

Contemporary Catholic Perspectives



Commissioned by the Association of Catholic Priests

February 2012

Draft 2

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research

MMCL/MOD

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Research Background

- **This research was commissioned by The Association of Catholic Priests to gain an understanding of Catholic's views on contemporary Catholicism.**
- **The research aimed to be inclusive - for the purpose of participation the definition of 'Catholic' was self defined by the respondent. The survey did not seek as a primary research focus to measure the extent and nature of participant's religious belief and practice. It was up to respondents to define themselves in terms of their religious belief.**
- **Those who defined themselves as anything other than Catholic were screened out early in the Survey.**
- **The research was undertaken on an all island basis – to match the remit and structures of the Catholic Church.**

Research Focus

- **There has been much coverage of issues in relation to the Catholic Church over the past decade. These issues rightly continue to command and demand huge attention from both Church and State. These issues are not the focus of this research.**
- **Religious practice and belief is changing in contemporary Irish society. The purpose of this research programme is to assess the response of Catholics to changes in Church structures and the relevance of contemporary Church teaching in key areas to their daily lives.**
- **A number of changes and announcements were recently made by the Catholic Church, these included:**
 - **An announcement by Pope Benedict XVI that the 50th Congress of the Eucharist will be held in Ireland in June 2012.**
 - **A new translation of the Missal or Mass was introduced, changing the wording of certain prayers and greetings.**
- **Specifically this survey was undertaken to:**
 - **Gain an overview of how Roman Catholics across the Island of Ireland are reacting to the new translation of the Missal,**
 - **Understand their feelings towards the Eucharistic Congress being held in Ireland in June, and**
 - **Probe the relevance of the churches teachings in everyday life.**

Research Methodology - I

- **For this research project we utilised a sample size of 1,000 across the island.**
 - **It is robust and would allow for a sizable base to highlight potential differences between respondents based demographic details such as gender, age and frequency of attending Mass.**
 - **A sample of 1,000 allows for a margin of error of +/- 3.1%.**

- **The Island of Ireland was treated as a whole, although differences between the North and South are highlighted where applicable.**

- **Due to the high availability of the internet across the Island of Ireland, an online methodology was utilised to achieve the majority of the interviews. We did, however, undertake the interviews among the older cohort (aged 55 to 74) face to face in the Republic to counteract a lower online presence.**

- **We have used this methodology for similar types of research work in the past – including research on other aspects of religious belief.**

B. Research Methodology - II

Quantitative Research

1,000 online and face-to-face Interviews

The same questionnaire was used across the Island of Ireland, with no changes to the text.

