the works of the Gospel. This project uses the term 'ministry' when referring to the works of ACFs/MPJPs e.g., schools, hospitals, aged care and other services.
Public Juridic Person (PJP)	Aggregate of persons or of things directed to a purpose befitting the Church's mission, which transcends the purpose of the individuals. PJPs are church entities established by law or by decree and act in the name of the Church. Examples of a PJP are: diocese, parish, religious institute or MPJP. This project uses the USA spelling of 'Juridic' rather than the UK spelling of 'Juridical'.
Religious Institute	Religious institute is a gift of the spirit in which individuals make a lifelong commitment to gospel life in community, framed by vows or bonds of chastity, poverty, and obedience and committed to apostolic service. Societies of Apostolic Life are similar. They may also be called orders, institutes, societies or congregations.
Trustee/ Sponsor	This project uses the term "Trustees/Sponsors" to refer to individuals appointed as responsible for the MPJP. This term is used in all the project's papers to enable easy identification of the same role in different MPJPs across the seven countries under consideration. Other terms used by MPJPs include: board Director, canonical steward, Trustee, Sponsor, Trustee Director

Introduction

This paper provides a brief overview of the context of the Catholic Church and Ministerial Public Juridic Persons (MPJP) within Canada.[3] It seeks to explain why MPJPs emerged, their purpose and their hopes for the future.

MPJPs, alongside dioceses and religious institutes, are the Church Authorities responsible for ensuring the mission and values of the Catholic Church are realized in major education, health, aged care and other ministries which impact the lives of millions of Canadians. In keeping with the Final Document: Synod on Synodality,[4] MPJPs are one of the few bodies where lay people can be delegated decision-making responsibilities on behalf of the Church. This role responds to the Second Vatican Council's[5] and the Final Document: Synod on Synodality's[6] emphasis on Baptism as the foundation for the full and active participation of all the Faithful, both in society and in the Church.

This paper is one in a series of papers on MPJPs in Anglophone countries prepared for the ACU Inclusive Governance in a Synodal Church (IGSC) project. This project is scheduled to run from July 2024 to June 2025 and will deliver: an initial Position Paper, Country Papers, a range of case studies and a final Project Report.

Methodology

This paper draws on publicly available data regarding Canadian society and the Catholic Church in Canada. Data on MPJPs, their ministries and their Trustee/Sponsors was obtained in the first instance from the MPJP.[7] MPJPs provided this information via: a survey,[8] participation in a 90-minute online consultation-focus group, and written responses to the summary of the consultation-focus group and to draft versions of this paper. Supplementary information on MPJPs was obtained from their websites and from other publicly available sources. The project was grateful for the Catholic Health Alliance of Canada's assistance and introductions to MPJPs. This enabled the project to communicate with MPJP contact people relatively quickly, although there were often delays within MPJPs in identifying the most appropriate person to complete the survey/participate in online interviews.

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[3] This project uses the term "Ministerial Public Juridic Person (MPJP) to refer to a public juridic person established by a competent Church Authority for the purpose of sponsoring Church ministries. See Glossary page 3. Ministerial Public Juridic Person on page 3

[4] Francis, and XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. *Final Document: For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission.* Vatican: Apostolic See, 2024. https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/news/2024-10-26_final-document/ENG---Documento-finale.pdf.

[5] See W. Abbott (ed)., *The Documents of Vatican II*, J. Gallagher (Trans.) Washington, American Press, 1966.

[6] *Final Document: For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission*

[7] This project uses the term "Trustees/Sponsors" to refer to individuals appointed as responsible for the MPJP. This term is used in all the project's papers to enable easy identification of the same role in different MPJPs across the seven countries under consideration. Other terms used by MPJPs include: board Director, canonical steward, Trustee, Sponsor, Trustee Director. See Glossary page 3.

[8] See: Appendix 1 IGSC Project survey instrument.

Canadian Societal and Church Context

Catholicism took root in Canada with the Europeans arrive in the New World. Many French religious institutes[9] sent men and women to New France[10] to establish hospitals and schools,[11] influencing its social, cultural and political life from the early colonial period to the present day.

While European explorer's "discovered" Canada in the 15th and 16th centuries, Indigenous nations had lived on the land for thousands of years.[12] Before European contact, Canada was home to diverse Indigenous nations, including the Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe, Mi'kmaq, Inuit and many others. These societies had well-established political, economic, and cultural systems.[13]

Canada's development was marked by British and French colonial rule (John Cabot's claim of Newfoundland for England in 1497 and Jacques Cartier's foundations for French claims in North America from 1534-1542. In 1608 Samuel de Champlain founded Quebec City, marking the start of permanent French settlement, with Ville Marie (Montreal) being founded to bring Christianity to local Indigenous peoples as a missionary settlement in 1642.[14] While France dominated much of Canada, Britain established settlements in Nova Scotia (1713) and Newfoundland (1583), with the rivalry between France and Britain culminating in the Seven Years' War (1756-1763) and resulted in New France being transferred to British control.[15]

Political instability, economic challenges and fears of American expansion led to the Charlottetown and Quebec Conferences (1864), where leaders such as Sir John A. MacDonald and George-Étienne Cartier drafted a plan for unity through the British North America Act (BNA) which created the Dominion of Canada, consisting of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.[16] Manitoba joined confederation in 1870,[17] followed in

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9   This project uses the term "religious institute" to Religious institute is a gift of the spirit in which individuals make a lifelong commitment to gospel life in community, framed by vows or bonds of chastity, poverty, and obedience and committed to apostolic service. Societies of Apostolic Life are similar. They may also be called orders, institutes, societies or congregations. See Glossary page 3.

10 New France is the term for the French colonies in what are now known as Canada and USA

11 See "The Catholic Church in Canada: A Missionary Country," Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, https://www.cccb.ca/the-catholic-church-in-canada/history-of-the-church-in-canada/, (= CCCB).

12 See M. Lipka, "5 Facts about religion in Canada," Pew Research Center, 1 July 2019, https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2019/07/01/5-facts-about-religion-in-canada/.

13 See B. Trigger, *Natives and Newcomers: Canada's "Heroic Age" Reconsidered*, Kingston, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985, 38, https://archive.org/details/nativesnewcomers00trig/page/38/mode/2up?q=political.

14 See J. Kalbffeisch, "Founding of Ville-Marie," in Canada's History, 17 May 2014, https://www.canadashistory.ca/explore/french-canada/founding-of-ville-marie.

15 See D. Miquelon, L. Massicotte, and A. McIntosh, "The Conquest of New France," in *The Canadian Encyclopedia,* 25 August 2019, https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/conquest.

16 See Government of Canada, British North America Act, 1867, 30-31 Vict., c. 3 (U.K.), https://justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/csj-sjc/constitution/lawreg-loireg/p1t11.html.

17 See J. Tattrie, A. McIntosh, S.A. Smith, F. Pannekoek, J.E. Ree, J. Scott, and M. Filice, "Manitoba and Confederation," 15 Mar 2020, *The Canadian Encyclopaedia*, https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/manitoba-and-confederation.

1871 by British Columbia only after the new country had promised a transcontinental railway to connect the country from east to west coast.[18]

The Catholic Church's Role in the Development of Canada's Culture

The Catholic Church has played a pivotal role in shaping Canadian society, both historically and in contemporary times. As noted previously, the history of the Catholic Church in Canada begins with the arrival of French explorers and missionaries in the early 17th century and included such names as Samuel de Champlain (founder of Quebec in 1608) and Jesuit priests who sought to spread Christianity among Indigenous peoples.

The Catholic Church was deeply intertwined with the government of New France, which upheld Catholicism as the official religion and supported its expansion.[19] The British conquest of New France in 1763 through the Treaty of Paris posed challenges to the Church, but the Quebec Act of 1774 allowed Catholics to practice their faith freely, securing the Church's continued influence.[20] Catholicism remained strong, particularly in Quebec, with bishops such as Jean-Olivier Briand maintained religious authority over Quebec's largely Catholic population.[21] Constitutional protection of denominational schools allowed Catholic schools to flourish, even to this day.[22] As Irish immigrants arrived in large number to escape the potato famine, Catholicism expanded into Ontario and the eastern provinces/colonies, leading to the growth of English-speaking Catholic communities.[23]

The Catholic Church and Canadian Indigenous People

Like the government of Canada, the Catholic Church was deeply involved in colonial policies that sought to assimilate Indigenous people, mostly through the residential school system.[24] The government funded, Church run schools, sought to assimilate Indigenous children by erasing their languages, traditions, and spiritual practices. The Catholic Church ran approximately 0-70% of residential schools in Canada, while Protestant churches ran the rest. Many Indigenous children faced neglect, malnutrition, physical, emotional and sexual abuse at these institutions, with forced separation from families leading to

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[18] See J. Tattrie, E, Harhi, and A. McIntosh, "British Columbia and Confederation," in *The Canadian Encyclopaedia*, https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/british-columbia-and-confederation.

[19] See P.N. Moogk, *La Nouvelle France: The Making of French Canada-A Cultural History*, Michigan State University Press, 2000.

[20] See M. Dagenais, A, McIntosh, and C. Cooper, "Quebec Act, 1774, in *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, 11 May 2020, https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/quebec-act.

[21] See W. Stewart Wallace (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Canada, Vol. 1*, Toronto, University Associates of Canada, 1948, 283-284.

[22] See M. McGowan, "A Short History of Catholic Schools in Ontario," Department of History, St. Michael's College, University of Toronto, https://www.torontocatholicteachersguild.com/uploads/1/5/6/7/15671878/a_short_history_of_catholic_schools_in_ontario._dr._mark_g._mcgowan_professor_of_history_st._michael_s_college_university_of_toronto.pdf.

[23] See R. Perin, *Rome in Canada: The Vatican and Canadian Affairs in the Late Victorian Age*, Toronto, University Press, 1990, 9, https://archive.org/details/romeincanadavati0000peri/page/n7/mode/2up?q=Irish+immigrants.

[24] See Z. Parrott and M. Filice, "Indigenous Peoples in Canada", in *The Canadian Encyclopaedia*, 28 November 2023, https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/aboriginal-people; See also J. Brant, "Racial Segregation of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, in *The Canadian Encyclopaedia*, 1 May 2020, https://www. thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/racial-segregation-of-indigenous-peoples-in-canada.

intergenerational trauma.[25] In 2009, a delegation of Indigenous leaders met with Pope Benedict XVI, who expressed "sorrow" but did not formally apologize for the Catholic Church's involvement in the Canadian Indian Residential School System.[26] In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) released its final report, calling for a formal papal apology and greater Church accountability.[27] During his 2023 visit to Canada, Pope Francis apologized for the Church's role in these abuses.[28]

Canada's Catholics in the Larger Social Context

The Catholic Church played a foundational role in the development of Canadian society, influencing its social, cultural and political life. A sense of social responsibility for health care for all was initiated in Canada through the Catholic Church. Jesus mandated His Church to heal the sick and care for the most vulnerable in our midst,[29] and this mandate was realized through health care apostolates established in Canada by religious institutes. The first hospital on the continent north of Mexico,[30] *L'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec*,[31]was established by the Augustinian Sisters in 1639. They were followed by the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph who arrived in Montréal in 1659 and worked with Jeanne Mance in the Montréal infirmary she established.[32]

"Today, there are 105 Catholic healthcare facilities across Canada, either self or parent governed by 43 Catholic organizations, which accounts for 13,738 healthcare beds in Canada. These facilities are supported by 19 dioceses and 14 Catholic sponsors. They span 6 provinces and 27 health regions/authorities."[33]

While the Catholic Church has undergone profound transformations, from its missionary origins of New France to its present-day support of Catholic health care in an increasingly secular society, the Church continues to be a major force in education, healthcare and social justice efforts.[34] Catholics form the largest Christian group in Canada, with 29.9% or

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25 See P. Menzies, "Intergenerational Trauma and Residential Schools," in *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, 30 My 2024, https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/intergenerational-trauma-and-residential-schools.

26 See "Pope expresses 'sorrow' for abuse at residential schools," in *The National News*, 29 April 2009, https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/pope-expresses-sorrow-for-abuse-at-residential-schools-1.778019.

27 See Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB), "From strong words to meaningful partnership: A renewed Catholic commitment to Indigenous reconciliation," 24 July 2024, https://www.cccb.ca/media-release/from-strong-words-to-meaningful-partnership-a-renewed-catholic-commitment-to-indigenous-reconciliation/.

28 *"Papal apology for residential schools in Canada"* Government of Canada-Gouvernement du Canada https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1689770368923/1689770422117

29 See Matt. 10:8.

30 See "La Fiducie du Patrimoine culturel des Autsutines," in B. MacLellan, "Canonical Sponsorship of Catholic Health Care in the Province of Ontario, Canada: How to Retain Catholic Organizational Identity While Delivering Quality Health Care," Saint Paul University, Ottawa, JCD, 2017, 89 (= MacLellan).

31 See G. Brown (ed.), *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. I, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1966, 34-349.

32 See Religious Hospitallers of Saint Joseph, Montréal History, http://www.rhsj.org/en/history_360_-21.php, in MacLellan, 89.

33 See CCCB, https://www.cccb.ca/faith-moral-issues/health-care/.

34 See D. Seljak, "Religion and public Policy in Canada: A Historical Perspective," in *Studies in Religion*, 1996, 3-16.

10.9 million people ascribing to the Catholic faith in 2021.[35] Jesus' healing mission continues to this day in Catholic-sponsored apostolates throughout Canada. "Catholic health ministry sees care for the sick as a sacred ministry pursued in fidelity to the example and teaching of Jesus Christ. It is dedicated to the relief of suffering within the constraints of divine law.[36]

Despite the Catholic Church's historic influences on health, education and social services, the impact of faith on the private and public lives of Canadians has dwindled over time. The accompanying charts reveal an ever-increasing segment of the population ascribing to no faith traditions. The question of how faith-based health care, education, and social services can be sustained without a fundamental faith formation and ascription, is one that will call us to serious reflection.

Religiosity in Canada and its evolution from 1985 to 2019

Chart 9
Frequency of participation in group religious activities and individual religious or spiritual activities, by province of residence and year of birth, 2017 to 2019

* different from the value for people in the same cohort residing in Ontario at p < 0.05
Note: Some result columns do not sum to 100% due to rounding.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, cycles 31 to 34, 2017 to 2019.

The share of the population with a Christian religion has been decreasing for 20 years, while the shares for other religions or no religious affiliation have been rising

Source(s): Census of Population, 2001 and 2021 (3901), and National Household Survey, 2011 (5178).

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[35] See O. Bush, Religion Statistics in Canada, 31 December 2024, https://madeinca.ca/religion-statistics-canada/.

[36] See E. Pellegrino, l" Catholic health Care ministry and Contemporary Culture: The Growing Divide," in *Urged on by Christ: Catholic health Care in Tension with Contemporary Culture. Proceedings of the twenty-First Workshop for Bishops,* Philadelphia, The National Catholic Bioethics Center, 2007, 14.

From religious institutes to MPJPs: Making a Leap of Faith

Catholic religious institutes in Canada have been major contributors to the development and delivery of healthcare services. Religious institutes in Canada have seen their demographics shift from vibrant and robust trailblazers to aging and declining membership.[37]

In light of these realities, many religious institutes transferred responsibilities for their ministries to Ministerial Public Juridic Persons whose ongoing support will rely almost completely on the lay faithful.[38]

In 2020, the World Economic Forum Social Mobility Index scored Canada at 76 out of 100, which ranked Canada overall as 14th out of 82 countries. The Index measures quality of life as well as factors that would enable the population to achieve a higher standard of living. This comprehensive measure has 47 indicators across five determinants: health, education, technology, work, and institutions. Canada's best ratings were in health (88/100); technology access (85/100); inclusive institutions (85/100) and education quality and equity (82/100). Canada's lowest ratings were fair wage distribution (63/100); working conditions (65/100) and lifelong learning (69/100). The Index shows a relatively high quality of life and social mobility for the Canadian population although there are still individuals and groups whose lives and prospects are well below the average.[39]

Why is this information useful? Just as religious institutes contributed to Canada's ranking as 76 out of 100 in the World Economic Forum Social Mobility Index that measures the quality of life and other factors that enable the population to achieve higher standards of living, so too now, MPJPs are being invited to take responsibility, *in nomine ecclesiae* for the needs of our societies. There is still ministry and justice work to be done to create a system of health care, education and social services that recognizes the needs of the most vulnerable in our midst.

There is a place for Ministerial Public Juridic Persons and the Episcopal Conference to serve a prophetic role in our Canadian culture and hold up a mirror to local and world-wide political systems, speaking of God's call to justice and equity that can invite shifts in consciousness and continued beliefs, philosophically and in fact, confirming that we are our brothers and sisters keepers.[40] Is this not reflective of the call of Vatican II and the recommendations coming from the Synod on Synodality that all of the baptized are responsible for the mission of the Church?

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[37] See R. Philippe, "Quebec's dwindling number of Catholic nuns spells end of era in province," in *OMI Lacombe Canada*, https://omilacombe.ca/quebecs-dwindling-number-catholic-nuns-spells-end-era-province/.

[38] See Health Progress, "The Public Juridic Person in Action," in *Health Progress*, 82 (3), https://www.chausa.org/publications/health-progress/archive/article/may-june-2001/the-public-juridic-person-in-action.

[39] World Economic Forum (2020:58-59) *The Global Social Mobility Report 2020 Equality, Opportunity and a New Economic Imperative* https://www3.weforum.org/docs/Global_Social_Mobility_Report.pdf

[40] See Genesis 4:9.

Just as Jesus' ministry was a grass-roots call to the disciples to "come follow me," so too every Catholic agency's Trustee/Sponsors and administration are being invited to "leave everything and follow Jesus," into a world that may have forgotten, either unconsciously or intentionally, that baptism brings with it the obligation to continue the mission of the Church – together. As Jesus called the disciples together, so too we are called to work together, as all the people of God, without hierarchical distinction, fanning into a flame the gifts received in baptism. This is the call of the Synod on Synodality to which we continue to respond today. The question we will need to answer is, "Are we willing to abandon historic hierarchical models of control and share responsibility for the mission of the Church, in collaboration with our Church's hierarchy? What can we do better together than we can do alone?" Bishops may have relied on religious institutes to fulfil the Church's mission in the arenas of health care, social services and education in the past, but those days are long past. Now, God's Spirit calls us to, as the scriptures suggest, "dream dreams and have new visions."[41]

National engagement with the Synod on Synodality

In preparation for the Synod on Synodality, Dioceses throughout Canada engaged in a consultation process to collate the views and concerns of the faithful. These responses were collated and submitted to Synod participants prior to the first session of the Synod. Pope Francis published a note accompanying the Final Document of the synod on Synodality, a text that captures the results of the two-year-long process initiated in October 2021 and concluded in October 2024. He called for creative implementation and renewal of commitment to communion, participation, and mission.

As part of the preparations for the second session of the Synod, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) asked each diocese or eparchy to choose only 2-3 themes or questions from those listed and organization reflection sessions around them. The method of conversation in the spirit was strongly recommended. Dioceses were asked to synthesize the fruits of their reflections. Responses were only received from Latin Rite Dioceses, with 66% responding. In Canada, 29% were from Western Canada, 16% from Ontario, 37% from Quebec and 18% from Atlantic Canada.[42] Top themes from the Diocesan Synthesis report received specific attention in descending order of priority:

1. The Church is mission (66%)

2. Towards a Listening and Accompanying Church (39%)

3. Structures of Participation (32%)

4. A Church "out of every tribe, tongue, people and nation (24%)

5. Women in the life and mission of the Church (21%)

6. A Synodal Approach to Formation (16%)

7. Entering the Community of Faith: Christian Initiation (11%)

8. People in Poverty, Protagonist of the Church's Journey (11%).

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[41] See Joel 2::28-29.

[42] See CCCB: Synthesis of Diocesan Reflections May 2024, https://www.cccb.ca/wp-content/uploads/ 2024/07/CCCB-Synthesis-Report-Canada-May-2024.pdf (= CCCB Synthesis of Diocesan Reflections May 2024).

While the dioceses were encouraged to focus on sections 8-12, 16, 18 in the CCCB Final Report, there was virtually no mention of sections 10-12 (which deal with consecrated life and the clergy.) The reasons for this are not clear but may be of concern. It was also interesting to note the third-most common theme was not those recommended by the document by the CCCB. This indicates the great importance Canadian dioceses give to the question of building community within the Church, especially as concerns those of different ethnic, cultural and linguistic groups.

The top priority for those who participated in this consultation was the Church in mission (identified in 66% of diocesan syntheses) and was identified twice as often as any other theme. There was clear convergence on the need for every baptized person (lay, consecrated, ordained) to bear witness in word and deed to the Good News and to participate in the Church's evangelizing mission of transforming humanity and society through the leaven of the Gospel. This will require going out of our own ecclesial spaces, both individually and communally, into the world to meet people where they are, listening attentively to their joys, hopes, griefs and anxieties.

In order to be effective, it will rely on the recognition of the action of the Holy Spirit in each baptized person, and on the fostering of their unique charisms. Finally, it was repeatedly noted that all of this will require formation at all age levels and for all Catholics since many Catholics do not see themselves as missionaries and may not be aware of the vocation and spiritual gifts they receive in Baptism.

Matters of Synodality Identified by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops [43]

1. It was noted that the major changes in diocesan and parish structures may be required to bring about the "missionary option" identified by Pope Francis in *Evangelii gaudium*. Some dioceses hint at more participative diocesan structures that are focused on fostering outreach initiatives.

2. Some dioceses noted that it might be useful to establish a commissioning rite for faithful entrusted with specific tasks in the Church's mission in order to make more visible the diversity of vocations, charisms and ministries at work in the local community.
3. Several dioceses noted that effective missionary outreach will require better internal communication (between parishes, between the diocesan office and parishes, between groups of faithful, etc).

4. One diocese noted that, in its local context, the word "mission" is often associated with colonialism and that we need to develop a corrected and purified understanding of mission in order to bring the Good News to the world. This purification is an ongoing challenge.
5. There were repeated calls for better formation. However, in Canada we do not have the requisite ecclesial culture or, in some cases, the needed structures. One challenge lies in identifying programs and methods of formation that will be

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43 CCCB, Synthesis of Diocesan Reflections May 2024, 2.

attractive and accessible to the lay faithful who are not already employed by the Church.

Matters of Synodality Where MPJPs Can Provide Leadership

In listening sessions that have occurred across Canada, MPJPs have heard that some patients, families and staff do not always feel safe and welcome in a health organization with Catholic identity. Some people with lived experience report that that they sometimes feel that they don't belong. This is particularly evident for some Indigenous people, women, and members of the LBGTQ+ community.

Building community within the Church requires efforts at listening, being an accompanying Church, reconciliation, and welcoming. This necessitates engaging with not only practicing Catholics but also with people that are served by the Church's healing ministry and with people who provide these services on behalf of the Church.

An identified priority for MPJPs in Canada is for all patients, families and staff needing to feel safe and welcome regardless of their faith, choices, or life circumstances. A health organization with Catholic identity must be open to all, just as the Catholic church must be open to all.

To this end, MPJPs can provide leadership to show the secular world how Church can be in the world today. A welcoming environment in health organizations with Catholic identity is one that actively embraces and respects the unique identities, cultures, and experiences of all individuals. Our health organizations are places where diversity is celebrated, and every person is empowered to feel welcome, safe, and cared for, no matter who they are.

MPJPs in Canada

In 1993, St Joseph's Health Care Society and Alberta Catholic Health Corporation became the first MPJPs in Canada. There are now eight MPJP's in Canada with their average age being 23 years. Figure 1 shows that the establishment of MPJPs in Canada started in the 1990's and experienced a period of rapid growth between 2000-2001, when three MPJPs were established. The most recent MPJP was Providence Residential and Community Care Services Society (established in 2019).

Figure 1. Establishment of MPJPs in Canada 1993-2024
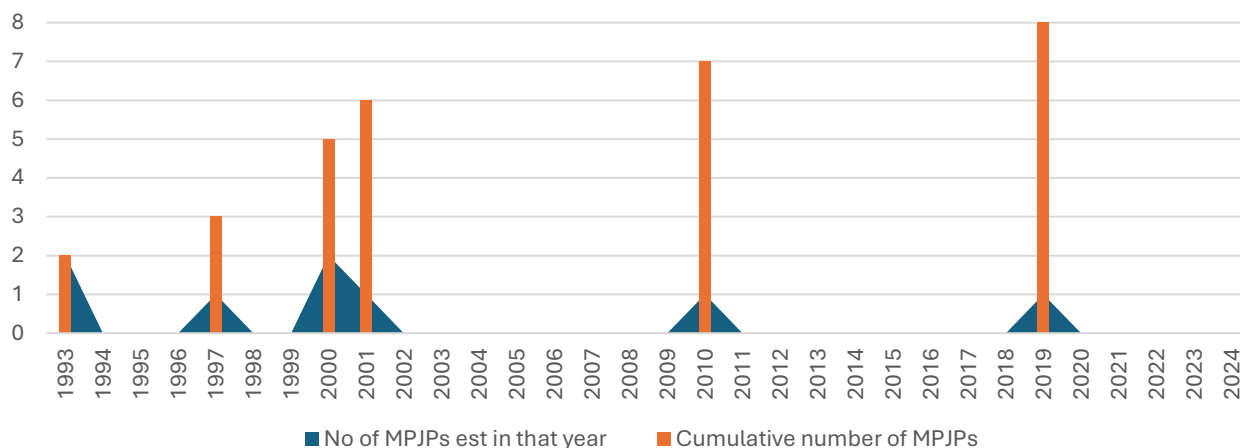
This project identified eight MPJPs who sponsor ministries in Canada.

Seven of the eight Canadian MPJPs completed the survey offered by this project. Publicly available data on the outstanding MPJP was available for many of the survey questions. Below is a summary of data collected and detailed in Appendix 2.

MPJPs in Canada, have the following significant characteristics:

- Three MPJPs were established by the Apostolic See: The Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (DICLSAL);

- No MPJPs were established by the national Catholic Bishops Conference;

- Five MPJPs were established by a local bishop (2 x Archbishop of Vancouver, 1 x Archbishop of Edmonton, 1 X Bishop of Hamilton, 1 x Bishop of London);

- One MPJP that is based in Canada also sponsor ministries in USA; and

- Sixteen separate religious institutes were founders of the 8 MPJPs:

  ➢ The Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception were co-founders of three MPJPs;
  ➢ Sisters of Charity of Providence, Sisters of Charity of Mount St. Vincent, Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul, Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception were all co-founders of two MPJPs; and
  ➢ No men's religious institutes were (co)founders of MPJPs.

- One other Catholic body was a co-founder of a MPJP (Catholic Health Association of New Brunswick for Catholic Health International)

Three of the MPJPs were established by the Apostolic See because their founding religious institute(s) was a Pontifical PJP and because the MPJP has ministries in multiple dioceses.

The reason why some MPJPs were established by a local bishop could be because their ministries are located in just one or in two neighbouring dioceses.

This project does not have data on the number of religious institutes, parishes and dioceses that contributed ministries to MPJPs subsequent to their establishment.

Background of MPJP/ACF Trustee/Sponsors

There are a total of 73 Trustees/Sponsors across the eight MPJPs in Canada. Seven MPJPs provided data on their Trustee/Sponsors via the project's survey. Publicly available data was found for most of the characteristics of the other MPJP's Trustee/Sponsors.

The following are characteristics of the Trustee/Sponsors across the MPJPs in Canada:

- Nine is the average number of persons appointed as Trustee/Sponsor of a MPJP.

- 35% is the average proportion of women appointed as Trustee/Sponsor of a MPJP.

- 98% of Trustee/Sponsors are baptized.*

- 63% of Trustee/Sponsors are lay people.

- 14% is the average proportion of Trustee/Sponsors who are also a member of a religious institute.

- 22% is the average the average proportion of Trustee/Sponsors who are ordained (deacon, priest, or bishop).

- 32% is the average proportion of Trustee/Sponsors who have a theological qualification.*
- 18% is the average proportion of Trustee/Sponsors who have a governance qualification.*
- 96% is the average proportion of Trustee/Sponsors who have experience as a Board Director.*
- 36% is the average proportion of Trustee/Sponsors who have previous experience as a "Trustee/Sponsor" with a different PJP (parish, diocese, religious institute, MPJP).*

The relatively even number of male and female Trustee/Sponsors is common in governance bodies that value diversity. The higher proportion of male Trustee/Sponsors could be partially explained by the relatively high proportion of ordained men among the Trustee/Sponsors.

The lack of religious as Trustee/Sponsors could be a factor of both their long-term fostering of lay people for governance roles and the scarcity of members willing/able to take on these roles.

The 22% of Trustee/Sponsors being deacons, priests and bishops could be a sign of high levels of collaboration and sharing of responsibility among the ordained and lay people. There is a risk that lay people may defer to the ordained, especially bishops. If that were to

* = data was not available from some MPJPs, therefore the average for this field is of the MPJPs for whom there was data.

happen the testing of ideas may not be as rigorous as is needed. There could also be a

confusion of roles and lack of accountability if the establishing bishop, to whom the MPJP reports, is also a Trustee/Sponsor.

The project uses theological qualification as an indicator of a Trustee/Sponsor's depth of knowledge of the Catholic faith. We recognise that it is not a perfect indicator. It does not capture personal knowledge and wisdom obtained outside of a credentialled course. It does not reflect personal faith/spirituality, nor does it demonstrate faith expressed in behaviour. Among Trustee/Sponsors in Canada the percentage with a theological qualification is a significant 32%. The presence of a significant number of people with theology degrees could assist the MPJP discuss theological issues and understand the theological significance/context of various matters. This may not be the case in Canada where only 10% of those with a theological qualification are lay people. It is possible that the ordained are seen as the "experts" on matters ecclesial/theological and other perspectives may be unspoken, dismissed or overruled.

The project uses governance qualification and experience as a Board Director as an indicator of the background/experience of Trustee/Sponsors. Among Trustee/Sponsors in Canada the percentage with experience as a board director is very high (96%), although a very few have a qualification (18%). The high proportion of former directors could be an asset when the MPJP Trustee/Sponsors are dealing with their ministry board(s) that are comprised of corporate directors. MPJPs typically have a skills matrix which includes a broad range criteria including theological knowledge/relationship with the Church. Assessing potential applicants against the matrix ensures that the MPJP selects appropriate individuals and that the total Trustee/Sponsor group contains the necessary skills/knowledge/experience. Appendix 3 witnesses to MPJP Trustee/Sponsor awareness that they have a unique role as ecclesial leaders.[44]

The project is also interested to see whether the Church is appointing to MPJP Trustee/Sponsor roles people who have previous experience as a Trustee/Sponsor of another canonical entity (parish, diocese, religious institute). The high proportion (36%) in Canada is reflective of the high proportion of ordained men in Trustee/Sponsor roles. Having MPJP Trustee/Sponsors with previous experience as a Trustee/Sponsor has both a moderately positive and negative impact. This experience could be a benefit to the MPJP in clarity of role and Church context. Alternatively, it could mean that the same people are being utilized and fresh perspectives are missing.

MPJP ministries by diocese

Only 28 of the 59 Dioceses in Canada have at least one MPJP providing ministries within that Diocese.[45]

Five dioceses have two MPJPs operating within their boundaries (Vancouver, Archdiocese; Victoria, Diocese; Ottawa-Cornwall, Archdiocese; Kingston, Archdiocese; and London, Diocese).

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[44] See Appendix 3 MPJP Trustee/Sponsors describe their experiences as Ecclesial Leaders
[45] See Appendix 4 Canadian dioceses and the MPJPs with ministries within each diocese

Two MPJP operate in just one diocese: Public Juridic Person – Diocese of Hamilton in Hamiliton, Diocese and St Joseph's Health Care Society in London, Diocese.

MPJPs do not currently operate in any of the fifteen Eastern Rite Eparchies in Canada.

The fact that 50% of dioceses do not have MPJPs to support Catholic ministries may be secondary to the decline in religious institutes in Canada. Since the mid-1960s, the number of religious in Canada has decreased by 80%. With this decline, some religious institutes have transferred their ministries to secular sponsorship.

MPJP ministries by ministry sector

Canada has a universal publicly funded health care system. While funds come from a variety of sources including various levels of government, health care is a provincial responsibility.

The project survey asked MPJPs to identify which of nine ministry sectors their ministries operate within. Figure 2 shows that all eight MPJPs in Canada have ministries in the hospitals/health care sector. Seven MPJPs have ministries that also provide aged care services. Some MPJPs are also involved in Disability services, Family services, and Community services.

Figure 2. Number of Canadian MPJPs operating in key ministry sectors
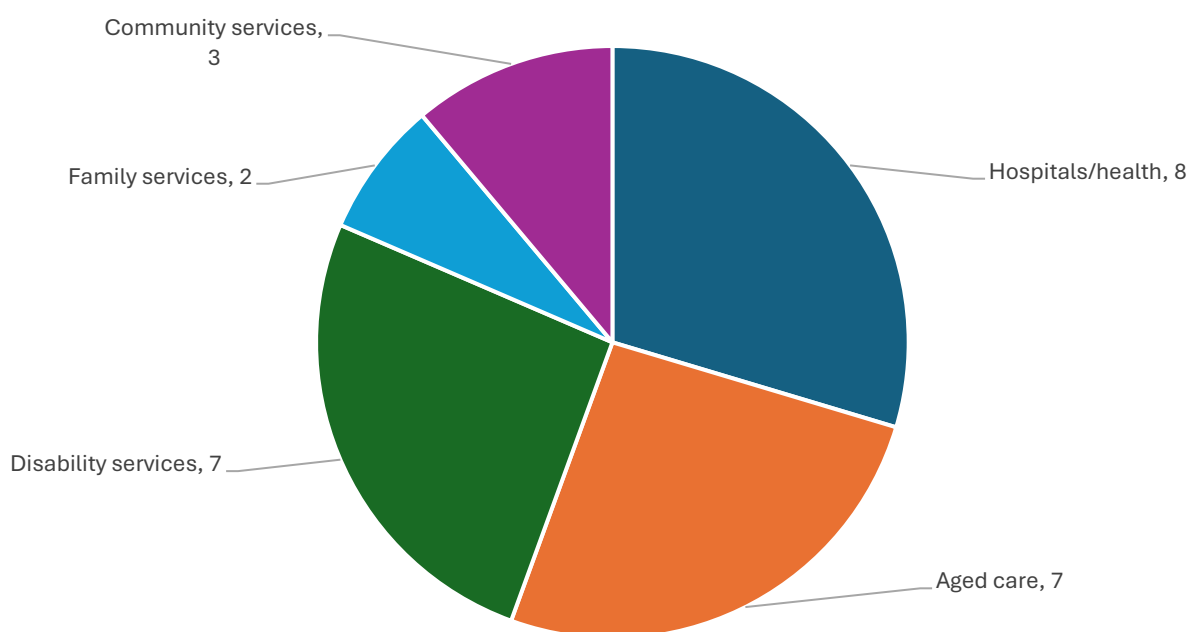
The project was unable to determine the role of MPJPs in the education sector in Canada. The Catholic school system in many provinces in Canada, is sponsored by separate Boards of Directors elected by their constituents. In 1997, Quebec and Newfoundland

ended public funding for Catholic schools, transitioning to a secular system.[46] Today, despite regular questions that are raised about public funding for denomination educational systems, Ontario, Alberta, and Saskatchewan continue to provide full public funding for Catholic schools, while in other provinces, Catholic education is privately funded.[47]

The survey did not ask MPJPs to specify the size or scope of their ministries. One of the reasons for not asking about the size of ministries was that the request may have deterred some MPJPs from completing the survey due to complexity of the calculation or for transparency concerns. Ultimately, the project concluded that its focus was the MPJP, so it was more relevant to know the ministry sector rather than the size or scope of the ministries.

Positive and synodal aspects of MPJP/ACFs in Canada

Canadian Trustees/Sponsors identified the following as aspects of their MPJP which are positive and synodal:[48]

a) MPJPs value diversity and see it as essential for good decision-making.

b) MPJPs are deliberate in recruiting people from different backgrounds and who hold different opinions for positions as MPJP Trustee/Sponsors and on ministry Board(s). As noted earlier, MPJPs use a skills matrix to ensure their boards are comprised of both diverse skills and demographic characteristics.

c) MPJPs respect that no individual can represent all the people with whom they share a characteristic. Likewise, the person has more to offer than merely one characteristic.

d) It is usual practice for MPJPs to have roughly even numbers of male and female Trustee/Sponsors.

e) MPJP's recruit people who possess high levels of emotional intelligence to positions of Trustee/Sponsor. This assists the MPJP engage with diverse stakeholders, work through difficulties and build relationships of cooperation and communication.

f) Trustee/Sponsors consult and invite others to share in the MPJP's decision-making processes.

g) Trustee/Sponsors allocate additional time when discussing complex and possibly conflictual matters. Trustee/Sponsors work through complex issues for as long as it takes.

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[46] See B. Bergman, D. Stokes Sullivan, and L. Fisher, "Newfoundlanders Vote for New School System", (Article Premier versus the Pope, originally published in Maclean's Magazine on 15 September 1997), in *The Canadian Encyclopedia, https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/newfoundlanders-vote-for-new-school-system*, 12 Dec 2013.

[47] See Saskatchewan Catholic School Boards Association, "Frequently Asked Questions About Catholic Education," 2018, https://www.scsba.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/2018faq.pdf.

[48] List developed during the Inclusive Governance in a Synodal Church Project online focus group held on 07 February 2025 with additional contributions from other Trustees/Sponsors

h) MPJPs have a commitment to accompanying people and not abandoning them. MPJPs seek to stay engaged with those within the Church who have differences of opinion to MPJP/ministry. Trustee/Sponsors encourage their ministry to continue to stay open to and to "journey" with people who are going through a difficult situation or who have decided on a course that is at odds with Church teaching.

i) MPJPs dedicate time to building relationships of mutual respect, open disclosure and trust with bishops/other Church leaders.

j) MPJPs uphold Church social teaching despite pressure from those who dismiss it as irrelevant and an unnecessary cost e.g. environmental stewardship, protecting refugees and supporting minorities.

The list above indicates that MPJPs currently assesses themselves as demonstrating some of the synodal expressions called for in the Canadian consultations for the Synod on Synodality. MPJPs in Canada are assisted by their framework "Sponsorship Roles, Relationships & Accountabilities." This is a self-assessment and peer review process for sponsors that was developed by the Catholic Health Alliance of Canada, with input and support from the CCCB. The tool includes articulating the role of the sponsor, the role of the ecclesial authority (Apostolic See or local bishop(s)), and the local bishop. This has been a critical tool for sponsors to demonstrate mission fidelity and to create a national scorecard that outlines strengths and areas for improvement across all MJPs and the country.

MPJP/ACF interaction with other parts of the Church in Canada

Individual MPJPs and their ministries usually have regular discussions with the bishops in whose diocese they operate. These bishops are invited to officiate at the MPJP's significant spiritual events.

As noted earlier, all MPJPs in Canada provide hospitals/health care ministries. They therefore benefit from Catholic Health Alliance of Canada (CHAC) role in coordinating MPJP and non-MPJP health care sponsors to work together as a national collective. For instance, seven or eight years ago CHAC established an annual Bishops Forum to bring together all health care sponsors and bishops with a substantive presence of health care in their diocese. These forums have been invaluable for relationship building, information sharing, and dialogue on strategic projects and emerging issues.

The previously noted the CHAC "Sponsorship Roles Relationships and Accountabilities" framework is important because it articulates the role of the sponsor and the role of the local bishop, and because CHAC regularly brings the national scorecard to the CHAC Bishops Forum for discussion.

Possible future MPJP/ACF activities

The CHAC is a collaborative of 13 sponsors of health and human services in Canada. Eight of these sponsors are MPJPs; five of these sponsors are religious congregations.

Working as a collaborative, the 13 sponsors have responsibility for Catholic health in Canada today, including appointing the boards of health organizations with Catholic identity and providing advice, guidance, and direction.

All eight MPJPs are members of CHAC and support the high level strategic direction and priority projects of CHAC.

Trustees/Sponsors identified the following as initiatives that they believe will support MPJPs in Canada:[49]

1. MPJPs collectively offering orientation/formation of laity and ordained.

2. MPJPs talking to each other (in-person and via videoconference) about how they are working through common issues e.g., Indigenous Reconciliation, sexual ethics, Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD).

3. MPJPs collectively articulating the positive story of being a Catholic ministry – describe how the Catholic tradition/viewpoint/practices make the ministry more effective.

4. MPJPs collectively articulating a common and compelling vision for the future.

5. MPJPs collectively advocating on the national stage regarding common issues, e.g., changes to public policy, health issues of the disadvantaged, and the positive contribution of Catholic healthcare.

6. MPJPs building their relationship with the bishops (e.g., regular meetings, sharing information, investing time).

7. MPJPs working together and with other members of Catholic Health Alliance of Canada on common issues/priorities, for example collective work on environmental stewardship in response to *Laudato si'*.

8. MPJPs collectively forming partnerships with organisations with shared issues.

9. MPJPs collectively and individually adopting and promoting synodality. This will require necessary education and training to increase receptivity to synodality.

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[49] Initiatives identified in the Inclusive Governance in a Synodal Church Project online focus group held on 07 February 2025 with additional contributions from other Trustees/Sponsors

Conclusion

The emergence and evolution of MPJPs within the Canadian context cannot be fully understood apart from the broader social and ecclesial currents that have shaped religious life, Catholic institutional ministries, a growing role for the lay faithful in the governance of these ministries, and the relationship between Church and society in Canada. MPJPs, as canonical structures, were conceived to ensure the continuity of Catholic identity and mission in ecclesial ministries originally founded and operated by religious institutes. Now, a quarter of a century after the initial "experiment," the development, maturity, and confidence of MPJPs in Canada reflects the unique interplay between societal change and ecclesiastical adaptation.

Ultimately, the story of MPJPs in Canada is one of adaptive creativity at the intersection of societal evolution and ecclesial fidelity. Canadian religious institutes and dioceses, confronted by the realities of secularization, demographic decline, and civil legal complexity, responded not by withdrawing from public ministry but by transforming their presence through MPJPs.

