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Student loan debt blocks religious life ambitions

Tom Roberts | May. 2, 2012 NCR Today

This sad story of student loan debt delaying dreams of a vocation as a sister intersects with several current stories: the need to provide assistance for college, including low interest loans, and the enormous sums paid by church leaders related to the ongoing sex abuse scandal.
According to the story [1]:

The study by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University, released this year, found 69 percent of religious orders ?turned away at least one person because of student loans. In addition, many religious communities ask young people to delay their applications to enter because of educational debt.?

I couldn't help but recall, when I read that, that another recent CARA study had calculated that the church in the United States has spent $2.5 billion since 2004 on costs related to the sex abuse crisis. And that doesn't count what dioceses paid between 1985, when the crisis first broke nationally, to 2003. That's nearly 20 years unaccounted for. I couldn't help think that without that huge expenditure, required primarily because of terrible decisions made over decades by bishops, that perhaps a fund might be available to help aspiring nuns and priests pay off student loans.

Whatever the case, it is sad to hear that a majority of orders were forced to turn people away, in this time of shortage of priests and sisters, because of student loan debts.

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Links:
[1] http://lifeinc.today.msnbc.msn.com/_news/2012/05/02/11488298-student-loan-debt-delays-dream-of-becoming-nun