**Island of Ireland
Roman Catholics**

**720 Republic of
Ireland**

280 Northern Ireland

**533 Online
Interviews**

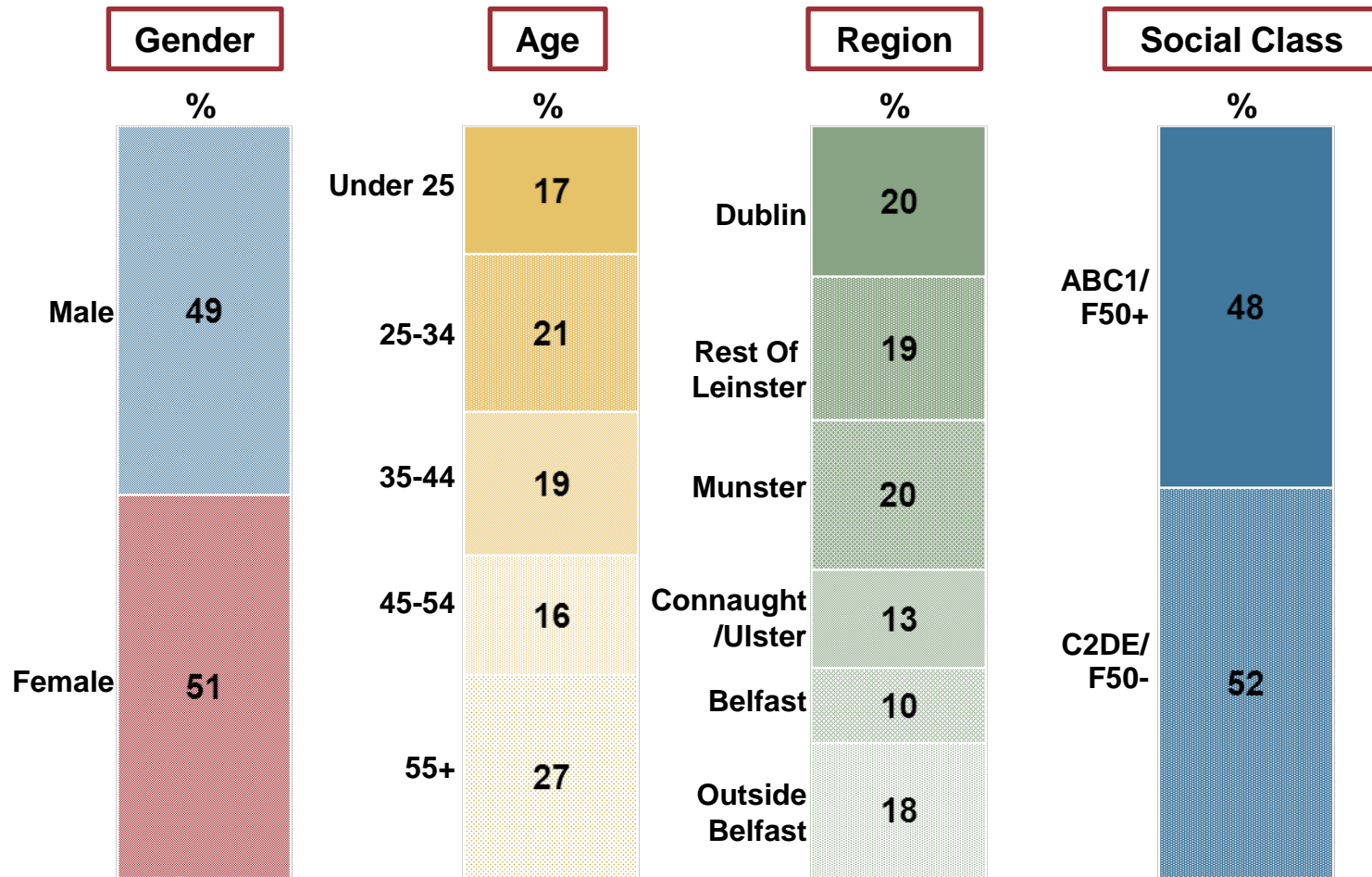
**187 face-to-
face Interviews**

280 Online Interviews

Interviews were conducted across the Island of Ireland, with regional quotas based on CSO population estimates. 187 interviews were conducted face-to-face in ROI among the older age cohort to ensure representativeness.

Profile of Sample

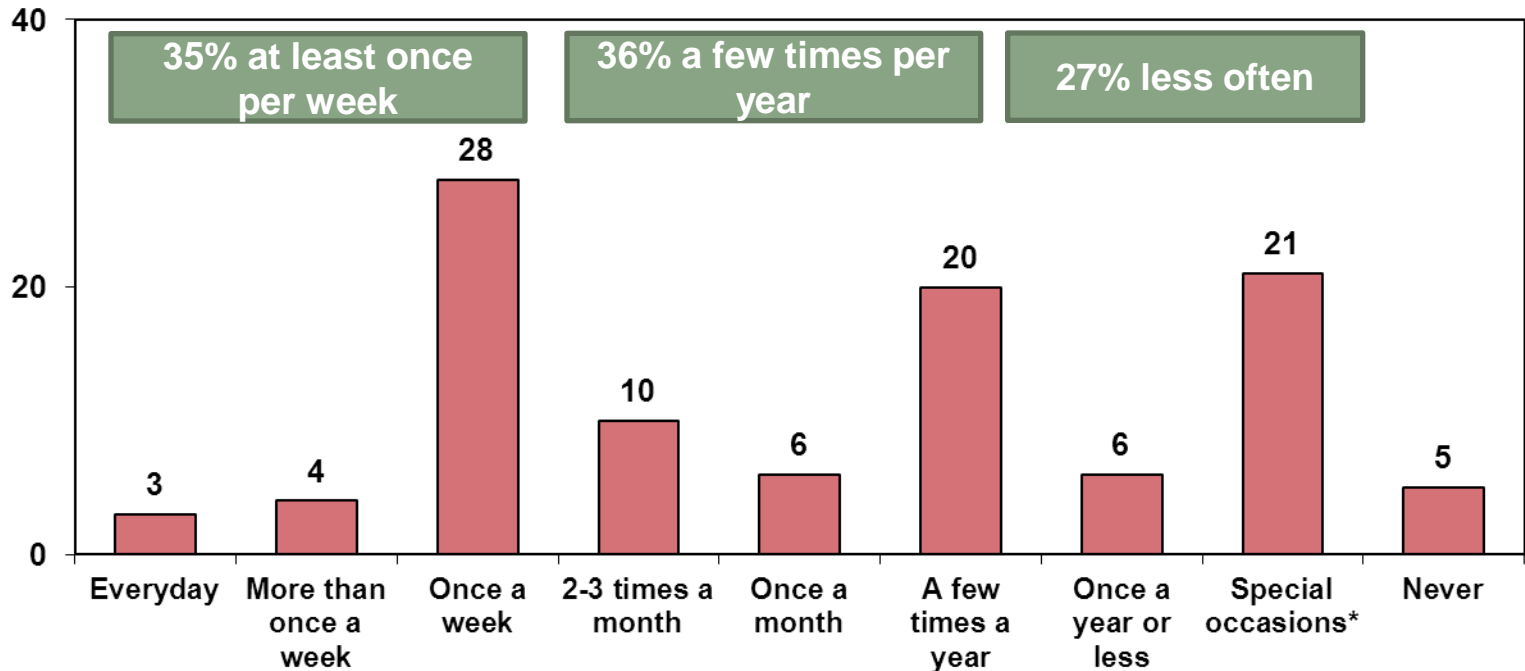
(Base: All Roman Catholic Adults – 1,005)