In turn, Canadian society has, in many cases, welcomed the professionalism and ethical standards brought by Catholic MPJPs to healthcare and social services — even as the society at large has become less religiously affiliated. MPJPs have become vehicles for ensuring that the Gospel's values of human dignity, social justice, and compassionate care remain embedded in Canadian institutional life.

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Appendix 1. Inclusive Governance in a Synodal Church, Survey Instrument

About your MPJP/ACF:

The questions in this section seek details about your PJP (i.e., MPJP-ACF).

These details, along with those of other MPJP-ACFs, will be included in the paper that will provide an overview of MPJP-ACFs in your country and the Church and societal factors that impact MPJP-ACFs.

You will see a draft of this country paper and have an opportunity to provide comment and to ask for changes before it is published.

1.   What is the name of your Public Juridic Person (PJP)?

2.   In which year your PJP was established by the Church?

3.   Who was Establishing Authority?
        options:
        ☐   Apostolic See: DICLSAL (previously known as CICLSAL), or
        ☐   National Catholic Bishops Conference or
        ☐   Local Bishop (or Archbishop) or other (please specify)

4.   What is the canonical basis of your PJP?
        options:
        ☐   as per canon 116; or
        ☐   as per canon 298ff; or
        ☐   I'm not sure (we will contact you to clarify)

5.   Which Religious Institute(s) originally petitioned the Establishing Authority to establish your PJP?

6.   What ministries does your PJP sponsor
        options:
        ☐   Hospitals/health care;
        ☐   Aged care;
        ☐   Disability Services;
        ☐   Family services,
        ☐   Community services,
        ☐   Early learning education (approx. 5-year-old and younger),
        ☐   Primary school education from (approx. 6- to 12-year-old),
        ☐   Secondary school education (approx. 13 to 18year old),
        ☐   Tertiary/university education,
        ☐   other (please specify)

These next questions ask about your MPJP-ACF's ministries in National and Local Churches.

This information will be included in the country paper to show your, and other MPJP-ACF, contributions to the wider Church and society.

7.   In which country(s) does your PJP operate?
        options:
        ☐   Australia; and/or

- ☐ Canada; and/or
- ☐ Ireland; and/or
- ☐ New Zealand; and/or
- ☐ Singapore-Malaysia; and/or
- ☐ UK; and/or
- ☐ USA; and/or
- ☐ Other

8. In which Dioceses does your PJP have ministries?
    options:
    Choose from lists of dioceses which will appear based on selected country (and in selected state/province of USA/Canada)

About your MPJP/ACFs Trustee/Sponsors:
The next eight questions will help us develop a profile of MPJP-ACF Trustee-Sponsors within each country. It will help answer questions about the diversity of their backgrounds/qualifications and the perspective/skills that they bring to a governance role in the Church.

9. What is the total number of Trustee/Sponsors in your PJP?

10. What % of Trustee/Sponsors are baptised?

11. What % of Trustee/Sponsors are women?

12. What % of Trustee/Sponsors in Religious life?

13. What % of Trustee/Sponsors are ordained?

14. What % of Trustee/Sponsors have a theology degree?

15. What % of Trustee/Sponsors have a qualification from a governance institute? (e.g., Company Director course from Institute of Company Directors)

16. What % of Trustee/Sponsors have previous experience as a Board Director?

17. What % of Trustee/Sponsors have previous experience as a MPJP Trustee-Sponsor (or parish priest, bishop, Religious Institute General Superior)?

About the person completing this survey:
Providing your contact details in the next questions will assist us should we have any questions about your responses in this survey.

18. Name of person completing this survey

19. MPJP/ACF

20. Contact phone number

21. Contact email

22. Date

Appendix 2. MPJPs in Canada *as of 17 March 2025*

MPJP	Est year	Establishing Authority	Instigating Church entities	Ministry	Diocesan presence
1. Alberta Catholic Health Corporation *(Spiritus Vitae Catholic Health Sponsor)*	1993	Archbishop of Edmonton	Misericordia Sisters	Hospitals/health care. Aged care. Disability services.	Alberta • Calgary, Diocese • Edmonton, Archdiocese • Grouard-McLennan, Archdiocese • Saint-Paul, Diocese North-West Territories • Mackenzie-Fort Smith, Diocese Saskatchewan • Prince Albert, Diocese • Regina, Archdiocese Saskatoon, Diocese
2. Catholic Health International (Catholic Health Partners Inc)	2001	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	Religious Hospitallers of St Joseph. Sisters of Charity of the Immaculate Conception; Les Religieuses de Notre-Damedu Sacre-Coeur; La Congregation des Filles des Jesus; and Catholic Health Association of New Brunswick.	Hospitals/health care; Aged care; Disability services; Family services; and Community services	New Brunswick • Bathurst, Diocese • Edmundston, Diocese • Moncton, Archdiocese • Saint John, Diocese Nova Scotia • Halifax-Yarmouth, Archdiocese Ontario • Kingston, Archdiocese • London, Diocese • Ottawa-Cornwall, Archdiocese • St Catharines, Diocese and in USA
3. Catholic Health Sponsors of Manitoba	2000	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	Sisters of Charity of Montreal "Grey Nuns"	Hospitals/health care; Aged care; Disability services; Family services; and Community services	Manitoba: • Saint-Boniface, Archdiocese • Winnipeg, Archdiocese Quebec: • Montréal, Archdiocese

MPJP	Est year	Establishing Authority	Instigating Church entities	Ministry	Diocesan presence
4. Catholic Health Sponsors of Ontario (CHSO)	1997	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception The Sisters of St. Joseph of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario; The Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto, Ontario;	Hospitals/health care; Aged care; Disability services; and Community services	Ontario • Kingston, Archdiocese • Ottawa-Cornwall, Archdiocese • Pembroke, Diocese • Peterborough, Diocese • Sault Ste-Marie, Diocese • Thunder Bay, Diocese • Toronto, Archdiocese
5. Providence Health Care Society	2000	Archbishop of Vancouver	Sisters of Charity of Providence, Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul, Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, Sisters of Charity of Mount St. Vincent, and Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception	Hospitals/health care Aged care;	British Columbia • Vancouver, Archdiocese • Victoria, Diocese
6. Providence Residential and Community Care Services Society (Providence Living Society)	2019	Archbishop of Vancouver	Sisters of Charity of Providence, Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul, Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, Sisters of Charity of Mount St. Vincent, and Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception	Hospitals/health care; Aged care;	British Columbia • Vancouver, Archdiocese • Victoria, Diocese
7. Public Juridic Person – Diocese of Hamilton	2010	Bishop of Hamilton	Congregation of Sisters of St Joseph of Hamilton, Ontario	Hospitals/health care; Aged care; Disability services;	Ontario • Hamilton, Diocese
8. St Joseph's Health Care Society	1993	Bishop of London	Sisters of St Joseph of London	Hospitals/health care;	Ontario • London, Diocese

Appendix 3. MPJP Trustee/Sponsors describe their experiences as Ecclesial Leaders

1. I bring to my role of Trustee/Sponsor, the perspective that I gained in my career in clinical front line work in Catholic health care. That perspective is that I engage with the person in front of me in an open and non-judgemental manner.

   As a Trustee/Sponsor I see myself as:
   - being called to encounter the individual in their uniqueness;
   - being committed to maintaining both engagement with the marginalized/those with views divergent to the Church and with maintaining Catholic tradition; and
   - being a "bridge" between staff/patients and our bishops.

   I am especially conscious of exercising leadership in this way with regard LGBTIQ+ persons; persons considering Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD); and First Nations Peoples.

2. An example of a time when I was most conscious of my role as a leader in the Church was during a weekend workshop on future strategy that involved our canonical/Member Council and our civil/ministry Board. There were some tense discussions which revealed different perspectives both within the room and between some views in the room and the views expressed by external Church leaders. I felt strongly that our MPJP was an expression of the Church. I could see that we have a legitimate voice and place within the Church and as Church in the world. I had a conviction that our MPJP is called to address the unmet needs of marginalised people (e.g., Aboriginal Peoples and LGBTIQ+). I also had the sense that we have a role and responsibility in shaping the direction of the whole Church.

3. I am aware of my leadership role within the Church when I need to "translate" the different perspectives of bishops and our staff/patients. Each has their own needs/aspirations and at times they are/appear to be in conflict. I respect that people's lives can be "messy" and complex. I see my role as explaining their situation and its healthcare implications to the Church. I also respect that the bishops need to be assured that the MPJP/ministry is well run. I see myself as having to earn the trust of staff/patients and of bishops/other Church leaders. At these times, I feel the Holy Spirit calling me to take courage, have the uncomfortable conversations, hear the different voices and maintain connection with all.

Appendix 4. Canadian dioceses and the MPJPs with ministries within each diocese *as of 17 March 2025*

Province	Diocese		MPJP
Alberta	Calgary, Diocese	1	• Alberta Catholic Health Corporation
	Edmonton, Archdiocese	1	• Alberta Catholic Health Corporation
	Grouard-McLennan, Archdiocese	1	• Alberta Catholic Health Corporation
	Saint-Paul, Diocese	1	• Alberta Catholic Health Corporation
British Columbia	Kamloops, Diocese		
	Nelson, Diocese		
	Prince George, Diocese		
	Vancouver, Archdiocese	2	• Providence Health Care Society • Providence Residential and Community Care Services Society
	Victoria, Diocese	2	• Providence Health Care Society • Providence Residential and Community Care Services Society
Manitoba	Churchill-Hudson Bay, Diocese		
	Keewatin-Le Pas, Archdiocese		
	Saint-Boniface, Archdiocese	1	• Catholic Health Sponsors of Manitoba
	Winnipeg, Archdiocese	1	• Catholic Health Sponsors of Manitoba
New Brunswick	Bathurst, Diocese	1	• Catholic Health International
	Edmundston, Diocese	1	• Catholic Health International
	Moncton, Archdiocese	1	• Catholic Health International
	Saint John, Diocese	1	• Catholic Health International
Newfoundland and Labrador	Corner Brook and Labrador, Diocese		
	Grand Falls, Diocese		
	St. John's, Archdiocese		
Northwest Territories	Mackenzie-Fort Smith, Diocese	1	• Alberta Catholic Health Corporation
Nova Scotia	Antigonish, Diocese		
	Halifax-Yarmouth, Archdiocese	1	• Catholic Health International
Nunavut	Manitoba, Diocese		

Province	Diocese		MPJP
Ontario	Hamilton, Diocese	1	• Public Juridic Person – Diocese of Hamilton
	Hearst – Moosonee, Diocese		
	Kingston, Archdiocese	2	• Catholic Health International • Catholic Health Sponsors of Ontario
	London, Diocese	2	• Catholic Health International • St Joseph's Health Care Society
	Ottawa-Cornwall, Archdiocese	2	• Catholic Health International • Catholic Health Sponsors of Ontario
	Pembroke, Diocese	1	• Catholic Health Sponsors of Ontario
	Peterborough, Diocese	1	• Catholic Health Sponsors of Ontario
	Sault Ste-Marie, Diocese	1	• Catholic Health Sponsors of Ontario
	St. Catharines, Diocese	1	• Catholic Health International
	Thunder Bay, Diocese	1	• Catholic Health Sponsors of Ontario
	Timmins, Diocese		
	Toronto, Archdiocese	1	• Catholic Health Sponsors of Ontario
Prince Edward Island	Charlottetown, Diocese		
Quebec	Amos, Diocese		
	Baie-Comeau, Diocese		
	Chicoutimi, Diocese		
	Gaspé, Diocese		
	Gatineau, Archdiocese		
	Joliette, Diocese		
	Montréal, Archdiocese	1	• Catholic Health Sponsors of Manitoba
	Nicolet, Diocese		
	Québec, Archdiocese		
	Rimouski, Archdiocese		
	Rouyn-Noranda, Diocese		
	Saint-Hyacinthe, Diocese		
	Saint-Jean-Longueuil, Diocese		
	Saint-Jérôme-Mont-Laurier, Diocese		
	Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pocatière, Diocese		
	Sherbrooke, Archdiocese		
	Trois-Rivières, Diocese		
	Valleyfield, Diocese		
Saskatchewan	Prince Albert, Diocese	1	• Alberta Catholic Health Corporation
	Regina, Archdiocese	1	• Alberta Catholic Health Corporation
	Saskatoon, Diocese	1	• Alberta Catholic Health Corporation
Yukon	Whitehorse, Diocese		

Appendix 5. Number of Canadian MPJPs operating in key ministry sectors *as of 17 March 2025*

Ministry sector	*MPJP/ACF sponsoring these ministries in Canada*	
Hospitals/health	8	- Alberta Catholic Health Corporation (*Spiritus Vitae Catholic Health Sponsor*) - Catholic Health International - Catholic Health Sponsors of Manitoba - Catholic Health Sponsors of Ontario - Providence Health Care Society - Providence Residential and Community Care Services Society (Providence - Public Juridic Person – Diocese of Hamilton - St Joseph's Health Care Society
Aged care	7	- Alberta Catholic Health Corporation (*Spiritus Vitae Catholic Health Sponsor*) - Catholic Health International - Catholic Health Sponsors of Manitoba - Catholic Health Sponsors of Ontario - Providence Health Care Society - Providence Residential and Community Care Services Society (Providence - Public Juridic Person – Diocese of Hamilton
Disability services	5	- Alberta Catholic Health Corporation (*Spiritus Vitae Catholic Health Sponsor*) - Catholic Health International - Catholic Health Sponsors of Manitoba - Catholic Health Sponsors of Ontario - Public Juridic Person – Diocese of Hamilton
Family services	2	- Catholic Health International - Catholic Health Sponsors of Manitoba
Community services	3	- Catholic Health International - Catholic Health Sponsors of Manitoba - Catholic Health Sponsors of Ontario
Early learning education *(approx. 5-year-old and younger)*		
Primary school education *(approx. 6- to 12-year-old)*		
Secondary school education *(approx. 13 to 18year old)*		
Tertiary/university education		

Ministerial Public Juridic Persons in England and Wales

Monica McArdle[1]

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[1]   Dr Monica McArdle is the UK Research Assistant for the Inclusive Governance Project.

Table of Contents

Glossary

Apostolic See	Also known as the Holy See or See of Rome or Petrine See. The episcopal jurisdiction and roles that the Pope (and the various offices within his Roman Curia) exercise across and on behalf of the entire Catholic Church.
Association of Christ's Faithful	Associations of Christ's Faithful are an organisation of laity, clerics or both collaborating for growth in faith and spirituality, and for the works of the Gospel. Associations may be public or private canonical associations or non-canonical. Public associations are PJPs and are an alternative Church structure to a MPJP for sponsoring Church ministries.
Board	The governing body of a company. This project generally uses the term 'Board' to refer to the governing body of MPJP/ACF ministries (e.g. school or school network board, hospital or hospital network board) and uses the term Council to refer to Trustee/Sponsors acting/meeting together.
DICLSAL	Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life - the department within the Roman Curia that also oversees the mission and life of religious institutes. This office has responsibility for authorizing the alienation of church property controlled by religious institutes and public juridical persons (which DICLSAL has established). Prior to the promulgation of _Praedicate Evangelium_ in 2022 DICLSAL was known as Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.
Establishing Authority for MPJPs	The Church Leader who approves the MPJP's Statutes and establishes it as a PJP. The Establishing Authority for MPJPs follows the guidelines for establishing Public Associations, namely: the Apostolic See, for universal and international associations, Episcopal Conference in its own territory, for national associations and the diocesan Bishop, his own territory. (c312)
Member of an MPJP	This project uses the term 'Member' to refers to the person(s) who appoint the Trustee/Sponsors. Some MPJPs use that term others use: Sponsor, Participating Entity
Ministerial PJP (MPJP)	The term commonly used to refer to a public juridical person (PJP) established by a competent Church Authority for the purpose of sponsoring Church ministries (see Canon 116).
Ministry	Ministry means any activity that carries out the works of the Gospel. This project uses the term 'ministry' when referring to the works of ACFs/MPJPs e.g., schools, hospitals, aged care and other services.
Public Juridic Person (PJP)	Aggregate of persons or of things directed to a purpose befitting the Church's mission, which transcends the purpose of the individuals. PJPs are church entities established by law or by decree and act in the name of the Church. Examples of a PJP are: diocese, parish, religious institute or MPJP. This project uses the USA spelling of 'Juridic' rather than the UK spelling of 'Juridical'.
Religious Institute	Religious institute is a gift of the spirit in which individuals make a lifelong commitment to gospel life in community, framed by vows or bonds of chastity, poverty, and obedience and committed to apostolic service. Societies of Apostolic Life are similar. They may also be called orders, institutes, societies or congregations.
Trustee/ Sponsor	This project uses the term "Trustees/Sponsors" to refer to individuals appointed a responsible for the MPJP. This term is used in all the project's papers to enable easy identification of the same role in different MPJPs across the seven countries under consideration. Other terms used by MPJPs include: board Director, canonical steward, Trustee, Sponsor, Trustee Director

Introduction

This paper provides a brief overview of the context of the Catholic Church and Ministerial Public Juridic Persons (MPJP) within England and Wales.[2] It seeks to explain why MPJPs emerged, their purpose and their hopes for the future.

MPJPs, alongside dioceses and religious institutes[3], are the Church authorities responsible for education, health, aged care and other ministries which impact the lives of millions of people. MPJPs are one of the few bodies where lay people can be the decision taker on behalf of the Church. This role responds to the Second Vatican Council's emphasis on baptism as the foundation for the full and active participation of all the Faithful, both in society and in the Church.

A renewed focus on the possibilities of participation in Church governance on the basis of baptism has arisen at the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (also known as the Synod on Synodality 2021-2024)[4].

This paper is one in a series of papers on MPJPs in Anglophone countries prepared for the ACU Inclusive Governance in a Synodal Church project. This project is scheduled to run from July 2024 to June 2025 and will deliver: an initial Position Paper, Country Papers, a range of case studies and a final Project Report.

Methodology

This paper draws on publicly available data regarding English and Welsh society and the Catholic Church in England and Wales. Information on MPJPs, their ministries, and their Trustee/Sponsors[5] was obtained directly from the MPJPs themselves. Data collection methods included a survey,[6] participation in a 90-minute online consultation-focus group, and written feedback on the consultation summary and draft versions of this paper.

To support this research, the project engaged with the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (CBCEW) and The Conference of Religious in England and Wales (COR), introducing the study and seeking assistance in identifying MPJPs. It became apparent that the term "Ministerial Public Juridic Person" is not widely used or understood in England and Wales. Rather, many Catholic organisations in England and Wales operate as "Trusts" and as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) recognised by the

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[2] This project uses the term "Ministerial Public Juridic Person (MPJP) to refer to a public juridic person established by a competent Church Authority for the purpose of sponsoring Church ministries. See Glossary page 3.

[3] This project uses the term "religious institute" to describe the gift of the spirit in which individuals make a lifelong commitment to gospel life in community, framed by vows or bonds of chastity, poverty, and obedience and committed to apostolic service. Societies of Apostolic Life are similar. They may also be called orders, institutes, societies or congregations. See Glossary page 3

[4] Francis, and XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. *Final Document: For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission.* Vatican: Apostolic See, 2024. https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/news/2024-10-26_final-document/ENG---Documento-finale.pdf.

[5] This project uses the term "Trustees/Sponsors" to refer to individuals appointed as responsible for the MPJP. This term is used in all the project's papers to enable easy identification of the same role in different MPJPs across the seven countries under consideration. See Glossary page 3. Gaudete Trust employs the terms "Member" and "Trustee" for its two leadership forums, while Saint John of God Hospitaller Ministries uses "Member" and "Sponsor" within its leadership structure.

[6] See: Appendix 1 Inclusive Governance in a Synodal Church Project survey instrument

Charities Commission in the UK. However, most Trusts do not seem to adopt any ecclesial juridical persona. After exploration and discussion with several key organisations, the project concluded that The Gaudete Trust is the only MPJP based in England and Wales. The Saint John of God Hospitaller Services Group, whilst operative in the England, is led by a MPJP based in Ireland, already identified through the project's fieldwork in Ireland.

English and Welsh Society and Catholic Context

The Catholic Church in the United Kingdom (UK) could be seen as having a complex ecclesial structure as it operates under three distinct Bishops' Conferences, despite its relatively small geographical size. The CBCEW comprises eighteen dioceses and four Archdioceses: Westminster, Birmingham, Liverpool, and Cardiff, and consists of approximately 6.2 million Catholics (9% of the general population).[7] The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Scotland consists of six dioceses and two Archdioceses: Glasgow and St Andrews & Edinburgh, with 676,000 Catholics (13.3% of the general population).[8] Northern Ireland falls under the jurisdiction of the Irish Bishops' Conference, with the recent census of 2021 revealing that 42% of the population identify themselves as Catholic.[9] The ecclesial structural diversity, despite this relatively small size of the Catholic community in most of the UK, is attributable rather to the country's complex and somewhat turbulent political and religious history.

A brief overview of the fragmented relationship between Catholicism and the UK State

The See of Rome Act of 1536 was the first State legislation to prohibit English and Welsh subjects from membership of the Catholic Church. Over the following centuries, these restrictions intensified, significantly limiting the rights of Catholics in areas such as land ownership, voting, and professional advancement, and making it difficult for them to worship together safely and openly. A shift began with the Catholic Relief Acts of 1778 and 1791, which granted Catholics limited rights, including the ability to own land, vote, enter professions such as law and medicine, and establish schools. This gradual softening of legal restrictions culminated in the Catholic Relief Act of 1829, commonly known as the Catholic Emancipation Act, which allowed Catholics to hold positions of trust and responsibility in society. However, some barriers remained, particularly at the highest levels of government and state institutions, even into the 21st Century. Recent examples of legislation that are now addressing this longstanding anti-Catholic prejudice would include the Succession to the Crown Act 2013, which removed the systematic disqualification of people who married Catholics from succession to the Crown, and the Church of Scotland (Lord High Commissioner) Bill 2025 which is currently being debated in Parliament.[10] If passed as expected, this will enable a Catholic, Lady Elish Angiolini, to be appointed as the King's Representative to the Church of Scotland.

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7 "Statistics: In England and Wales" CBCEW. accessed March 26, 2025, https://www.cbcew.org.uk/statistics/

8 "The Catholic Church in Scotland" Catholic Bishops Conference of Scotland accessed March 26, 2025, https://www.bcos.org.uk/Catholic-Scotland

9 Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, *Main statistics for Northern Ireland Statistical Bulletin Religion* (NISRA, 2022) https://www.nisra.gov.uk/system/files/statistics/census-2021-main-statistics-for-northern-ireland-phase-1-statistical-bulletin-religion.pdf

10 UK Parliament, *Hansard: Church of Scotland (Lord High Commissioner) Bill Volume 844: debated on Wednesday 19 March 2025* https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2025-03-19/debates/8567CB47-B8B7-4588-B74F-A4369DD7F4C5/ChurchOfScotland(LordHighCommissioner)Bill

Scotland, which maintained its own legal system until 1701, exhibited particularly strong anti-Catholic sentiment. The Acts of Union (1701 and 1706), which politically united England and Scotland, contained explicit anti-Catholic provisions, reinforcing legal discrimination and further restricting Catholic influence. This deepened sectarian mistrust, prejudice, and conflict, which became deeply embedded in Scottish society in ways that persisted far into the 20th century.

A striking example of this enduring sectarianism occurred in 1989 when James Mackay, the Lord Chancellor of Scotland, was forced to resign from the Free Presbyterian Church, in which he was an elder, because he attended the Catholic funeral of two judges, and would not commit to refrain from entering a Catholic Church ever again. However, in the 21st Century, there are now signs of reconciliation and transformation in the relationship between Catholics and Protestants Churches. A significant step forward came in 2022 with the signing of the St Margaret Declaration of Friendship between the Church of Scotland and the Catholic Church in Scotland, marking a commitment to unity and mutual respect.[11]

Key challenges facing Catholic Church in the England and Wales

The 2,169 Catholic schools in England and Wales constitute 10% of the state-funded sector and are the largest provider of secondary and second largest of primary education. The schools foster academic success as evidenced by students outperforming UK averages at General Certificate of Secondary Education Maths and English. From a mission perspective, Catholic schools educate more pupils from the most deprived areas; are more ethnically diverse than other schools and there are 26 Catholic schools for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.[12]

Catholic education remains a significant and widely valued contribution to UK society. However, there is ongoing debate about how to sustain its Catholic identity when the proportion of Catholics in both staffing levels and the percentage of pupils attending the school are decreasing. Similar to the trends witnessed across many European countries, the most recent censuses taken across the UK reveal a reduction in the number of people identifying as Christian, alongside a rise in people who claim to have no religious affiliation.[13]

One of the most significant political changes to education in the 21st Century that has occurred in England, though not in Wales, is the introduction of Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs), where funding is received from Central as opposed to Local Government. The CBCEW and Catholic Education Service (CES) have viewed these as ways of strengthening and protecting the Catholicity of Catholic schools, as it enables a collective

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[11] "Historic agreement between Church of Scotland and Catholic Church in Scotland. *Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.* May 23, 2022, https://ctbiarchive.org/historic-agreement-between-church-of-scotland-and-catholic-church-in-scotland/#:~:text=A%20declaration%20of%20friendship%20has,and%20generosity%20to%20poor%20people .

[12] "Statistics: Education" CBCEW. Accessed March 26, 2025https://www.cbcew.org.uk/statistics/

[13] "Census 2021: Data and analysis from Census 2021" Office of National Statistics https://ons.gov.uk; and "Scotland's Census 2022 - Ethnic group, national identity, language and religion." Scotland Census https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/2022-results/scotland-s-census-2022-ethnic-group-national-identity-language-and-religion/

approach to resources and responsibilities. Most dioceses have therefore grouped their schools into CMATs. Likewise, some of the schools from the Gaudete Trust in the North West and Midlands area have joined the Laetare Trust CMAT. Some Gaudete Trust schools in the area have chosen to remain as single separate Academy Trusts.

Similarly, as in other European nations, Sunday Mass attendance among Catholics saw a sharp decline due to the COVID-19 pandemic, though recent data suggests a gradual recovery.[14] Since Head Teachers and Foundation Governors are legally protected positions assigned to practising Catholics, some schools do face difficulties in filling these key positions. This dilemma might account for the wide-scale adoption of Catholic Multi-Academy Trusts (CMATs).

Reflections on the social and ethnical diversity present in England and Wales

One noted strength of Catholic schools in the UK is that they often exhibit a greater level of social diversity than other schools in that area. In 2020, the World Economic Forum Social Mobility Index scored UK at 74.4 out of 100, which ranked UK overall as 21st out of 82 countries. In the World Economic Forum Social Mobility Index, where the United Kingdom is ranked 21st, with a score of 74.4, the limited social diversity in schools is given as one reason why it lags behind its regional peers in overall Education Quality and Equity (69.1), despite a high score on the Education Access pillar (82.5). The Index measures quality of life as well as factors that would enable the population to achieve a higher standard of living. This comprehensive measure has 47 indicators across five determinants: health, education, technology, work, and institutions. UK's best ratings were: technology access (89/100); health (86/100); education access (83/100) and work opportunities (82/100). UK's lowest ratings were: fair wage distribution (53/100); working conditions (63/100 and lifelong learning (66/100). The Index shows a relatively high quality of life and social mobility for the British[15] population although there are still individuals and groups whose lives and prospects are well below the average.[16]

The 2021 census shows that the population of England and Wales is predominantly White British (74%), with 6.2% identifying as White Other, 9.3% as Asian, 4.0% as Black, 2.9% as Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups, and 2.1% as Other ethnic groups. The Catholic population is more diverse, with notable participation from Eastern European communities, such as Polish and Lithuanian, as well as Asian communities from Goa and Pakistan. These groups have helped maintain Catholic numbers, potentially masking the decline in membership seen in the increasing number of people with no religious affiliation. Figure 1 below compares the religious societal composition as expressed in the two census of 2011 and 2021. It illustrates that the representation of other faiths in British society has seen minimal change, hence it is most likely that people who now identify themselves as No Religion, colloquially referred to as 'Nones' previously classed themselves as Christian.

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[14] Jonah McKeown, "Mass attendance rises in the UK, though still far below pre-pandemic levels" *Catholic News Agency,* February 12, 2025, https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/262191/mass-attendance-rises-in-the-uk-though-still-far-below-pre-pandemic-levels

[15] The term "British" is used to refer to people, things, or concepts related to the United Kingdom (UK), which includes England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

[16] World Economic Forum, *The Global Social Mobility Report 2020 Equality, Opportunity and a New Economic Imperative.* (2020:194-195) https://www3.weforum.org/docs/Global_Social_Mobility_Report.pdf

Figure 1 Religious composition, 2011 and 2021, England and Wales[17].
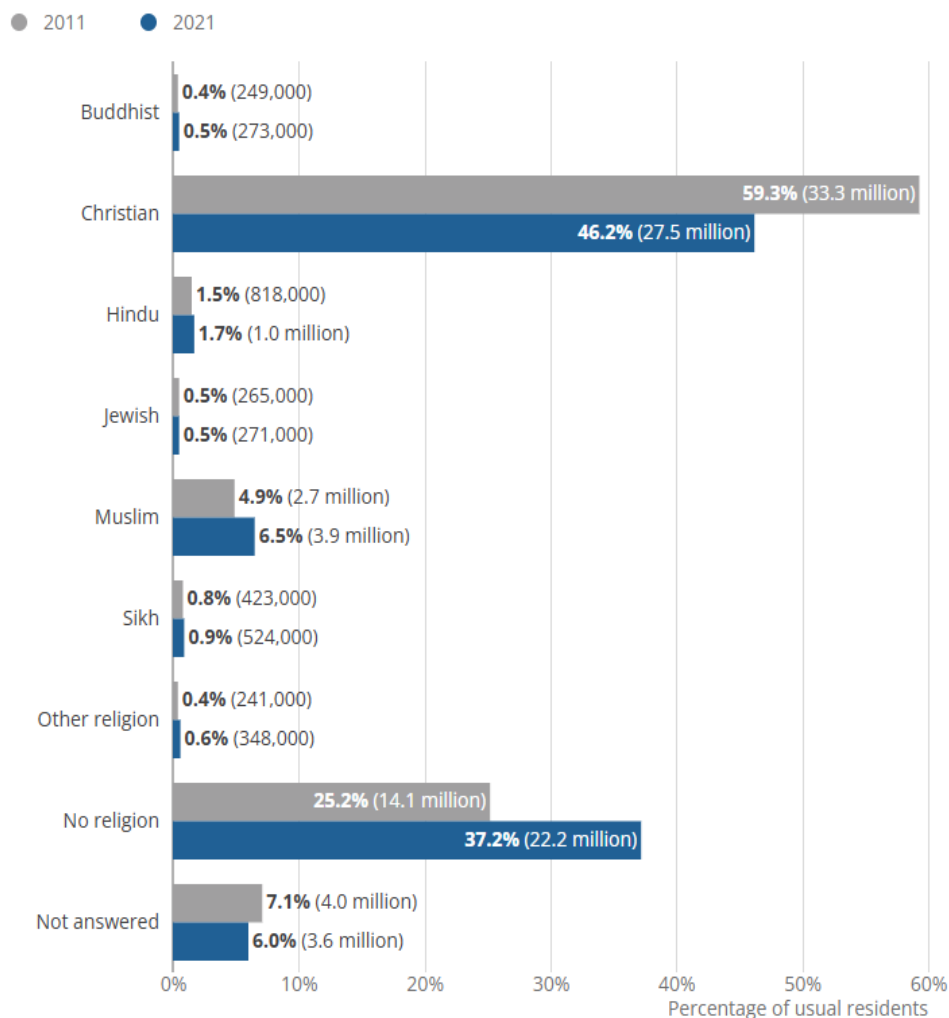
Exploring the perspective of religious 'Nones',

The proportion of adults identifying as 'No religion', or more colloquially 'Nones' was even higher in the Scottish Census of 2022 (51.1%) than that recorded in the 2021 England and Wales Census, (37%). Investigating this situation further, THEOS, a UK-based Christian think-tank, produced a report in November 2022 that examined the demographics, beliefs, and practices of 'Nones' which revealed them to be a diverse and complex group. It found that lacking religious affiliation does not necessarily mean lacking beliefs, for 42% of those who expressed No religion did hold some form of supernatural belief, and only 51% explicitly stated they do not believe in God. The study identified three distinct subcategories:

- Spiritual Nones – Open to spirituality and religion's role in society, with 80% believing in some form of the supernatural. They lean toward New Age beliefs rather than traditional Christianity, likely to be agnostic rather than atheistic. 61% are women.

17 "Religion, England and Wales: Census 2021." Office for National Statistics, accessed March 26, 2025, https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/religion/bulletins/religionenglandand wales/census2021

- <u>Tolerant Nones</u> – Personally uninterested in religion but accept its societal value.

- <u>Campaigning Nones</u> – Strongly anti-religious, viewing it as harmful and unnecessary. [18]

By highlighting their wide-ranging perspectives on faith and spirituality, the findings challenge any assumption that Nones are a homogenous secular group. It also heightens a primacy of mission. In the UK, there are growing concerns that both the Anglican and Catholic Churches could disappear by 2060 due to rising secularism[19]. Since 2011, for every one person who joined the Catholic Church, ten left, with most becoming Nones. Weekly Mass attendance has dropped to just 555,000 nationwide, and conversions are rare—less than 1% come from None backgrounds, with virtually none from non-Christian traditions. It is maybe for this reason that the imperative for mission featured strongly in the synthesis of responses from England and Wales for the Synod on Synodality.

English and Welsh engagement with the Synod on Synodality

Respondents expressed how the synodal experience was a revelation, as it offered a rare opportunity to speak freely, in order to be heard in structured conversations. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was evident in the 2021 Synod responses in England and Wales, especially concerning Mass attendance, which had been disrupted by ongoing restrictions and lockdowns. The importance of Catholic education and its societal value was also emphasised, a view shared in diocesan synods conducted by the Archdiocese of Liverpool, prior to the Synod on Synodality, and Salford, which followed the global synodal process.

Key Themes from the Synod on Synodality[20]

- Reconnecting the Church: There was a focus on the Church's identity as the People of God, and gratitude was expressed for how the Church facilitated charity, belonging, and mutual support during the pandemic, which was articulated as a time of shared vulnerability. Future ways of reconnecting people with the Church was thus highlighted as important for consideration. The Church's compassionate outreach was seen as a great gift, but participants emphasised that its mission must extend beyond crisis moments to embrace ongoing mercy and evangelisation.
- A Wounded Church: The Church struggles with clericalism, disempowered laity, and the lasting effects of abuse scandals. Greater accountability, communication, and lay participation are needed. A key concern that emerged was the deep and lasting impact of sexual abuse scandals, which have significantly wounded the Church.

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[18] Hannah Waites, *The Nones: Who are they and what do they believe?* (Theos , 2022), accessed March 26, 2025, https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/cmsfiles/The-Nones---Who-are-they-and-what-do-they-believe.pdf

[19] John Hayward "Growth, Decline and Extinction of UK Churches" *Church Growth Modelling*, May 15, 2022, https://churchmodel.org.uk/2022/05/15/growth-decline-and-extinction-of-uk-churches/

[20] CBCEW *National Synthesis Document*, (CBCEW, 2022). Accessed March 25, 2025. https://www.cbcew.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2022/06/synod-national-synthesis-england-wales.pdf

- Inclusivity and Outreach: The Church must better engage women, LGBTQ+ individuals, young people, divorced Catholics, Traveller Community[21], and traditionalists, who felt dismissed or ignored by the reforms of Pope Francis.

- Renewal and Mission: The pandemic has awakened a desire for discipleship and community, calling for a cultural shift where all the baptised actively participate in the Church's life and mission.

There was an overall sense of the Holy Spirit stirring among the faithful, and a consensus that the Church must embrace synodality to grow in holiness, engagement, and shared responsibility.

Regarding the clerical abuse crisis in the UK, the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse of England and Wales took place between 2014 and 2022, examining how the institutions in England and Wales handled their duty of care to protect children from sexual abuse. In November 2020, IICSA published a report specifically concerning the Catholic Church in England and Wales.[22] It stated that the Church had covered up child sex abuse allegations involving priests, monks, and volunteers, and criticised Cardinal Vincent Nichols for prioritising the Church's reputation over victims and showing a lack of compassion. As a response, the Catholic Studies Centre, based at Durham University, undertook a four-year research project involving interviews with those affected by the abuse crisis, leading of the publishing of the Boundary Breaking report, The Cross of the Moment, in April 2024.[23] This explores the ecclesial and cultural impact of the child abuse crisis in the Catholic Church in England and Wales, and examines how Catholic culture and theology contributed to the crisis and suggests new perspectives and practical steps for restorative and synodal approaches within the Church.

MPJPs in England and Wales

The second part of this paper describes the development and nature of MPJPs in England and Wales. It will become evident that there are many synodal characteristics in the MPJPs internal and external relationships and activities. The paper also provides an overview of the breadth and nature of the current and possible future contribution of MPJPs to the Church in England and Wales.

History of MPJPs in England and Wales

The Gaudete Trust (GT) emerged from a three-year collaborative effort led by the National Association of Religious Orders in Education (ROE). This initiative aimed to preserve the rich heritage of religious institutes in Catholic education and address the evolving needs of its members.

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[21] In the UK, the term "Traveller community" encompasses various Romani, Roma, and Irish Traveller groups, recognised as distinct ethnic groups with unique cultures and traditions, and facing significant challenges like discrimination and lack of access to resources.

[22] Independent Inquiry: Child Sexual Abuse The Roman Catholic Church: Investigation Report (IICSA, 2020) https://www.iicsa.org.uk/reports-recommendations/publications/investigation/roman-catholic-church.html

[23] Pat Jones, Marcus Pound and Catherine Sexton, *The Cross of the Moment,* (Durham University: Centre for Catholic Studies, 2024) https://www.durham.ac.uk/media/durham-university/research-/research-centres/catholic-studies-centre-for-ccs/The-Cross-of-the-Moment_digital.pdf

ROE was established in 2019 to support religious institutes who are trustees or founders of Catholic schools and colleges in England and Wales. It involves nearly 30 religious institutes and operates as a network rather than a formal organisation. ROE aims to sustain the charism of religious institutes in education, with one-half of its executive board being lay members. ROE successfully influenced the modification of the Bishops' Directives for Catholic Education, and the Framework for the Catholic Inspection of Schools, ensuring they also reflect the needs of religious institutes. Additionally, ROE has a seat at the CES meetings, advocating for the recognition of differences between diocesan and religious institute schools. This has led to the establishment of a protocol for mutual relations between religious institutes, dioceses and the CES in the service of Catholic Education, which is a key milestone in collaborative endeavours.

Characteristics of MPJPs in England and Wales

Two MPJPs operate in England and Wales: Saint John of God Hospitaller Ministries (SJOGHM) and The Gaudete Trust.[24]

SJOGHM was established in 2012 by the Apostolic See (DICLSAL) at the request of the Hospitaller Order of the Brothers of St John of God, expanding to the UK in 2019. The Apostolic See was chosen as the establishing authority as the MPJP was always intended as an international enterprise.[25] SJOGHM has a civilly incorporated company, Saint John of God Hospitaller Services Group, which it uses govern its subsidiary companies in Ireland, England and Malawi. The Saint John of God Hospitaller Services Group UK subsidiary company has an England based board of Trustees with civil responsibility. Canonical responsibility rests with the Ireland based Trustee/Sponsors of SJOGHM .

GT was established in 2022 by CBCEW at the request of five religious institutes, following the two-year discernment process by nine members of ROE and CES, as mentioned above. The five founding religious institutes of GT are:

1. The Province of France and England of the Brothers of Christian Instruction of Ploërmel

2. The European Province of the Congregation of Christian Brothers

3. The Anglo-Hibernian Province of the Congregation of La Sainte Union des Sacre Coeurs

4. The Province of Europe of the Sisters Faithful Companions of Jesus

5. The Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of St Paul the Apostle

GT oversees eighteen Catholic schools, mainly secondary but some primary, ensuring their mission and ethos align with the founding religious institutes. Its governance structure consists of three levels. Each religious institute is a Member and appoints a Representative, and the EBCEW appoints its Episcopal Representative. These Member

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[24] Appendix 2. Ministerial PJPs in England and Wales
[25] Laurence Kearns, New Governance for Ancient Hospitality: The Founding of Saint John of God Hospitaller Ministries, 2nd Ed. (Saint John of God Hospitaller Services Group, 2018),

Representatives: oversee GT's mission, appoint and remove Trustees and can amend GT's Constitution. Trustees, consisting of 5 to 15 people, with at least two-thirds Catholic, set GT's vision, Foundation Governors and Academy Members and Directors, advise on the appointment of school leaders such as the Head Teacher, oversee educational performance, and employ GT staff, including the Education Office. Governors and Academy Directors determine the educational character of the school in line with GT's vision and the charism of their founding religious institute, oversee school leadership, and report annually to Trustees. The GT Education Office, led by a paid Education Officer, supports schools in maintaining Catholic educational values, offers professional development, and fosters collaboration through the GT Education Network. This governance structure ensures accountability, strong leadership, and the preservation of each religious institute's unique educational charism.

Possible explanations as to why Catholic organisation have not pursued a juridical pathway

The historical legal frameworks shaped the complex relationship between the Catholic Church and the British state, influencing religious and social structures for centuries. They may also be a contributing factor to the current lack of ecclesial juridical engagement within the Catholic Church in the UK, in that there may be an implicit desire to navigate paths or challenges discreetly, finding ways to "fly beneath the radar." It is noteworthy how one person interviewed for this project recalled how Cardinal Basil Hume, around 1990, encouraged their Catholic lay organisation to pursue an informal path, rather than a juridical formalisation as it would keep things simple and protect their freedom.[26]

There are other potential reasons as to why so few MPJPs are operative in England and Wales. For example, the long-established and comprehensive Charity Commission UK has provided financial and structural stability to many Catholic organisations, ensuring accountability and recognition within British society. This legal framework may have reduced any perceived need for an ecclesial juridical structure, as existing mechanisms have been sufficient to support Catholic institutions.