Quotas were applied to align the sample with the Catholic population of the Island of Ireland.

Mass Attendance

(Base: All Roman Catholic Adults – 1,005)



**Just over one in three Catholics (35%) attend Mass weekly or more often.
One in five only go for either celebratory and/or religious occasions.**

* Includes at Christmas & Easter and/or wedding & funerals (muticode allowed)

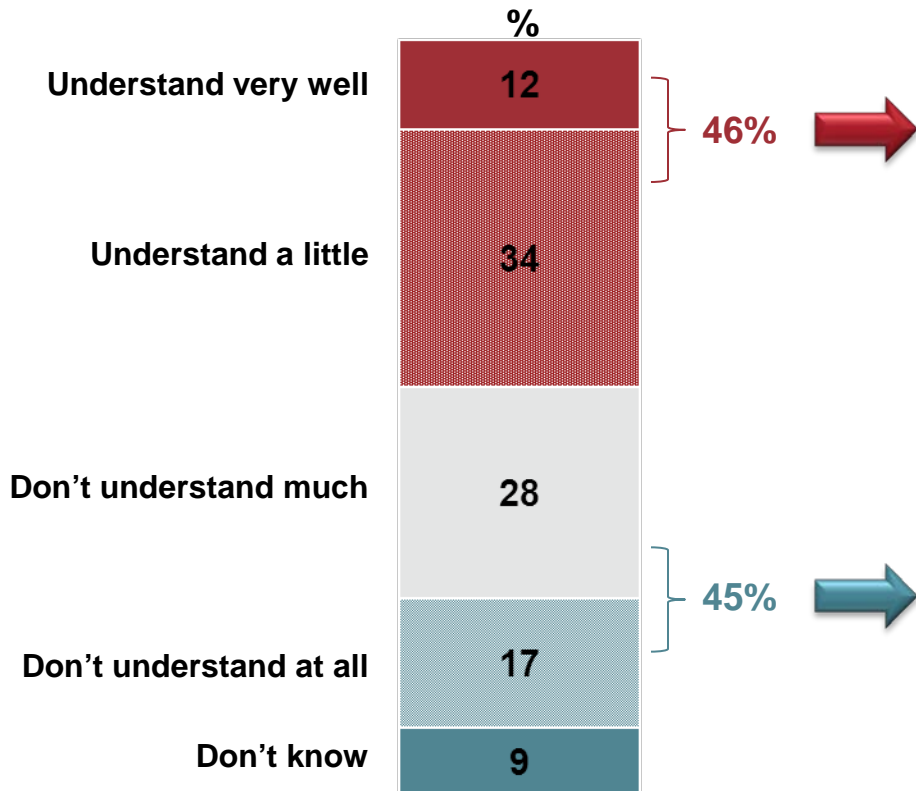
MAIN FINDINGS

SECTION 1: Church Structures

Church's Understanding of Challenges Faced by Irish Catholics

(Base: All Roman Catholic Adults – 1,005)

Do the leaders of the Catholic Church in the Island of Ireland - including bishops - understand the challenges faced by Irish Catholics?



Highest Amongst:

Over 55's – 57%

Northern Ireland – 50%

Attend Mass at least once a week – 62%

Lowest Amongst:

35-44's – 54%

Leinster Residents (inc. Dublin) – 48%

Attend Mass a few times a year – 49%

Attend Mass less than once a year – 53%

Never attend Mass – 68%

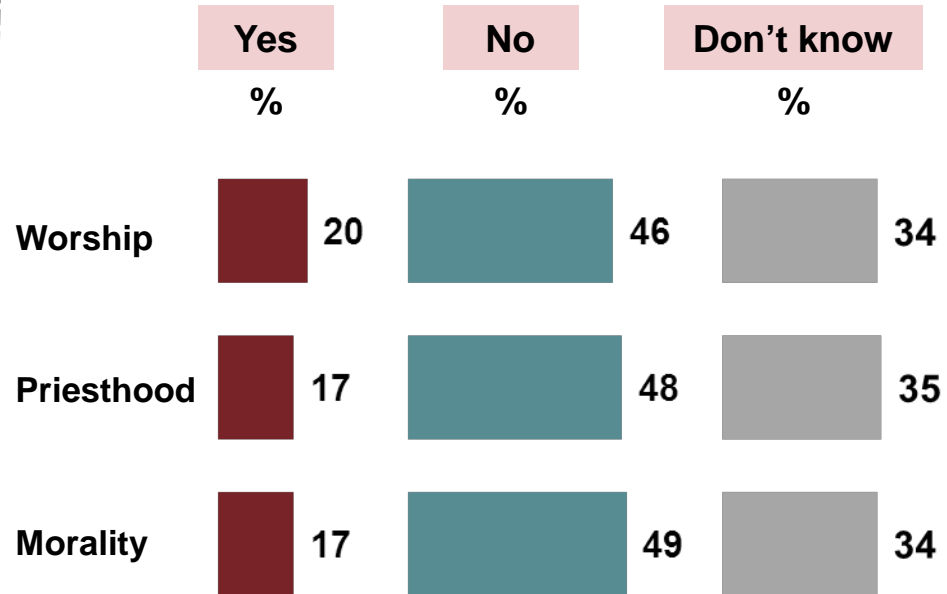
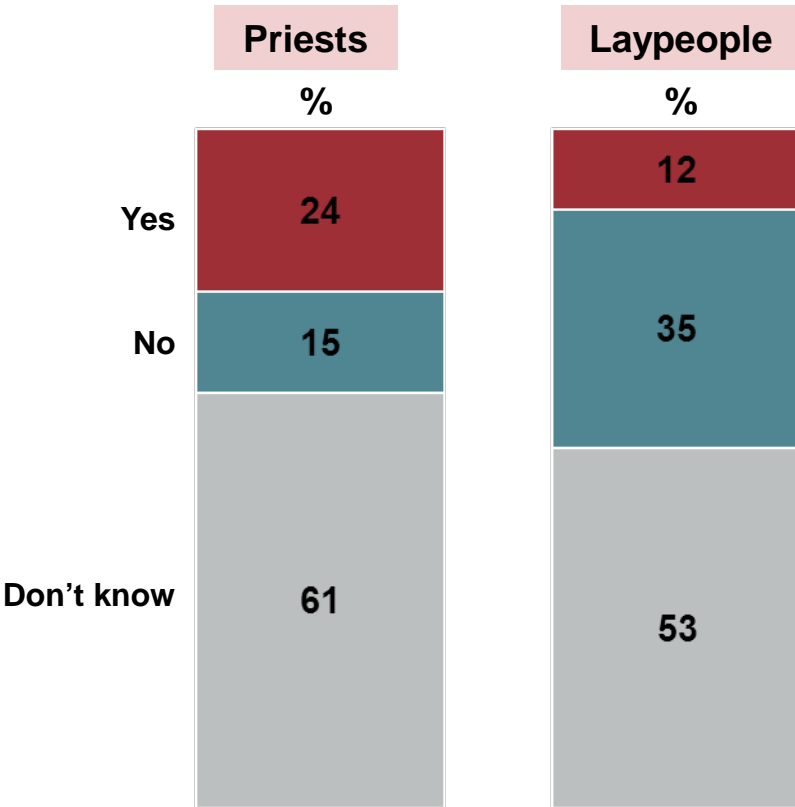
Relatively even split among Catholics concerning the Church's understanding of the challenges they face – with those who attend Mass regularly feeling challenges are more understood.