A similar contributing factor to the lack of MPJP's in the UK is the well-defined, oft-referenced, legal framework of the UK. Over the past century, possibly in response to historical anti-Catholic prejudice, the State has adopted a more positive stance toward Catholic involvement in sectors such as health and, particularly, education. As one Episcopal Vicar for Education noted in an interview for this project, Catholic education in the UK holds a relatively unique position in that it receives state funding while its Catholic identity is legally protected. It is particularly expressed through staff appointments and the development and inspection of the religious curriculum.[27] This reciprocal relationship between Church and State has allowed local dioceses and religious institutes to establish state-funded Catholic schools across the UK, alongside the independent private schools originally opened by the religious institutes. The 18 schools of The Gaudete Trust are a small percentage of the 2,169 Catholic schools in England and Wales.[28]

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[26]   Michelle Moran interview with author, February 04, 2025
[27]   Rev M Fitzsimmons interview with author, February 11, 2025.
[28]   "About Us: Our Schools," The Gaudete Trust. Accessed March 26, 2025.
       https://www.thegaudetetrust.com/about-us/#tab-id-6

Background of Trustee/Sponsors

There are currently six Members and five Trustees within the governing structure of GT, and eleven Trustees/Sponsors within SJOGHM. The two MPJPs operative in England and Wales, agreed that their data be shown separately to improve statistical accuracy and direct comparison, the data regarding these two MPJPs will be presented separately, and notable points of interest then highlighted in Table 1 below. GT Members and Trustee/Sponsors are both shown as they hold joint meetings.

Table 1 Statistical representation of the background context for each MPJP

	The Gaudete Trust		Saint John of God Hospitaller Ministries
	Members	Trustees	
Number of Trustee/Sponsors	6	5	11
Number of men appointed as Trustee/Sponsor of a MPJP.	3 (50%)	1 (20%)	7 (63%)
Number of women appointed as Trustee/Sponsor of a MPJP.	3 (50%)	4 (80%)	4 (37%)
Number of Trustee/Sponsors who are baptised.	100%	100%	100%
Number of Trustee/Sponsors are lay people.	0	4 (80%)	7 (63%)
Number of Trustee/Sponsors who are a member of a religious institute.	6 (100%)	1 (20%)	3 (27%)
Number of Trustee/Sponsors who are ordained (deacon, priest, or bishop).	1	0	1
Number of Trustee/Sponsors who have a theological qualification.	100%	3 (60%)	2 (18%)
Number of Trustee/Sponsors who have a governance qualification.	100%	1 (20%)	3 (27%)
Number of Trustee/Sponsors who have experience as a Board Director.	100%	100%	100%
Number of Trustee/Sponsors who have previous experience as a "Trustee/Sponsor" with a different PJP (parish, diocese, religious institute, MPJP).	100%	1 (20%)	1 (9%)

The Member Representatives of GT are currently drawn from the founding religious institutes, and the bishop who has been appointed the Episcopal representative is a Marist priest (SM), hence the high percentage of members of religious institutes, and the ordained member, are as would be expected. The equal gender balance of males and

females in such high levels is also predictable, given that three of the founding religious institutes are of women. When examining the background of GT Trustees, and indeed SJOGHM, there is a greater disparity between males and females. Given that GT is actively trying to increase the numbers of Trustees, to widen the governing skill-sets at the service of the Trust, it may be that the balance of the sexes may equal out in the future. SJOGHM has also indicated that it will be seeking more women in its future Trustee/Sponsor appointments.

The low number of religious among GT Trustee/Sponsors reflects the desire of the Members to foster lay participation in GT governance. This approach ensures that structures and practices are in place to uphold the MPJP's mission, even if the presence of religious Trustees/Sponsors declines due to diminishing numbers. The low proportion of religious among SJOGHM Trustee/Sponsors reflects the larger size of this group and the requirement in their Statutes that the Trustee/Sponsors include three Brothers of Saint John of God.

Similarly, the absence of deacons, priests, and bishops among the Trustees/Sponsors in both MPJPs may be due to the fact that neither MPJP was founded by a clerical religious institute. This, combined with a limited availability of clerics for Trustee/Sponsor roles or a deliberate preference for lay leadership, could explain their absence.

The project considers theological qualifications as an indicator of a Trustee or Sponsor's depth of knowledge of the Catholic faith, though it is not a perfect measure, as it does not account for personal wisdom, lived faith, or spirituality expressed through actions. The wealth of lived spiritual experience is obvious in the Trustee/Sponsors understanding of their role as ecclesial leaders.[29] The healthcare dynamic of SJOGHM is perhaps demonstrated again, in the lack of emphasis on theological qualifications.

All of the GT Trustees/Sponsors have previous experience as a Board Director reflecting their background in leadership in education. Legally, each UK school has its own governing body that oversees: educational standards, safeguarding, property issues etc. Being a new MPJP, GT purposefully chose as Trustees/Sponsors, people with Senior leadership experience in religious institutes and/or school governing body experience as well other relevant experience. GT wanted to reassure its school communities and the wider Church that it was governed by recognised leaders and experts in their field. SJOGHM Trustee/Sponsors have a dual role as members of the governing body of their main corporate entity. This necessitates that the Trustee/Sponsors be people who are highly experienced in corporate and health/human services governance.

The project also sought information on Trustees/Sponsors having prior experience governing other canonical entities, such as parishes, dioceses, religious institutes, or other MPJPs. The low prevalence of people with such experience among English and Welsh MPJP is expected given the lack of MPJPs and the high number of lay Trustee/Sponsors. While such experience can bring valuable insights into Church governance, it may also risk limiting fresh perspectives if the same individuals are repeatedly appointed. Ensuring a balance between experience and new voices remains an important consideration.

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[29] See Appendix 3 MPJP Trustee/Sponsors describe their experiences as Ecclesial Leaders

MPJP/ACF ministries by diocese

MPJPs are present in more than half of the dioceses of England and Wales. Table 2 and Figure 1 show that GT and SJOGHM sponsor ministries within 13 of the 22 dioceses in England and Wales. Birmingham, Liverpool and Westminster are the only arch/dioceses with two MPJPs operating within their boundaries. The other ten arch/dioceses have only one MPJP present.

Table 2. MPJPs with ministries within each English/Welsh Diocese

Diocese	MPJP
Arundel and Brighton, Diocese	• St John of God Hospitaller Ministries
Birmingham, Archdiocese	• The Gaudete Trust • St John of God Hospitaller Ministries
Brentwood, Diocese	• The Gaudete Trust
Cardiff-Menevia, Archdiocese	
Clifton, Diocese	
East Anglia, Diocese	
Hallam, Diocese	
Hexham and Newcastle, Diocese	• St John of God Hospitaller Ministries
Lancaster, Diocese	• St John of God Hospitaller Ministries
Leeds, Diocese	• St John of God Hospitaller Ministries
Liverpool, Archdiocese	• The Gaudete Trust • St John of God Hospitaller Ministries
Middlesbrough, Diocese	• St John of God Hospitaller Ministries
Northampton, Diocese	
Nottingham, Diocese	
Plymouth, Diocese	
Portsmouth, Diocese	• The Gaudete Trust
Salford, Diocese	• St John of God Hospitaller Ministries
Shrewsbury, Diocese	• The Gaudete Trust
Southwark, Archdiocese	• The Gaudete Trust
Westminster, Diocese	• The Gaudete Trust • St John of God Hospitaller Ministries
Wrexham, Diocese	

Figure 2. Number of MPJPs with ministries in the Arch/Dioceses of England and Wales, 2024
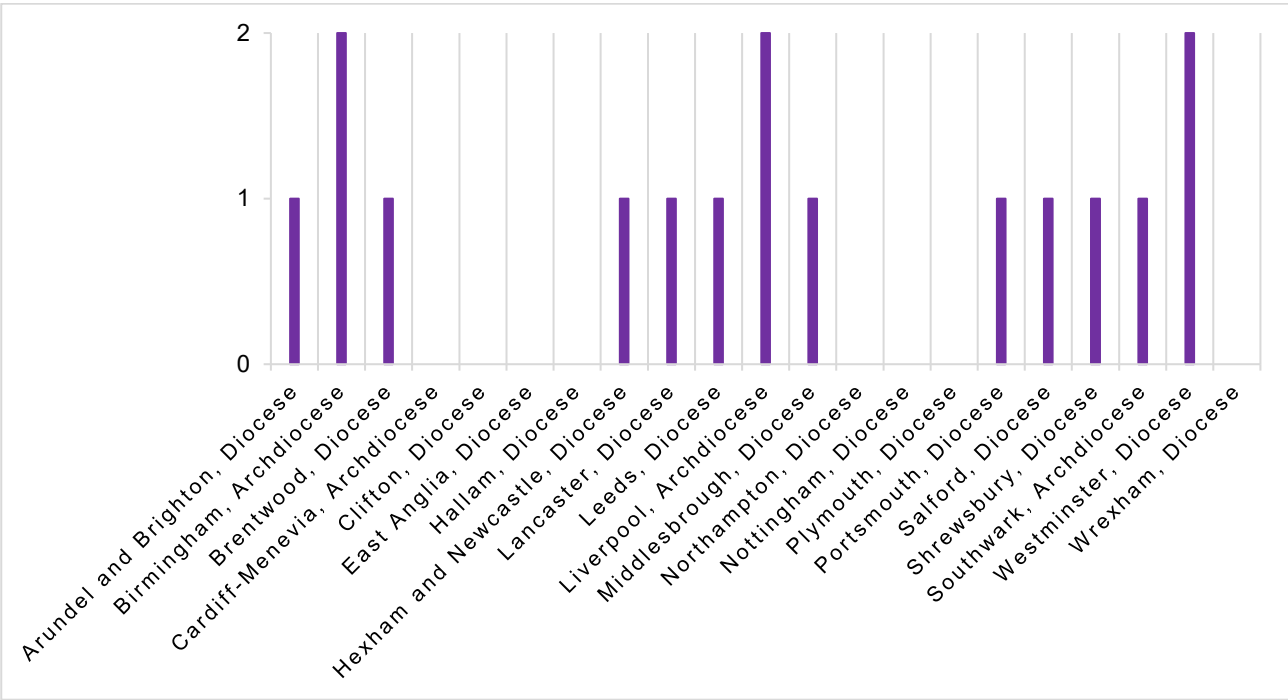
The significant MPJP presence across the Church in England and Wales should make dioceses interested in understanding the role of MPJPs and how they can better work with them. Likewise, the MPJP should see their presence as an impetus to make themselves better known to the People of God within these arch/dioceses.

MPJP/ACF ministries by ministry sector

The project's survey asked MPJPs to identify in which of nine ministry sectors their ministries operated. MPJPs in England and Wales address a wide range of ministry sectors. SJOGHM sponsors mental health, disability services, older communities, homelessness services and services addressing modern slavery. GT sponsors education ministries: Early learning education (approx. 5-year-old and younger); Primary school education; and Secondary school education. None of the MPJPs in England and Wales sponsor Tertiary education or Hospitals/healthcare (note: mental health is considered separately).

Table 3 does not show how many ministries/sites/services are sponsored by that MPJP. As noted earlier GT sponsors 18 schools. The survey did not ask MPJPs to specify the size or scope of their ministries. One of the reasons the project did not ask about the size of ministries was that the request may have deterred some MPJPs due to complexity or transparency reasons. Ultimately, the project concluded that its focus was the MPJP, so it was more relevant to know the ministry sector than the size or scope of the ministries.

Table 3. England and Wales MPJPs ministries by ministry sector

Ministry sector	MPJP/ACF sponsoring these ministries in England and Wales	
Hospitals/health		
Aged care	1	• St John of God Hospitaller Ministries
Disability services	1	• St John of God Hospitaller Ministries
Family services	1	St John of God Hospitaller Ministries
Community services	1	• St John of God Hospitaller Ministries
Early learning education *(approx. 5-year-old and younger)*	1	• The Gaudete Trust
Primary school education *(approx. 6- to 12-year-old)*	1	• The Gaudete Trust
Secondary school education *(approx. 13 to 18year old)*	1	• The Gaudete Trust
Tertiary/university education		
Other: Mental health	1	• St John of God Hospitaller Ministries

The wide range of ministries is another reason that MPJPs should be known within diocesan communities.

Development of MPJPs and their ministries

The establishment of further MPJPs in England and Wales is unlikely as there are few religious institutes with enough ministries to sustain a separate MPJP. Dioceses have yet to show an interest in establishing a MPJP for their ministries. The lack of diocesan interest may be due to the small number/size of their ministries, the tradition of the bishop being the responsible person and the difficulty of bringing together ministries from multiple dioceses under a MPJP.

GT is funded by the five founding religious institutes who have provided an initial investment "pot". Sixteen of the schools are State schools and so funded by the government. Two schools are part of the Independent education sector and consequently, receive funding through parental school fees. Other religious institutes can apply to join GT and new schools could be established with the Bishop's permission.

Most of funding for SJOGHM ministries in England and Wales comes from the UK National Health Service and other government sources. In addition, SJOGHM receives donations/regular giving and conducts fundraising events/campaigns. Further growth is possible with increased funding.

Positive and synodal aspects of MPJPs

Trustees/Sponsors in England and Wales identified the following as aspects of their MPJP that are positive and synodal:[30]

1. MPJPs appreciate the importance of telling their, and their founding religious institute's, story. It is only in looking back that the disappointments, stumbles and frustrations can be put in perspective.

2. Trustee/Sponsors take the time and they make the time to listen to each other. This enables the building of the relationships that are so important for trust and understanding and collaboration.

3. GT and SJOGHM have gatherings of the leaders of their ministries. This enables all to express and clarify their concerns, perspectives, aspirations and preferred way of working. These gatherings have been very helpful.

4. MPJPs value subsidiarity. GT supports each school in keeping and promoting its identity while also being part of GT. SJOGHM also empowers its UK ministry to be proactive and to appropriately address issues locally.

5. Trustee/Sponsors recognise that collaboration leads to enormous strength and deep roots, and it's really tough.

6. Trustee/Sponsors create the space for the Holy Spirit to work.

7. Trustee/Sponsors encourage a constant flow of information upwards, downwards and sidewards. They make sure everyone knows what is happening, why and how. It is a joined-up picture. It's not a structure which is static, it's a flowing structure, and so the diverse opinions are always coming forward.

8. In GT's first year they had many meetings of the Board of Trustee/Sponsors and the Members. Trustee/Sponsors wanted to hear the wisdom of the Members and they wanted the Members to know what they were doing and their way of proceeding.

9. GT communicates and collaborates with others, such as Religious Orders in Education.

10. GT appreciates where they have come from, those who have gone before them and left them so much.

Trustee/Sponsors provided many examples of synodal practice: including key stakeholders in discussions; openness to the views of others; processes with periods of reflection/prayer; communication/transparency/accountability from the centre to the peripheries (and back) and from the ground to the top (and back) and collaboration with others. Synodal practices, such as these, could be helpful to MPJPs as they dialogue and engage with the increasing ethnic diversity and secular nature of society. This diversity will be present among boards, staff and service users/students within MPJP ministries. As the

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[30] List developed during the Inclusive Governance in a Synodal Church Project online focus group held on 11 March 2025 with additional contributions from other Trustees/Sponsors

Church appointed leaders, it falls to the Trustee/Sponsors to provide pastoral leadership to these people.

The synodal practice in MPJPs also accords with the National Synthesis where the Church in England and Wales committed to synodality.

MPJP interaction with the other parts of the Church

The name "Gaudete" was chosen to reflect joy in the Gospel, the Holy Spirit's guidance in collaboration, the rich legacy of religious institutes, and the Trust's mission to help young people live life to the fullest as taught by Jesus. At its core, the Trust reflects the commitment of religious institutes to serve the Church through their charisms. By embracing a collaborative trusteeship model, it provides an alternative for religious institutes struggling with the growing challenges of educational governance, ensuring their continued contribution to Catholic education in England and Wales. GT are active participants in consultations with CES. It also has Bishop Alan Williams SM as the CBCEW Member representative to ensure they stay engaged with the CBCEW. As required by its Statutes, GT provides regular reports to CBCEW, their establishing authority.

The SJOGHM is the UK's largest provider of safe houses for people subject to modern day slavery and trafficking. There are reasons for them to work collaboratively with diocesan CARITAS organisations, particularly regarding specialist support for the homeless. SJOGHM also has a long history of specialist dementia and nursing home care for older people, and often working in partnership with religious institutes with either their nursing homes or concerning the care of elderly members of the religious institute. Most of the collaboration between SJOGHM and the wider Church is at the ministry – service delivery level. There is limited communication and collaboration between SJOGHM Trustee/Sponsors and CBCEW and/or COR on matters ecclesial.

There has to date been no communication and collaboration between the two MPJPs. This is due to them operating in different ministry sectors and GT being a new MPJP who needs to establish its own identity and relationships.

Possible future MPJP/ACF activities

Trustees/Sponsors identified the following, as initiatives that they believe will support MPJPs in England and Wales:[31]

a) MPJPs need to take courage and be prepared to standout. Sometimes Trustee/Sponsors will need to speak before others or say something that is different. They need to take up the Holy Spirit's gift of courage.

b) MPJPs need to seek and be given a place at the table where key discussions take place.

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[31] Initiatives identified in the Inclusive Governance in a Synodal Church Project online focus group held on 11 March 2025 with additional contributions from other Trustees/Sponsors

c) MPJPs need to have a clear sense of their identity, purpose and place in the Church. The MPJP is not a religious institute, is not a diocese, nor is it a Bishop. It is a lay run PJP.

d) Trustee/Sponsors need to build relationships of trust with the Bishops conference so they can clearly recognise that this MPJP is a way forward.

e) MPJPs need to be determined, bloody minded and not give in when they know it's really important to do the right thing and keep on doing the right thing despite the barriers that come up.

f) A little bit of passion goes a long way. Be passionate about what you know, about what you want to do and set out to do it.

g) Discernment makes something really strong and that means it can weather the storms of whatever people throw at it.

h) MPJPs can take strength from the stories of the founders of religious institutes and others who have gone before them. They were resilient and overcame obstacles. MPJPs need to say to ourselves and to each other, this is the Holy Spirit's work.
> Let's make it work.
> Let's go round obstacles.
> Let's go under obstacles.
> Let's go over obstacles.
> Let's go through obstacles.
> But we have to allow the Holy Spirit to work.

i) Individual MPJPs would really benefit from being part of a family of MPJPs. This family could support each other.

j) Groups who are seeking to establish a MPJP could learn so much from others who have already done so.

Conclusion

There is a sense that collectively MPJPs in England and Wales are in their infancy. One of the MPJPs in England and Wales was only established in 2022, while the other has operated since 2012. Once the newer MPJP is in a more settled state, there might be more reasons to meet together and explore shared issues. While their ministries are in different sectors, the Trustee/Sponsors could find similarities in the issues that they confront and similarities in how they do/could respond.

The data shows that these MPJPs are synodal by nature. Their practices and their aspirations have a strong resonance with the recent Synod on Synodality themes of Participation, Communion and Mission. These are themes characteristic of the internal life of the MPJPs and of their engagement with students/clients/society. The final frontier appears to be progressing these themes in the engagement of MPJPs with the wider Church in England and Wales.

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Appendix 1. Inclusive Governance in a Synodal Church Project, Survey Instrument

About your MPJP/ACF:

The questions in this section seek details about your PJP (i.e., MPJP-ACF).

These details, along with those of other MPJP-ACFs, will be included in the paper that will provide an overview of MPJP-ACFs in your country and the Church and societal factors that impact MPJP-ACFs.

You will see a draft of this country paper and have an opportunity to provide comment and to ask for changes before it is published.

1.   What is the name of your Public Juridic Person (PJP)?

2.   In which year your PJP was established by the Church?

3.   Who was Establishing Authority?
options:
  ☐ Apostolic See: DICLSAL (previously known as CICLSAL), or
  ☐ National Catholic Bishops Conference or
  ☐ Local Bishop (or Archbishop) or other (please specify)

4.   What is the canonical basis of your PJP?
options:
  ☐ as per canon 116; or
  ☐ as per canon 298ff; or
  ☐ I'm not sure (we will contact you to clarify)

5.   Which Religious Institute(s) originally petitioned the Establishing Authority to establish your PJP?

6.   What ministries does your PJP sponsor
options:
  ☐ Hospitals/health care;
  ☐ Aged care;
  ☐ Disability Services;
  ☐ Family services,
  ☐ Community services,
  ☐ Early learning education (approx. 5 year old and younger),
  ☐ Primary school education from (approx. 6 to 12 year old),
  ☐ Secondary school education (approx. 13 to 18year old),
  ☐ Tertiary/university education,
  ☐ other (please specify)

These next questions ask about your MPJP-ACF's ministries in National and Local Churches.

This information will be included in the country paper to show your, and other MPJP-ACF, contributions to the wider Church and society.

7.   In which country(s) does your PJP operate?
options:
☐   Australia; and/or
☐   Canada; and/or
☐   Ireland; and/or
☐   New Zealand; and/or
☐   Singapore-Malaysia; and/or
☐   UK; and/or
☐   USA; and/or
☐   Other

8.   In which Dioceses does your PJP have ministries?
options:
Choose from lists of dioceses which will appear based on selected country (and in selected state/province of USA/Canada)

About your MPJP/ACFs Trustee/Sponsors:
The next eight questions will help us develop a profile of MPJP-ACF Trustee-Sponsors within each country. It will help answer questions about the diversity of their backgrounds/qualifications and the perspective/skills that they bring to a governance role in the Church.

9.   What is the total number of Trustee/Sponsors in your PJP?
10.   What % of Trustee/Sponsors are baptised?
11.   What % of Trustee/Sponsors are women?
12.   What % of Trustee/Sponsors in Religious life?
13.   What % of Trustee/Sponsors are ordained?
14.   What % of Trustee/Sponsors have a theology degree?
15.   What % of Trustee/Sponsors have a qualification from a governance institute? (e.g., Company Director course from Institute of Company Directors)
16.   What % of Trustee/Sponsors have previous experience as a Board Director?
17.   What % of Trustee/Sponsors have previous experience as a MPJP Trustee-Sponsor (or parish priest, bishop, Religious Institute General Superior)?

About the person completing this survey:
Providing your contact details in the next questions will assist us should we have any questions about your responses in this survey.
18.   Name of person completing this survey
19.   MPJP/ACF
20.   Contact phone number
21.   Contact email
22.   Date

Appendix 2. Ministerial PJPs in England and Wales *as of 10 March 2025*

MPJP	Est year	Establishing Authority	Instigating Church entities	Sponsored ministries	Diocesan presence
(1) The Gaudete Trust	2022	Catholic Bishop's Conference of England and Wales	1. The Congregation of La Sainte Union (LSU) 2. Sisters of Charity of St Paul the Apostle (SP) 3. De La Mennais Brothers FICP (Brothers of Christian Instruction) 4. The Christian Brothers (CFC) 5. The Faithful Companions of Jesus (FCJ)	Early learning education (approx. 5 year old and younger), Primary school education from (approx. 6 to 12 year old), Secondary school education (approx. 13 to 18year old),	• Birmingham, Archdiocese • Brentwood, Diocese • Liverpool, Archdiocese • Portsmouth, Diocese • Shrewsbury, Diocese • Southwark, Archdiocese • Westminster, Diocese
(2) St John of God Hospitaller Ministries	2012	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	Hospitaller Order of the Brothers of St John of God	<u>Within England and Wales:</u> • residential care and support for adults with autism • accommodation and support for people experiencing homelessness • supported living, residential care and housing management services • support services for people impacted by modern slavery • Research and advocacy • supporting religious institutes care for their elderly members <u>Across all ministries internationally:</u> Hospitals/health care; Mental health, Aged care; Disability services; Family services, Primary school education from (approx. 6 to 12 year old), Secondary school education (approx. 13 to 18year old), and Tertiary/university education	Ireland • Armagh, Archdiocese • Dublin, Archdiocese • Kerry, Diocese England • Arundel and Brighton, Diocese • Birmingham, Archdiocese • Hexham and Newcastle, Diocese • Lancaster, Diocese • Leeds, Diocese • Liverpool, Archdiocese • Middlesbrough, Diocese • Salford, Diocese • Westminster, Diocese Malawi • Lilongwe, Archdiocese • Mzuzu, Diocese

Appendix 3. MPJP Trustee/Sponsors describe their experiences as Ecclesial Leaders

1. When I look back on the journey that led to the establishment of Religious Orders in Education, I can see that it was an exercise in leadership. For many years, religious institutes who sponsored schools only met together when the Catholic Education Service convened meetings. We gradually came to see that we had issues in common that had nothing to do with the Catholic Education Service. A few of us stepped up and invited others together to build relationships and share information and best practise. These gatherings led to the formation of Religious Orders in Education and all sorts of ripple effects and impacts. It all started with the realisation that "we can".

2. I went to a meeting called to address the issues of religious order schools. We had a rich discussion with many and varied views put forward. I was so disappointed that nothing happened afterwards I felt that the meeting organisers had given us false hope of continued action. At a later conference, a number of women from religious institutes decided to meet together. We listened to each other. We encouraged each other. We knew the Holy Spirit was really guiding us. It was the Holy Spirit saying, you know, there is something to be done here because if not there is going to be a loss of all these gifts that the Holy Spirit has given through the charisms of all the different religious order schools. This was a journey that started with disappointment and then the galvanisation.

3. We set up a collaborative trust steering group and there were probably about a dozen religious institutes represented on that group. We were wrestling with how schools could be both in some kind of collaborative trust and also keep their particular charism alive. At a key meeting we decided we needed to write a common vision statement for how we see education developing for the schools in this trust. Each person around the table talked about the distinctive parts of their charism. I was asked to go away and put that together into some kind of statement. When we next met all five of the religious five orders said that the vision statement captured our own mission. We now have a direction and focus that complements and extends our individual missions. So that for me was a key moment when we said yes, this is what we own. This is what we believe in. This is what Gaudete stands for. It grew out of a real process of collaboration.

Ministerial Public Juridic Persons in Ireland

Frances O'Callaghan[1]

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[1] Frances O'Callaghan is the research officer for Ireland in the IGSC project. She holds a degree in Christian Theology from The Priory Institute and Tallaght University Dublin, as well as an M. Phil in Christian Theology from Trinity College Dublin, where she is commencing her PHD studies this year.

Table of Contents

Glossary

Apostolic See	Also known as the Holy See or See of Rome or Petrine See. The episcopal jurisdiction and roles that the Pope (and the various offices within his Roman Curia) exercise across and on behalf of the entire Catholic Church.
Association of Christ's Faithful	Associations of Christ's Faithful are an organisation of laity, clerics or both collaborating for growth in faith and spirituality, and for the works of the Gospel. Associations may be public or private canonical associations or non-canonical. Public associations are PJPs and are an alternative Church structure to an MPJP for sponsoring Church ministries.
Board	The governing body of a company. This project generally uses the term 'Board' to refer to the governing body of MPJP/ACF ministries (e.g. school or school network board, hospital or hospital network board) and uses the term Council to refer to Trustee/Sponsors acting/meeting together.
DICLSAL	Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life - the department within the Roman Curia that also oversees the mission and life of religious institutes. This office has responsibility for authorizing the alienation of church property controlled by religious institutes and public juridical persons (which DICLSAL has established). Prior to the promulgation of _Praedicate Evangelium_ in 2022 DICLSAL was known as Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.
Establishing Authority for MPJPs	The Church Leader who approves the MPJP's Statutes and establishes it as a PJP. The Establishing Authority for MPJPs follows the guidelines for establishing Public Associations, namely: the Apostolic See, for universal and international associations, Episcopal Conference in its own territory, for national associations and the diocesan Bishop, his own territory. (c312)
Member of an MPJP	This project uses the term 'Member' to refer to the person(s) who appoint the Trustee/Sponsors. Some MPJPs use that term others use: Sponsor, Participating Entity
Ministerial PJP (MPJP)	The term commonly used to refer to a public juridical person (PJP) established by a competent Church Authority for the purpose of sponsoring Church ministries (see Canon 116).
Ministry	Ministry means any activity that carries out the works of the Gospel. This project uses the term 'ministry' when referring to the works of ACFs/MPJPs e.g., schools, hospitals, aged care and other services.
Public Juridic Person (PJP)	Aggregate of persons or of things directed to a purpose befitting the Church's mission, which transcends the purpose of the individuals. PJPs are church entities established by law or by decree and act in the name of the Church. Examples of a PJP are: diocese, parish, religious institute or MPJP. This project uses the USA spelling of 'Juridic' rather than the UK spelling of 'Juridical'.
Religious Institute	Religious institute is a gift of the spirit in which individuals make a lifelong commitment to gospel life in community, framed by vows or bonds of chastity, poverty, and obedience and committed to apostolic service. Societies of Apostolic Life are similar. They may also be called orders, institutes, societies or congregations.
Trustee/ Sponsor	This project uses the term "Trustees/Sponsors" to refer to individuals appointed as responsible for the MPJP. This term is used in all the project's papers to enable easy identification of the same role in different MPJPs across the seven countries under consideration. Other terms used by MPJPs include: board Director, canonical steward, Trustee, Sponsor, Trustee Director

Introduction

This paper provides a brief overview of the context of the Catholic Church and Ministerial Public Juridic Persons (MPJP) within Ireland.[2] It seeks to explain why MPJPs emerged, their purpose and their hopes for the future.

MPJPs, alongside dioceses and religious institutes, are the Church Authorities responsible for major education, health, aged care and other ministries which impact the lives of millions of Irish People. MPJPs are one of the few bodies where lay people can be the decision taker on behalf of the Church. This role responds to the Second Vatican Council's emphasis on Baptism as the foundation for the full and active participation of all the Faithful, both in society and in the Church.

A renewed focus on the possibilities of participation in Church governance on the basis of Baptism has arisen at the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (also known as the Synod on Synodality 2021-2024)[3].

This paper is one in a series of papers on MPJPs in Anglophone countries prepared for the ACU Inclusive Governance in a Synodal Church (IGSC) project. This project is scheduled to run from July 2024 to June 2025 and will deliver: an initial Position Paper, Country Papers, a range of case studies, theological, canonical, and ecclesiological reflections on their findings, and a final Project Report.

Methodology

This paper draws on publicly available data regarding Irish society and the Catholic Church in Ireland. Data on MPJPs, their ministries and their Trustee/Sponsors was obtained in the first instance from the MPJP.[4] MPJPs provided this information via: a survey,[5] participation in a 90-minute online consultation-focus group, and written responses to the summary of the consultation-focus group and to draft versions of this paper. Supplementary information on MPJPs was obtained from their websites and from other publicly available sources.

The Irish Catholic Bishops Conference did not respond to the project's request for information regarding MPJPs in Ireland, although contact has been made with various bishops since then, who facilitated contacts and with whom the research team are maintaining contact and conversation. The project is grateful to the Association of Patrons and Trustees of Catholic Schools and The Association of Leaders of Missionaries and Religious of Ireland for their assistance and introductions to MPJPs. This assistance enabled the project to contact MPJP contact people relatively quickly although there were often delays within MPJPs in identifying the most appropriate person to complete the survey/participate in online interviews. The project had considerable difficulty locating small MPJPs that were established by a single bishop. As an emerging form of Church governance, these difficulties are understandable. It is also a factor

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2. Canon law uses the term public juridic person for diocese, parishes religious institutes etc. In recent years the term "Ministerial Public Juridic Person" was adopted by non-canonists to distinguish these new church structures whose specific purpose is the sponsorship of Church health, education and other ministries. In Ireland the convention is to refer to MPJPs as Trusts. This project uses the acronym MPJP.

3. Francis, and XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. *Final Document: For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission.* (Vatican: Apostolic See, 2024). https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/news/2024-10-26_final-document/ENG---Documento-finale.pdf.

4. This project uses the term "Trustees/Sponsors" for the persons who are appointed as responsible for the MPJP.

5. See: Appendix 1 IGSC Project survey instrument

linked to the complex and somewhat intense Catholic identity and history of the Irish nation, as outlined briefly below.[6]

Irish Society and Catholic Context

Despite operating across two political jurisdictions, Ireland's major Christian Churches function on an all-island basis. After partition in 1920, religious affiliation and political allegiance became more closely linked. By 1926, Roman Catholics made up 92.6% of the Irish Free State's population,[7] shaping its political and public culture, and for the first fifty years of independence, Church and State leaders, regardless of party, pursued a vision of Catholic nationalism.[8] In the uncertain 1920s, the Church provided the new Irish State with stability and infrastructure, while the financially struggling government allowed it to expand its role in education, health, and welfare, a dynamic that persisted until the 1960s. In Northern Ireland, Irish Catholicism before the 1960s was defined by a sense of belonging to the State but not fully being part of it. Tensions between catholics and protestants (the common unifying title oft-given to and self-appropriated by those of other Christian churches) ran high, only coming to a tenuous peaceful resolution in the year 1999. Early relations between Church leaders, who represented the minority, and the Northern administration were marked by hostility. After World War II, as the welfare state expanded, Catholic bishops took a more pragmatic stance, shifting from condemning the State itself to addressing injustices within it. Despite the political border, the Catholic Church maintained its all-Ireland identity, ensuring its religious unity remained intact, as another factor in this complex socio-cultural and political space.[9]

From the 1920s to the 1950s, the Catholic Church wielded immense influence in Éire (the part of Ireland not under British rule), with widespread devotional practices, strong lay adherence, and tremendous influence of clergy over social life and politics. However, post-World War II, the hierarchy gradually lost that influence, failing to sway the government on stricter moral policies. Pope Pius XI's *Quadragesimo Anno*[10] advanced the principle of subsidiarity, stating that the State should support, not replace, smaller societal units like families. This idea shaped Catholic social teaching, notably seen in *Muintir na Tíre*, a community development group founded by Father John Hayes in 1931. Dr. Alfred O'Rahilly promoted these teachings through the widely read *Standard*.[11] The Legion of Mary, founded by Frank Duff in 1921, stood out as a lay-led initiative addressing spiritual and social issues like homelessness and prostitution. Before the 1960s, Church-State interactions centred mainly on education and, to a lesser extent, health, whose Catholic ministries emerged out of and remained for a while under the charisms of various religious Institutes. Control over education, its ethos, management, and teaching appointments, was seen as vital for preserving Catholic faith and values. After 1922, school management remained with the clergy, while the State funded teachers and oversaw curricula.[12] When the

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6   We are grateful for the support of all those individuals who cannot be named but whose roles and generosity in our interviews who helped us gain a better (if still incomplete) understanding of this evolving space in the Irish Church.

7   Central Statistics Office. *Census of Population, 1926: Volume I–VII.* (Stationery Office, 1928).

8   Daithi Ó Corráin, *The Catholic Church, the State and Society in Independent Ireland*, 1922-2022. (Jesuit centre for Faith and Justice, 2022).

9   Daithí Ó Corráin, *Rendering to God and Caesar: The Irish churches and the two states in Ireland, 1949-73* (University Press, 2006) 43-69.

10   Pope Pius XI. *Quadragesimo Anno: Encyclical of Pope Pius XI on Reconstruction of the Social Order*. (Vatican Publishing House, 1931)

11   John Whyte, *Church and State in Modern Ireland, 1923-1970* (Barnes & Noble Books, 1971), 68-72.

12   Séamus Ó Buachalla, *Education policy in twentieth century Ireland* (Wolfhound Press, 1988), 60.

Vocational Education Act (1930) threatened primary and secondary school structures, the Church secured religious instruction and clerical representation in the vocational system.[13]

In the 1960s, Ireland recognised that expanding educational opportunities was vital for economic development. Free post-primary education was introduced in 1967. While the Church still controlled denominational schools, the State's influence in education grew. In the 1990s and 2000s, the Irish State became more interventionist and secular in education, introducing policies like the 1999 primary school curriculum, which separated secular and religious instruction, and the 1998 Education Act, which formally recognised non-denominational schools such as *Gaelscoileanna* and Educate Together. Despite these changes, the Catholic Church continues to control 90% of primary schools and about half of post-primary schools in Ireland.[14]

In 1968, Ireland recorded its first decline in the number of priests, brothers, and nuns within a decade,[15] for every ten who entered religious life, seven died and eight left.[16] This shortage of vocations contributed to the Church's declining power as it struggled to staff hospitals, welfare homes, and schools, leading to a contraction of its institutional presence. Religious institutes[17] began withdrawing from traditional sectors like education and healthcare, particularly after the 1960s. A notable example was the Sisters of Charity's departure from healthcare in 2017. The number of principals in schools who were also members of a religious institute dropped from 104 in 1991 to just 10 in 2014.[18] Many religious institutes also left the care of orphaned children. At the parish level, the number of diocesan priests fell sharply, from 3,702 in 1961 to 1,966 in 2015.[19] Alongside this crisis in vocations, the percentage of Irish identifying as Catholic declined from 93% in 1981 to 78.3% in 2016, with 9.8% identifying as having 'No Religion'.[20]

According to the 2022 census, Ireland's population was recorded at 5,149,139, an 8% increase since 2016. In 2022, more than 3.5 million people, or 69% of the population, reported their religion was Roman Catholic. The second largest religious grouping was Church of Ireland or England, Anglican and Episcopalian with more than 124,700 people. The number of people who stated they had no religion increased to more than 736,000, or 14% of the population. This was up 63% since the Census of 2016. There were also large increases in the number of people whose religion was Orthodox (up 65% to over 100,000), Islam (up 32% to almost 82,000), and Hindu (up 141% to just over 33,000). Among pre-school aged children (0 to 4 years), 65% were Roman Catholic while 16% had no religion. Of those aged 5 to 9 years, 72% were Roman Catholic with 11% having no religion. People aged 25 to 29 years were less likely to be Roman Catholic (53%) than

13 Marie Clarke, 'The Response of the Roman Catholic Church to the Introduction of Vocational Education in Ireland, 1930-1942', *History of Education.* 41:4 (2012), 477-93.

14 Emma Hickey. "Three primary schools will no longer be under patronage of Catholic Church come September." *The Journal*, May 23, 2024 https://www.thejournal.ie/primary-schools-divest-catholic-church-6387486-May2024/

15 Jeremiah Newman. *A survey of vocations in Ireland, 1971*.(Catholic Communications Institute of Ireland, 1971), 3. – A confidential report submitted to the Irish Catholic Bishops Conference in June 1971)

16 Tom Inglis, "Decline in Numbers of Priests and Religious in Ireland." *Doctrine and Life.* 30:2, Feb. 1979, 81, 84.

17 This project uses the term "religious institute" to describe Church approved communities of individuals who make a commitment to gospel life usually framed by vows or bonds of chastity, poverty, and obedience and committed to apostolic service. These communities may also be called orders, institutes, societies or congregations.

18 Eithne Woulfe, "Religious life in Ireland today" in Niall Coll (ed.), *Ireland & Vatican II: Essays Theological, Pastoral and Educational.* Columba Books, 2015, 219.

19 Irish Catholic Directory 1962 (Duffy and Co, 1962), 653; Irish Catholic Directory 2001 (Veritas Publications, 2001), 284; Irish Catholic Directory 2016, (Veritas Publications, 2001), 329.

20 *Census of Ireland 2016: Profile 8 Religion: Religious Change,* accessed March 24, 2025. https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp8iter/p8iter/p8rrc/.

other age groups. They were also the age group with the highest proportion of people with no religion (26%).[21] In Northern Ireland, a 2021 census revealed that 42% of that population identify themselves as Catholic.[22]

In 2020, the World Economic Forum Social Mobility Index scored Ireland at 75 out of 100, which ranked Ireland overall as 18th out of 82 countries. The Index measures quality of life as well as factors that would enable the population to achieve a higher standard of living. This comprehensive measure has 47 indicators across five determinants: health, education, technology, work, and institutions. Ireland's best ratings were: health (90/100); technology access (82/100); inclusive institutions (82/100); education quality and equity (79/100) and education access (78/100). Ireland's lowest ratings were: fair wage distribution (54/100); lifelong learning (65/100); and working conditions (69/100). The Index shows a relatively high quality of life and social mobility for the Irish population although there are still individuals and groups whose lives and prospects are well below the average.[23]

A key factor alongside these developments towards a more secular understanding of the relationship between state and religion was the discovery of systematic institutional abuse of various forms by clergy and religious in the institutions and parishes they led (from the 1980's onwards). This emerged in various forms, but the scandal of clerical sexual abuse and its cover up by the authorities, as well as disciplinary abuse of state-approved institutions on, for example, unmarried mothers shook Irish consciousness and its Catholic self-understanding to the core. Coming to terms on the one side, with a Church that not only abused the trust of its people but also sought to cover it up, and on the other with our own complicity in a culture that accepted such treatment of its own unquestioned is an ongoing reality.[24] This is coupled with an awakening to and challenge of the Church's intervention in areas of women's health and sexuality. Legal changes to the right to divorce, contraception, abortion, gay marriage all signal the end of Church dominance on Irish individual freedoms. The vehement reaction against any Church influence on the health of Irish individuals and their health system seems to be one of the key factors explaining the devolvement of so many Catholic hospitals to the State or secular health groups.[25] Some aged care still remains in Catholic ministries, (such as Nazareth Care),

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[21] Central Statistics Office. *Census of Population 2022: Summary Results.* (Central Statistics Office, 2023). accessed March 24, 2025. https://www.cso.ie/en/csolatestnews/pressreleases/2023pressreleases/pressstatementcensusofpopulation2022-summaryresults/

[22] Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, *Main statistics for Northern Ireland Statistical Bulletin Religion* (NISRA, 2022) https://www.nisra.gov.uk/system/files/statistics/census-2021-main-statistics-for-northern-ireland-phase-1-statistical-bulletin-religion.pdf

[23] World Economic Forum *The Global Social Mobility Report 2020 Equality, Opportunity and a New Economic Imperative* (2020:110-111) *https://www3.weforum.org/docs/Global_Social_Mobility_Report.pdf*

[24] Cf. Derek Scally, *The Best Catholics in The World: The Irish, the Church and the End of a Special Relationship* (Penguin UK, 2021); Marie Keenan, *Child sexual abuse and the Catholic Church: gender, power, and organizational culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Kate Gleeson and Sinéad Ring, "Confronting the past and changing the future? Public inquiries into institutional child abuse, Ireland and Australia," *Griffith law review* 29, no. 1 (2020), https://doi.org/10.1080/10383441.2020.1855950.

[25] In a 2012 document on *Caring for Health in Ireland*, the Irish Bishop's Conference names the following Catholic Health Care Providers as contributing to the consultation: Congregation of the Brothers of Charity, Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy, Daughters of Charity, Little Company of Mary, Little Sisters of the Poor, Medical Missionaries of Mary, Religious Sisters of Charity, Sisters of Bon Secours, Sisters of St John of God, and St John of God Services. Cf. The Council for Justice and Peace of the Irish Episcopal Conference, *Caring for Health in Australia* (2012), https://www.catholicbishops.ie/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/caring-for-health-in-Ireland.pdf Since then, various have handed over their works to the state or secular organisations.

as a charitable Trust born of the Sisters of Nazareth, rather than an MPJP. Many were not converted into MPJPs, in part because there was no appetite for ongoing religious presence and influence in that sector. Indeed, the level of toxicity around the provision of Catholic Healthcare in recent years has been alarming with no regard for the range and level of care delivered by 'Catholic' hospitals. In the public sphere such hospitals seem to be defined by what they do not do, e.g. abortion services, sterilisation etc.

In terms of oversight in the health sector, public/voluntary hospitals are largely funded by the state. As the major funder the state can "call the tune" and health systems are subject to rigorous scrutiny and compliance obligations under civil law, in which Canon Law has no standing. Hence the necessity for board appointees with corporate and governance backgrounds. To date there has been no difficulty in finding such people, who also happily support and promote the Catholic ethos of these entities. The Catholic Education sector lives in a more conflicted space: a recent attempt to devolve some Catholic Schools to the State had very little success, with many parents still desiring a "Catholic" education (however that might be understood), despite a negative or dialectic attitude towards the Church and diminishing trends of Church attendance.

Irish engagement with the Synod on Synodality

In March 2021, the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference launched a five-year Synodal Pathway for the Church in Ireland. Later that year, in October, Pope Francis initiated a global consultation process leading to the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, focused on the theme of synodality. The people of God across the island of Ireland were invited to participate in the universal synod, with the core of this journey being listening to God by listening to one another.[26] The National Steering Committee and the Task Group for the Synodal Pathway of the Catholic Church in Ireland, which were appointed by the Irish Catholics Bishops Conference, supported dioceses and groups during this phase, which involved a balanced representation of clergy, religious, lay men and lay women working together. Between October 2021 and May 2022, faith-based consultations took place across Ireland, culminating in a synthesis submitted to the Bishops' Conference on May 29th. All 26 dioceses submitted syntheses, along with 29 additional submissions from religious congregations, lay associations, ecclesial movements, and Church agencies. Some individuals also contributed. A sub-group of the Steering Committee reviewed these submissions in a spirit of prayer and discernment over Pentecost weekend (June 2022) and presented key themes at a national pre-synodal assembly in Athlone in June 2022. Following further reflection, the final synthesis was prepared for submission to the Synod office in Rome. The *National Synthesis* is available in English and Irish as a resource for continued reflection and outreach.[27] Among the themes identified were: Abuse as Part of the Story of the Church, Co-Responsible Leadership, Clergy, Lay Ministry, The Role of Women, LGBTQI+ community, adult faith formation and family.

The Irish National Synthesis states that 'The significance of the Irish contribution to the Universal Synod arguably lies in the radical demographic, economic and social transformation of Ireland which has framed and been paralleled by dramatic changes in the Church. Within this story, the nature, scale and consequences of clerical abuse, and the complicity of Church bodies in the

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[26] Irish Catholic Bishop's Conference. *Synthesis of the Consultation in Ireland for the Diocesan Stage of the Universal Synod*. Irish Catholic Bishop's Conference, 2023, 2. Accessed March 25, 2025. https://synod.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/National-Synthesis-1.pdf

[27] Ibid

institutionalisation of women and children in Ireland, have profound significance in their own right. The Church in Ireland, ministering in two political jurisdictions, has also lived with the reality of sectarian conflict and religious divisions which, despite political, social and religious progress, continue to be the focus of international attention and concern.'
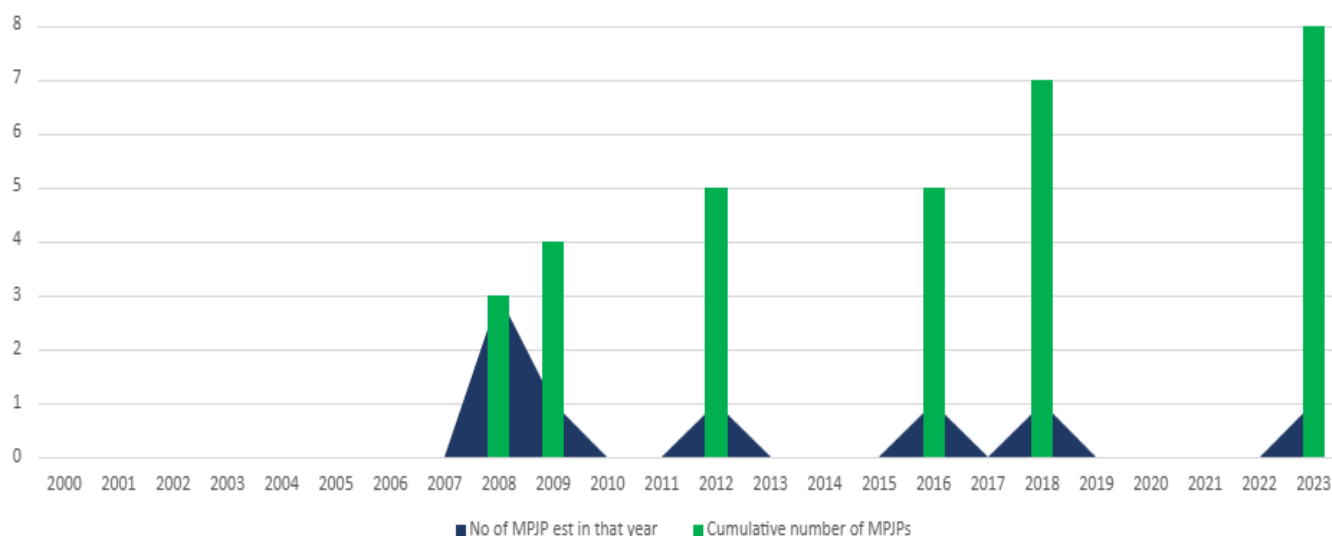
MPJPs in Ireland

It is within the context of these profound changes over the course of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries that the emergence of MPJPs as a form of governance of Church ministries in Ireland can be understood.The decline in religious vocations not only weakened the Church's institutional presence but also necessitated new governance models for its ministries. The loss of institutional credibility challenged its ministries *and* summoned forth more active and mature responses from committed lay people to take up their baptismal calling. As religious institutes withdrew from traditional roles in education and healthcare, lay-led structures have emerged. The creation of MPJPs marked a transition in overseeing Church-sponsored institutions.

This project identified eight MPJPs who sponsor ministries in Ireland, reflecting an evolving approach to maintaining the Church's influence in key sectors despite dwindling religious vocations.

Six of the eight Irish MPJPs completed the survey offered by this project. Publicly available data on the outstanding MPJPs was available for many of the survey questions. Below is a summary of data collected and detailed in Appendix 2.[28]

In 2008, the first three MPJPs were established in Ireland (CEIST; Edmund Rice Schools Trust and Le Chéile Schools Trust). There are now eight MPJP's in Ireland with their average age being 12.25 years. Chart 1 shows that single MPJPs were established every few years after 2008.

Chart 1. Establishment of MPJPs in Ireland 2000-2023

Legend: ■ No of MPJP est in that year   ■ Cumulative number of MPJPs

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[28] Appendix 2. MPJPs in Ireland

The Bon Secours Mercy Ministries, established in 2018, operates under the authority of the Apostolic See (DICLSAL) and is sponsored by the Congregation of the Sisters of Bon Secours. The organisation is involved in hospitals and health care, as well as aged care services. It serves within several dioceses in Ireland, including the Diocese of Cork & Ross, the Archdiocese of Dublin, the Diocese of Galway, Kilmacduagh & Kilfenora, the Diocese of Kerry, the Diocese of Kilmore, and the Diocese of Limerick.

CEIST (Catholic Education – An Irish Schools Trust) was established in 2008 under the patronage of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference. It was founded by five religious congregations: the Christian Retreat Sisters, the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy in Ireland, the Daughters of Charity, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, and the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. CEIST is dedicated to providing primary school education (approximately ages 6 to 12) and secondary school education (approximately ages 13 to 18). Its work spans a wide range of dioceses in Ireland, including the Diocese of Achonry, Ardagh & Clonmacnois, Cashel & Emly (Archdiocese), Clonfert, Cloyne, Cork & Ross, Dublin (Archdiocese), Elphin, Ferns, Galway, Kilmacduagh & Kilfenora, Kerry, Kildare & Leighlin, Killala, Killaloe, Kilmore, Limerick, Meath, Ossory, Raphoe, Tuam (Archdiocese), and Waterford & Lismore.

The Edmund Rice Schools Trust was established in 2008 under the patronage of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference. It was founded by the Congregation of Christian Brothers and is committed to providing both primary education (approximately ages 6 to 12) and secondary education (approximately ages 13 to 18). The Trust supports schools across numerous dioceses in Ireland, including the Archdioceses of Armagh, Cashel & Emly, Dublin, and Tuam, as well as the Dioceses of Cloyne, Cork & Ross, Elphin, Ferns, Galway, Kilmacduagh & Kilfenora, Kerry, Kildare & Leighlin, Killaloe, Limerick, Meath, Ossory, and Waterford & Lismore.

The Le Chéile Schools Trust was established in 2008 under the patronage of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference. It brings together fifteen religious congregations: the Cross and Passion Sisters, Dominican Sisters, De La Salle Brothers, Holy Faith Sisters, Faithful Companions of Jesus, Marianists, Patrician Brothers, Poor Servants of the Mother of God, Society of the Holy Child Jesus, Sisters of Christian Education, Sisters of Jesus and Mary, Sisters of St. Louis, Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny, Sisters of St. Paul, and Ursuline Sisters. The Trust provides both primary education (approximately ages 6 to 12) and secondary education (approximately ages 13 to 18). Its schools are located across a wide range of dioceses in Ireland, including the Diocese of Achonry, the Archdioceses of Armagh, Cashel & Emly, Dublin, and Tuam, as well as the Dioceses of Clogher, Cork & Ross, Ferns, Galway, Kilmacduagh & Kilfenora, Kildare & Leighlin, Killala, Limerick, and Waterford & Lismore.

Mater Misericordiae and The Children's University Hospitals (MMCUH) was established in 2023 under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin. It is sponsored by the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy in Ireland and is dedicated to providing hospital and health care services. The organization operates within the Archdiocese of Dublin.

Mercy Care South was established in 2016 under the patronage of the Bishop of Cork & Ross. Sponsored by the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy in Ireland, it focuses on providing hospital and health care services. Mercy Care South operates within the Diocese of Cork & Ross.

The Presentation Brothers Schools Trust was established in 2009 under the patronage of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference. It is sponsored by the Institute of Presentation Brothers and is dedicated to providing both primary education (approximately ages 6 to 12) and secondary education (approximately ages 13 to 18). The Trust supports schools in the Diocese of Cloyne, the Diocese of Cork & Ross, and the Archdiocese of Dublin.

Saint John of God Hospitaller Ministries was established in 2012 under the authority of the Apostolic See (DICLSAL) and is sponsored by the Hospitaller Order of the Brothers of St John of God. The organization provides a wide range of services, including hospitals and health care, aged care, disability services, family services, mental health support, as well as education at the primary (approximately ages 6 to 12), secondary (approximately ages 13 to 18), and tertiary/university levels. Its work spans multiple regions. In Ireland, it operates within the Archdioceses of Armagh and Dublin, and the Diocese of Kerry. In the United Kingdom, it is active in the Archdioceses of Birmingham, Liverpool, and Westminster, and the Dioceses of Arundel and Brighton, Hexham and Newcastle, Lancaster, Leeds, Middlesbrough, and Salford. Internationally, the ministry also serves in Malawi, within the Archdiocese of Lilongwe and the Diocese of Mzuzu.

MPJPs in Ireland, have the following significant characteristics:

- Two MPJPs were established by the Apostolic See: The Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (DICLSAL);
- Four MPJPs were established by the Irish Catholic Bishops Conference;
- Two MPJPs were established by a local bishop (1 x Archbishop of Dublin, 1 x Bishop of Cork & Ross);
- One MPJP has its head office based in Canada and sponsors ministries in Ireland.

Founding Origins of the MPJPs in Ireland:

- Twenty-four separate religious institutes were founders of the 8 MPJPs:
  - The Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy in Ireland were founders of 3 MPJPs
  - Seventeen other women's religious institutes were (co)founders of MPJPs; and
  - Six men's religious institutes were (co)founders of MPJPs.

This project does not have data on the number of Religious Institutes, parishes and dioceses that contributed ministries to MPJPs subsequent to their establishment.

Background of Trustee/Sponsors

Six MPJPs provided data on their Trustee/Sponsors via the project's survey. Publicly available data was found for most of the characteristics of one other MPJP's Trustee/Sponsors. The data below covers seven of the eight MPJPs and should therefore be considered to be indicative of the MPJP Trustee/Sponsor population in Ireland.

The following are characteristics of these Trustee/Sponsors:

- 54 persons are Trustee/Sponsors across these six MPJPs.

- Nine is the average number of persons appointed as Trustee/Sponsor of a MPJP.

- 38% is the average proportion of women appointed as Trustee/Sponsor of a MPJP.

- 100% of Trustee/Sponsors are baptised.*

- 84% of Trustee/Sponsors are lay people.

- 11% is the average proportion of Trustee/Sponsors who are also a member of a religious institute.

- 6% is the average the average proportion of Trustee/Sponsors who are ordained (deacon, priest, or bishop).

- 20% is the average proportion of Trustee/Sponsors who have a theological qualification.*

- 31% is the average proportion of Trustee/Sponsors who have a governance qualification.*

- 82% is the average proportion of Trustee/Sponsors who have experience as a Board Director.*

- 31% is the average proportion of Trustee/Sponsors who have previous experience as a "Trustee/Sponsor" with a different PJP (parish, diocese, religious institute, MPJP).*

* = data was not available from most MPJPs, therefore the average for this field is of the MPJPs for whom there was data.

The relatively even number of male and female Trustee/Sponsors is common in governance bodies that value diversity. The higher proportion of male Trustee/Sponsors could be partially explained by the ongoing involvement of male religious, where they were the founding Institute, cultural over-representation of men in governance roles more broadly, and an over-reliance on male-dominated professional groups as sources for Trustee/Sponsors.

The lack of religious as Trustee/Sponsors could be a factor of both their long-term fostering of lay people for governance roles and the scarcity of members willing/able to take on these roles. The effect of the abuse crisis on their credibility with a corresponding desire to find alternative faces for the Church is also a factor.

The 6% of Trustee/Sponsors being deacons, priests and bishops could be a sign of the lack of clergy available for these roles.

The project uses theological qualification as an indicator of a Trustee/Sponsor's depth of knowledge of the Catholic faith. The research team recognise that it is not perfect indicator. It does not capture personal knowledge and wisdom obtained outside of a credentialled course. It does not reflect personal faith/spirituality, nor does it demonstrate faith expressed in behaviour. However, the presence of a significant number of people with theology degrees could assist the MPJP discuss theological issues and understand the theological significance/context of various matters. Among Trustee/Sponsors in Ireland the percentage with a theological qualification is

highest in those MPJPs with more religious serving as Trustee/Sponsor. The diminishing numbers of religious in Ireland may mean that MPJPs in Ireland will need to find alternative sources for their theological knowledge in the future.

The project uses governance qualification and experience as a Board Director as an indicator of the background/experience of Trustee/Sponsors. This is an issue as there is a possibility that the Church is disproportionately appointing people with corporate backgrounds to Trustee/Sponsor roles. However, given the legal demands experienced by MPJPs in Ireland, this is understandable, and the contributions of skilled, Catholic professionals willing to support the ethos of the Ministries has, to date, been possible to source. Among Trustee/Sponsors in Ireland the percentage with experience as a board director is very high (82%), although less than half have a governance qualification (31%). The high proportion of former directors could be an asset when the MPJP Trustee/Sponsors are dealing with governance issues, given that most of these people not having a governance qualification. It is recognised that the MPJP Trustee/Sponsors role is more than corporate governance for they have a unique role as ecclesial leaders, although governance expertise is important.[29] The felt need for governance experience and skills on Boards and as Trustees in the Irish context is probably a direct result of lack of analogue skills in church governance and its effects in Irish society in past.

The project is also interested to see whether the Church is appointing to MPJP Trustee/Sponsor roles people who have previous experience as a Trustee/Sponsor of another canonical entity (parish, diocese, religious institute). The high proportion (31%) in Ireland is reflective of the high proportion of religious in Trustee/Sponsor roles. Having MPJP Trustee/Sponsors with previous experience as a Trustee/Sponsor has both a moderately positive and negative impact. This experience could be a benefit to the MPJP in clarity of role and Church context. Alternatively, it could mean that the same people are being utilised, and fresh perspectives are missing.

MPJP ministries by diocese

MPJPs providing ministries within 23 of the 26 Arch/Dioceses in Ireland.[30]

Chart 2. Number of MPJPs in each Arch/Diocese in Ireland

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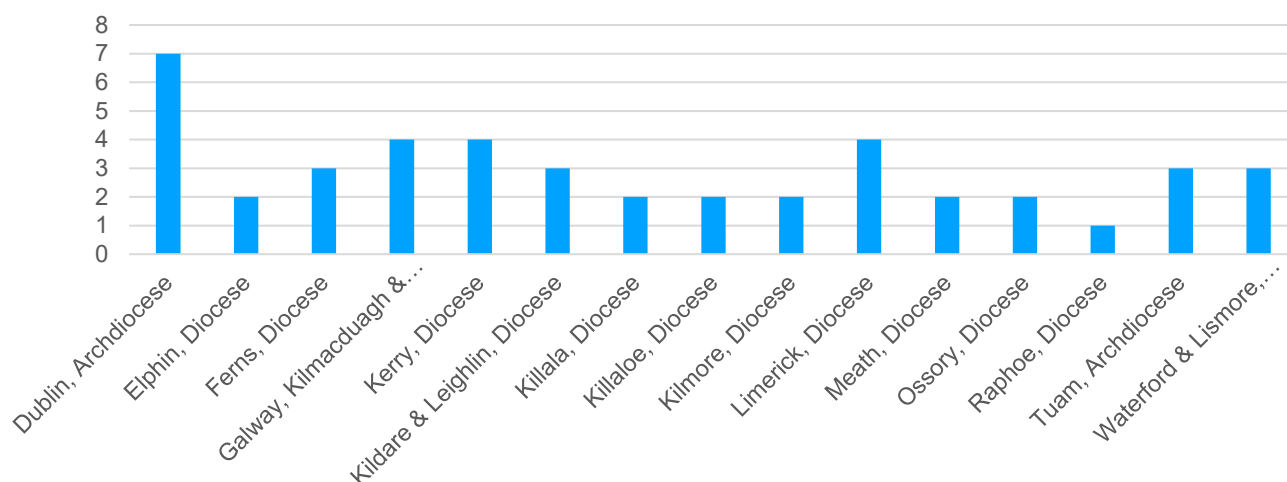
[29]   See Appendix 3 MPJP Trustee/Sponsors describe their experiences as Ecclesial Leaders
[30]   See Appendix 4 Irish dioceses and the MPJPs with ministries within each diocese

The Arch/Dioceses with the most MPJPs operating within their boundaries are: Dublin Archdiocese (7) and Cork & Ross Diocese (6).

Three Dioceses have four MPJPs operating within their boundaries (Galway, Kilmacduagh & Kilfenora Diocese; Kerry Diocese and Limerick Diocese).

Seven Arch/Dioceses have two MPJPs operating within their boundaries (Armagh Archdiocese; Cashel & Emly Archdiocese; Cloyne Diocese; Ferns Diocese; Kildare & Leighlin Diocese; Tuam Archdiocese; and Waterford & Lismore Diocese).

Four Arch/Dioceses have one MPJPs operating within their boundaries (Ardagh & Clonmacnois Diocese; Clogher Diocese; Clonfert Diocese; and Raphoe Diocese).

Those without MPJP ministries are the dioceses of Derry, Down & Connor and Dromore.

Two MPJPs operate in just one diocese: Mater Misericordiae and The Children's University Hospitals in Dublin Archdiocese and Mercy Care South in the Cork & Ross Diocese.

The high prevalence of MPJPs across arch/dioceses should mean that bishops and their people are aware of the existence and role of MPJPs. As common providers of services across the Irish Church, there is also the potential for the faithful to see MPJPs as a positive contributor to the life of the Church. However, the actual awareness of these entities as Catholic forms of governance seems quite limited. The general population of Ireland are not theologically formed, and the overall sense of Church leadership and governance, with reactions for and against, seems to relate more generally to its clerical structure and oversight.

MPJP ministries by ministry sector

The project survey asked MPJPs to identify within which of nine ministry sectors their ministries operate. One MPJP operates in two countries outside of Ireland and the survey did not ask MPJPs to specific the ministry sectors of their Irish ministries. This means that some ministry sector data may reflect the MPJPs global activity but not necessarily their ministries within Ireland.

Chart 2 shows that 57% of MPJPs in Ireland have ministries in the school education sector.[31]

Four MPJP have Hospital/health care ministries.

Smaller numbers of MPJPs provide Aged care services; Disability services and Mental health services.

No MPJPs in Ireland are involved in the Early learning (approx. 5-year-old and younger) education sector.

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[31] Also refer to Appendix 5. Number of Irish MPJPs operating in key ministry sectors

Chart 2. Number of Irish MPJPs operating in key ministry sectors
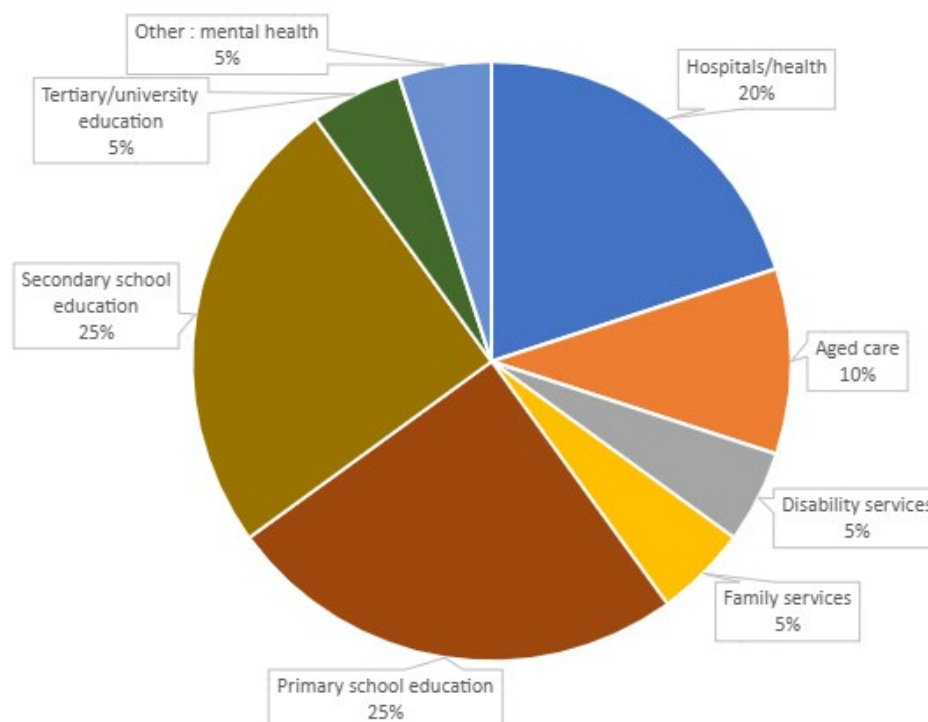
The survey did not ask MPJPs to specify the size or scope of their ministries. One of the reasons for not asking about the size of ministries was that the request may have deterred some MPJPs from completing the survey due to complexity of the calculation or for transparency concerns. Ultimately, the project concluded that its focus was the MPJP, so it was more relevant to know the ministry sector rather than the size or scope of the ministries.

Positive and synodal aspects of MPJPs

Irish Trustees/Sponsors identified the following aspects of their emergence and workings as MPJP as positive and synodal:[32]

a) When established by the national episcopal conference, the question was raised about whether/how their experience would be more or less synodal if they were established by a local bishop or by Rome.

b) MPJPs have a freedom to innovate as they are a new structure in the Church with few restrictions/traditions. Questions remain about reporting and the synodal and dialogical witness of the relationship between MPJPs and the bishops, or lack thereof.

c) The boards of MPJPs draw people from education/health and also legal, business and other backgrounds. This diversity means that they are less prone to "group-think" as there is always someone who questions the assumptions and wants us to consider alternatives.

d) They also brought together the leaders from different ministries for them to discuss their work and their shared issues. They left with an appreciation that they are part of a larger organisation with a broad and deep mission that includes their particular ministry.

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[32] List developed during the Inclusive Governance in a Synodal Church Project online focus group held on 14 March 2025 with additional contributions from other Trustees/Sponsors

e)   They recognise that complex and critical matters need more prayer and communal discernment. When an appropriate matter arises they take the time and make the space for the more time-consuming synodal processes.

f)   The importance of having an excellent Chair who encourages different voices to speak and be heard was noted.

g)   Some MPJPs/their ministries get experts in, either from their ministries or from outside, to better inform and enable them to make better decisions.

h)   One MPJP Board is comprised of two Sisters from the founding congregations, two ordained men and a diverse group of lay people. Together they listen, constantly question and thoroughly explore issues. The diversity was recognised as important.

i)   Another MPJP has a "sister-PJP" that has a sole focus on finances. When these two MPJP boards meet they come from different perspectives but for the same mission. That dialogue was seen as healthy.

j)   One MPJP meets regularly with their Members – representatives of the founding religious institutes. They are kept informed and in turn, they hold the Trustee/Sponsors accountable.

MPJP interaction with the other parts of the Church

To date the MPJPs report annually to its Establishing Authority. However, there is an openness or even desire on behalf of the MPJPs to explore this further, so as to make it more dialogical and mutually enriching. Otherwise, the reporting can feels imposed and lacking in meaning. Some MPJPs include initial training programme and ongoing formation in the obligations and duties under their Canonical Statutes, and ringfence funding to guarantee this commitment. In addition to theologians and canon lawyers who are members of the MPJP, some entities also appoint qualified canon lawyers and ethicists who can be consulted should any controversy arise. The researchers sense that greater formation in and understanding of ecclesiological sources of the ministries could be positive to bring insight and wisdom to systemic relationships affected by past failings and lack of lay involvement.

Possible future MPJP/ACF activities

Trustees/Sponsors identified the following as initiatives that they believe will support MPJPs in Ireland:[33]

1.   The need for MPJPs to recruit to the role of Trustee/Sponsor more people who represent the new cultural diversity of Ireland;

2.   The advantage of cross-fertilisation/support/information sharing among health MPJPs;

3.   The advantage of more cross-fertilisation/support/information sharing among education MPJPs;

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[33]   Initiatives identified in the Inclusive Governance in a Synodal Church Project online focus group held on 14 March 2025 with additional contributions from other Trustees/Sponsors

4. There could be benefit in meeting more, from time to time, for the sharing of opinions and resources. It would continue something intrinsic to their history, since our conversations highlighted how concrete encounters and meetings between people and organisations in similar situations were the first provocation and foundation point of some of the MPJPs in Ireland.

5. The advantage of a more comprehensive and lengthy induction/formation provided to new Trustee/Sponsors;

6. The advantage of more formation of MPJP Chairs/Trustee/Sponsors on the MPJP/canonical/ecclesial elements of their role;

7. The need for better relationships of trust understanding and mutual accountability with the Irish Catholic Bishops Conference – respecting each other's unique role so as to foster a more genuine and authentic partnership was noted;

8. It was noted that the variety of terms to describe MPJPs can be a challenge: variations at present include: Ministerial Public Juridic Person, Public Juridic Person and Public Ministerial Juridic Person.

9. The advantage of developing a lay person's guide to MPJPs – an explanation of the roles, structures and meaning to people who are not steeped in Catholic theology/lingo;

10. The advantage of MPJPs encouraging their ministries to have a separate budget for spiritual formation;

11. The advantage of MPJPs encouraging their ministries to have an induction program that engages staff of non-Catholic backgrounds – helping them to find resonances of their personal values and the collective ethos of this Catholic ministry.

Conclusion

The Catholic Church in Ireland shares in the universal trend of decreasing numbers of religious people and the handing over of its ministries to lay people, or at times, to the State. Our research witnesses to the groundswell and growth of MPJPs in this country, grounded by their founding religious institutes and resourced by committed lay people dedicated to continuing and improving these ministries, as well as establishing synodal, solid, faith-informed and legally accountable systems for their future work. The complex history of Irish Catholicism has led to a conflictive and difficult healthcare space, and to a lesser degree, in Catholic Education.

Conversations, gatherings and resonance with the witness and life of the founding religious seem to have been key to the emergence of these organisations. They are still in the consolidation stage, individually and as a sector, in which collaboration and sharing of insights and challenges could prove beneficial, now and into the future. At a time when the Church is Ireland is learning how Synodal processes work and can inform and form the future, these organisations need to have a place at the table, due the significant experience they can bring to the journey. Indeed, the wider Irish society would benefit from knowing more about these complementary governance structures that are part of the Catholic ecosystem. In terms of regaining lost credibility, in this Jubilee year, they are a source of hope for the future.

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Appendix 1. Inclusive Governance in a Synodal Church, Survey Instrument

About your MPJP/ACF:

The questions in this section seek details about your PJP (i.e., MPJP-ACF).

These details, along with those of other MPJP-ACFs, will be included in the paper that will provide an overview of MPJP-ACFs in your country and the Church and societal factors that impact MPJP-ACFs.

You will see a draft of this country paper and have an opportunity to provide comment and to ask for changes before it is published.

1.   What is the name of your Public Juridic Person (PJP)?

2.   In which year your PJP was established by the Church?

3.   Who was Establishing Authority?
       options:
       ☐   Apostolic See: DICLSAL (previously known as CICLSAL), or
       ☐   National Catholic Bishops Conference or
       ☐   Local Bishop (or Archbishop) or other (please specify)

4.   What is the canonical basis of your PJP?
       options:
       ☐   as per canon 116; or
       ☐   as per canon 298ff; or
       ☐   I'm not sure (we will contact you to clarify)

5.   Which Religious Institute(s) originally petitioned the Establishing Authority to establish your PJP?

6.   What ministries does your PJP sponsor
       options:
       ☐   Hospitals/health care;
       ☐   Aged care;
       ☐   Disability Services;
       ☐   Family services,
       ☐   Community services,
       ☐   Early learning education (approx. 5 year old and younger),
       ☐   Primary school education from (approx. 6 to 12 year old),
       ☐   Secondary school education (approx. 13 to 18year old),
       ☐   Tertiary/university education,
       ☐   other (please specify)

These next questions ask about your MPJP-ACF's ministries in National and Local Churches.

This information will be included in the country paper to show your, and other MPJP-ACF, contributions to the wider Church and society.

7. In which country(s) does your PJP operate?
    options:
    - ☐ Australia; and/or
    - ☐ Canada; and/or
    - ☐ Ireland; and/or
    - ☐ New Zealand; and/or
    - ☐ Singapore-Malaysia; and/or
    - ☐ UK; and/or
    - ☐ USA; and/or
    - ☐ Other

8. In which Dioceses does your PJP have ministries?
    options:
    Choose from lists of dioceses which will appear based on selected country (and in selected state/province of USA/Canada)

About your MPJP/ACFs Trustee/Sponsors:
The next eight questions will help us develop a profile of MPJP-ACF Trustee-Sponsors within each country. It will help answer questions about the diversity of their backgrounds/qualifications and the perspective/skills that they bring to a governance role in the Church.

9. What is the total number of Trustee/Sponsors in your PJP?

10. What % of Trustee/Sponsors are baptised?

11. What % of Trustee/Sponsors are women?

12. What % of Trustee/Sponsors in Religious life?

13. What % of Trustee/Sponsors are ordained?

14. What % of Trustee/Sponsors have a theology degree?

15. What % of Trustee/Sponsors have a qualification from a governance institute? (e.g., Company Director course from Institute of Company Directors)

16. What % of Trustee/Sponsors have previous experience as a Board Director?

17. What % of Trustee/Sponsors have previous experience as a MPJP Trustee-Sponsor (or parish priest, bishop, Religious Institute General Superior)?

About the person completing this survey:
Providing your contact details in the next questions will assist us should we have any questions about your responses in this survey.

18. Name of person completing this survey

19. MPJP/ACF

20. Contact phone number

21. Contact email

22. Date

Appendix 2. Ministerial PJPs in Ireland *as at 20 March 2025*

MPJP	Est year	Establishing Authority	Instigating Church entities	Ministry	Diocesan presence
(1) Bon Secours Mercy Ministries	2018[34]	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	Congregation of the Sisters of Bon Secours	Hospitals/health care; Aged care;	• Cork & Ross, Diocese • Dublin, Archdiocese • Galway, Kilmacduagh & Kilfenora, Diocese • Keery, Diocese • Kilmore, Diocese • Limerick, Diocese
(2) CEIST	2008	Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference	1. Christian Retreat Sisters 2. Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy in Ireland 3. Daughters of Charity, 4. Missionaries of the Sacred Heart 5. Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Primary school education from (approx. 6 to 12 year old), and Secondary school education (approx. 13 to 18year old),	• Achonry, Diocese • Ardagh & Clonmacnois, Diocese • Cashel & Emly, Archdiocese • Clonfert, Diocese • Cloyne, Diocese • Cork & Ross, Diocese • Dublin, Archdiocese • Elphin, Diocese • Ferns, Diocese • Galway, Kilmacduagh & Kilfenora, Diocese • Kerry, Diocese • Kildare & Leighlin, Diocese • Killala, Diocese • Killaloe, Diocese • Kilmore, Diocese • Limerick, Diocese • Meath, Diocese • Ossory, Diocese • Raphoe, Diocese • Tuam, Archdiocese • Waterford & Lismore, Diocese

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[34] In 2019 Bon Secours, Ireland joined Bon Secours Mercy Health based in USA. This project use the establishment date of the current MPJP (Bon Secours Mercy Health).

MPJP	Est year	Establishing Authority	Instigating Church entities	Ministry	Diocesan presence
(3) Edmund Rice Schools Trust	2008	Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference	Congregation of Christian Brothers	Primary school education from (approx. 6 to 12 year old), and Secondary school education (approx. 13 to 18year old),	- Armagh, Archdiocese - Cashel & Emly, Archdiocese - Cloyne, Diocese - Cork & Ross, Diocese - Dublin, Archdiocese - Elphin, Diocese - Ferns, Diocese - Galway, Kilmacduagh & Kilfenora, Diocese - Kerry, Diocese - Kildare & Leighlin, Diocese - Killaloe, Diocese - Limerick, Diocese - Meath, Diocese - Ossory, Diocese - Tuam, Archdiocese - Waterford & Lismore, Diocese
(4) Le Chéile Schools Trust	2008	Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference	1. Cross and Passion Sisters 2. Dominican Sisters 3. De La Salle Brothers 4. Holy Faith Sisters 5. Faithful Companions of Jesus 6. Marianists 7. Patrician Brothers 8. Poor Servants of the Mother of God 9. Society of the Holy Child Jesus 10. Sisters of Christian Education 11. Sisters of Jesus and Mary 12. Sisters of St. Louis 13. Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny 14. Sisters of St. Paul 15. Ursuline Sisters	Primary school education from (approx. 6 to 12 year old), and Secondary school education (approx. 13 to 18year old),	- Achonry, Diocese - Armagh, Archdiocese - Cashel & Emly, Archdiocese - Clogher, Diocese - Cork & Ross, Diocese - Dublin, Archdiocese - Ferns, Diocese - Galway, Kilmacduagh & Kilfenora, Diocese - Kildare & Leighlin, Diocese - Killala, Diocese - Limerick, Diocese - Tuam, Archdiocese - Waterford & Lismore, Diocese

MPJP	Est year	Establishing Authority	Instigating Church entities	Ministry	Diocesan presence
(5) Mater Misericordiae and The Children's University Hospitals (MMCUH)	2023	Archbishop of Dublin	Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy in Ireland	Hospitals/health care;	• Dublin, Archdiocese
(6) Mercy Care South[35]	2016	Bishop of Cork & Ross	Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy in Ireland	Hospitals/health care;	• Cork & Ross, Diocese
(7) Presentation Brothers Schools Trust	2009	Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference	The Institute of Presentation Brothers	Primary school education from (approx. 6 to 12 year old), and Secondary school education (approx. 13 to 18year old),	• Cloyne, Diocese • Cork & Ross, Diocese • Dublin, Archdiocese

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[35] Mercy Care South operates under two umbrellas – canonically as a PJP and civilly as a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG). Their Boards mirror each other and have the same members, with two members nominated by the sisters and one by the bishop. The PJP Board "assume *inter alia* the reserved powers hitherto held by the Sisters". Cf. Tim McCarthy, "Mercy Care South: the creation of Ireland's first Diocesan Public Juridic Person (PJP)," *Intercom*, June 2018 Vol. 48 Issue 5, 28-29.

MPJP	Est year	Establishing Authority	Instigating Church entities	Ministry	Diocesan presence
(8) Saint John of God Hospitaller Ministries	2012	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	Hospitaller Order of the Brothers of St John of God	Hospitals/health care; Aged care; Disability services; Family services, Primary school education from (approx. 6 to 12 year old), Secondary school education (approx. 13 to 18year old), and Tertiary/university education Other: Mental health	**Ireland** • Armagh, Archdiocese • Dublin, Archdiocese • Kerry, Diocese **UK** • Arundel and Brighton, Diocese • Birmingham, Archdiocese • Hexham and Newcastle, Diocese • Lancaster, Diocese • Leeds, Diocese • Liverpool, Archdiocese • Middlesbrough, Diocese • Salford, Diocese • Westminster, Diocese **Malawi** • Lilongwe, Archdiocese • Mzuzu, Diocese

Appendix 3. MPJP Trustee/Sponsors describe their experiences as Ecclesial Leaders

1. The death of one of the school community is always a time of trauma, grief and vulnerability. Recently, a teacher in one of our schools had the sudden death of her young adult daughter. Some of the Trustee/Sponsors visited the school and the teacher at his home to personally express our condolences. The teacher and the school community appreciated our effort and saw that we really care about them in their time of distress.

2. For me there was no "road to Damascus" moment when my role became apparent. It was more an unfolding over time. When I first became a Trustee of a hospital MPJP, I thought my role was to preserve the ethos of the founding sisters. Then, I realised that it was actually my role to promote the ethos and foster it in a new generation. I find this daunting given that the Sisters were fulltime in this role and I am a part-time amateur. Then, I realised that MPJPs are a radical new development in the church where lay people are responsible for Church ministries replacing the Sisters. At that point, I also saw that our MPJP is just one of many in Ireland and across the world and that together we are a new face of the Church.

3. Our MPJP has responsibility for Catholic schools. There is a small, but very vocal, group pushing a narrative that faith-based education has no place in what is perceived as a largely secular society. Much of the opposition is because of the history of scandal and abuse within the Irish church. It took time for our MPJP to establish creditability within the wider education system. I now see that the Department of Education recognises our value and is willing to do business with us. So, it was the recognition and respect from those outside the Church that gave me a sense of being effective in my role as a lay ecclesial leader.

4. I was speaking to bishops last year about our MPJP and many of them had no idea about MPJPs. I needed to educate them about this part of the Church.

5. I was talking to the leadership of the Order that founded our MPJP and during our discussion it dawned on all of us that the MPJP is actually a separate Church entity from the Order. The MPJP doesn't "answer" to the Order, or to the local Bishop but directly to Rome. So, it was a gradual realisation that leading in a MPJP is a huge responsibility. I am struck that we act in the name of the Church.

Appendix 4. Irish dioceses and the MPJPs with ministries within each diocese *as of 20 March 2025*

Diocese		MPJP(s)
Achonry, Diocese	**2**	• CEIST • Le Chéile Schools Trust
Ardagh & Clonmacnois, Diocese	**1**	• CEIST
Armagh, Archdiocese	**3**	• Edmund Rice Schools Trust • Le Chéile Schools Trust • Saint John of God Hospitaller Ministries
Cashel & Emly, Archdiocese	**3**	• CEIST • Edmund Rice Schools Trust • Le Chéile Schools Trust
Clogher, Diocese	**1**	• Le Chéile Schools Trust
Clonfert, Diocese	**1**	• CEIST
Cloyne, Diocese	**3**	• CEIST • Edmund Rice Schools Trust • Presentation Brothers Schools Trust
Cork & Ross, Diocese	**6**	• Bon Secours Mercy Ministries • CEIST • Edmund Rice Schools Trust • Le Chéile Schools Trust • Mery Care South • Presentation Brothers Schools Trust
Derry, Diocese		
Down & Connor, Diocese		
Dromore, Diocese		
Dublin, Archdiocese	**7**	• Bon Secours Mercy Ministries • CEIST • Edmund Rice Schools Trust • Le Chéile Schools Trust • MMCUH • Presentation Brothers Schools Trust • Saint John of God Hospitaller Ministries
Elphin, Diocese	**2**	• CEIST • Edmund Rice Schools Trust
Ferns, Diocese	**3**	• CEIST • Edmund Rice Schools Trust • Le Chéile Schools Trust

Diocese		MPJP(s)
Galway, Kilmacduagh & Kilfenora, Diocese	4	• Bon Secours Mercy Ministries • CEIST • Edmund Rice Schools Trust • Le Chéile Schools Trust
Kerry, Diocese	4	• Bon Secours Mercy Ministries • CEIST • Edmund Rice Schools Trust • Saint John of God Hospitaller Ministries
Kildare & Leighlin, Diocese	3	• CEIST • Edmund Rice Schools Trust • Le Chéile Schools Trust
Killala, Diocese	2	• CEIST • Le Chéile Schools Trust
Killaloe, Diocese	2	• CEIST • Edmund Rice Schools Trust
Kilmore, Diocese	2	• Bon Secours Mercy Ministries • CEIST
Limerick, Diocese	4	• Bon Secours Mercy Ministries • CEIST • Edmund Rice Schools Trust • Le Chéile Schools Trust
Meath, Diocese	2	• CEIST • Edmund Rice Schools Trust
Ossory, Diocese	2	• CEIST • Edmund Rice Schools Trust
Raphoe, Diocese	1	• CEIST
Tuam, Archdiocese	3	• CEIST • Edmund Rice Schools Trust • Le Chéile Schools Trust
Waterford & Lismore, Diocese	3	• CEIST • Edmund Rice Schools Trust • Le Chéile Schools Trust

Appendix 5. Number of Irish MPJPs operating in key ministry sectors *as of 20 March 2025*

Ministry sector		*MPJP/ACF sponsoring these ministries in Ireland*
Hospitals/health	4	• Bon Secours Mercy Ministries • Mater Misericordiae and The Children's University Hospitals • Mercy Care South • Saint John of God Hospitaller Ministries
Aged care	2	• Bon Secours Mercy Ministries • Saint John of God Hospitaller Ministries
Disability services	1	• Saint John of God Hospitaller Ministries
Family services	1	• Saint John of God Hospitaller Ministries
Community services		
Early learning education *(approx. 5-year-old and younger)*		
Primary school education *(approx. 6- to 12-year-old)*	5	• CEIST • Edmund Rice Schools Trust • Le Chéile Schools Trust • Presentation Brothers Schools Trust • Saint John of God Hospitaller Ministries
Secondary school education *(approx. 13 to 18year old)*	5	• CEIST • Edmund Rice Schools Trust • Le Chéile Schools Trust • Presentation Brothers Schools Trust • Saint John of God Hospitaller Ministries
Tertiary/university education	1	• Saint John of God Hospitaller Ministries
Other: Mental health	1	• Saint John of God Hospitaller Ministries

Ministerial Public Juridic Persons in New Zealand-Aotearoa

Lawrence Hallinan[1]

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[1]   Lawrence Hallinan, M. Theol, M.M. (Community, B.S.W. is ACU research officer with the Inclusive Governance in a Synodal Church project. He was the inaugural Executive Director of the Association of MPJPs 2017-2023

Table of Contents

Glossary

Apostolic See	Also known as the Holy See or See of Rome or Petrine See. The episcopal jurisdiction and roles that the Pope (and the various offices within his Roman Curia) exercise across and on behalf of the entire Catholic Church.
Association of Christ's Faithful	Associations of Christ's Faithful are an organisation of laity, clerics or both collaborating for growth in faith and spirituality, and for the works of the Gospel. Associations may be public or private canonical associations or non-canonical. Public associations are PJPs and are an alternative Church structure to a MPJP for sponsoring Church ministries.
Board	The governing body of a company. This project generally uses the term 'Board' to refer to the governing body of MPJP/ACF ministries (e.g. school or school network board, hospital or hospital network board) and uses the term Council to refer to Trustee/Sponsors acting/meeting together.
DICLSAL	Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life - the department within the Roman Curia that also oversees the mission and life of religious institutes. This office has responsibility for authorizing the alienation of church property controlled by religious institutes and public juridical persons (which DICLSAL has established). Prior to the promulgation of _Praedicate Evangelium_ in 2022 DICLSAL was known as Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.
Establishing Authority for MPJPs	The Church Leader who approves the MPJP's Statutes and establishes it as a PJP. The Establishing Authority for MPJPs follows the guidelines for establishing Public Associations, namely: the Apostolic See, for universal and international associations, Episcopal Conference in its own territory, for national associations and the diocesan Bishop, his own territory. (c312)
Member of an MPJP	This project uses the term 'Member' to refers to the person(s) who appoint the Trustee/Sponsors. Some MPJPs use that term others use: Sponsor, Participating Entity
Ministerial PJP (MPJP)	The term commonly used to refer to a public juridical person (PJP) established by a competent Church Authority for the purpose of sponsoring Church ministries (see Canon 116).
Ministry	Ministry means any activity that carries out the works of the Gospel. This project uses the term 'ministry' when referring to the works of ACFs/MPJPs e.g., schools, hospitals, aged care and other services.
Public Juridic Person (PJP)	Aggregate of persons or of things directed to a purpose befitting the Church's mission, which transcends the purpose of the individuals. PJPs are church entities established by law or by decree and act in the name of the Church. Examples of a PJP are: diocese, parish, religious institute or MPJP. This project uses the USA spelling of 'Juridic' rather than the UK spelling of 'Juridical'.
Religious Institute	Religious institute is a gift of the spirit in which individuals make a lifelong commitment to gospel life in community, framed by vows or bonds of chastity, poverty, and obedience and committed to apostolic service. Societies of Apostolic Life are similar. They may also be called orders, institutes, societies or congregations.
Trustee/ Sponsor	This project uses the term "Trustees/Sponsors" to refer to individuals appointed as responsible for the MPJP. This term is used in all the project's papers to enable easy identification of the same role in different MPJPs across the seven countries under consideration. Other terms used by MPJPs include: board Director, canonical steward, Trustee, Sponsor, Trustee Director

Introduction

This paper provides a brief overview of the context of New Zealand-Aotearoa society and the Catholic Church and Ministerial Public Juridic Persons (MPJP) within that country. It seeks to explain why MPJPs emerged, their purpose and their hopes for the future.

MPJPs, alongside Dioceses and religious institutes[2], are the church bodies responsible for education, health, aged care and other ministries. MPJPs are one of the few bodies where lay people can be the decision taker on behalf of the Church. This role responds to the Second Vatican Council's emphasis on Baptism as the foundation for the full and active participation of all the Faithful, both in society and in the Church. A renewed focus on the possibilities of lay participation in Church governance has arisen at the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (also known as the Synod on Synodality 2021-2024)[3].

This paper is one in a series of papers on MPJPs in Anglophone countries prepared for the ACU Inclusive Governance in a Synodal Church (IGSC) project. This project is scheduled to run from July 2024 to June 2025 and will deliver: an initial Position Paper, Country Papers, a range of case studies and a final Project Report.

Methodology

This paper draws on publicly available data regarding New Zealand-Aotearoa society and the Catholic Church in New Zealand-Aotearoa. Data on MPJPs, their ministries and their Trustee/Sponsors was obtained in the first instance from the MPJP.[4] MPJPs provided this information via: a survey,[5] participation in a 90-minute online consultation-focus group, and written responses to the summary of the consultation-focus group and to draft versions of this paper. Supplementary information on MPJPs was obtained from their/their ministry's websites and from other publicly available sources.

New Zealand-Aotearoa Society and Catholic Context

New Zealand-Aotearoa MPJPs have arisen and developed in the context of particular social and ecclesial characteristics of which the following are significant.

Prominence of Māori

It is estimated that some time before 1300 CE, the ancestors of Māori settled in New Zealand from Pacific islands. The first recorded European encounter with Māori was from

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[2] This project uses the term "religious institute" to describe the gift of the spirit in which individuals make a lifelong commitment to gospel life in community, framed by vows or bonds of chastity, poverty, and obedience and committed to apostolic service. Societies of Apostolic Life are similar. They may also be called orders, institutes, societies or congregations. See Glossary page 3

[3] Francis, and XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. *Final Document: For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission.* Vatican: Apostolic See, 2024. https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/news/2024-10-26_final-document/ENG---Documento-finale.pdf.

[4] This project uses the term "Trustees/Sponsors" to refer to individuals appointed as responsible for the MPJP. This term is used in all the project's papers to enable easy identification of the same role in different MPJPs across the seven countries under consideration. See Glossary page 3. MPJPs in New Zealand-Aotearoa use alternative terms: "Trustee Stewards" by Whānau Mercy Ministries Trust; "Directors' by Sophia education Ministries and "Trustees" by St John of God Australia.

[5] See: Appendix 1 IGSC Project survey instrument

the Dutch explorer, Abel Tasman, in 1642. However, Tasman did not land in New Zealand – the first European to do so was Captain James Cook in 1769. It was not until the early 1800s that Europeans began settling in New Zealand. In 1840, the representative of the British Crown and more than 500 Māori chiefs from numerous tribes signed *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* - The Treaty of Waitangi. From this point onwards, the British considered the land and waters of New Zealand as their colony.

Colonisation had a devastating impact on Māori with disease, conflict and poverty leading to enormous loss of life. A Māori led revival in the twentieth century resulted in the government establishing the Waitangi Tribunal to address violations of the Treaty. A number of subsequent initiatives have strengthened Māori culture and increased their prominence/respect within broader New Zealand society.[6] Māori, along with English, is an official language and dual naming (English-Māori) is common.[7] In 2023, 19.6% of the population claimed Māori descent.[8]

Impact of migration on New Zealand-Aotearoa's population

The most recent national census was in 2023 found the national population to be 5 million with approximately 75% of the population living on the North Island.[9] This census also found that the population is ageing, with the median having increased to 38 years (up from 37 years in the 2018 census).[10] The ageing of the population would have been greater if not for migration.

Like many developed countries, New Zealand-Aotearoa saw a dramatic increase in migration after the COVID pandemic. Chart 1 shows that in 2022-2023, the net migration gain was 155,800 which is much higher than the average of 46,100 p.a. for the previous 16 years.[11]

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[6] "Story: Māori" The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, accessed March 22, 2025. https://teara.govt.nz/en/maori/page-4 and 5

[7] "Our Languages - Ō Tātou Reo" New Zealand Government: Ministry of Ethnic Communities, accessed March 22, 2025. https://www.ethniccommunities.govt.nz/resources/our-languages-o-tatou-reo/#:~:text=English%20is%20the%20most%20common,the%20law%20as%20official%20languages.

[8] "2023 Census population counts (by ethnic group, age, and Māori descent) and dwelling counts" Stats NZ, accessed March 22, 2025. https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/2023-census-population-counts-by-ethnic-group-age-and-maori-descent-and-dwelling-counts/#:~:text=In%20the%202023%20Census%3A,from%2018.5%20percent%20in%202018

[9] ibid

[10] ibid

[11] "Net migration loss to Australia in 2023" Stats NZ, accessed March 22, 2025. https://www.stats.govt.nz/news/net-migration-loss-to-australia-in-2023/#:~:text=There%20was%20a%20provisional%20net,net%20migration%20loss%20to%20Australia.

Chart 1. Implied migration between New Zealand and the rest of the world (excluding Australia), rolling year ending September 2004-December 2023.[12]

— Migration from rest of the world (excluding Australia) to New Zealand   — Migration from New Zealand to rest of world (excluding Australia)
— Net migration from rest of the world (excluding Australia) to New Zealand
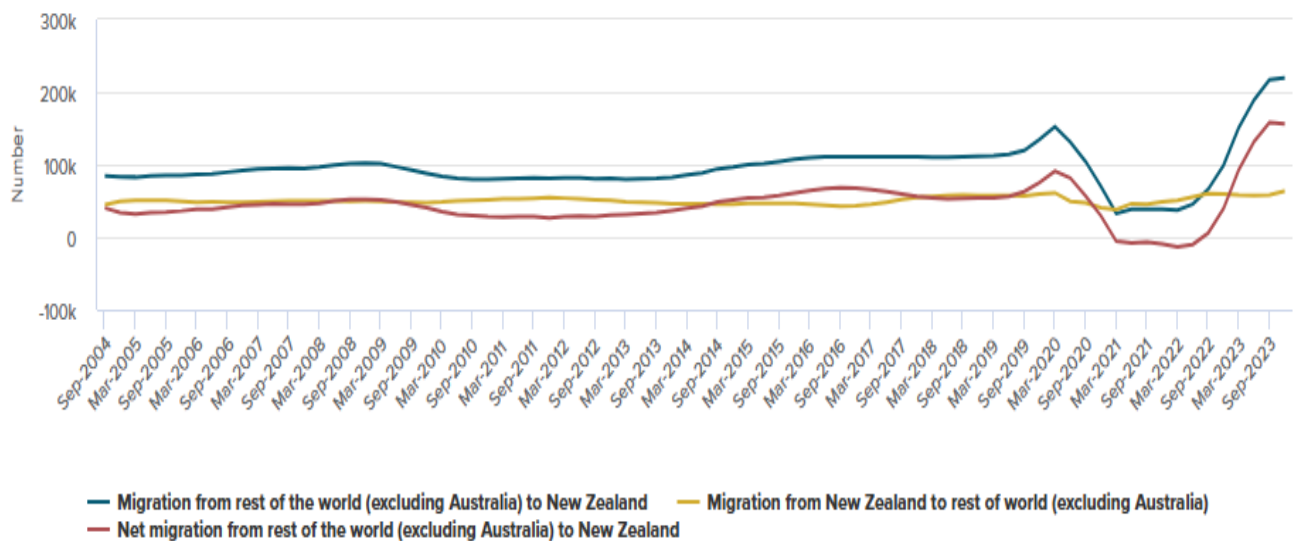
Increasing ethnic diversity

The percentage of the population who were born in New Zealand-Aotearoa was 71.2% in 2023 (down from 84.2% in 1991).[13] When the 2023 census asked people to identify their ethnic origin, it found: 62% European ethnicity, followed by 18% Māori, 8.2% South Pacific Islander, 5.8% Indian and 5.6% Chinese.[14]

Table 1 Ten most common overseas birthplaces in New Zealand, for census, usually resident population count in 2013 to 2023 Censuses[15]

Birthplace	2013	2018	2023	Percentage change 2018 to 2023
England	215,586	210,915	208,428	-1.2
China, People's Republic of	89,121	132,906	145,371	9.4
India	67,176	117,348	142,920	21.8
Philippines	37,299	67,632	99,264	46.8
South Africa	54,279	71,382	95,577	33.9
Australia	62,613	75,696	86,322	14.0
Fiji	52,755	62,310	68,829	10.5
Samoa	50,658	55,512	61,494	10.8
United States of America	21,465	27,678	31,779	14.8
Korea, Republic of	26,601	30,975	31,689	2.3

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[12] ibid
[13] "Census results reflect Aotearoa New Zealand's diversity" Stats NZ, accessed March 22, 2025.
   https://www.stats.govt.nz/news/census-results-reflect-aotearoa-new-zealands-diversity/
[14] ibid
[15] ibid

Relatively high social mobility

In 2020, the World Economic Forum Social Mobility Index scored New Zealand-Aotearoa at 74.3 out of 100, which ranked New Zealand-Aotearoa overall as 22nd out of 82 countries. The Index measures quality of life as well as factors that would enable the population to achieve a higher standard of living. This comprehensive measure has 47 indicators across five determinants: health, education, technology, work, and institutions. New Zealand-Aotearoa 's best ratings were: inclusive institutions (90/100); technology access (89/100); health (82/100); education quality and equity (82/100) and education access (78/100). New Zealand-Aotearoa 's lowest ratings were: fair wage distribution (49/100); working conditions (62/100) and lifelong learning (67/100). The Index shows a relatively high quality of life and social mobility for the New Zealand-Aotearoa population although there are still individuals and groups whose lives and prospects are well below the average.[16]

Relationship with Australia

New Zealand-Aotearoa has a close relationship with Australia. They are both former British colonies and New Zealand was incorporated *de facto* within the boundary of the colony of New South Wales from 1788 to 1839, and *de jure* for the following two years, until the colony of New Zealand was formed in 1841. In the 1890s, New Zealand was invited to join the Australian colonies in their process of federation.[17] After a thorough inquiry, New Zealand declined the offer but the Australian Constitution includes a clause leaving that option open.[18] There is a free trade agreement between New Zealand-Aotearoa and both countries offer their citizens reciprocal access to subsidised medical services and social security benefits .Citizens of both countries enjoy reciprocal visa-free travel, work and residence rights.[19] Both countries have a defence alliance and have jointly engaged as allies in previous conflicts. They are relatively close geographically (East coast Australia (Sydney) to Auckland flight time is 3hr 10min and West coast Australia (Perth) to Auckland 6hr 35min).

Catholic Church in an increasingly secular society

The 2023 census found that just over half of the population of New Zealand-Aotearoa said they had no religion (52%). The largest religious affiliation was Christian (32% down from 49% in 2013) and the next largest religions are Hindu (3%) and Islam (2%). At 9% of the population, Catholics are the largest of the Christian denominations.[20] According to the latest World Values Survey, average Mass attendance in New Zealand is around 25% of

16 World Economic Forum, *The Global Social Mobility Report 2020 Equality, Opportunity and a New Economic Imperative.* (Geneva, 2020), 110-111.
https://www3.weforum.org/docs/Global_Social_Mobility_Report.pdf
17 "New Zealand becomes a separate colony" National Museum of Australia. accessed March 22, 2025.
https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/new-zealand-becomes-a-separate-colony
18 "New Zealand is mentioned in the Australian constitution. Does that mean that New Zealanders have the legal authority to vote?" Parliamentary Education Office. accessed March 22, 2025.
https://peo.gov.au/understand-our-parliament/your-questions-on-notice/questions/new-zealand-is-mentioned-in-the-australian-constitution-does-that-mean-that-new-zealanders-have-the-legal-authority-to-vote
19 "New Zealand Citizens" Australian Government: Department of Home Affairs. accessed March 22, 2025.
https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/entering-and-leaving-australia/new-zealand-citizens
20 "Most common religious affiliations in New Zealand" Figures NZ. accessed March 22, 2025.
https://figure.nz/chart/RfmHYb2IsMMrn9OC

adult self-identified Catholics in 2023.[21] The project was unable to locate longitudinal data on Sunday Mass participation rates.

The first missionaries to New Zealand-Aotearoa were French, as was the first bishop (1838-1869), Jean Baptiste Pompallier. French missionaries were later followed by Irish and Australian missionaries with many establishing Catholic schools. In 2025, the New Zealand -Aotearoa has 42 religious institutes and their combined membership is 631 persons. The project was unable to locate longitudinal data on the religious institutes membership in New Zealand-Aotearoa.

Approximately 11.5% of New Zealand-Aotearoa students attend a Catholic school.[22] From 1877 to 1962, Catholic schools received no government funding and only limited funding up to 1976. The schools were only able to continue by having large class sizes, basic facilities, cheap labour from mainly Religious/retired lay teachers and donations from Catholics. Following the passage of the Private Schools Conditional Integration Act in 1975, which secured a binding agreement from the Government regarding maintenance of a school's special character, Catholic bishops and religious institutes began progressively to integrate their schools into the public education system. The school proprietor (diocese, religious institute or MPJP) continues to own the land and buildings with the government paying teacher salaries and at least 85% of building maintenance costs. School proprietors have control over enrolment and key staff appointments to support the school's special character.

For adult education, *Te Kupenga*: *Catholic Leadership Institute* brings together the theological college, resource centre for teachers of the religious education curriculum in schools and the centre for bioethics. *Te Kupenga* also provides webinars, short courses and other resources that are accessible to the wider church.

New Zealand-Aotearoa has a comprehensive public health system. Individuals who opt to purchase private health insurance or who have the means to pay the full cost can also access private hospitals. In recent years, some Catholic hospitals were sold to private businesses (e.g., Little Company of Mary, Christchurch and Mercy, Auckland). The New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference website lists 20 health/aged care/disability services and 27 social services.[23]

Abuse by Church personnel

New Zealand-Aotearoa held a Royal Commission of Inquiry from 2018 until 2024 into historical abuse in State care and in the care of faith-based institutions between 1950 and

21 "NZ – middling performer in Mass attendance" Catholic Diocese of Wellington. accessed March 22, 2025. https://www.wn.catholic.org.nz/adw_welcom/nz-middling-performer-in-mass-attendance/

22 "The story of state integrated education; our journey, and where we are today – Video Resources" NZ Catholic education Office. accessed March 22, 2025. https://www.nzceo.org.nz/the-story-of-state-integrated-education-video-resources/

23 "Catholic Hospitals and Homes" New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference. accessed March 22, 2025. https://www.catholic.org.nz/find-us/organisations/#section_69

1999.[24] This inquiry found significant abuse of children and vulnerable adults by Catholic Church personnel and mishandling of this abuse by Church authorities. The Inquiry criticised the poor response to abuse, the lack of engagement of Māori, South Pacific Island peoples, and service users in the design and monitoring of care services and systems.[25] The Church's handling of abuse negatively impacts the way Catholics and others view Church authorities and may diminish the desire of people to be associated with the Church.

Engagement with the Synod on Synodality in New Zealand-Aotearoa

The Catholic Church in New Zealand-Aotearoa has overall embraced the reforms of Vatican II. Over the past fifty years, a number of dioceses have held synods/assemblies with high participation from their members.

There was wide-spread engagement in diocesan and national consultations over 2021-2022 in preparation for the first Assembly of the Synod on Synodality. [26] The 2023 National synthesis report was summarised under six themes:

1. "Inclusion – We want the Church to be a non-judgmental and safe place of welcome and belonging. Church teaching which excludes some people from the Eucharist is causing pain and hurt. Awareness of those who feel marginalised or excluded can lead to new attitudes and action. Action on inclusion must be part of our synodal journey.

2. Gathering – There is great love for the Mass, but also concerns about inclusion and lay participation. A new English translation of the Roman Missal is needed. Homilies must help people to encounter Jesus in the reality of their lives. If lay people are allowed to give homilies, they must have good formation. Small groups for prayer, formation, scripture study, and mission are needed.

3. Leadership – Collaborative ministry should become the norm, with greater sacramental involvement for lay people. Co-responsible leadership with barriers to lay participation in decision-making should be removed. Women should participate equally in decision making and have greater participation in liturgical roles.

4. Mission – Formation is needed for mission and help with engaging in mission collectively. Ecumenical activity and interfaith dialogue need to be embraced as part of mission. Shame related to abuse in the Church makes evangelisation difficult. Prophetic leadership is needed in the community on social justice, ecological and bicultural issues. The only public voice of the Church for many is on euthanasia and human sexuality.

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[24] "About the Royal Commission" Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions. accessed March 22, 2025. https://www.abuseincare.org.nz/about-us/about-the-royal-commission

[25] "Summary of Findings: Catholic Church" Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions. accessed March 22, 2025. https://www.abuseincare.org.nz/reports/from-redress-to-puretumu/from-redress-to-puretumu-4/1-1-introduction-9/1-1-introduction-5

[26] New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference, *National Synod Synthesis.* New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference, 2022. https://catholic.org.nz/assets/NZCBC-National-Synod-Synthesis-Aug-2022.pdf

5. Education and Formation – Further formation is needed for both lay people and clergy in discernment and synodality. There is a need for catechesis in Church teaching. Education and formation in safeguarding is essential for both lay people and clergy. Seminarians' formation should involve more community engagement and include biculturalism and cultural sensitivity. Both clergy and laity need formation in collaborative ministry and co-responsible leadership.

6. Synodality and Change – The Synod process is exciting and transformative. We want to bring back those who are missing. Synodality and discernment can help us change while holding on to what is central to our faith. We want to learn to journey together in a synodal way."[27]

The report on these consultations reflects the hopes, frustrations and aspirations of the Church in New Zealand-Aotearoa. Since the first New Zealand-based MPJP only commenced in November 2022, it was not involved in the Synod consultations.

MPJPs in New Zealand-Aotearoa

St John of God Australia is the oldest MPJP and was established in 2003. In 2007, it was given responsibility for St John of God Hauora Trust by the Hospitaller Order of St John of God (Brothers). The two more recent foundations are: Sophia Education Ministries (2016) and Whānau Mercy Ministries Trust (2022).[28] The use of Māori words in the names of two of these MPJPs is consistent with Treaty obligations and demonstrate inclusion and respect of Māori.

The three MPJPs that sponsor ministries in New Zealand-Aotearoa were instigated by religious institutes who did so in a considered manner – none was rushed by crisis. All had engaged in post-Vatican II empowerment of lay collaborators, providing formation and opportunities for lay people as leaders and in governance.[29] The three religious institutes undertook a thorough process of discernment before deciding to form the resulting MPJPs.

All three of the MPJPs who sponsor ministries in New Zealand-Aotearoa completed the project's 22-question survey. Appendix 1. Ministerial PJPs in New Zealand-Aotearoa provides the following data on the three MPJPs:

- Two MPJPs were established by the Apostolic See: The Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (DICLSAL);

- No MPJPs were established by the national Catholic Bishops Conference;

- One MPJP was established by a local bishop (Archbishop of Perth);

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27 "National Synod synthesis – what the New Zealand Church has to say" Catholic Archdiocese of Wellington. accessed March 22, 2025. https://www.wn.catholic.org.nz/adw_welcom/national-synod-synthesis-what-the-new-zealand-church-has-to-say/
28 See: Appendix 2 Ministerial PJPs in New Zealand-Aotearoa
29 See: Appendix 3. MPJP Trustee/Sponsors describe their experiences as Ecclesial Leaders

- Two MPJPs are based in Australia and sponsor ministries in both Australia and New Zealand-Aotearoa;

- Three separate religious institutes were founders of the three MPJPs.

- Ten years is the average time that the three MPJPs have sponsored ministries in New Zealand-Aotearoa.

The small number of MPJPs in New Zealand-Aotearoa could be explained by the relatively few and small ministries that are under the responsibility of religious institutes. As noted earlier, some Religious Institutes had already closed or sold their health ministries due to competing demands on their few members and the cost of maintaining buildings/service standards. Similar issues also reduced the religious institute profile in the school sector. In short, there were and are few religious institute ministries to transfer to a MPJP.

The choice of Apostolic See (DICLSAL) as the establishing authority for two MPJPs can be explained by their founding religious institutes already having a relationship with the Apostolic See (DICLSAL). Pontifically established religious institutes need the approval of the Apostolic See (DICLSAL) before they can sell/transfer their ministries. There is no requirement that they only sell/transfer their ministries to another pontifically established religious institute or MPJP. Nonetheless they may perceive this as being proper especially if the ministry is part of a network that spans more than one diocese/country.

The religious institutes with one or a few ministries determined that it was more prudent to have these ministries under canonical supervision from Australia rather than forming local Trustee/Sponsors. In both cases this meant that the New Zealand-Aotearoa would remain within a body that had inherited the same religious institute charism. The fact that a local Board was also established for their ministries may have been considered a means to maintain legitimacy and competency in New Zealand-Aotearoa. The close and multi-faceted links between Australia and New Zealand-Aotearoa would explain why two religious institutes chose to utilise the MPJPs that they had already established in Australia.

Background of Trustee/Sponsors

There are 20 Trustees/Sponsors across the three MPJPs who sponsor ministries in New Zealand-Aotearoa. Only six of these people live in New Zealand-Aotearoa with the others living in Australia.

The following are characteristics of the Trustee/Sponsors across the MPJPs in New Zealand-Aotearoa:

- Seven is the average number of persons appointed as Trustee/Sponsor of an MPJP.
- 57% is the average proportion of women appointed as Trustee/Sponsor of an MPJP.
- 100% of Trustee/Sponsors are baptized.

- 96% of Trustee/Sponsors are lay people.

- 0% (none) of Trustee/Sponsors are a member of a religious institute.

- 4% is the average the average proportion of Trustee/Sponsors who are ordained (deacon, priest, or bishop).
- 4% is the average proportion of Trustee/Sponsors who have a theological qualification.

- 54% is the average proportion of Trustee/Sponsors who have a governance qualification.

- 94% is the average proportion of Trustee/Sponsors who have experience as a Board Director.

- 12% the average proportion of Trustee/Sponsors who have previous experience as a "Trustee/Sponsor" with a different PJP (parish, diocese, religious institute, MPJP).

The relatively even number of male and female Trustee/Sponsors is common in governance bodies that value diversity. It is worth noting that one of the MPJPs has a much higher percentage of female Trustee/Sponsors. This could be because that MPJP sponsors all-girl schools and seeks to witness to women as leaders and in control of their services.

The lack of Religious as Trustee/Sponsors could be a factor of both their long-term fostering of lay people for governance roles and the scarcity of members willing/able to take on these roles. In some of these MPJPs, the founding religious institute appoints the Trustee/Sponsors. These religious institutes may see the process of appointment as a way of influencing the Trustee/Sponsors – as an alternative to their fellow Religious being Trustee/Sponsors. In some of these MPJPs, the Statutes grant the founding religious institute reserve powers to also guide Trustee/Sponsor formation.

The lack of deacons, priests and bishops in MPJP Trustee/Sponsor roles could be due to: none of the MPJPs were founded by a clerical religious institute; the lack of available clerics for Trustee/Sponsor roles and the trust that bishops have for the MPJPs.

The project uses theological qualification as an indicator of a Trustee/Sponsor's depth of knowledge concerning the Catholic faith. We recognise that it is not a perfect indicator. It does not capture personal knowledge and wisdom obtained outside of a credentialled course. It does not reflect personal faith/spirituality, nor does it demonstrate faith expressed in behaviour. Among Trustee/Sponsors in New Zealand the percentage with a theological qualification is only 4%. Notwithstanding the caveats above, this is a low figure for bodies who need to draw on theology in their responsibility for ministries in the name of the Church. It is noteworthy that the percentage with a theological qualification is the same as the percentage who are ordained. This probably indicates that the Trustee/Sponsor who is a cleric is the only person with a theological qualification and his fellow Trustee/Sponsors rely on him and possibly outside assistance on theological matters.

The project uses governance qualification and experience as a Board Director as an indicator of the background/experience of Trustee/Sponsors. There is a possibility that the Members[30] are appointing people with corporate backgrounds to Trustee/Sponsor roles on an incorrect assumption that the same skills/knowledge are needed. Among Trustee/Sponsors in New Zealand-Aotearoa the percentage with a governance qualification and experience as a Board Director is very high (54% and 94%). This could mean that the MPJP needs to ensure that Trustee/Sponsors understand and are comfortable in their unique role as ecclesial leaders as distinct from corporate directors.

The project is interested to see whether the Church is appointing to MPJP Trustee/Sponsor roles people who have previous experience as a Trustee/Sponsor of another canonical entity (parish, diocese, religious institute). This experience could be a benefit to the MPJP in the form of relationships with key leaders and knowledge or past/current Church issues. Alternatively, it could mean that the same people are being utilised and fresh perspectives are missing. This is certainly not the case in New Zealand-Aotearoa where only 12% have previous experience as a Trustee/Sponsor. This low percentage could indicate the need for a thorough induction and formation to ensure that Trustee/Sponsors understand and are comfortable in their unique role as ecclesial leaders.

MPJP ministries by diocese

MPJPs operate in four of the six dioceses in New Zealand-Aotearoa. Chart 2 and Table 2 shows that three Arch/Dioceses have two MPJPs within their boundaries (Auckland Diocese, Christchurch, Diocese and Wellington, Archdiocese). Dunedin Diocese has only one MPJP providing services within its boundary. No MPJPs operate in Palmerston North or Hamilton.

Chart 2. Number of MPJPs with ministries in the Arch/Dioceses of New Zealand-Aotearoa, 2024

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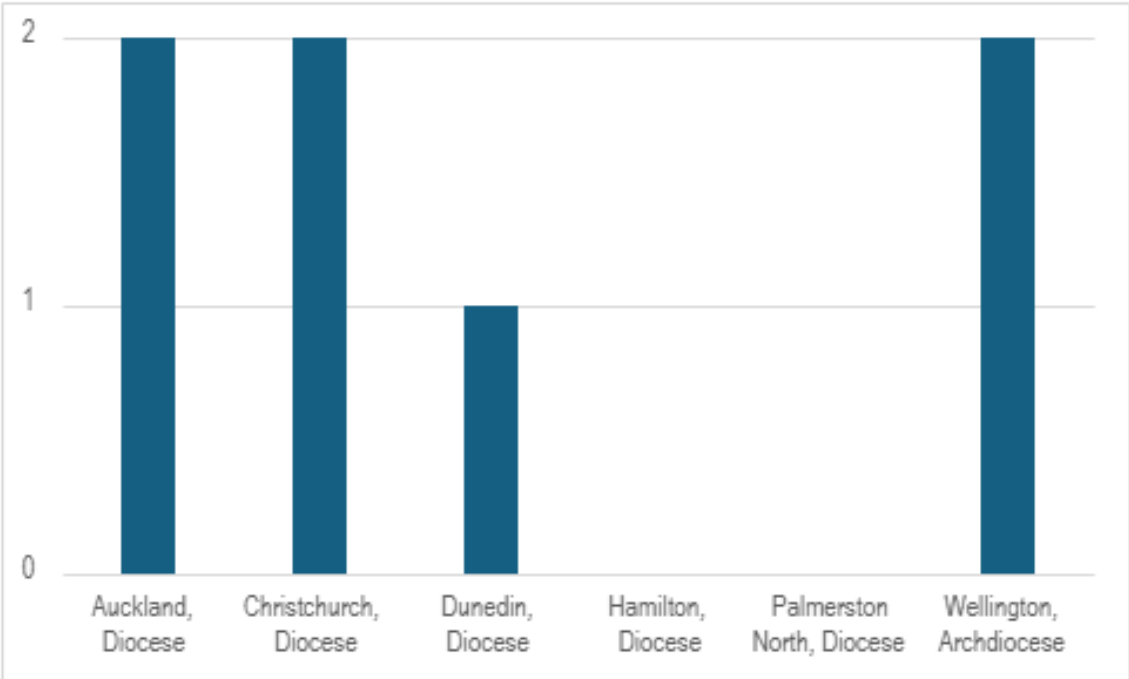
[30] This project uses the term 'Member' to refers to the person(s) who appoint the Trustee/Sponsors. Some MPJPs use that term others use: Sponsor, Participating Entity. See Glossary on page 3.

Table 2. MPJPs ministries within each New Zealand-Aotearoa Diocese

Diocese		MPJP
Auckland, Diocese	2	• Sophia Education Ministries • Whānau Mercy Ministries Trust
Christchurch, Diocese	2	• St John of God Australia • Whānau Mercy Ministries Trust
Dunedin, Diocese	1	• Whānau Mercy Ministries Trust
Hamilton, Diocese		
Palmerston North, Diocese		
Wellington, Archdiocese	2	• St John of God Australia • Whānau Mercy Ministries Trust

MPJP ministries by ministry sector

The project's survey asked MPJPs to identify in which of nine ministry sectors their ministries operated. Table 2 shows that two MPJPs sponsor secondary school education (Sophia Education Ministries and Whānau Mercy Ministries Trust). Two MPJP's sponsor both hospitals/health and Family service (St John of God Australia and Whānau Mercy Ministries Trust). Whānau Mercy Ministries Trust is the only ministry sponsoring Aged care (in the form of affordable housing for the elderly) and St John of God Australia is the only MPJP sponsoring Disability services, Community services and Early learning education. No MPJP sponsors tertiary/university or primary school education.

Table 3. New Zealand-Aotearoa MPJPs ministries by ministry sector

Ministry sector		MPJP/ACF sponsoring these ministries in New Zealand-Aotearoa
Hospitals/health	2	• St John of God Australia • Whānau Mercy Ministries Trust
Aged care *(affordable housing)*	1	• Whānau Mercy Ministries Trust
Disability services	1	• St John of God Australia
Family services	2	• St John of God Australia • Whānau Mercy Ministries Trust
Community services	1	• St John of God Australia
Early learning education *(approx. 5-year-old and younger)*	1	• St John of God Australia
Primary school education *(approx. 6- to 12-year-old)*	-	
Secondary school education *(approx. 13 to 18year old)*	2	• Sophia Education Ministries • Whānau Mercy Ministries Trust
Tertiary/university education	-	

The survey did not ask MPJPs to specify the size or scope of their ministries. One of the reasons that the project did not ask about the size of ministries was that the request may have deterred some MPJPs from completing the survey due to complexity or transparency reasons. Ultimately, the project concluded that its focus was the MPJP, so it was more relevant to know the ministry sector rather than the size or scope of the ministries.

Positive and synodal aspects of MPJPs

Trustees/Sponsors identified the following as aspects of their MPJP which are positive and synodal:[31]

1. One MPJP has a structure that involves the Trustee/Sponsors and all the MPJP's schools:

   - each school chooses which of <u>the MPJP's five goals</u> is their priority for the year;

   - each school determines how they will address their priority goal and develops their action plan;

   - once a year all the Chairs and Principals of the MPJP's schools meet to share the results of their action plans;

   - this meeting provokes affirmation of each other, much discussion and mutual learning.

2. A MPJP noted that it is easy to just be absorbed in their own issues and context. This MPJP said that they find benefit in being part of a MPJP network (e.g., Association of MPJPs) and of charism specific networks (e.g. those connected with the Sisters of Mercy for Whānau Mercy Ministries Trust and Society of the Sacred Heart for Sophia Education Ministries). The MPJP said that conversations in these external groups expands their perspective.

3. In some MPJPs, the Trustee/Sponsors see themselves as a faith community as well as being a group with governance responsibilities. As a faith community, they foster and support the development and expression of their individual and collective spirituality.

4. The Trustee/Sponsor group of one MPJP has always used a Māori concept to guide their approach. That word is *tikanga*. The word means the method/practice of working through issues after having first encountered the other person and deeply listened to the other. It is a practice of naming the difficult issues and working through difficult issues until all reach a consensus.

5. Recently one MPJP's Trustee/Sponsor group was introduced to another Māori word *wananga* which is to have a "learning conversation", wrestling with issues that are not easily resolved. The MPJP says that the adoption of this concept is symbolic of their journey as Trustee/Sponsors from working through the urgent/ordinary issues

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[31] List developed during the Inclusive Governance in a Synodal Church Project online focus group held on 13 December 2024 with additional contributions from other Trustees/Sponsors

to being open to tackle the complex issues with ambition, honesty, humility – knowing that there are no easy or quick answers.

Many of the practices described above could be helpful to MPJPs as they dialogue and engage with the increasing ethnic diversity and secular nature of society. This diversity will be present among boards, staff and service users/students within MPJP ministries. As the Church appointed leaders, it falls to the Trustee/Sponsors to provide pastoral leadership to these people.

MPJP interaction with the other parts of the Church

The project has no information about the frequency and nature of MPJP interaction with the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference, Conference of (religious institute) Leaders in Aotearoa/New Zealand or other relevant Catholic bodies.

Possible future MPJP activities

The establishment of further MPJPs in New Zealand-Aotearoa is unlikely as there are not religious institutes with significant numbers/size of the ministries. Had there been MPJPs in the 1980-1990s, it is unclear whether religious institutes would have transferred ministries to a MPJP rather than sell or close ministries. It is lawful but unlikely that a bishop may choose to transfer ministries to a MPJP.

Future growth of the existing three MPJPs will most likely be as a result of other religious institutes transferring ministries or government grants enabling new or expanded services.

Trustees/Sponsors identified the following as initiatives that they believe will support MPJPs in New Zealand-Aotearoa:[32]

a) Formation

- it is unique for each Trustee/Sponsor and needs to consider their civil and canonical roles.

- One MPJP has a 1-to-3-hour formation session that precedes each meeting of the Trustee/Sponsors.

b) MPJPs are concerned about the limited pool of future Trustees/Sponsors.

c) One MPJP conducts pilgrimages, international and local, where participants are exposed to the founding stories, and they explore the significance of these stories to the MPJP and to their own life.

d) One MPJP's Annual Report is developed collectively by all the Trustee/Sponsors. They use a discernment approach to developing the report.

e) Connecting with wider church

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[32] Initiatives identified in the Inclusive Governance in a Synodal Church Project online focus group held on 13 December 2024 with additional contributions from other Trustees/Sponsors

- This year one MPJP sent their Annual Report to the Papal Nuncio which prompted them to arrange to meet with him at a later date.

- One MPJP meets annually with each of the bishops and parish priests who are relevant to the MPJP's ministries.

- One MPJP has a limited role with its New Zealand ministry due to New Zealand law. The Australian MPJP is still canonically responsible. Therefore, the MPJP recognises the need to activate their relationship with the relevant New Zealand bishop and parish priest.

f) One expression of the respect for Māori peoples by principals and boards is their use of Māori language. The Trustee/Sponsors have a key role in supporting this and adopting it as appropriate.

g) MPJPs can lead the church in practices which respect the Māori perspective of being Catholic. One MPJP has a commitment to a bi-cultural way of working, to nurturing Māori leaders, and to providing opportunities for Māori to be seen and heard. The MPJP is not burdened by clericalism and hierarchy and can be closer to the people and more innovative. This gives is greater scope to adopt practices from which the rest of the Church might learn and benefit.

h) The ministries of the different MPJPs in New Zealand could meet together - starting with the Chairs of the proprietor boards. Representatives of our proprietor board could attend each other's significant events e.g., ceremony to welcome new principal.

Conclusion

The three MPJPs in New Zealand-Aotearoa play a small but significant role in the Church's service to society. They operate in a manner that is consistent with the New Zealand-Aotearoa Church's embrace of the reforms of Vatican II. They and their ministries are dedicated to respecting and working with Māori and with the cultural/religious diversity forum in New Zealand-Aotearoa.

Perhaps because of their religious institute roots, MPJPs began with some synodal structures and practices. This project has found a strong interest among MPJPs in developing their practice of synodality. The synodal elements of communion, participation and mission are excellent guides for MPJP development – within each MPJP, among MPJPs, among MPJPs and the wider Church and of MPJPs in the broader New Zealand-Aotearoa society.

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Appendix 1. Inclusive Governance in a Synodal Church, Survey Instrument

About your MPJP/ACF:

The questions in this section seek details about your PJP (i.e., MPJP-ACF).

These details, along with those of other MPJP-ACFs, will be included in the paper that will provide an overview of MPJP-ACFs in your country and the Church and societal factors that impact MPJP-ACFs.

You will see a draft of this country paper and have an opportunity to provide comment and to ask for changes before it is published.

1.   What is the name of your Public Juridic Person (PJP)?

2.   In which year your PJP was established by the Church?

3.   Who was Establishing Authority?
      options:
      ☐ Apostolic See: DICLSAL (previously known as CICLSAL), or
      ☐ National Catholic Bishops Conference or
      ☐ Local Bishop (or Archbishop) or other (please specify)

4.   What is the canonical basis of your PJP?
      options:
      ☐ as per canon 116; or
      ☐ as per canon 298ff; or
      ☐ I'm not sure (we will contact you to clarify)

5.   Which religious institute(s) originally petitioned the Establishing Authority to establish your PJP?

6.   What ministries does your PJP sponsor
      options:
      ☐ Hospitals/health care;
      ☐ Aged care;
      ☐ Disability services;
      ☐ Family services,
      ☐ Community services,
      ☐ Early learning education (approx. 5 year old and younger),
      ☐ Primary school education from (approx. 6 to 12 year old),
      ☐ Secondary school education (approx. 13 to 18year old),
      ☐ Tertiary/university education,
      ☐ other (please specify)

These next questions ask about your MPJP-ACF's ministries in National and Local Churches.

This information will be included in the country paper to show your, and other MPJP-ACF, contributions to the wider Church and society.

7. In which country(s) does your PJP operate?
   options:
   ☐ Australia; and/or
   ☐ Canada; and/or
   ☐ Ireland; and/or
   ☐ New Zealand; and/or
   ☐ Singapore-Malaysia; and/or
   ☐ UK; and/or
   ☐ USA; and/or
   ☐ Other

8. In which Dioceses does your PJP have ministries?
   options:
   Choose from lists of dioceses which will appear based on selected country (and in selected state/province of USA/Canada)

About your MPJP/ACFs Trustee/Sponsors:

The next eight questions will help us develop a profile of MPJP-ACF Trustee-Sponsors within each country. It will help answer questions about the diversity of their backgrounds/qualifications and the perspective/skills that they bring to a governance role in the Church.

9. What is the total number of Trustee/Sponsors in your PJP?

10. What % of Trustee/Sponsors are baptised?

11. What % of Trustee/Sponsors are women?

12. What % of Trustee/Sponsors in Religious life?

13. What % of Trustee/Sponsors are ordained?

14. What % of Trustee/Sponsors have a theology degree?

15. What % of Trustee/Sponsors have a qualification from a governance institute? (e.g., Company Director course from Institute of Company Directors)

16. What % of Trustee/Sponsors have previous experience as a Board Director?

17. What % of Trustee/Sponsors have previous experience as a MPJP Trustee-Sponsor (or parish priest, bishop, religious institute General Superior)?

About the person completing this survey:

Providing your contact details in the next questions will assist us should we have any questions about your responses in this survey.

18. Name of person completing this survey

19. MPJP/ACF

20. Contact phone number

21. Contact email

22. Date

Appendix 2. Ministerial PJPs in New Zealand-Aotearoa *as of 22 March 2025*

MPJP	Est year	Establishing Authority	Instigating Church entities	Ministry	Diocesan presence
(1) St John of God Australia Ltd	2003	Bishops of the Province of Western Australia	Sisters of St John of God	Hospitals/health care Disability services and Family services	Australia New Zealand-Aotearoa • Christchurch, Diocese • Wellington, Archdiocese Timor Leste Papua New Guinea
(2) Sophia Education Ministries	2016	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	Australian & New Zealand Province of the Society of the Sacred Heart	Primary school education from *(approx. 6 to 12 year old),* and Secondary school education *(approx. 13 to 18year old)*	Australia New Zealand-Aotearoa • Auckland, Diocese
(3) Whānau Mercy Ministries Trust	2022	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	Ngā Whaea Atawhai o Aotearoa Sisters of Mercy New Zealand	Hospitals/health care Aged care *(affordable housing)* Family services and Secondary school education *(approx. 13 to 18year old)*	New Zealand-Aotearoa • Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin Dioceses

Appendix 3. MPJP Trustee/Sponsors describe their experiences as Ecclesial Leaders

We have held different leadership roles in the church before we took on the role of Trustee/Steward of a MPJP. These previous roles have prepared us for the MPJP role of lay ecclesial leader.

It was an honour for me to be involved in the planning group that lead to the development of our MPJP. The Sisters recognised my gifts and chose me.

Our MPJP Trustee/Steward commissioning ceremony was a time when I felt the importance of my role of lay ecclesial leader. The context of the ceremony conveyed the importance – it was in the cathedral, the bishop was presider, all Trustees standing together in front of everyone, and the congregation was comprised of our families, friends and most of the members of the religious institute who formerly sponsored the ministries. We heard messages of being called to this role, commissioned on behalf of the church, that there was a handing over of responsibility, that we were to make the most of future opportunities and to treasure the charism/traditions of the past.

The title 'canonical steward' reinforces the ecclesial nature of my role.

The initial group of Trustee/Stewards were commissioned with great pomp and ceremony but not so for the second and subsequent intakes of Trustee/Stewards. This doesn't reflect the continued importance of the role. I think our MPJP needs to review and improve and make consistent our commissioning of Trustee/Stewards.

Our use of discernment practices conveys the ecclesial nature of our role. Discernment was a key feature of the process that led to the establishment of our MPJP and in determining who would be the Trustee/Stewards.

Ministerial Public Juridic Persons in Singapore and Malaysia

Wendy Louis with assistance from Lawrence Hallinan[1]

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[1] Wendy Louis is Chair of CHCA with many years' experience in church leadership. Lawrence Hallinan is ACU research officer with the IGSC project.

Contents

Glossary

Apostolic See	Also known as the Holy See or See of Rome or Petrine See. The episcopal jurisdiction and roles that the Pope (and the various offices within his Roman Curia) exercise across and on behalf of the entire Catholic Church.
Association of Christ's Faithful	Associations of Christ's Faithful are an organisation of laity, clerics or both collaborating for growth in faith and spirituality, and for the works of the Gospel. Associations may be public or private canonical associations or non-canonical. Public associations are PJPs and are an alternative Church structure to a MPJP for sponsoring Church ministries.
Board	The governing body of a company. This project generally uses the term 'Board' to refer to the governing body of MPJP/ACF ministries (e.g. school or school network board, hospital or hospital network board) and uses the term Council to refer to Trustee/Sponsors acting/meeting together.
DICLSAL	Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life - the department within the Roman Curia that also oversees the mission and life of religious institutes. This office has responsibility for authorizing the alienation of church property controlled by religious institutes and public juridical persons (which DICLSAL has established). Prior to the promulgation of _Praedicate Evangelium_ in 2022 DICLSAL was known as Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.
Establishing Authority for MPJPs	The Church Leader who approves the MPJP's Statutes and establishes it as a PJP. The Establishing Authority for MPJPs follows the guidelines for establishing Public Associations, namely: the Apostolic See, for universal and international associations, Episcopal Conference in its own territory, for national associations and the diocesan Bishop, his own territory. (c312)
Member of an MPJP	This project uses the term 'Member' to refers to the person(s) who appoint the Trustee/Sponsors. Some MPJPs use that term others use: Sponsor, Participating Entity
Ministerial PJP (MPJP)	The term commonly used to refer to a public juridical person (PJP) established by a competent Church Authority for the purpose of sponsoring Church ministries (see Canon 116).
Ministry	Ministry means any activity that carries out the works of the Gospel. This project uses the term 'ministry' when referring to the works of ACFs/MPJPs e.g., schools, hospitals, aged care and other services.
Public Juridic Person (PJP)	Aggregate of persons or of things directed to a purpose befitting the Church's mission, which transcends the purpose of the individuals. PJPs are church entities established by law or by decree and act in the name of the Church. Examples of a PJP are: diocese, parish, religious institute or MPJP. This project uses the USA spelling of 'Juridic' rather than the UK spelling of 'Juridical'.
Religious Institute	Religious institute is a gift of the spirit in which individuals make a lifelong commitment to gospel life in community, framed by vows or bonds of chastity, poverty, and obedience and committed to apostolic service. Societies of Apostolic Life are similar. They may also be called orders, institutes, societies or congregations.
Trustee/ Sponsor	This project uses the term "Trustees/Sponsors" to refer to individuals appointed as responsible for the MPJP. This term is used in all the project's papers to enable easy identification of the same role in different MPJPs across the seven countries under consideration. Other terms used by MPJPs include: board Director, canonical steward, Trustee, Sponsor, Trustee Director

Introduction

This paper provides a brief overview of context of the Catholic Church and Ministerial Public Juridic Persons (MPJP) within Singapore and Malaysia.[2] Catholic Health Care Asia (CHCA) is the only MPJP in these countries. It has ministries in both Singapore and Pulau Pinang (Penang Island), West Malaysia. It will become very clear that both countries, while close neighbours, are vastly different and require different approaches in health care and leadership styles.

MPJPs, alongside dioceses and religious institutes, are the Church Authorities responsible for major education, health, aged care and other ministries which impact the lives of millions of people. MPJPs are one of the few bodies where lay people can be the decision taker on behalf of the Church. This role responds to the Second Vatican Council's emphasis on Baptism as the foundation for the full and active participation of all the Faithful, both in society and in the Church.

A renewed focus on the possibilities of participation in Church governance on the basis of Baptism has arisen at the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (also known as the Synod on Synodality 2021-2024)[3].

This paper is one in a series of papers on MPJPs in Anglophone countries prepared for the ACU Inclusive Governance in a Synodal Church (IGSC) project. This project is scheduled to run from July 2024 to June 2025 and will deliver: an initial Position Paper, Country Papers, a range of case studies and a final Project Report.

Methodology

This paper draws on publicly available data regarding the society and the Catholic Church in both Singapore and Malaysia. Data on MPJPs, their ministries and their Trustee/Sponsors was obtained in the first instance from the MPJP.[4] MPJPs provided this information via: a survey,[5] participation in a 90-minute online consultation-focus group, and written responses to the summary of the consultation-focus group and to draft versions of this paper. Supplementary information on MPJPs was obtained from their/their ministry's websites and from other publicly available sources.

Singapore and Malaysia - Society and Catholic Context

CHCA has arisen and developed in the context of particular social and ecclesial characteristics of which the following are significant.

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2   This project uses the term "Ministerial Public Juridic Person (MPJP) to refer to a public juridic person established by a competent Church Authority for the purpose of sponsoring Church ministries. See Glossary page 3.
3   Francis, and XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. *Final Document: For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission.* Vatican: Apostolic See, 2024. https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/news/2024-10-26_final-document/ENG---Documento-finale.pdf.
4   This project uses the term "Trustees/Sponsors" to refer to individuals appointed as responsible for the MPJP. This term is used in all the project's papers to enable easy identification of the same role in different MPJPs across the seven countries under consideration. CHCA uses the term "Canonical Steward" to refer to its Trustee/Sponsors.
5   See: Appendix 1 IGSC Project survey instrument

Singapore and Malaysia are separated by a one-mile-long causeway with thousands crossing every day for work. However, the two countries are strikingly different in a number of ways.

Figure 1.   Map showing West and East Malaysia with Singapore at the southern tip of the Malaysian peninsula.

Singapore is a wealthy island nation, or city state, of only 790 sq. km and with no hinterland. By contrast, Malaysia has the vast Peninsula and East Malaysian States of Sabah and Sarawak, which are a part of Borneo with resources from mining, oil, plantations of oil palm, rubber, tea, agricultural produce and tourism.

Singapore depends on its geographical location and deep water, sheltered harbour, (it is the largest port in the world by tonnage of shipping passing through), oil refineries, ship bunkering services, high level banking and financial services, bio-chemical and electronic/ digital products and tourism.[6] It is a City in a Garden - organised, clean and well run. There

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[6]   "Over 70% of nominal value added was generated by the services industries, while about 25% was generated by the goods producing industries." "According to "Singapore economy" Department of

are high quality, well-regulated education and health care systems which are universal and affordable for citizens and 77% of the population lives in low-cost public housing.

One can argue that one party rule in Singapore has hampered freedom of speech and consultative processes since independence in 1965. Singapore is small, easy to control and easy to manage however one key to the success of Singapore as a place friendly to do business and safe for living, has been a zero tolerance for corruption. Tax revenue is used for the common good. According to the Business Times, Singapore does not fare well for equality in society. The Gini coefficient measure of inequality rose 22.9% from 2008 to 2024.[7] Inequality in any society is a source of unrest and dissatisfaction among the less wealthy segments of society eventually. The poor in Singapore tend to be among those in the lowest wage jobs, such as cleaners. The government is aware but the large numbers of migrant workers willing to work for lower wages tends to suppress wages overall.

Malaysia has all the goods and services provided by Singapore, in addition to the resources mentioned above, but does not attract the international business community to the same extent due to bureaucratic slowdowns and preferential treatment for the Malay population which discourages the other ethnic groups. There are pockets of serious poverty and populations who are underserved while there is a thriving middle class and wealthy elite. Malaysia has a king (officially titled: *Yang di-Pertuan Agong)* who is chosen from the Sultans/Governors of the 13 states of Malaysia. The King serves a five-year term and holds largely ceremonial roles however some wield significant political influence.

Malaysia has a majority Muslim population with many religions co-existing. While the constitution maintains a secular stand, the reality is very different. Some hardline Muslim groups and political parties have significant influence on public policy.

In 2020, the World Economic Forum Social Mobility Index scored Singapore at 74.6 out of 100, which ranked Singapore overall as 20th out of 82 countries. The same Index In 2020, the World Economic Forum Social Mobility Index scored Malaysia at 62 out of 100, which ranked Malaysia overall as 43rd out of 82 countries. The Index measures quality of life as well as factors that would enable the population to achieve a higher standard of living. This comprehensive measure has 47 indicators across five determinants: health, education, technology, work, and institutions. Singapore's overall rating was 75. Singapore's best ratings were: health (91/100); technology access (87/100); inclusive institutions (87/100); education quality and equity (86/100) and education access (84/100). Singapore's lowest ratings were: social protection (39/100); fair wage distribution (45/100); and working conditions (67/100). Malaysia's overall rating was 62. Malaysia's best ratings were: technology access (78/100); work opportunities (76/100); health (73/100); and education access (72/100). Malaysia's lowest ratings were: fair wage distribution (33/100); social protection (42/100); and working conditions (55/100). The Index shows a reasonable

Statistics, Singapore, Accessed March 23, 2025.
https://www.singstat.gov.sg/modules/infographics/economy

[7] Tan Nai Lun, "Singapore average wealth continues uptrend as inequality surpasses regional peers: UBS Report." *Business Times,* July 10, 2024, https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/companies-markets/singapore-average-wealth-continues-uptrend-inequality-surpasses-several-regional-peers-ubs-report

quality of life and social mobility for the Singapore-Malaysia population although there are still individuals and groups whose lives and prospects are well below the average.[8]

Singapore

The population of Singapore is diverse in ethnicity, religion and language. Generally, there is an openness to religion and a prevalent sense of God although this may be eroding with the younger generation.

The Constitution of the Republic of Singapore is secular, while respecting all faiths. The practice of religion and the obvious capitalist commercial economy mix in ways that can be puzzling as the wealthy middle class practice traditional faiths, including Catholicism. Some sociologists have explained this by pointing to the mercantile and transactional approach to religion as practiced by the early settlers in Singapore.

In 2024, the Singapore population was 6.4 million people (3.64 million citizens; 0.55 million permanent residents: and 1.86 million non-residents, mainly migrant workers).[9]

Density of population is 8,207 persons per square kilometre in Singapore in 2024. 80% of the population live in high rise apartments.

In 2024, Christians made up 18.9% of the total population. Of that number 37% are Catholic while the other 63% are the various Christian denominations. Catholics are 6% of the total Singaporean population and their number increased 10% between 2010 and 2020. The Catholic Church reflects the nation's demographic with ethnic Chinese in the majority with Indians, Malays, Eurasians and others making up the rest. Almost 100% of Malays in Singapore are Muslim.

Figure 2. Religions of Singapore[10]

Singapore has not been impervious to the pressures of secularism and materialism. There was an increase in the number of people who say they have no religious affiliation. In the

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8   World Economic Forum, *The Global Social Mobility Report 2020 Equality, Opportunity and a New Economic Imperative.* (Geneva, 2020), 130-131 and 170-171. *https://www3.weforum.org/docs/Global_Social_Mobility_Report.pdf*]

9   "Population in Brief 2024: Key Trends." Singapore Government: National Population and Talent Division, accessed March 23, 2025. https://www.population.gov.sg/population-in-brief-2024-key-trends/#:~:text=Overall%2C%20Singapore's%20total%20population%20stood,in%20the%20non%2Dresident%20population.

10 "Census of Population 2020 – Religion." Singapore Government: Department of Statistics, accessed March 23, 2025, https://www.singstat.gov.sg/-/media/files/visualising_data/infographics/c2020/c2020-religion.pdf

year 2000, 15% of the population while it was 20% in 2020. Buddhism saw the biggest drop in adherents from 2000 to 2020, going from 42.5% of the population to 31.1%. Many of these went towards Christianity which saw a rise from 14.6% to 18.3%. The other major religions are Taoism which has seen a rise from 8.5% to 8.8% from 2000 to 2020; Hinduism 4.0% to 5.0% and Islam an increase from 14.9% to 15.6%.[11]

Some of the changes to the religious affiliation could be due to the expatriate population becoming permanent residents or citizens over the 20-year period.

In the Catholic Churches in Singapore each year around 800 to 900 adults are baptized and about the same number of infants. The numbers have dipped from the peak in 1989. A study conducted by the Catholic Schools Office in 2009 discovered that the two main sources of adult conversions were the Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour and Catholic Schools. Today a source of adult conversions is the inter-faith marriages that constitute more than 50% of marriages.

Today, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Singapore is comprised of 395,000 Catholics. The church has a significant impact on life in Singapore due to its schools, its charitable outreach and from influential individuals.[12] Cardinal William Goh is Archbishop of Singapore. The Archdiocese has: 29 parish churches and 3 devotional churches spread across 5 districts in Singapore. Masses are predominantly provided in English but also said in Mandarin and Tamil, and other languages such as Indonesian, Tagalog, Cantonese, Latin, Vietnamese, Burmese, Malayalam, Sinhala, German, Italian and French. There is also Mass for the Deaf Community.

The Catholic Church operates 18 pre-schools and 38 Catholic schools (primary, secondary and junior college) in Singapore.[13] This equates to 11% of schools in Singapore or 11.6% of all Singaporean enrolments.[14] The number of Catholic students in each Catholic school varies greatly from around 30% to 0.2%. The overall number of children entering primary school is dropping due to a negative birth replacement rate in the country. For this reason and because of changing regulations, prioritising distance from the school and Alumni over religion or parental preference, the number of students in certain Catholic schools that traditionally served the lower achievers or poorer areas has seen a drop in student admissions. Some schools have reduced the number of classes for each level and reduced the number of teachers.

There are 11 public hospitals and nine private hospitals in Singapore with one (5%) of these operated by CHCA (Catholic Church). There are six public community/rehabilitation

[11] Singapore Government: Department of Statistics, *Census of Population 2010 Statistical Release 1 On Demographic Characteristics, Education, Language and Religion.* (Singapore Government, 2011) https://www.singstat.gov.sg/-/media/files/publications/cop2010/census_2010_release1/cop2010sr1.pdf

[12] "Archdiocese of Singapore Today." Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Singapore, accessed March 23, 2025, https://www.catholic.sg/about-archdiocese-of-singapore-2/

[13] "Enrolment in Government, Government-Aided, Independent, Specialised Independent and Specialised Secondary Schools and Junior Colleges by Level, Sex and Age." Singapore Government: Department of Statistics, accessed March 23, 2025, https://tablebuilder.singstat.gov.sg/table/TS/M850241

[14] Management Information Branch Research and Management Information Division, *Education Statistics Digest 2023.* (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 2023) https://www.moe.gov.sg/-/media/files/about-us/education-statistics-digest-2023.pdf

hospitals and four private community hospitals. The Catholic Church does not operate any community hospitals. CHCA also operates one out of the ten hospices in Singapore. The Catholic Church also operates 47 humanitarian organisations in Singapore.[15]

The number of priests in Singapore is 170 diocesan and religious with 22 young men in the seminary for the Archdiocese of Singapore. There is one permanent Deacon. There are 22 religious institutes, but vocations are almost non-existent for the women's religious institutes and the religious institutes engaged in education. The Franciscan Friars, Jesuits, Carmelite men and Dominican men are doing better although that is not to say they are doing well.

Singapore has the second fastest aging population in Asia, after Japan. The Catholic Church reflects this reality and while there are still many youths attending church and active in church ministries. Estimates are that about half of the Catholics in Singapore participate in Sunday Eucharist.[16]

In spite of the prevalence of many religions, it is only in the recent years that religion has been established as a subject in Universities in Singapore. There is no theological degree course offered in Singapore except at Trinity Theological College a union of the Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist and Lutheran Churches in Asia. The courses offered in the Catholic Church are not accredited to any institute of higher learning overseas or locally. For this reason, it is difficult to find Catholic laity with theological or religious education backgrounds to populate our Catholic institutions.

Malaysia

The population of Malaysia is 34.1 million.[17] The ethnic majority in Malaysia are Malay who make up the 63.5% Muslim population. Other religious groups are 18.7% Buddhist, 9.1% Christianity, 6.1% Hinduism, 1.8% Atheist and 0.9% include animists, Confucianists, Taoists, Sikhs, and Baha'is. [18] There are laws in place to prevent conversion from Islam to any other religion. Marriage to a Muslim is only allowed if the other party converts to Islam.

The Catholic population is estimated to be 1,578,830 or 4.63% of the national population.[19] The States of Sabah and Sarawak in East Malaysia have the larger Catholic populations and many of the people have a tribal background and have come from Animism to Christianity. The largest Catholic population of 267,000 is around the capital, Kuala Lumpur. Malaysia has three archdioceses among its nine dioceses (three in Peninsula Malaysia, three in Sabah and three in Sarawak).[20] Some statistics related to the Catholic

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15 "Archdiocese of Singapore Today"
16 Lisa Zengarini, "An overview of the Church in Singapore". *Vatican News,* August 31, 2024, https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2024-08/pope-francis-apostolic-journey-singapore-church-overview.html
17   "The population of Malaysia." Malaysian Government: Population & Demographic Statistics Division, accessed March 23, 2025, https://open.dosm.gov.my/dashboard/population
18 Office of International Religious Freedom, *Malaysia 2023 International Religious Freedom Report*. (United States of America Department of State, 2024). https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/547499-MALAYSIA-2023-INTERNATIONAL-RELIGIOUS-FREEDOM-REPORT.pdf
19 "National / Regional Profiles, included Nations/Regions: Malaysia, South-Eastern Asia, The World." Association of Religion Data Archives, accessed March 23, 2025, https://www.thearda.com/world-religion/national-profiles?u=139c
20 "Church in Malaysia." Union des Nouvelles Catholiques Asiatiques (UCANEWS), accessed March 23, 2025, https://www.ucanews.com/directory/country/malaysia/20

church are as follows for the whole of Malaysia: Priests 323; Religious institutes 32 (membership = 389 women & 114 men); Deacons 14 permanent.

This project has limited information on education, health and welfare services in Malaysia. Catholic schools 552 Primary and Secondary, 1 training college in Kota Kinabalu, East Malaysia. The religious and language specific schools were nationalised in a gradual process that was completed in 1982. Catholic schools sit on land and buildings owned by the church, including religious institutes. The church has little input into the curriculum and appointment of teachers and principals of these schools. The medium of instruction is Bahasa Malaysia, the national language.

No data was found on Catholic participation in Sunday Eucharist in Malaysia.

National engagement with the Synod on Synodality

The Singapore Archdiocese used the opportunity of the 2021-2024 Synod on Synodality consultation to set up the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council. Over a year, there were many heartfelt and fruitful conversations in the spirit in parishes and organisations and the sensation of being listened to was transforming. In many cases the clergy chose to not participate in these conversations in the spirit.

At the Plenary Assembly after a year of conversations and collating responses, the following issues or desires were named and adopted as priorities in the Archdiocesan Pastoral Plan:

1. Life-long formation for clergy and laity;
2. Building communities of faith;
3. Enhanced differentiated co-responsibility of clergy and laity;
4. Build unity in diversity; and
5. Embrace synodality as a way of being church.[21]

The Singapore Archdiocesan Pastoral Council is looking into the issues and the pastoral approaches needed. "In the development of the 10-year pastoral plan, four broad areas were identified, and these are:

1. Discipleship;
2. Families and Communities;
3. Evangelisation and Mission; and
4. Structures and Support."[22]

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[21] Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, *Archdiocesan Pastoral Plan Schema 3.0: Journeying together with Christ, Building the Kingdom of God*, (Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Singapore, 2024), 04, https://www.catholic.sg/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Schema_3.0a.pdf

[22] "APC Study Groups" Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Singapore, accessed March 23, 2025, https://www.catholic.sg/apc-groups/

Since then, the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council has worked with the issues and has developed a 'schema' to encourage more conversations and discernment in the communities.[23]

The Malaysian Church implemented the 2021-2024 Synod on Synodality consultation and conversation in the spirt extensively. There were diocesan, regional and national assemblies to collect the thinking and hopes of the people in the synodal conversations. The Synodal journey and the practical steps required within the Malaysian Church has been described as:

1. Face the Reality in the Malaysian Church – move beyond rhetoric.

2. Build collaborative structures: moving beyond silos.

3. Empower the laity.

4. Live the Gospel in the public sphere: Mission as witness,

5. Transforming the vision of Shared Mission (Overcoming clericalism).[24]

The issues raised at the Regional Pastoral Assembly in 25-27 August 2024 by the 3 West Malaysian dioceses are: Family, Ecology, Society, Church. [25]

MPJP/ACFs in Singapore-Malaysia.

MPJPs are usually established to sponsor Church health, education and other ministries. Neither the Singaporean nor Malaysian contexts have the conditions for the Church to be a major provider of these types of ministries.

CHCA runs the only Catholic hospital and hospice in Singapore. CHCA's hospital in Pulau Pinang is one of three Catholic hospitals in Malaysia. The Brothers of Mercy have a hospital in Malaysia. The Franciscan Missionaries of Mary (FMM) established Assunta Hospital in Malaysia but their connection with the hospital is unclear. The hospital website says: "In 1974, the Assunta Foundation was formed and the management of the now full-fledged hospital was handed over to a Board of Directors by the FMM sisters."[26] The Assunta Hospital website shows FMM sisters currently working there but the FMM Province website does not list the hospital as one of their works which could indicate that it was sold.[27]

CHCA was established as a MPJP in 2020 by the Apostolic See in response to a petition from Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood (FMDM).[28] The FMDM Sisters saw that their diminishing numbers would eventually mean that they would soon be unable

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23 *Archdiocesan Pastoral Plan Schema 3.0: Journeying together with Christ, Building the Kingdom of God*

24 Fabian Dicom, "For a shared mission: Embodying synodality in the Malaysian Church" *Herald Malaysia Online*, October 04, 2024, https://www.heraldmalaysia.com/news/for-a-shared-mission-embodying-synodality-in-the-malaysian-church/78608/9

25 Patricia Pereira, "RPA2024 Charting the way forward" *Herald Malaysia Online*, August 23, 2024, https://www.heraldmalaysia.com/news/rpa2024-charting-the-way-forward/77821/1

26 "Our History and Timeline" Assunta Foundation accessed March 29, 2025. https://www.assunta.com.my/about/our-history-assunta-timeline/

27 "Website," Franciscan Missionaries of Mary: Malaysia-Singapore Sector, accessed March 23, 2025. http://www.fmm-mysg.org/

28 See Appendix 2: MPJPs in Singapore-Malaysia

sponsor their Singapore and Malaysia ministries. They could not see an alternative Church sponsor and were encouraged by their ministries to establish an MPJP to continue the ministries as works of the Church.

It is highly unlikely that another health focused PJP will be established in Singapore or Malaysia. It is also likely that the language, cultural and regulatory differences would prevent Catholic hospitals merging with a MPJP in neighbouring countries (should a MPJP ever be established in Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia).

There are trusts and foundations set up by the religious institutes running Catholic schools in Singapore, but these are not PJPs. New MPJPs are possible in the education sector, as religious institutes have dwindled membership and might explore other governance models.

Background of MPJP/ACF Trustee/Sponsors

CHCA completed this project's survey resulting in the following data on the background on CHCA Trustee/Sponsors. There are potentially two vacancies at present for Trustees/Sponsors as the maximum is 11 Trustees/Sponsors. There are slightly more women than men among the Trustee/Sponsors (see Chart 1).

Chart 1. Gender of CHCA Trustee/Sponsors
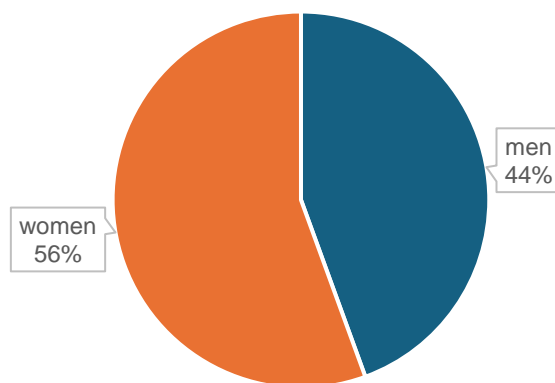
The following are characteristics of CHCA's nine Trustees/Sponsors:

- All of the nine Trustees/Sponsors are baptised. Eight are Catholic and one is Methodist. All are active in their respective parish churches.

- 78% of the Trustee/Sponsors are lay people (2 men from Malaysia, a businessman and medical ethicist/clinician; 1 woman from Malaysia, a lawyer in banking; 2 men from Singapore, an accountant and lawyer and 2 women from Singapore, a lawyer in social services, and a theologian from education).

- 22% of the Trustee/Sponsors are members of a religious institute.

- None of the Trustee/Sponsors are ordained (deacon, priest, or bishop).

- 33% have theology in their studies and professions including the Chair and two FMDM sisters.

- 22% of Trustee/Sponsors have a governance qualification experience in the areas of governance
- 55% of Trustee/Sponsors have experience as a Board Director.
- 22% of the Trustees/Sponsors have previous experience as a "Trustee/Sponsor" with a different PJP (i.e. leadership of a religious institute (FMDM)).

The relatively even number of male and female Trustee/Sponsors is common in governance bodies that value diversity. Having a female founding religious institute may also have contributed to a sense that women should be equally present among the Trustee/Sponsors.

Religious are not plentiful in Singapore or Malaysia so it is likely that the only religious as Trustee/Sponsors of CHCA will be FMDM. There are not many FMDM able to fulfil these roles so their number among CHCA Trustees will decrease.

The lack of deacons, priests and bishops in MPJP Trustee/Sponsor roles could be due to: the founding religious institute not being a clerical religious institute and the lack of available clerics for Trustee/Sponsor roles.

The project uses theological qualification as an indicator of a Trustee/Sponsor's depth of knowledge of the Catholic faith. We recognise that it is not perfect indicator. It does not capture personal knowledge and wisdom obtained outside of a credentialled course. It does not reflect personal faith/spirituality, nor does it demonstrate faith expressed in behaviour. As noted earlier, it is rare for lay people to have a theological qualification as there is no local Catholic institution provided accredited theological qualifications. Having Trustee/Sponsors with a theology qualification can assist the MPJP to discuss theological issues and to understand the theological significance/context of various matters. The Trustee/Sponsors will probably also draw on outside theological/canonical/ethical expertise at times. Among the CHCA Trustee/Sponsors the percentage with a theological qualification is a significant 33%. Two of these three people are FMDM.

The project uses governance qualification and experience as a Board Director as an indicator of the background/experience of Trustee/Sponsors. This is an issue as there is a possibility that the Church may disproportionately appoint people with corporate backgrounds to Trustee/Sponsor roles. This could be on an incorrect assumption that the same skills/knowledge are needed in a MPJP as on a corporate board. Among CHCA Trustee/Sponsors the percentage with a governance qualification and experience as a Board Director is moderate at 55%. This could be an asset when the MPJP Trustee/Sponsors are dealing with their ministry board that is comprised of corporate directors. It also indicates that there are sufficient Trustee/Sponsors who can draw upon other backgrounds in exercising their unique role as ecclesial leaders.[29]

The project is also interested to see whether the Church is appointing to MPJP Trustee/Sponsor roles people who have previous experience as a Trustee/Sponsor of another canonical entity (parish, diocese, religious institute). This experience could be a

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[29] See Appendix 3 MPJP Trustee/Sponsors describe their experiences as Ecclesial Leaders

benefit to the MPJP in clarity of role and Church context. Alternatively, it could mean that the same people are being utilised and fresh perspectives are missing. The only CHCA Trustee/Sponsors with previous Trustee/Sponsor experience gained this in leadership of a religious institute.

MPJP ministries by diocese

CHCA's profile is larger in Singapore as it has two ministries within the Archdiocese of Singapore which is the only see in the city-state of Singapore. There are nine arch/diocese within Malaysia and CHCA operates a ministry in only one of these dioceses. Both national churches are members of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei.

Chart 1. Number of MPJPs with ministries in the Arch/Dioceses of Singapore and Malaysia, 2024

MPJP ministry sectors

The project survey asked MPJPs to identify within which of nine ministry sectors their ministries operate. CHCA is present in just one sector: Hospitals/healthcare.

The CHCA Hospice in Singapore has both 80 beds onsite and home care teams which can assist people in their own home.

The CHCA Acute Hospital in Singapore has a specialist Mother and Child and a Mental Wellness department with currently only outpatient care for young people.

The CHCA hospital in Malaysia has a long history of cancer treatment and is developing inpatient palliative hospice care.

In Singapore and Malaysia there are private standalone hospitals and care homes which have expressed some interest in exploring the suitability of CHCA oversight and governance. In the coming years, these discussions can begin as CHCA is coming to end of its establishment phase.

The survey did not ask MPJPs to specify the size or scope of their ministries. One of the reasons for not asking about the size of ministries was that the request may have deterred

some MPJPs from completing the survey due to complexity of the calculation or for transparency concerns. Ultimately, the project concluded that its focus was the MPJP, so it was more relevant to know the ministry sector rather than the size or scope of the ministries.

Positive and synodal aspects of MPJP/ACFs in Singapore-Malaysia

The CHCA case study paper provides the detail of the process towards establishing CHCA. This process involved the FMDM Sisters seeking and receiving assistance from the Australia-based MPJP, St John of God Australia. Two Trustee/Sponsors from St John of God Australia partnered with the FMDM Sisters and their co-workers in a synodal process to clarify that a MPJP was needed and to determine its key features.

CHCA Trustees/Sponsors identified the following as aspects of their MPJP which are positive and synodal:

a) The miracle of the Spirit working among our MPJP community and making it more than the sum of its parts. Witnesses this work of the Spirit extends MPJP participant dreams beyond their imaginings. It gives Trustees/Sponsors confidence to trust the Spirit as they go into uncharted territory.

b) Trustees/Sponsors are committed to making sure that this health care ministry perpetuates as an expression of Church.

c) Trustees/Sponsors lead by enabling, building people, and sharing their faith journey.

d) Trustees/Sponsors practice deep listening to the ministry, to the church, to the bigger picture. The Chair communicates regularly and seeks the opinions of other Trustee/Sponsors. Meeting with ministry leaders so we can get to know them and listen to them.

e) Trustee/Sponsors exercise soft governance with others - building relationships with ministries and with the local church. There is value in the relationship as an end in itself, not just for some possible transactional benefit. Fraternity is a way of being Christian. It is a way of being like God.

f) Trustee/Sponsors exercise soft governance within themselves - they use social gatherings to get to know each other.

g) Trustee/Sponsors have a sense of walking together – of being called/brought together by God for the mission.

h) Trustee/Sponsors acknowledge their differences both cultural and personality. They keep reminding themselves that their individual perspective is not necessarily shared by others. They are conscious of the need for deep listening to others.

i) CHCA's structure is diverse by nature - their ministries are in different countries, with different cultures, each ministry has its own board and within the Trustee/Sponsors there is cultural diversity. On one level this makes them aware of diversity and the need to truly listen to the other beyond one's own bias and filters.

j) Trustee/Sponsors see diversity as both a gift and challenge to CHCA.

k) Having Trustee/Sponsor from both the cultures in which ministries are based means that the Trustee/Sponsors have the appropriate cultural knowledge in the room when they are making decisions.

l) Task focused Trustee/Sponsors remind themselves of the need to slow down.

m) Trustee/Sponsors schedule "wasting time" (not just attending to business) - making time to look at the wider context, church teachings and how they can integrate these into practices.

n) Trustee/Sponsor schedule time to consider matters in good time – not rushed

o) Trustee/Sponsor reminding themselves to let the ministry boards do the business and to nurture them in their role.

p) Trustee/Sponsors have formation on listening, spiritual conversation, discernment and start meeting days with an hour of faith reflection.

q) Trustee/Sponsors use committees to spread work and enable many people to be leaders.[30]

The list above indicates that CHCA currently assesses itself as demonstrating some of the synodal expressions called for in the national consultations for the Synod on Synodality.

MPJP/ACF interaction with other parts of the Church in Singapore-Malaysia

CHCA has a governance structure which includes the local church leaders as part of the body that appoints Trustee/Sponsors.

CHCA provides an annual presentation on the status and developments in CHCA to the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei. There is much interest in CHCA as a new form of governance even from bishops who are not directly involved in any health care ministry.

CHCA is not directly working with any other Catholic organisations in Singapore or Malaysia. However, through the ministries and their activities there is contact with the charity and welfare bodies such as Caritas Singapore with whom there are some collaborative activities with the hospital.

Possible future MPJP/ACF activities

CHCA Trustees/Sponsors identified the following as initiatives that they believe will support MPJPs in Singapore Malaysia:

1. Practicing deep listening

2. Collect more stories of the MPJP, Trustee/Sponsor and ministries living of the mission. Keep telling these stories to the wider church.

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[30] List developed during the Inclusive Governance in a Synodal Church Project online focus group held on 21 November 2024 and in subsequent email contributions from CHCA Trustees/Sponsors

3. Having local church recognition of health care as a core part of church identity/mission.

4. Trustee/Sponsor discussing difficult case studies so they can work out their role and how they can support (not take over from) the ministry.

5. Building relationship with the bishops and religious who appoint the Trustee/Sponsors – communicating with them about the role of the MPJP and of the Trustee/Sponsors. Helping them appreciate the MPJP as a distinct church entity.

6. Mentoring from another MPJP (St John of God Australia) has helped. Support from the founding religious institute especially hearing their charism and exploring what that might mean for how Trustee/Sponsors support the ministries.

7. The MPJP having the freedom to listen to the Holy Spirit and respond to the charism, as it unfolds in new ways, rather than just perpetuate the charism of the founding religious institute.

8. Trustees/Sponsors use their committees to bring in new people for succession and to share the mission.
9. CHCA reaching out to the local Church and society.

10. Trustee/Sponsors need formation to be confident as a leader. In the Asian context, it is jarring for lay people to be in the position of ecclesial leader (hard for the lay person, for clergy and for the wider church). Information and formation of others could help them accept Trustee/Sponsors as leaders of the MPJP.

11. Trustee/Sponsor need courage to make hard decisions.[31]

CHCA's ministries have strategic plans to guide their future development. The list above is a similar plan for the MPJP. Many of the suggestions above focus on internal dynamics/structures/capacities. There are also suggestions that seek engagement with the wider Church and society.

Conclusion

The Asian region is diverse and dynamic. Each of the countries within this region has its own unique social and ecclesial context. This paper has briefly considered the two countries of Singapore-Malaysia.

We have seen that Singapore is the wealthier country. Being a City-State, Singapore is more compact with services and facilities easily accessible to most of the population. It is religiously diverse, with Catholics being only 6% of the population.
Malaysia has a much larger population and land mass. Its wealth and opportunities are not so evenly distributed. The population is predominantly Muslim and Catholics are only 4.6% on the population. In these countries, where Catholicism is a marginal, CHCA as the sole MPJP is a small addition.

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[31] Initiatives identified in the Inclusive Governance in a Synodal Church Project online focus group held on 21 November 2024 and in subsequent email contributions from CHCA Trustees/Sponsors

CHCA was only established in 2020 and has already developed synodal practices for its internal life and in its engagement with the wider Church. In this regard, it is an example of the synodal life that both national Churches have endorsed in their responses to the Synod on Synodality.

CHCA is a pioneer of the MPJP structure in the Asian region. Given its limited growth opportunities, it is likely that CHCA will remain small. In Matthew's account of Jesus' parables of the Reign of God, it is only the mustard seed and the yeast that grows bigger.[32] The treasure in the field and the pearl of great value stay the same size and yet they are their owner's greatest delight.[33] If CHCA continues as a manifestation of God's Reign, it will be both God and the Church's delight regardless of its size.

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[32] Matt 13:31-34
[33] Matt 13:44-45

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Appendix 1. Inclusive Governance in a Synodal Church, Survey Instrument

About your MPJP/ACF:

The questions in this section seek details about your PJP (i.e., MPJP-ACF).

These details, along with those of other MPJP-ACFs, will be included in the paper that will provide an overview of MPJP-ACFs in your country and the Church and societal factors that impact MPJP-ACFs.

You will see a draft of this country paper and have an opportunity to provide comment and to ask for changes before it is published.

1.   What is the name of your Public Juridic Person (PJP)?

2.   In which year your PJP was established by the Church?

3.   Who was Establishing Authority?
       options:
       ☐ Apostolic See: DICLSAL (previously known as CICLSAL), or
       ☐ National Catholic Bishops Conference or
       ☐ Local Bishop (or Archbishop) or other (please specify)

4.   What is the canonical basis of your PJP?
       options:
       ☐ as per canon 116; or
       ☐ as per canon 298ff; or
       ☐ I'm not sure (we will contact you to clarify)

5.   Which Religious Institute(s) originally petitioned the Establishing Authority to establish your PJP?

6.   What ministries does your PJP sponsor
       options:
       ☐ Hospitals/health care;
       ☐ Aged care;
       ☐ Disability Services;
       ☐ Family services,
       ☐ Community services,
       ☐ Early learning education (approx. 5 year old and younger),
       ☐ Primary school education from (approx. 6 to 12 year old),
       ☐ Secondary school education (approx. 13 to 18year old),
       ☐ Tertiary/university education,
       ☐ other (please specify)

These next questions ask about your MPJP-ACF's ministries in National and Local Churches.

This information will be included in the country paper to show your, and other MPJP-ACF, contributions to the wider Church and society.

7. In which country(s) does your PJP operate?
    options:
    - ☐ Australia; and/or
    - ☐ Canada; and/or
    - ☐ Ireland; and/or
    - ☐ New Zealand; and/or
    - ☐ Singapore-Malaysia; and/or
    - ☐ UK; and/or
    - ☐ USA; and/or
    - ☐ Other

8. In which Dioceses does your PJP have ministries?
    options:
    Choose from lists of dioceses which will appear based on selected country (and in selected state/province of USA/Canada)

About your MPJP/ACFs Trustee/Sponsors:
The next eight questions will help us develop a profile of MPJP-ACF Trustee-Sponsors within each country. It will help answer questions about the diversity of their backgrounds/qualifications and the perspective/skills that they bring to a governance role in the Church.

9. What is the total number of Trustee/Sponsors in your PJP?

10. What % of Trustee/Sponsors are baptised?

11. What % of Trustee/Sponsors are women?

12. What % of Trustee/Sponsors in Religious life?

13. What % of Trustee/Sponsors are ordained?

14. What % of Trustee/Sponsors have a theology degree?

15. What % of Trustee/Sponsors have a qualification from a governance institute? (e.g., Company Director course from Institute of Company Directors)

16. What % of Trustee/Sponsors have previous experience as a Board Director?

17. What % of Trustee/Sponsors have previous experience as a MPJP Trustee-Sponsor (or parish priest, bishop, Religious Institute General Superior)?

About the person completing this survey:
Providing your contact details in the next questions will assist us should we have any questions about your responses in this survey.

18. Name of person completing this survey

19. MPJP/ACF

20. Contact phone number

21. Contact email

22. Date

Appendix 2. MPJPs in Singapore-Malaysia

MPJP	Est year	Establishing Authority	Instigating Church entities	Ministry	Diocesan presence
1. *Catholic Health Care Asia*	2020	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood	Hospitals/health care (Hospital and Hospice in Singapore and Hospital in Malaysia)	Archdiocese of Singapore Diocese of Penang, Malaysia

Appendix 3. MPJP Trustee/Sponsors describe their experiences
as Ecclesial Leaders

When I was appointed to a role that had previously only been held by clergy or religious, some people responded as if this was either because I had an exceptional qualification or because I was only chosen as a substitute due to the lack a clergy or religious. As a canonical steward I, and others, take my role as a church leader seriously.

When I was a pastoral worker in a parish and I was accompanying parishioners and assisting with their formation. I saw the difference this made and saw them take more responsibility within the parish.
Lay and religious are equally yoked in the ministry of leadership in MPJPs.

Trustee/Sponsors are enabled to be leaders and enable others.

Supporting lay leaders work through a crisis in their ministry. Being a peer and appreciating their gifts and them appreciating my gifts as we grow as a genuine faith community. The interactions of this MPJP faith community nourishes me even when I am away.

Trustee/Sponsors journeying together and growing in their self-understanding and their exercising of their role.

This is a journey in faith – stepping out into the unknown with trust in God. We didn't know where it would take us but it has been a blessing.

Meeting and accompanying Trustee/Sponsors and board members and truly hearing them

Religious realised in humility that they could not continue to support our ministries as they had in the past. They initially reached out to seek help from other religious but many of them were likewise altering their role in ministries. The religious found that lay people shared their vision and expanded it. St John of God Australia was a great support and collaborated with Catholic Health Care Asia. This gave us an experience of oneness with the wider church.

The miracle of the Spirit working among us and making us more than the sum of our parts and extending our dream beyond our imaginings. It gives me confidence to trust the Spirit as we go into uncharted territory.

Making sure that this health care ministry perpetuates as an expression of church

We lead by enabling, building people, and sharing our faith journey.

Ministerial Public Juridic Persons in the United States of America

Donna Miller[1]

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[1] Donna Miller JD, JCL, is a civil and canon lawyer who has worked for Catholic organizations at both the diocesan and national levels in various positions and venues. She is currently the Executive Coordinator of the Canon Law Society of America.

Contents

Glossary

Apostolic See	Also known as the Holy See or See of Rome or Petrine See. The episcopal jurisdiction and roles that the Pope (and the various offices within his Roman Curia) exercise across and on behalf of the entire Catholic Church.
Association of Christ's Faithful	Associations of Christ's Faithful are an organisation of laity, clerics or both collaborating for growth in faith and spirituality, and for the works of the Gospel. Associations may be public or private canonical associations or non-canonical. Public associations are PJPs and are an alternative Church structure to an MPJP for sponsoring Church ministries.
Board	The governing body of a company. This project generally uses the term 'Board' to refer to the governing body of MPJP/ACF ministries (e.g. school or school network board, hospital or hospital network board) and uses the term Council to refer to Trustee/Sponsors acting/meeting together.
DICLSAL	Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life - the department within the Roman Curia that also oversees the mission and life of religious institutes. This office has responsibility for authorizing the alienation of church property controlled by religious institutes and public juridical persons (which DICLSAL has established). Prior to the promulgation of *Praedicate Evangelium* in 2022 DICLSAL was known as Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.
Establishing Authority for MPJPs	The Church Leader who approves the MPJP's Statutes and establishes it as a PJP. The Establishing Authority for MPJPs follows the guidelines for establishing Public Associations, namely: the Apostolic See, for universal and international associations, Episcopal Conference in its own territory, for national associations and the diocesan Bishop, his own territory. (c312)
Member of an MPJP	This project uses the term 'Member' to refer to the person(s) who appoint the Trustee/Sponsors. Some MPJPs use that term others use: Sponsor, Participating Entity
Ministerial PJP (MPJP)	The term commonly used to refer to a public juridical person (PJP) established by a competent Church Authority for the purpose of sponsoring Church ministries (see Canon 116).
Ministry	Ministry means any activity that carries out the works of the Gospel. This project uses the term 'ministry' when referring to the works of ACFs/MPJPs e.g., schools, hospitals, aged care and other services.
Public Juridic Person (PJP)	Aggregate of persons or of things directed to a purpose befitting the Church's mission, which transcends the purpose of the individuals. PJPs are church entities established by law or by decree and act in the name of the Church. Examples of a PJP are: diocese, parish, religious institute or MPJP. This project uses the USA spelling of 'Juridic' rather than the UK spelling of 'Juridical'.
Religious Institute	Religious institute is a gift of the spirit in which individuals make a lifelong commitment to gospel life in community, framed by vows or bonds of chastity, poverty, and obedience and committed to apostolic service. Societies of Apostolic Life are similar. They may also be called orders, institutes, societies or congregations.
Trustee/ Sponsor	This project uses the term "Trustees/Sponsors" to refer to individuals appointed as responsible for the MPJP. This term is used in all the project's papers to enable easy identification of the same role in different MPJPs across the seven countries under consideration. Other terms used by MPJPs include: board Director, canonical steward, Trustee, Sponsor, Trustee Director

Introduction

This paper provides a brief overview of the context of the Catholic Church and Ministerial Public Juridic Persons (MPJP) within the United States of America (USA).[2] It seeks to explain why MPJPs emerged, their purpose and their hopes for the future.

MPJPs, alongside dioceses and religious institutes,[3] are the Church Authorities responsible for major education, health, aged care and other ministries which impact the lives of millions of Americans. MPJPs are one of the few bodies where lay people can be the decision taker on behalf of the Church. This role responds to the Second Vatican Council's emphasis on Baptism as the foundation for the full and active participation of all the Faithful, both in society and in the Church.

A renewed focus on the possibilities of participation in Church governance on the basis of Baptism has arisen at the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (also known as the Synod on Synodality 2021-2024)[4].

This paper is one in a series of papers on MPJPs in Anglophone countries prepared for the ACU Inclusive Governance in a Synodal Church (IGSC) project. This project is scheduled to run from July 2024 to June 2025 and will deliver: an initial Position Paper, Country Papers, a range of case studies and a final Project Report.

Methodology

The project was able to obtain information on MPJPs from various websites, directly from MPJPs, and from the Apostolic See, namely the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (DICLSAL), the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA) and The Resource Center for Religious Institutes. Finding the contact details for many of the MPJPs proved to be extremely challenging. While CHA and DICLSAL provided a list of MPJP names and establishment dates, they were not able to provide specific contact persons (e.g., Trustee/Sponsors[5]), websites, or email addresses.[6]

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[2] Canon law uses the term public juridic person for diocese, parishes, religious institutes etc. In recent years the term "Ministerial Public Juridic Person" was adopted by non-canonists to distinguish these new church structures whose specific purpose is the sponsorship of Church health, education and other ministries.

[3] This project uses the term "religious institute" to describe Church approved communities of individuals who make a commitment to gospel life usually framed by vows or bonds of chastity, poverty, and obedience and committed to apostolic service. These communities may also be called orders, institutes, societies or congregations. See Glossary on page 3.

[4] Synod of Bishops, *Synthesis Report: A Synodal Church in Mission*. XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod Of Bishops, First Session (4-29 October 2023) https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/assembly/synthesis/english/ 2023.10.28-ENG-Synthesis-Report.pdf (accessed on 8 April 2025).

[5] This project uses the term "Trustees/Sponsors" to refer to individuals appointed as responsible for the MPJP. This term is used in all the project's papers to enable easy identification of the same role in different MPJPs across the seven countries under consideration. See Glossary on page 3. MPJPs in USA use alternative terms: Sponsor, Trustee, Director, Member, Councilor, and Canonical Steward.

[6] Occasionally the website of an MPJP's ministry would provide a list of its Trustee/Sponsors and/or its civil trustees/board members. Unfortunately, email addresses or other means of direct contact were provided only rarely. The project located most MPJP contacts through professional/personal networks or from the MPJP's founding religious institute. After multiple lines of inquiry between June 2024 and March 2025, there were still seven MPJPs for which contact details for even a single sponsor could not be found. The length

This paper draws on publicly available data regarding both civil society and the Catholic Church in the US. Data on MPJPs, their ministries, and their Trustee/Sponsors was obtained in the first instance from the MPJPs. MPJPs provided this information via a survey,[7] participation in a 90-minute online consultation-focus group, and written responses to the summary of the consultation-focus group and to draft versions of this paper. Supplementary information on MPJPs was obtained primarily from their websites and from other publicly available sources.

USA - Society and Catholic Context

MPJPs have arisen and developed in the context of particular social and ecclesial characteristics in the US, of which the following are significant.

a)   *Social mobility*

In 2020, the World Economic Forum Social Mobility Index scored USA at 70 out of 100, which ranked USA overall as 27th out of 82 countries. The Index measures quality of life as well as factors that would enable the population to achieve a higher standard of living. This comprehensive measure has 47 indicators across five determinants: health, education, technology, work, and institutions. USA's best ratings were: technology access (90/100); work opportunities (83/100); education quality and equity (77/100); health (76/100); and inclusive institutions (74/100). USA's lowest ratings were: fair wage distribution (44/100); working conditions (59/100); social protection (62/100); and education access (67/100). The Index shows a reasonably high quality of life and social mobility for the USA population, although there are still individuals and groups whose lives and prospects are well below the average.[8]

These statistics show that the circumstances that existed when many religious institutes began operating in the US—particularly in the 1800s—no longer hold sway in the 21st century. Some Americans are led to question whether Catholic services continue to be necessary given that state and federal governmental assistance is available for education and health care services—the two principal reasons that religious founded ministries in the pioneering days of the US. As long as Catholics continue to attribute importance to their religious beliefs and heritage, they will continue to appreciate and advocate for their faith to play a role in these essential services. They and their families can appreciate and trust those who provide educational opportunities and deliver health care services.

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of time locating contact details delayed the distribution of the survey and shortened the notice period for the online consultation-focus groups with MPJPs in USA.

[7]   See: Appendix 1 IGSC Project survey instrument

[8]   World Economic Forum (2020:196-197) *The Global Social Mobility Report 2020 Equality, Opportunity and a New Economic Imperative*, https://www3.weforum.org/docs/Global_Social_Mobility_Report.pdf (accessed on 29 March 2025).

b) Number of Catholics

The USA undertook its decennial census in 2020. The results were released in 2023, and the total USA population was reported to be 331,449,281.[9] That same year, the number of (self-identifying) Catholics in the USA was reported by the *Official Catholic Directory* to be 61.9 million,[10] which was 18.7% of the total US population.

Certain States in the USA continue to be more heavily Catholic than others, and the concentration of MPJPs in certain cities illustrates that these regions were a preferred locus for religious women who founded many Catholic ministries, particularly hospitals and schools, over the last 200 years.

c) How Percentage of Catholics Compares to Other Religions

According to a 2023 Gallop poll, participants were asked to respond to the question "What is your religious preference – are you Protestant, Roman Catholic, Mormon, Jewish, Muslim, another religion or no religion?" The results were as follows:[11]

Protestant – 33

Christian (non-specified) – 11

Roman Catholic – 22

Mormon – 1

Jewish – 2

Muslim – *No statistics given*[12]

Other – 6

No religion – 22

These numbers are parsed below.

d) Trend of Religious Affiliation

Decades of statistics have shown a severe drop in numbers for those who identify as Protestant, starting at 69% in 1948 (when the poll first started) and plummeting to 33% in 2023. In 1948 22% identified as Catholic, and that number reached a high of 29% in the late 1970s and early 1980s; it has hovered at 21-23% since 2016. The percentage with Jewish affiliation was 4% in 1948, but it has steadily declined to as low as 1% throughout the 1990s and has stayed steady at 2% since 2000. Those who identify as having no religion was negligible (0 to 2%) until the 1970s, when 4% professed no religious affiliation; the number has steadily increased, reaching double digits in 2002 and climbing to 22% in 2023, reaching parity with those who identify as Catholic.[13] This rise in the numbers of unaffiliated is reflected in various aspects of life in the US, such

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9   United States Census Bureau, "Profiles," https://data.census.gov/profile?q=Catholics&g=010XX00US (accessed on 8 March 2025).

10   See Kelsey W. Reinhardt, "U.S. Catholic Church 2023 Highlights," in *The Official Catholic Directory Anno Domini 2024* (Athens, GA: P.J. Kenedy & Sons, 2024) 1.

11   See "Religion," Gallup, https://news.gallup.com/poll/1690/Religion.aspx (accessed on 8 March 2025).

12   Note that a 2023-2024 Pew Research Poll reports the number of Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus each as 1%; Catholics at 19%. See "Religious Landscape Study," Pew Research Center, https://www.pewresearch.org/religious-landscape-study/ (accessed on 10 March 2025).

13   See "Religion," Gallup, https://news.gallup.com/poll/1690/Religion.aspx (accessed on 8 March 2025).

as declining marriage rates,[14] rising divorce rates,[15] the "legalization" of abortion in 1973 (Roe v. Wade),[16] a rise in drug use,[17] and other social statistics.

e) *Relevant Survey Results on Attitudes to Religion/Belief*

Since 1992, Gallup has asked the question: "How important would you say religion is in your own life -- very important, fairly important or not very important?" The number of respondents who said *Very important* was 58 to 60% through the year 2004, then began to decline. In 2023 45% held religion to be *Very important*. As for *Not very important*, the number has more than doubled from 12% in 1992 to 28 % in 2023. Those who responded *Fairly important* have stayed within the 26% (2023) to 29% range (1992) throughout the three decades.[18]

f) *Number of USA Students in Catholic Schools*

The National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) reported in 2022-2023 that enrolment in Catholic elementary and secondary schools stood at 1,693,493 students in 5,920 schools.[19] That year marked the second in a row that enrolment had risen—a total of just over 4%—in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The increase was sharpest in the Southeast region of the US, where Catholic schools enrolled 1.7 percent more students at the close of the 2023 school year than before the pandemic. Nearly 40% of schools had waiting lists in 2022-2023, and eight new schools opened that year. Although forty-four Catholic schools closed or merged in 2022-2023, that was the lowest number of closures per year in the last twenty years. This renewed appreciation for Catholic education should be an encouraging factor for existing MPJPs that sponsor Catholic schools and for the many religious institutes that are discerning the future of their sponsorship of educational ministries.

g) *Number of USA Hospitals That Are Catholic*

According to the CHA, there are currently 674 Catholic hospitals and approximately 1,600 long-term care and other health facilities in the USA.[20] California leads the way with 50 Catholic hospitals, representing 16% of all hospitals in the state. In comparison, Wisconsin is home to 32 Catholic hospitals out of 74 total and thus has the highest percentage of Catholic compared to total number of hospitals at 43%. Illinois has 39

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14 "Studies have shown that adults in the United States are increasingly postponing marriage, and that a record number of current youth and young adults are projected to forego marriage altogether." Sally Curtin, Paul Sutton, "Marriage Rates in the United States, 1900-2018," Centers for Disease Control, https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hestat/marriage_rate_2018/marriage_rate_2018.htm (accessed on 29 March 2025).

15 See, e.g., "Facts about Divorce in America 2024," https://terryandrobertslaw.com/blog/divorce-rate-facts/ (accessed on 29 March 2025).

16 "What the data says about abortion in the U.S.," Pew Research Center, https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/03/25/ what-the-data-says-about-abortion-in-the-us/ (accessed on 29 March 2025).

17 See "Drug Abuse Statistics," National Center for Drug Abuse Statistics, https://drugabusestatistics.org/ (accessed on 29 March 2025).

18 Ibid.

19 See Annie Smith, "Catholic Schools by the Numbers," *Momentum* (Spring 2023) 36, https://nxt-ubiquity2-prod-storage.s3.amazonaws.com/assets/2d882c408574bcde41ecf7d1eb24d705.pdf (accessed on 10 March 2025).

20 See "U.S. Catholic Health Care," CHA (2024), https://www.chausa.org/docs/default-source/about/catholic-health-care-in-the-united-states---2024.pdf?sfvrsn=a745daf2_3 (accessed on 10 March 2025).

Catholic hospitals, which represents 30% of the total 131 hospitals in the state.[21] The last decade has been a challenging time for Catholic hospitals in that many Americans question the fact that Catholic health care entities will not provide certain medical services, particularly related to women's health care and to youth who wish to transition their gender. Whether these challenges will have an effect on future Catholic health care ministries remains to be seen.

h)   *Other Data Showing the Impact of Catholic Church/Services*

The Catholic health ministry is the largest group of nonprofit health care providers in the USA. On any given day, more than one in seven patients in the USA is cared for in a Catholic hospital.[22] "Catholic hospitals in the USA spend more than $13.6 billion on charity care and community programs each year," and they "provide on average free and discounted care to individuals and families with incomes up to 230% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) and 380% of the FPL respectively."[23]

i)   *How the Catholic Population Compares to General Population*

"The Catholic population is 57% white, 33% Hispanic, 4% Asian, and 2% Black, while 3% are of another race; [about 29% of USA Catholics] live in the South, while 26% live in the Northeast, 24% in the West and 21% in the Midwest."[24] More than half of all USA Catholic adults are aged 50 or older, but when viewed separately, fewer than half of Hispanic Catholics (43%) are 50 and older; indeed, just 14% of Hispanic Catholics are age 65 and older, compared to 38% of white Catholics.[25] About 32% of USA Catholics have a bachelor's degree, with another 28% having some lesser amount of college experience; the remaining 40% have a high school education or less — "a distribution similar to that of the general adult population."[26]

j)   *Mass Attendance*

28% of USA Catholics say they attend Mass weekly or more often, compared to 40% of Protestants who attend weekly services.[27] "Larger shares of Catholics say they pray daily (52%) and say religion is very important in their life (46%). [...] Overall, 20% of U.S. Catholics say they attend Mass weekly and pray daily and consider religion very important in their life."[28] In comparison, 10% say "they attend Mass a few times a year or less often, pray seldom or never, and consider religion 'not too' or 'not at all' important in their life."[29]

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21   See Appendix B of Tess Solomon, Lois Uttley, Patty HasBrouck, and Yoolim Jung, "Bigger and Better: The Growth of Catholic Health Systems (2020) pg. 29, https://www.communitycatalyst.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/2020-Cath-Hosp-Report-2020-31.pdf (accessed on 10 March 2025).

22   See "Catholic Health Care in the United States," CHA (updated April 2024), https://www.chausa.org/about/about/facts-statistics# (accessed on 10 March 2025).

23   "Catholic Health Care Facts - Social Toolkit," CHA, https://www.chausa.org/about/about/facts-about-catholic-health-care (accessed on 10 March 2025).

24   Jonah McKeown, "9 Facts About Catholics in the US, According to Pew Research," *National Catholic Register* (April 15, 2024), https://www.ncregister.com/cna/9-facts-about-catholics-in-the-us-according-to-pew-research (accessed on 10 March 2025).

25   Ibid.

26   Ibid.

27   Ibid.

28   Ibid.

29   Ibid.

k) Number of Parishes

The USCCB reports that there are 196 Catholic dioceses in the USA; 178 are Latin Catholic dioceses (32 archdioceses), and 18 are Eastern Catholic (arch)eparchies.[30] There are approximately 16,615 parishes in the USA.[31] Parishes are grouped into 14 geographical regions. The total number of parishes decreased by about 1300 since 1965, when there were 17,763 parishes in the USA. That number climbed as high as 19,620 in 1990 but has steadily declined over the last 35 years.

l) Number of Priests

The number of priests in the USA has declined by 43% in the last fifty years. In 1965 there were just under 60,000 priests (religious and diocesan combined); in 2023 the number stood at 34,092.[32]

m) Number of Religious

The number of women religious in the USA has declined precipitously over the last 50 years, from 178,740 in 1965 to 35,680 in 2023. The number of men religious has fallen by nearly two-thirds over the same time period, from 34,858 (priests and brothers) in 1965 to 13,460 in 2023.[33] The median age of members of reporting institutes—men and women combined—has changed significantly since 1985, when 8% were ages 30-49, 85% were between 50 and 69, and 7% were age 70 and above. In 2024 5% were aged 30-49, 24% were between 50 and 69, and 71% were aged 70 and above. This represents a ten-fold increase in the number of religious over age 70.[34]

n) National engagement with the Synod on Synodality

Issues and priorities identified by the Catholic population in 2021-2022 in the diocesan phase of the Synod on Synodality were numerous. Foremost mentioned was the wound caused by individuals in leadership and the Church hierarchy itself as the "still unfolding sexual abuse crisis" has ripped through the US Church.[35] The lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic were also identified, with many Catholics feeling alienated by the leadership that refused to take a stand against civil authorities who insisted on shuttering churches and staunching all religious services. Deep divisions in the US Church over political ideologies was a grave concern for many, with Pope

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[30] See USCCB, "National Synthesis of the People of God in the United States of America for the Diocesan Phase of the 2021-2023 Synod," pg. 3, https://www.usccb.org/resources/US%20National%20 Synthesis%202021-2023%20 Synod.pdf (accessed on 10 Mar. 2025).

[31] See CARA, "Frequently Requested Church Statistics," https://cara.georgetown.edu/faqs (accessed on 10 March 2025). The precise number comes from the Global Country Profiles input by CARA, taken from the most recent *Annuarium Statisticum Ecclesiae* (ASE) or Vatican Statistics; the spreadsheet is available at the same CARA URL.

[32] See CARA, "Frequently Requested Church Statistics."

[33] See ibid. For additional statistics, see "National Religious Retirement Office, "Statistical Report—August 2024," pg. 2; https://www.usccb.org/resources/Statistical%20Report.pdf (accessed on 10 March 2025). Note this NRRO report is updated annually, so the 2024 report will be replaced with the 2025 report at this URL later this year. Also, it only includes those who participate in the annual survey, so the numbers are understandably less than those reflected in the CARA report.

[34] See CARA, "Frequently Requested Church Statistics," pg. 5.

[35] The issues identified in this section are all taken from the USCCB, "National Synthesis of the People of God in the United States," pgs. 5-6.

Francis' issuance of *Traditiones custodes* (2023)[36] being noted as a painful curtailing of preferred liturgical practices. Tied in with these divisions was the lack of unity among US bishops, with many expressing concerns that partisan secular politics have infiltrated homilies and ministry. Marginalization of two broad groups was also a concern, with one group being those who are vulnerable due to a lack of social and economic power. The other group of marginalized includes those whose life circumstances are experienced as impediments to full participation in life in the Church.[37]

MPJP/ACFs[38] in USA

Factors that Led to the Establishment of MPJPs/ACFs

When the settling of the USA was firmly under way in 17th century, many hospitals and schools were founded by religious institutes of men and women. Many of these institutions grew and flourished for over two hundred years. After Vatican II, however, the numbers of religious—women in particular—declined precipitously in the USA, as the statistics previously cited in 2.k-l above attest. A natural consequence of that decline was that religious leadership had to study and plan for their sponsored ministries, particularly regarding how their respective charisms and Catholic identity could be protected and insured, along with their chances of surviving into the future. In the 1960s and 1970s, Catholic colleges and universities began inviting lay persons onto their civil boards of regents/trustees and separately incorporating the educational entities from their sponsoring religious institutes.[39]

Governing boards and sponsors of Catholic healthcare ministries were the first to explore ways to organize and structure the canonical governance to be able to maintain their status as ecclesiastically recognized entities. When the 1983 Code of Canon Law was promulgated by Pope John Paul II in 1983, it included new language to describe certain entities that had been called "moral persons" in the 1917 code.[40] The term "juridic person" was introduced, with the capacity to be public or private. One of the canonists who was in the forefront of assisting Catholic healthcare entities as they studied their future prospects was Reverend Francis Morrisey, OMI, from Ottawa, Ontario. He assisted the leadership of many religious institutes in the USA and Canada as they sought to form separate public juridic persons to

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[36] See Francis, mp *Traditiones custodes* On the Use of the Roman Liturgy Prior to the Reform of 1970, July 16, 2021: *AAS* 113 (2031) 793-796, Eng. trans. at https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/motu_proprio/documents/20210716-motu-proprio-traditionis-custodes.html (accessed on 10 Mar. 2025).

[37] "National Synthesis of the People of God in the United States," pg. 6. Those who experience marginalization, and thus a lack of representation in the Church, fall into two broad groups. More specifically, the first group includes immigrant communities; ethnic minorities; the undocumented; the unborn and their mothers; those experiencing poverty, homelessness, or incarceration; those with disabilities or mental health issues; people with various addictions, and women whose voices are frequently marginalized in the decision-making processes. The second group includes members of the LGBTQ+ community, divorced and remarried without a declaration of nullity, and civilly married individuals who never married in the Church.

[38] ACF means Association of Christs Faithful, an alternative canonical structure utilized for the sponsorship of some Church ministries. See Glossary on page 3.

[39] These events led to the McGrath-Maida disagreement—primarily among canonists and civil attorneys—over whether and how the civil incorporation of a sponsored ministry affected the canonical status of a college or university. A full discussion is beyond the scope of this paper, but one helpful resource for more on the topic is Adam Maida. "Canonical and Legal Fallacies of the McGrath Thesis on Reorganization of Church Entities," *The Catholic Lawyer*, vol. 4 no. 19 (Autumn 1973) 275-286, https://scholarship.law.st johns.edu/tcl/vol19/iss4/9/ (accessed 15 Mar. 2025).

[40] Compare *CIC/83* cc. 113-123 and (primarily) *CIC/17* c. 99.

act as sponsors for ministries that would, at some point in the not-too-distant future, no longer be able to rely on the founding religious institute for their canonical juridic identity.

Number of MPJPS/ACFs in the USA

This project identified 26 MPJPs and 1 ACF who sponsor ministries in the USA. The project was able to obtain information on MPJPs from various websites and from the Apostolic See through the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (DICLSAL).[41] As noted earlier, finding the contact details for the MPJPs proved to be extremely difficult.

Seven MPJPs completed the project's 22-question survey. An additional MPJP completed the survey but later asked that it be withdrawn, resulting in its data being deleted.

Appendix 2. MPJPs in the USA provides the following data on the 27 MPJPs:

- 25 MPJPs were established by the Apostolic See (DICLSAL);

- No MPJPs were established by the national episcopal conference (USCCB);

- Two MPJPs were established by a local bishop (St Louis and La Crosse);

- One MPJP operating in the USA is based in Canada (Catholic Health International);

- At least 50 separate religious institutes (with provinces counted as separate religious institutes) were founders of MPJPs operating in the USA;

- Only two male religious institutes were founders of a MPJP (Society of Jesus Midwest Province and Clerics of St. Viator of the Province of Chicago).

Year of establishment data in Appendix 2 shows that the average age of MPJPs in the USA is 13 years, with the oldest being 34 years old (established in 1991). The MPJPs sponsoring health ministries were the first to be established. The MPJPs sponsoring educational ministries are much more recent as can be seen in their average age being 6 years.[42] Graph 1 shows that the establishment of MPJPs in the USA was most rapid in the 2018-2022 period, when 10 MPJPs were established.

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[41] Formerly the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CICLSAL). See Glossary on page 3.

[42] Of the 9 MPJPs that have education as their principal ministry, 5 of them are less than 4 years old. Eight of the 9 are 8 years old or younger. Although the mean (average) is 6 years, the median and mode are both 3 years.

Graph 1. Establishment of MPJPs in USA 1991-2024

Legend: ■ No of MPJP est in that year ■ Cumulative number of MPJPs
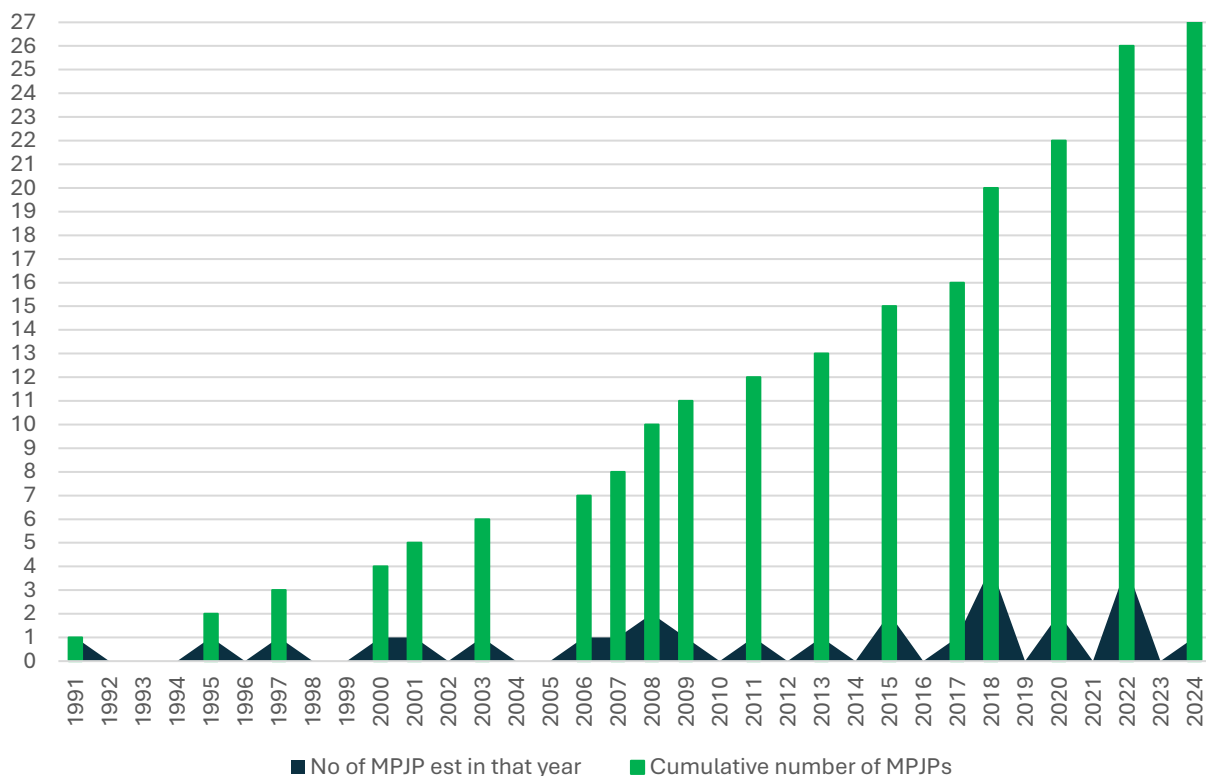
The project is aware of a significant number of mergers and acquisitions among the MPJPs who sponsor health ministries. When two MPJPs "merge", the usual practice is for one to be suppressed and for the other MPJP to continue, although often with a new name to acknowledge the absorbed MPJP. The project did not have the resources to track these mergers and acquisitions.

Almost all of the MPJPs were established by the Apostolic See. This could be because their founding religious institute was a pontifical PJP and/or because the MPJP would be operating across multiple dioceses. The two MPJPs established by a local bishop are both education focused, and both operate in only one diocese.

The high number of MPJPs founded by women religious reflects the success of the women in establishing so many ministries. The scarcity of MPJPs founded by male religious institutes could be explained by most of them being international rather than diocesan or regional. There are a various reasons why male religious have not founded many MPJPs. Clerical religious were often assigned pastoral and parish roles that will remain with a diocese. Male religious, especially brothers, did establish many educational institutions, and these potentially could be transferred to MPJPs. Male religious institutes are typically international rather than diocesan or regional so that a decrease in US membership may not be seen as an existential threat, which is, in part, what has prompted some women's institutes to transfer ministries to MPJPs. In addition, the empowerment of laity to take on leadership and sponsorship roles may not be sufficient motivation for male religious to found MPJPs.

Background of MPJP/ACF Trustee/Sponsors

The responses below were gleaned from the representatives who responded to the survey.

As noted previously, only eight (30%) of the 27 MPJPs completed the survey. A closer look reveals that 60% of education sponsoring MPJPs but only 10% of MPJPs sponsoring hospitals/healthcare completed the survey (it would have been 16% from hospitals/healthcare if not for one MPJP withdrawing their survey). The responses are presented below in Table 1.

There are a total of 92 Trustee/Sponsors across these surveyed MPJPs.

Table 1. Key characteristics of surveyed Trustee/Sponsors in USA

	Hospitals/healthcare Trustee/Sponsors	*Education Trustee/Sponsors*
Average number of Trustee/Sponsors	7	13
Average proportion of women Trustee/Sponsors	61%	65%
Average percentage baptized Trustee/Sponsors	100%	100%
Average proportion of Trustee/Sponsors who are lay persons	54%	58%
Average proportion of Trustee/Sponsors who are members of a religious institute	46%	34%
Average proportion of Trustee/Sponsors who are ordained (deacon priest, or bishop)	0	8%
Average proportion of Trustee/Sponsors who have a theological qualification	36%	22%
Average proportion of Trustee/Sponsors who have a governance qualification	7%	13%
Average proportion of Trustee/Sponsors who have experience as a Board Director	93%	72%
Average proportion of Trustee/Sponsors who have previous experience as a Trustee/Sponsor of a canonical entity (parish, diocese, Religious Institute)	30%	25%

If the number of Trustee/Sponsors for all MPJPs in USA is similar to the averages in this sample, then there are about 300 people in these roles. While MPJP Trustee/Sponsor roles are not common in the Church, collectively they are a significant number of people. Together they have a scale that enables cooperative action. There could also be challenges in recruiting a sufficient number of quality successors.

There are key differences between the education sponsoring Trustee/Sponsors and those involved with health care. Trustee/Sponsors sponsoring education ministries are more likely

to be on a larger board; less likely to be a member of a religious institute, more likely to be ordained, less likely to have a theological qualification and less likely to have previous board experience. The much larger size and complexity of most of the health care MPJPs could explain why more of their Trustee/Sponsors have a governance qualification and previous board experience.

The project is interested to see whether the Church is appointing to MPJP Trustee/Sponsor roles people who have previous experience as a Trustee/Sponsor of another canonical entity (parish, diocese, religious institute). The high proportion (25-30%) in the USA sample is reflective of the high proportion of religious in Trustee/Sponsor roles. It could also be possible that some lay people have served as Trustee/Sponsor with another MPJP. Having MPJP Trustee/Sponsors with previous experience as a Trustee/Sponsor has both a moderately positive and negative impact. This experience could be a benefit to the MPJP in clarity of role and Church context. Alternatively, it could mean that the same people are being utilised, and fresh perspectives are missing. Further in this paper is evidence that MPJPs are conscious of the importance of succession planning.

MPJP/ACF ministries by diocese

According to the USCCB, there are 194 archdioceses/dioceses, the Archdiocese for the Military Services, and the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter.

- 144 Latin Catholic dioceses
- 33 Latin Catholic archdioceses
- 16 Eastern Catholic eparchies
- 2 Eastern Catholic archeparchies
- 1 Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA

Of the 178 Latin arch/dioceses in the USA,[43] there are 54 (30%) dioceses where a MPJP is not represented.[44] Because Eastern eparchies in the USA are not territorial in their jurisdiction,[45] it is not possible to determine whether MPJPs operate within any of the eighteen Eastern arch/eparchies in the USA.[46]

Five arch/dioceses have four MPJPs (the greatest number in USA) operating ministries within their boundaries (Cleveland, Milwaukee, New Orleans, Seattle, and St Louis).

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[43] The number 178 includes 144 Latin dioceses (including one in the Virgin Islands—see fn 44 for more), 33 Latin archdioceses, and the Archdiocese for the Military Services. The Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St Peter is a recent construct (established in January 2012) to serve former Anglican groups and clergy in the United States who sought to become Catholic. Similar to a diocese, though national in scope, the ordinariate is based in Houston, Texas, and includes parishes and communities across the United States that are fully Catholic, while retaining elements of their Anglican heritage and traditions. See https://www.usccb.org/about/bishops-and-dioceses#tab--listing-of-all-dioceses-by-state (accessed on 29 March 2025).

[44] See: Appendix 4 USA dioceses and the MPJPs with ministries within each diocese.

[45] As part of the Diaspora of Eastern Catholics, eparchies and archeparchies in the US have jurisdiction over large areas of the United States (and Canada) based on the locations of the members of each individual Church. See https://www.usccb.org/about/bishops-and-dioceses#tab--listing-of-all-dioceses-by-state.

[46] During a meeting in February 2025 with officials from the Dicastery for the Eastern Churches in Rome, the author asked whether there had been any requests from religious institutes of any of the Eastern Churches *sui iuris* to form MPJPs. The officials stated that they were not familiar with any such requests. This information will be reported this fall in the 2025 edition of *Roman Replies and CLSA Advisory Opinions*.

Six arch/diocese have three MPJPs (the greatest number in USA) operating ministries within their boundaries (Belleville, Chicago, Indianapolis, Joliet, Orange, and Portland).

Twenty-nine arch/diocese have two MPJPs operating ministries within their boundaries (Albany; Atlanta; Baker; Boise; Boston; Camden; Cincinnati; Dallas; Evansville; Fargo; Fort Wayne-South Bend; Fresno; Galveston-Houston; Kalamazoo; Lexington; Los Angeles; Madison; New York; Omaha; Owensboro; Peoria; Philadelphia; Rockford; Saint Paul and Minneapolis; Saint Petersburg; Sioux City; Spokane; Toledo; Youngstown).

Eighty arch/diocese have an MPJP providing at least one ministry within their boundaries.

The high prevalence of MPJPs across arch/dioceses (70%) could mean that bishops and their people are aware of the existence and role of MPJPs. For instance, Catholic Health Care Federation and Catholic Health Ministries both have ministries in 35 arch/dioceses. As common providers of services across the Church in the USA, there is also the potential for the faithful to see MPJPs as a positive contributor to the life of the Church. However, the actual awareness of these entities as Catholic forms of governance is quite limited.

MPJP/ACF ministries by ministry sector[47]

The project's survey asked MPJPs to identify which of nine ministry sectors their ministries operated. Graph 2 shows that one MPJP identified ministries in addition to these nine (shown as "other"). Nineteen of the twenty-seven (70%) MPJPs sponsor hospital/health ministries. The next most common ministry sector is secondary school education (22% of MPJPs); followed by tertiary/university (19% of MPJPs); then primary school education (11% of MPJPs). Only two MPJPs sponsor early learning education and aged care ministries. Disability services, Family services and Community services are sponsored by single MPJPs.

Graph 2. USA MPJPs ministries by ministry sector

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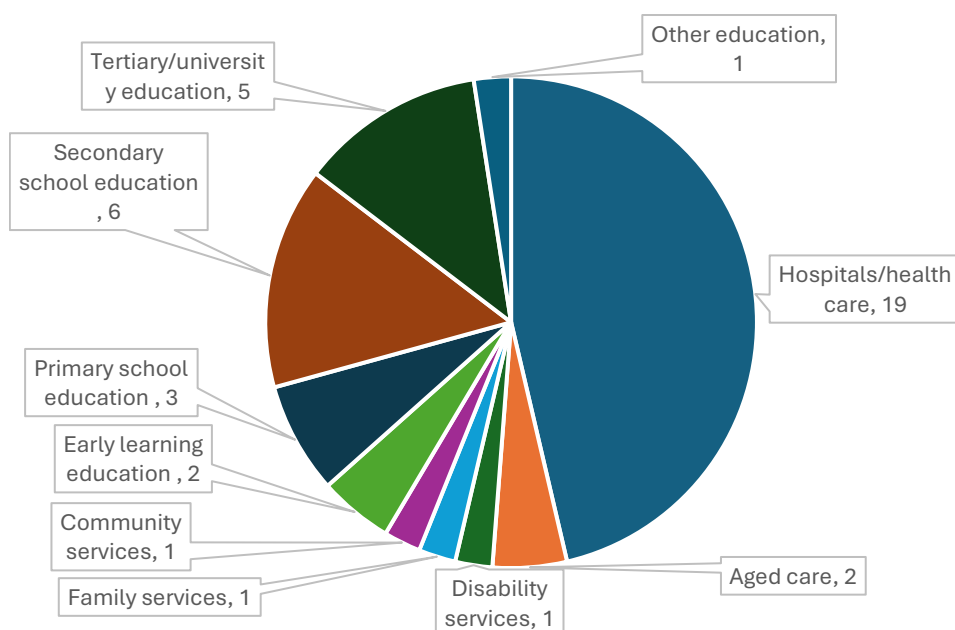
[47] See: Appendix 5. Number of USA MPJPs operating in key ministry sectors.

The lower number of schools compared to health ministries is related to funding. There is no financial assistance from the government for Catholic schools in the USA. The costs of operating a school have progressively increased as the number of religious working in schools has decreased. Some religious institutes have closed or transferred schools rather than provide high fee schools that are not as aligned with their mission as other options. Catholic hospital/health care services have options of funding from health insurance and government.

The survey did not ask MPJPs to specify the size or scope of their ministries. The project is aware that some MPJPs operate just one single hospital whereas others sponsor a system with dozens of hospitals, research centers and associated services. Likewise in the education sector, some MPJPs operate multiple educational institutions and others just a single institution. One of the reasons the project did not ask about the size of ministries was that the request may have deterred some MPJPs due to complexity or transparency reasons. Ultimately, the project concluded that its focus was the MPJP, so it was more relevant to know the ministry sector than the size or scope of the ministries.

Positive and synodal aspects of MPJP/ACFs in USA

USA Trustees/Sponsors identified the following as aspects of their MPJP which are positive and synodal:[48]

a) One MPJP has a two-year mission formation period before people take on the role of Trustee/Sponsor. This is a time of discernment and dialogue for the individual and for the MPJP as they both listen for the Spirit's voice on whether this person is being called to be a Trustee/Sponsor. Formation for candidates involves attending meetings of the mission committee—every meeting includes 90 minutes spiritual formation on core values, mission statement, Catholic Social Teaching. This is a slow and deep process of formation in which all of the voices are heard.

b) One MPJP reported that early in their respective terms, their Trustee/Sponsors realized that they were not a board; rather they recognized themselves as being an ecclesial body. They saw voting as inappropriate for their decision-making and adopted a spiritual conversation-like process. This allows them to appreciate many voices and have richer discussions.

c) Another group of Trustee/Sponsors said that they have grown in their knowledge of, experience in, and commitment to the Catholic faith as a consequence of their role.

d) One participant noted that, within his/her own MPJP sponsors' council, there are different perspectives. The council aims to hear and respect all perspectives. They strive to accommodate each Trustee/Sponsor's style, noting that some need to talk a lot, some need more time to reflect, and others need to read about issues. The council chair was noted as having excellent leadership skills, and s/he ensured that all Trustee/Sponsors are engaged and valued.[49]

e) The CHA formation course for Trustee/Sponsors was acclaimed as excellent. Trustee/Sponsors said that they learnt from theologians and other experts. One of the

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[48] List developed during the Inclusive Governance in a Synodal Church Project online focus group held on 04 March 2025 with additional contributions from other Trustees/Sponsors.

[49] See: Appendix 3. MPJP Trustee/Sponsors describe their experiences as Ecclesial Leaders.

other benefits was the friendship and assistance that they now have with a range of Trustee/Sponsors from across the country. They continue to support each other.

f) Trustee/Sponsors of one MPJP drew attention to their structures and processes to consult with our ministries. The Trustee/Sponsors know that the onus is on them to go out to hear the voices of those who the MPJP serves. There are meetings: with mission directors; with presidents of universities; with individual boards; and with the boards of the different ministries together. The Trustee/Sponsors regularly bring mission representatives to have conversations with them. The Trustee/Sponsors acknowledge that there's more work to be done on this, so they look at this as an area for continued development.

g) MPJPs promote a culture of collaboration with the boards that they appoint. On major issues, the Trustee/Sponsors share their concerns and hopes, and they plot a way forward together with the boards.

h) Some MPJPs have ministries in different States, and these States have different perspectives—some could be called conservative, and others could be called progressive. These ministries expressed concern that the MPJP may force a particular perspective on them. The MPJP's approach is one of subsidiarity. The Trustee/Sponsors respect the local culture and empower the ministries to make decisions appropriate for the local level.

MPJP/ACF interaction with other parts of the Church in USA

Because MPJPs are approved by either a bishop or the Holy See, they have interaction with the bishop or his delegate during all stages of formation and operation. Bishops have oversight over various aspects of apostolates within their jurisdiction, including anything related to liturgical and sacramental functions, the use of the name "Catholic," approval of religion instructors, and certain aspects of educational institutions. Even pontifically approved MPJPs will have sought a favorable votum from the bishop since they must have his permission to operate in the diocese.

Many MPJPs that sponsor health care ministries are members of CHA, which serves many needs related to the governance and administration of these juridic persons, such as maintaining Catholic identity, providing formation opportunities for leadership and employees, and advancing the Catholic health care ministry in the USA.[50]

In addition, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) has been journeying with women religious for decades as they sought to form MPJPs. This organization continues to be a locus for discussion as women religious assess where they have been, how their current realities are playing out, and whether the future requires other creative options. The Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM) has also been involved in the study of MPJPs as men's institutes and societies begin to explore future options for their own sponsored ministries. Resource Center for Religious Institutes (RCRI) continues to assist both of these leadership organizations by providing information and resources related to legal and financial matters that MPJPs may encounter.

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[50] See, e.g., "About" CHA at https://www.chausa.org/about/about (accessed on 29 March 2025).

Lastly, a number of canon lawyers from the Canon Law Society of America have been involved in the formation and preservation of MPJPs in the USA. As the need grows, the study of the MPJP must be compared to other options for carrying the legacy of sponsored works into the future. Collaborative efforts between Catholic civil attorneys is another piece that needs to be nurtured and expanded in order to provide founding institutes and (potential) sponsors with the full breadth of possibilities when deciding a path for the future.

Possible future MPJP/ACF activities

Trustees/Sponsors identified the following as initiatives that they believe will support MPJPs in USA:[51]

1. Potential Trustee/Sponsors need significant (e.g., two-year) formation/discernment before they begin in this role. This formation needs to acknowledge that prospective Trustee/Sponsors are not a "blank slate." They all come with different knowledge and experience. So, there is a need for dialogue in preparing/delivering the formation. This preparation period can also help them to understand that this is a discernment process.
2. Trustee/Sponsors need ongoing formation. Their formation needs are distinct from those of board directors. Trustee/Sponsor formation could explore topics of: Catholic social teaching; Catholic context; Church expectations of MPJPs and their ministries; how to negotiate with the local diocese and why that matters to the local ordinary and his staff, understanding the role of spirituality; personal prayer; and spiritual conversation in an MPJP. Education also includes: the different ministries and their field (e.g. healthcare issues, language).

3. Developing a supportive community that nurtures and challenges the Trustee/Sponsor is important. The Trustee/Sponsors within the MPJP need an experience of communion (*communio*) with each other. They are hoping to foster experiences like conversations in the Spirit so as to find colleagues in each other.

4. A network of support between Trustee/Sponsors of different MPJPs would be helpful in addressing common issues. It could also give a sense of support to each other.

5. The Trustee/Sponsors need God. Trustee/Sponsors praying together is core to their role.

6. Each MPJP needs a clear mission and vision of their identity and purpose and ways of proceeding.

7. MPJPs need practical assistance and resources. MPJP issues are unique and there are not many who understand what Trustee/Sponsors are dealing with so it would be good to share knowledge and experience. Someone suggested a repository of papers, templates, guidelines, etc., for education and other non-health MPJPs (in a similar way to how CHA is a repository for health matters). The MPJP also requires resources to meet its current and growth needs we don't want to take these from our ministries.

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[51] Initiatives identified in the Inclusive Governance in a Synodal Church Project online focus group held on 04 March 2025 with additional contributions from other Trustees/Sponsors.

8. Some education for senior leaders of the Church, specifically around the MPJP role, the possibilities, the richness, and the relationship with local/national Church. This education could be conducted in ways that build mutual awareness and trust.

Conclusion

The development of MPJPs in the USA over the last thirty-four years is a testament to the desire of religious and laity to perpetuate the ministries that thousands of men and women religious built. Protecting their Catholic identity and the quality of services are paramount concerns, The thousands of schools, hospitals, and other ministries were inspired by the respective charisms of the founding religious institutes whose members sought to meet the needs of the People of God in a young country with little infrastructure to provide for the needs of its growing Catholic population.

We have reached a turning point, and the torch is being passed to new generations. Those passing and those receiving must dialogue and learn from each other if success is to be long term.

> Foundational to assuring sponsorship in the next generation is belief in the power of the organizational values to influence, and the spirit and spirituality of the sponsor to animate the transformation of American institutional ministries—an influence that is posited on Catholic institutional ministries remaining active players. Moreover, a spirit of courage and daring, rooted in personal and organizational integrity, is essential. Together with a spirit of detachment from individual corporate or congregational identity and a willingness to forge those partnerships, sponsors can insure the future viability of sponsored ministries.[52]

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[52] Mary Catherine Grant and Patricia Vandenberg, *After We're Gone: Creating Sustainable Sponsorships* (Mishawaka, IN: Ministry Development Resources, 1998) 126-127.

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Appendix 1. Inclusive Governance in a Synodal Church, Survey Instrument

About your MPJP/ACF:

The questions in this section seek details about your PJP (i.e., MPJP-ACF).

These details, along with those of other MPJP-ACFs, will be included in the paper that will provide an overview of MPJP-ACFs in your country and the Church and societal factors that impact MPJP-ACFs.

You will see a draft of this country paper and have an opportunity to provide comment and to ask for changes before it is published.

1.　　What is the name of your Public Juridic Person (PJP)?

2.　　In which year your PJP was established by the Church?

3.　　Who was Establishing Authority?
　　　options:
　　　☐　Apostolic See: DICLSAL (previously known as CICLSAL), or
　　　☐　National Catholic Bishops Conference or
　　　☐　Local Bishop (or Archbishop) or other (please specify)

4.　　What is the canonical basis of your PJP?
　　　options:
　　　☐　as per canon 116; or
　　　☐　as per canon 298ff; or
　　　☐　I'm not sure (we will contact you to clarify)

5.　　Which Religious Institute(s) originally petitioned the Establishing Authority to establish your PJP?

6.　　What ministries does your PJP sponsor
　　　options:
　　　☐　Hospitals/health care;
　　　☐　Aged care;
　　　☐　Disability Services;
　　　☐　Family services,
　　　☐　Community services,
　　　☐　Early learning education (approx. 5 year old and younger),
　　　☐　Primary school education from (approx. 6 to 12 year old),
　　　☐　Secondary school education (approx. 13 to 18year old),
　　　☐　Tertiary/university education,
　　　☐　other (please specify)

These next questions ask about your MPJP-ACF's ministries in National and Local Churches.

This information will be included in the country paper to show your, and other MPJP-ACF, contributions to the wider Church and society.

7.　　In which country(s) does your PJP operate?
　　　options:
　　　☐　Australia; and/or

- ☐ Canada; and/or
- ☐ Ireland; and/or
- ☐ New Zealand; and/or
- ☐ Singapore-Malaysia; and/or
- ☐ UK; and/or
- ☐ USA; and/or
- ☐ Other

8. In which Dioceses does your PJP have ministries?
   options:
   Choose from lists of dioceses which will appear based on selected country (and in selected state/province of USA/Canada)

About your MPJP/ACFs Trustee/Sponsors:
The next eight questions will help us develop a profile of MPJP-ACF Trustee-Sponsors within each country. It will help answer questions about the diversity of their backgrounds/qualifications and the perspective/skills that they bring to a governance role in the Church.

9. What is the total number of Trustee/Sponsors in your PJP?

10. What % of Trustee/Sponsors are baptised?

11. What % of Trustee/Sponsors are women?

12. What % of Trustee/Sponsors in Religious life?

13. What % of Trustee/Sponsors are ordained?

14. What % of Trustee/Sponsors have a theology degree?

15. What % of Trustee/Sponsors have a qualification from a governance institute? (e.g., Company Director course from Institute of Company Directors)

16. What % of Trustee/Sponsors have previous experience as a Board Director?

17. What % of Trustee/Sponsors have previous experience as a MPJP Trustee-Sponsor (or parish priest, bishop, Religious Institute General Superior)?

About the person completing this survey:
Providing your contact details in the next questions will assist us should we have any questions about your responses in this survey.

18. Name of person completing this survey

19. MPJP/ACF

20. Contact phone number

21. Contact email

22. Date

Appendix 2. MPJPs in USA *as of 31 March 2025*

MPJP	Est year	Establishing Authority	Instigating Church entities	Ministry	Diocesan presence
1. Ascension Sponsor	2011	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	• Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet • Southeast, Northeast, East Central and West Central provinces of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul	Hospitals/health care; Aged care; Disability services; and Family services	Alabama: • Birmingham, Diocese Arizona: • Tuscan, Diocese Arkansas: • Little Rock, Diocese District of Columbia: • Washington, Archdiocese Florida: • Pensacola-Tallahassee, Diocese • Saint Augustine, Diocese Georgia: • Savannah, Diocese Illinois: • Chicago, Archdiocese • Joliet, Diocese • Rockford, Diocese Indiana: • Evansdale, Diocese • Indianapolis, Archdiocese Louisiana: • New Orleans, Archdiocese Maryland: • Baltimore, Archdiocese Michigan: • Detroit, Archdiocese • Kalamazoo, Diocese • Saginaw, Diocese Missouri • St Louis, Archdiocese New York • Rochester, Diocese Oklahoma

MPJP	Est year	Establishing Authority	Instigating Church entities	Ministry	Diocesan presence
					• Tulsa, Diocese Tennessee • Nashville, Diocese Texas • Austin, Diocese Wisconsin • Milwaukee, Archdiocese
2. Bon Secours Mercy Ministries	2018	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	• Sisters of Bon Secours, • Sisters of the Humility of Mary, • Sisters of Mercy of the Americas	Hospitals/health care;	Florida • Saint Petersburg, Diocese New York • New York, Archdiocese Kentucky • Lexington, Diocese • Owensboro, Diocese Maryland • Baltimore, Archdiocese Ohio • Cincinnati, Archdiocese • Cleveland, Diocese • Toledo, Diocese • Youngstown, Diocese South Carolina • Charleston, Diocese Virginia • Richmond, Diocese
3. Catholic Health Care Federation	1991	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	• A large group of sisters' congregations each of which had sponsored their own systems.	Hospitals/health care; (CommonSpirit Health)	Arizona: • Phoenix, Diocese Arkansas • Little Rock, Diocese California • Fresno, Diocese • Los Angeles, Archdiocese • Monterey, Diocese • Oakland, Diocese • Sacramento, Diocese • San Francisco, Archdiocese

MPJP	Est year	Establishing Authority	Instigating Church entities	Ministry	Diocesan presence
					• San Jose, Diocese • Stockton, Diocese Colorado • Colorado Springs, Diocese • Denver, Archdiocese • Pueblo, Diocese Georgia • Atlanta, Archdiocese Illinois • Belleville, Diocese Indiana • Evansville, Diocese • Fort Wayne-South Bend, Diocese • Indianapolis, Archdiocese Kansas • Dodge City, Diocese Kentucky • Lexington, Diocese Minnesota • Crookston, Diocese • Saint Cloud, Diocese Nebraska • Grand Island, Diocese • Lincoln, Diocese • Omaha, Archdiocese Nevada • Las Vegas, Archdiocese New Mexico • Santa Fe, Archdiocese North Dakota • Bismark, Diocese • Fargo, Diocese Ohio • Steubenville, Diocese Oregon

MPJP	Est year	Establishing Authority	Instigating Church entities	Ministry	Diocesan presence
					• Portland, Archdiocese Pennsylvania • Harrisburg, Diocese Tennessee • Knoxville, Diocese Texas • Galveston-Houston, Archdiocese Utah • Salt Lake City, Diocese
4. Catholic Health Ministries	2000	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	• Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, • Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, • Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, • Sisters of Providence, • Holyoke, Sisters of St. Joseph of St. Augustine	Hospitals/health care; (Trinity Health)	Alabama: • Mobile, Diocese California • Fresno, Diocese Connecticut • Hartford, Archdiocese Delaware • Wilmington, Diocese District of Columbia • Washington, Archdiocese Florida • Miami, Archdiocese Georgia • Atlanta, Archdiocese Idaho • Boise, Diocese Illinois: • Chicago, Archdiocese • Joliet, Diocese • Peoria, Diocese • Rockford, Diocese Indiana • Fort Wayne-South Bend, Diocese Iowa • Davenport, Diocese • Des Moines, Diocese

MPJP	Est year	Establishing Authority	Instigating Church entities	Ministry	Diocesan presence
					• Dubuque, Archdiocese • Sioux City, Diocese Massachusetts • Springfield, Diocese Michigan • Detroit, Archdiocese • Grand Rapids, Diocese • Kalamazoo, Diocese • Lansing, Diocese Minnesota • Winona-Rochester, Diocese Nebraska • Omaha, Archdiocese New Jersey • Camden, Diocese • Trenton, Diocese New York • Albany, Diocese • Syracuse, Diocese North Carolina • Raleigh, Diocese Ohio • Columbus, Diocese Oregon • Baker, Diocese Pennsylvania • Philadelphia, Archdiocese • Pittsburgh, Diocese South Dakota • Sioux Falls, Diocese Texas • Dallas, Diocese
5. Catholic Health International (Catholic Health Partners Inc)	2001	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	• Religious Hospitallers of Saint Joseph; • Sisters of Charity of the Immaculate Conception;	Hospitals/health care;	Illinois: • Chicago, Archdiocese Wisconsin • Green Bay, Diocese

MPJP	Est year	Establishing Authority	Instigating Church entities	Ministry	Diocesan presence
			• Les Religieuses de Notre-Damedu Sacre-Coeur; • La Congregation des Filles des Jesus; and • Catholic Health Association of New Brunswick.		and in Canada
6. Covenant Health Systems	1995	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	• Sisters of Charity of Montreal (Grey Nuns)	Hospitals/health care (Covenant Health Inc)	Maine • Portland, Diocese Massachusetts • Boston, Archdiocese • Worchester, Diocese Pennsylvania • Scranton, Diocese Rhode Island • Providence, Diocese Vermont • Burlington, Diocese
7. Cristo Rey Institute	2017	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	• Clerics of St. Viator of the Province of Chicago, • Society of Jesus (Midwest Province) • Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, Kansas	Secondary school education (approx. 13 to 18year old),	California • Orange, Diocese Florida • Miami, Archdiocese Illinois • Chicago, Archdiocese South Carolina • Charleston, Diocese
8. Dominican Veritas Ministries	2022	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	• Dominican Sister Congregations of Adrian, Michigan, Sinsinawa, Wisconsin, Houston, Texas, Springfield, IL, and • Dominican Sisters of Peace, Columbus Ohio.	Secondary school education (approx. 13 to 18year old), Tertiary/university education	Florida • Palm Beach, Archdiocese Illinois • Chicago, Archdiocese Louisiana • New Orleans, Archdiocese Minnesota • Saint Paul and Minneapolis, Archdiocese New York

MPJP	Est year	Establishing Authority	Instigating Church entities	Ministry	Diocesan presence
					• New York, Archdiocese Ohio • Cleveland, Diocese Tennessee • Memphis, Diocese Texas • Galveston-Houston, Archdiocese Wisconsin • Madison, Diocese • Milwaukee, Archdiocese
9. Duluth Benedictine Ministries	2022	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	• Benedictine Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery	Hospitals/health care (Essentia Health and St Mary's Health, St Francis Regional Medical Centre) Aged care. Tertiary/university education (College of St. Scholastica)	Idaho • Boise, Diocese Minnesota • Duluth, Diocese • Saint Paul and Minneapolis, Archdiocese
10. Franciscan Calais Ministries	2018	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	• Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady (Baton Rouge, LA)	Hospitals/health care (Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady Health System)	Louisiana • Baton Rouge, Diocese • Lafayette, Diocese • New Orleans, Archdiocese • Shreveport, Diocese Mississippi • Jackson, Diocese
11. Health System Ministries	2007	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	• Sisters of Charity of Saint Augustine	Hospitals/health care (Sisters of Charity Health System, incl. Regina Healthcare)	Ohio • Cleveland, Diocese
12. Holy Names Educational Ministries	2022	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	• Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus and Mary	Primary school education from (approx. 6 to 12 year old), Secondary school education (approx. 13 to 18year old), Other: Music Center and an Adult Learning Center	California: • Los Angeles, Archdiocese • Oakland, Diocese Florida • Saint Petersburg, Diocese New York • Albany, Diocese Oregon

MPJP	Est year	Establishing Authority	Instigating Church entities	Ministry	Diocesan presence
					• Portland, Archdiocese Washington • Seattle, Archdiocese • Spokane, Diocese
13. Hospitals Sisters Ministries	2015	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	• Hospitals Sisters of the Third Order of St Francis, Springfield, IL	Hospitals/health care	Wisconsin • Green Bay, Diocese • Milwaukee, Archdiocese Illinois • Belleville, Diocese • Springfield, Diocese
14. Leaven Ministries	2008	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	• Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, Kansas	Hospitals/health care	Kansas • Kansas City, Archdiocese
15. Mercy Health Ministry	2008	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	• Sisters of Mercy	Hospitals/health care	Kentucky • Covington, Diocese • Owensboro, Diocese Ohio • Cincinnati, Archdiocese • Cleveland, Diocese • Toledo, Diocese • Youngstown, Diocese
16. PeaceHealth	1997	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	• Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace	Hospitals/health care	Alaska: • Anchorage-Juneau, Archdiocese Oregon • Portland, Archdiocese Washington • Seattle, Archdiocese
17. Providence Ministries	2009	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	• Sisters of Providence	Hospitals/health care (Providence St Joseph Health is co-sponsored by the MPJPs: Providence Ministries and St Joseph Health Ministries)	California • Los Angeles, Archdiocese • Orange, Diocese • San Bernardino, Diocese • Santa Rosa, Diocese Montana • Helena, Diocese New Mexico

MPJP	Est year	Establishing Authority	Instigating Church entities	Ministry	Diocesan presence
					• Las Cruces, Diocese **Oregon** • Baker, Diocese • Portland, Archdiocese **Texas** • Lubbock, Diocese **Washington** • Seattle, Archdiocese • Spokane, Diocese • Yakima, Diocese
18. Redeemer Ministries	2020	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	• Sisters of the Most Holy Redeemer	Hospitals/health care (Holy Redeemer Health System)	**New Jersey** • Camden, Diocese **Pennsylvania** • Philadelphia, Archdiocese
19. Sisters of Mary of the Presentation (SMP) Health Ministry	2015	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	• Sisters of Mary of the Presentation, Bismark, North Dakota	Hospitals/health care (SMP Health System)	**North Dakota** • Fargo, Diocese
20. Sisters of St Mary Health Ministries	2013	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	• Franciscan Sisters of Mary	Hospitals/health care	**Illinois:** • Belleville, Diocese **Missouri:** • Jefferson City, Diocese • St Louis, Archdiocese **Oklahoma** • Oklahoma City, Archdiocese **Wisconsin** • Madison, Diocese • Milwaukee, Archdiocese
21. St Anthony Ministries	2018	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	• Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, La Crosse, Wisconsin	Hospitals/health care;	**Iowa:** • Sioux City, Diocese
22. St Joseph Educational Ministry	2020	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	• Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, St. Louis Province	Early learning education (approx. 5-year-old and younger),	**Indiana:** • Indianapolis, Archdiocese **Missouri:** • Kansas City-Saint Joseph, Diocese

MPJP	Est year	Establishing Authority	Instigating Church entities	Ministry	Diocesan presence
				Primary school education from (approx. 6- to 12-year-old), Secondary school education (approx. 13 to 18year old), Tertiary/university education	• St Louis, Archdiocese
23. St Joseph Health	2007	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	• Sisters of St. Joseph, Orange	Hospitals/health care (Providence St Joseph Health is co-sponsored by the MPJPs: Providence Ministries and St Joseph Health Ministries)	Same as Providence Ministries
24. Third Order Franciscan University Alliance	2024	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	• The Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate, Joliet, IL • Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis, Oldenburg, IN	Tertiary/university education	Illinois: • Joliet, Archdiocese Indiana • Indianapolis, Archdiocese
25. Ursuline Education Foundation	2022	Apostolic See (DICLSAL)	• Ursuline Sisters of the Romans Union, Central Province	Secondary school education (approx. 13 to 18year old),	Louisiana: • New Orleans, Archdiocese Massachusetts • Boston, Archdiocese Missouri • Saint Louis, Archdiocese Texas • Dallas, Diocese
26. Visitation ACF	2003	Archbishop of St Louis	• Sisters of the Visitation St Louis	Early learning education (approx. 5-year-old and younger), Primary school education from (approx. 6- to 12-year-old), Secondary school education (approx. 13 to 18year old),	Missouri • Saint Louis, Archdiocese
27. Viterbo Ministries	2018	Bishop of La Crosse	• Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration	Tertiary/university education	Wisconsin • La Crosse, Diocese

Appendix 3. MPJP Trustee/Sponsors describe their experiences as Ecclesial Leaders

1. I experienced an "Aha" moment at the time during my commissioning ceremony to this role. I still get emotional when I recall the look in the eyes of the Religious Leader. It felt like a mutual recognition that there was a "passing of the torch" so to speak. I was moved by the awareness of the depth of what was going on for me and for the others.

2. I was a founding sponsorship board member, and it struck me at our first meeting that we were lay and religious coming together as equals for this common purpose. We lay people did not have to pretend to be like a member of a religious order – we have our own beautiful charism. The MPJP was bringing together these diverse vocations and our own histories in ministries. We were all seen as equals around the one table – Religious and lay people – a sense of equanimity – equality of each and that we're all in this together without the usual hierarchies of the Church.

3. I have a feeling and a recognition that it is a privilege to be an ecclesial leader. I am now a part of something of value, and something important, something not of me, but of the Church itself, as well as of the Founding Institutes.

4. I have an awareness that I have inherited something that was not just about the immediate ministries, but actually about the 2,000-year tradition of the Church.

5. I appreciate that the development of MPJPs is a unique gift to the Church. The emergence of MPJPs is a work of the Holy Spirit responding to the signs of the times and bringing life to the Church. MPJPs are not a second-best option – created to fill a void left by a lack of Religious. At the same time, the MPJP is not a comment or criticism of other structures in the Church. I do not see Religious Institutes as no longer needed or in any way deficit. Religious Institutes are also a gift to the Church now and into the future. I see Religious Institutes as partnering with MPJPs.

6. I see my ecclesial leadership role as a calling of the Holy Spirit which is part of the Spirit's renewal of the Church.

7. I have a sense that the path is not entirely clear. It is like the metaphor of assembling the airplane on the runway. There is inspiration and a coming together. There is also challenge as it as the journey is unfolding. I have confidence and a sense of freedom knowing that the Holy Spirit is with us.

8. The importance of my role was clear when we practice discernment in sifting of the goods for the true good. I also see others in the Church sifting their expectations of the lay leaders in MPJPs.

9. I didn't have one moment of realizing I was an ecclesial leader – it was more a growing recognition. It is only now when I look back and take in the leadership journey that I say "wow, I have come a long way".

10. It didn't really hit me that I was an ecclesial leader while our MPJP was kind of going pretty smoothly. It was only when we began to face challenges I realized when I looked around that there's nobody else here but me and the other Trustee/Sponsors. We're the ones we have to handle it. We're the ones who have to take the reins.

11. There was a moment when one of the Trustee/Sponsors said, "we are here to carry on the Sister's charism". Then I said: "No, we need to be true to ourselves – not mimic the Sisters." We all became aware that we needed to fulfil this role in our way – trusting that the Spirit will be with us and guide us.

Appendix 4. USA dioceses and the MPJPs with ministries within each diocese
as of 31 March 2025

The table below shows each diocese and the names of the MPJPs known to operate/sponsor at least one ministry in that diocese.

State	Diocese	MPJP
Alabama	Diocese of Birmingham	Ascension Health Ministries
	Archdiocese of Mobile	Catholic Health Ministries
Alaska	Archdiocese of Anchorage-Juneau	PeaceHealth
	Diocese of Fairbanks	
Arizona	Diocese of Phoenix	Catholic Health Care Federation (CommonSpirit)
	Diocese of Tucson	Ascension Health Ministries
Arkansas	Diocese of Little Rock	Catholic Health Care Federation (CommonSpirit)
California	Diocese of Fresno	Catholic Health Care Federation (CommonSpirit) Catholic Health Ministries
	Archdiocese of Los Angeles	Catholic Health Care Federation (CommonSpirit) Providence Ministries
	Diocese of Monterey	Catholic Health Care Federation (CommonSpirit)
	Diocese of Oakland	Catholic Health Care Federation (CommonSpirit)
	Diocese of Orange	Cristo Rey Institute Providence Ministries St Joseph Health
	Diocese of Sacramento	Catholic Health Care Federation (CommonSpirit)
	Diocese of San Bernardino	Providence Ministries
	Diocese of San Diego	
	Archdiocese of San Francisco	Catholic Health Care Federation (CommonSpirit)
	Diocese of San Jose	Catholic Health Care Federation (CommonSpirit)
	Diocese of Santa Rosa	Providence Ministries
	Diocese of Stockton	Catholic Health Care Federation (CommonSpirit)
Colorado	Diocese of Colorado Springs	Catholic Health Care Federation (CommonSpirit)
	Archdiocese of Denver	Catholic Health Care Federation (CommonSpirit)
	Diocese of Pueblo	Catholic Health Care Federation (CommonSpirit)
Connecticut	Diocese of Bridgeport	
	Archdiocese of Hartford	Catholic Health Ministries
	Diocese of Norwich	
Delaware	Diocese of Wilmington	Catholic Health Ministries
District of Columbia	Archdiocese of Washington	Catholic Health Ministries
	Archdiocese for the Military Services[53]	

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[53] Although the Archdiocese for Military Services is not a territorial episcopal see with defined boundaries, it is identified by the USCCB and the OCD as an archdiocese. The current president of the USCCB is the Archbishop of the Military Archdiocese, Most Reverend Timothy P. Brogilio.

State	Diocese	MPJP
Florida	Archdiocese of Miami	Catholic Health Ministries
		Cristo Rey Institute
	Diocese of Orlando	
	Diocese of Palm Beach	Dominican Veritas Ministries
	Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee	Ascension Health Ministries
	Diocese of Saint Augustine	Ascension Health Ministries
	Diocese of Saint Petersburg	Holy Names Educational Ministries
		Bon Secours Mercy Ministries
	Diocese of Venice	
Georgia	Archdiocese of Atlanta	Catholic Health Care Federation (CommonSpirit)
		Catholic Health Ministries
	Diocese of Savannah	Ascension Health Ministries
Hawaii	Diocese of Honolulu	
Idaho	Diocese of Boise	Catholic Health Ministries
		Duluth Benedictine Ministries
Illinois	Diocese of Belleville	SSM Health Ministries
		Catholic Health Care Federation (CommonSpirit)
		Hospital Sisters Ministries
	Archdiocese of Chicago	Ascension Health Ministries
		Catholic Health Ministries
		Dominican Veritas Ministries
	Diocese of Joliet	Ascension Health Ministries
		Catholic Health Ministries
		Third Order Franciscan University Alliance
	Diocese of Peoria	Catholic Health Ministries
		Sisters of St Mary Health Ministries
	Diocese of Rockford	Ascension Health Ministries
		Catholic Health Ministries
	Diocese of Springfield	Hospital Sisters Ministries
Indiana	Diocese of Evansville	Ascension Health Ministries
		Catholic Health Care Federation (CommonSpirit)
	Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend	Catholic Health Care Federation (CommonSpirit)
		Catholic Health Ministries
	Diocese of Gary	
	Archdiocese of Indianapolis	Ascension Health Ministries
		Catholic Health Care Federation (CommonSpirit)
		Third Order Franciscan University Alliance
	Diocese of Lafayette	Franciscan Calais Ministries

State	Diocese	MPJP
Iowa	Diocese of Davenport	Catholic Health Ministries
	Diocese of Des Moines	Catholic Health Ministries
	Archdiocese of Dubuque	Catholic Health Ministries
	Diocese of Sioux City	St Anthony Ministries
		Catholic Health Ministries
Kansas	Diocese of Dodge City	Catholic Health Care Federation (CommonSpirit)
	Archdiocese of Kansas City	Leaven Ministries
	Diocese of Salina	
	Diocese of Wichita	
Kentucky	Diocese of Covington	Mercy Health Ministry
	Diocese of Lexington	Bon Secours Mercy Ministries
		Catholic Health Care Federation (CommonSpirit)
	Archdiocese of Louisville	
	Diocese of Owensboro	Bon Secours Mercy Ministries
		Mercy Health Ministry
Louisiana	Diocese of Baton Rouge	Franciscan Calais Ministries
	Diocese of Alexandria	
	Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux	
	Diocese of Lafayette	Franciscan Calais Ministries
	Diocese of Lake Charles	
	Archdiocese of New Orleans	Ursuline Education Foundation
		Ascension Health Ministries
		Dominican Veritas Ministries
		Franciscan Calais Ministries
	Diocese of Shreveport	Franciscan Calais Ministries
Maine	Diocese of Portland	Covenant Health Systems
Maryland	Archdiocese of Baltimore	Bon Secours Mercy Ministries
Massachusetts	Archdiocese of Boston	Ursuline Education Foundation
		Covenant Health Systems
	Diocese of Fall River	
	Diocese of Springfield	Catholic Health Ministries
	Diocese of Worchester	Covenant Health Systems
Michigan	Archdiocese of Detroit	Ascension Health Ministries
		Catholic Health Ministries
	Diocese of Gaylord	
	Diocese of Grand Rapids	Catholic Health Ministries
	Diocese of Kalamazoo	Ascension Health Ministries
		Catholic Health Ministries
	Diocese of Lansing	Catholic Health Ministries
	Diocese of Marquette	
	Diocese of Saginaw	Ascension Health Ministries

State	Diocese	MPJP
Minnesota	Diocese of Crookston	Catholic Health Care Federation (CommonSpirit)
	Diocese of Duluth	Duluth Benedictine Ministries
	Diocese of New Ulm	
	Diocese of Saint Cloud	Catholic Health Care Federation (CommonSpirit)
	Saint Paul and Minneapolis, Archdiocese	Dominican Veritas Ministries Duluth Benedictine Ministries
	Diocese of Winona-Rochester	Catholic Health Ministries
Mississippi	Diocese of Biloxi	
	Diocese of Jackson	Franciscan Calais Ministries
Missouri	Diocese of Jefferson City	SSM Health Ministries
	Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph	
	Archdiocese of Saint Louis	Ursuline Education Foundation SSM Health Ministries Visitation ACF Ascension Health Ministries
	Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau	
Montana	Diocese of Great Falls-Billings	
	Diocese of Helena	Providence Ministries
Nebraska	Diocese of Grand Island	Catholic Health Care Federation (CommonSpirit)
	Diocese of Lincoln	Catholic Health Care Federation (CommonSpirit)
	Archdiocese of Omaha	Catholic Health Care Federation (CommonSpirit) Catholic Health Ministries
Nevada	Archdiocese of Las Vegas	Catholic Health Care Federation (CommonSpirit)
	Diocese of Reno	
New Hampshire	Diocese of Manchester	Covenant Health Systems
New Jersey	Diocese of Camden	Catholic Health Ministries Redeemer Ministries
	Diocese of Metuchen	
	Archdiocese of Newark	
	Diocese of Paterson	
	Diocese of Trenton	Catholic Health Ministries
New Mexico	Diocese of Las Cruces	Providence Ministries
	Diocese of Gallup	
	Archdiocese of Santa Fe	Catholic Health Care Federation (CommonSpirit)

State	Diocese	MPJP
New York	Diocese of Albany	Holy Names Educational Ministries Catholic Health Ministries
	Diocese of Brooklyn	
	Diocese of Buffalo	
	Archdiocese of New York	Bon Secours Mercy Ministries Dominican Veritas Ministries
	Diocese of Ogdensburg	
	Diocese of Rochester	Ascension Health Ministries
	Diocese of Rockville Centre	
	Diocese of Syracuse	Catholic Health Ministries
North Carolina	Diocese of Charlotte	
	Diocese of Raleigh	Catholic Health Ministries
North Dakota	Diocese of Bismarck	Catholic Health Care Federation (CommonSpirit)
	Diocese of Fargo	Catholic Health Care Federation (CommonSpirit) SMP Health
Ohio	Archdiocese of Cincinnati	Bon Secours Mercy Ministries Mercy Health Ministry
	Diocese of Cleveland	Bon Secours Mercy Ministries Dominican Veritas Ministries Health System Ministries (SC of St Augustine) Mercy Health Ministry
	Diocese of Columbus	Catholic Health Ministries
	Diocese of Steubenville	Catholic Health Care Federation (CommonSpirit)
	Diocese of Toledo	Bon Secours Mercy Ministries Mercy Health Ministry
	Diocese of Youngstown	Bon Secours Mercy Ministries Mercy Health Ministry
Oklahoma	Archdiocese of Oklahoma City	SSM Health Ministries
	Diocese of Tulsa	Ascension Health Ministries
Oregon	Diocese of Baker	Catholic Health Ministries Providence Ministries
	Archdiocese of Portland	Catholic Health Care Federation (CommonSpirit) PeaceHealth Providence Ministries
Pennsylvania	Diocese of Allentown	
	Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown	
	Diocese of Erie	
	Diocese of Greensburg	
	Diocese of Harrisburg	Catholic Health Care Federation (CommonSpirit)
	Archdiocese of Philadelphia	Catholic Health Ministries Redeemer Ministries
	Diocese of Pittsburgh	Catholic Health Ministries
	Diocese of Scranton	Covenant Health Systems

State	Diocese	MPJP
Rhode Island	Diocese of Providence	Covenant Health Systems
South Carolina	Diocese of Charleston	Bon Secours Mercy Ministries
South Dakota	Diocese of Rapid City	
	Diocese of Sioux Falls	Catholic Health Ministries
Tennessee	Diocese of Knoxville	Catholic Health Care Federation (CommonSpirit)
	Diocese of Memphis	Dominican Veritas Ministries
	Diocese of Nashville	Ascension Health Ministries
Texas	Diocese of Amarillo	
	Diocese of Austin	Ascension Health Ministries
	Diocese of Beaumont	
	Diocese of Brownsville	
	Diocese of Corpus Christi	
	Diocese of Dallas	Ursuline Education Foundation Catholic Health Ministries
	Diocese of El Paso	
	Diocese of Fort Worth	
	Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston	Catholic Health Care Federation (CommonSpirit) Dominican Veritas Ministries
	Diocese of Laredo	
	Diocese of Lubbock	Providence Ministries
	Diocese of San Angelo	
	Archdiocese of San Antonio	
	Diocese of Tyler	
	Diocese of Victoria	
Utah	Diocese of Salt Lake City	Catholic Health Care Federation (CommonSpirit)
Vermont	Diocese of Burlington	Covenant Health Systems
Virgin Islands	Diocese of Saint Thomas[54]	
Virginia	Diocese of Arlington	
	Diocese of Richmond	Bon Secours Mercy Ministries

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[54] The Diocese of St. Thomas is in the Virgin Islands, which is a US Territory and not a state. Normally, sees of US territories are not included in the count of US dioceses—as evidenced by it not being listed in the *Official Catholic Directory* in the section naming the US dioceses. Rather, it is listed among the US territories in the section includes numerous dioceses in Guam, Puerto Rico, Caroline Islands, Marshall Islands, US Virgin Islands, and Samoa-Pago Pago. The list included here correlates to the USCCB's list, which includes the Diocese of St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands on the list since it is the only suffragan diocese of the Archdiocese of Washington. See https://www.catholicvi.com/the-diocese (accessed on 29 March 2025).

State	Diocese	MPJP
Washington	Archdiocese of Seattle	Holy Names Educational Ministries
		University Place, WA
		PeaceHealth
		Providence Ministries
	Diocese of Spokane	Holy Names Educational Ministries
		Providence Ministries
	Diocese of Yakima	Providence Ministries
West Virginia	Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston	
Wisconsin	Diocese of Green Bay	Hospital Sisters Ministries
	Diocese of La Crosse	Viterbo Ministries
	Diocese of Madison	SSM Health Ministries
		Dominican Veritas Ministries
	Archdiocese of Milwaukee	SSM Health Ministries
		Ascension Health Ministries
		Dominican Veritas Ministries
		Hospital Sisters Ministries
	Diocese of Superior	
Wyoming	Diocese of Cheyenne	

Appendix 5. Number of USA MPJPs operating in key ministry sectors *as of 17 March 2025*

Ministry sector		MPJP/ACF sponsoring these ministries in USA
Hospitals/health care	19	• Ascension Sponsor • Bon Secours Mercy Ministries • Catholic Health Care Federation • Catholic Health Ministries • Catholic Health International • Covenant Health System • Duluth Benedictine Ministries • Franciscan Calais Ministries • Health System Ministries • Hospital Sisters Ministries • Leaven Ministries • Mercy Health Ministry • PeaceHealth • Providence Ministries • Redeemer Ministries • Sisters of Mary of the Presentation Health Ministry • Sisters of St Mary Health Ministries • St Anthony Ministries • St Joseph Health
Aged care	2	• Ascension Sponsor • Duluth Benedictine Ministries
Disability services	1	• Ascension Sponsor
Family services	1	• Ascension Sponsor
Community services	1	• Ascension Sponsor
Early learning education *(approx. 5-year-old and younger)*	2	• St Joseph Educational Ministry • Visitation ACF
Primary school education *(approx. 6- to 12-year-old)*	3	• Holy Names Educational Ministries • St Joseph Educational Ministry • Visitation ACF
Secondary school education *(approx. 13 to 18year old)*	6	• Cristo Rey Institute • Dominican Veritas Ministries • Holy Names Educational Ministries • St Joseph Educational Ministry • Ursuline Education Foundation • Visitation ACF
Tertiary/university education	5	• Dominican Veritas Ministries • Duluth Benedictine Ministries • St Joseph Educational Ministry • Third Order Franciscan University Alliance • Viterbo Ministries
Other - Music Center and an Adult Learning Center	1	• Holy Names Educational Ministries