Views & Voice Sought and Heard

(Base: All Roman Catholic Adults – 1,005)

Does your local Bishop actively seek the views of priests and laypeople (ordinary church goers) when making important decisions in your diocese?

Is the voice of laypeople is being heard in the Catholic Church in Ireland when it comes to issues of priesthood, worship and morality?

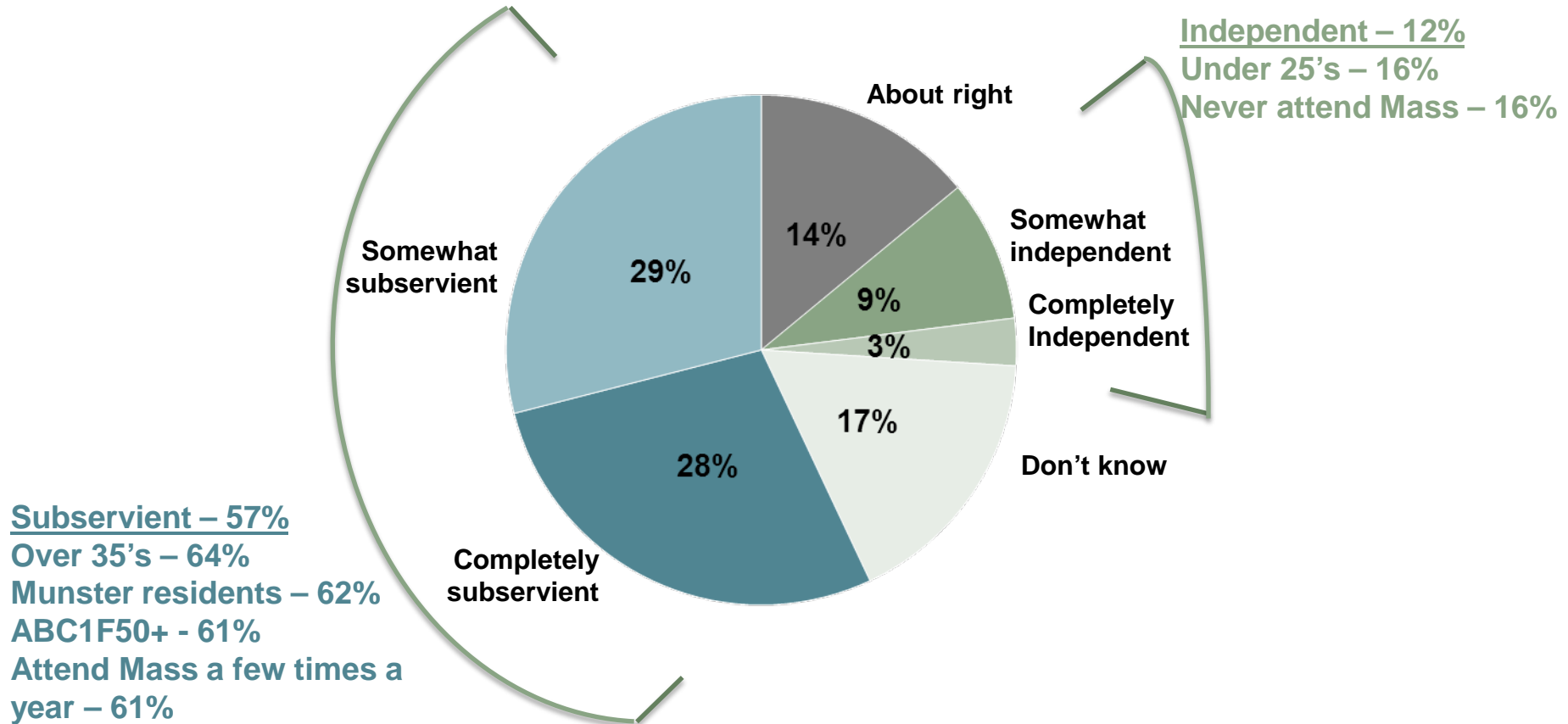


One in four believe that their local Bishop actively seeks the advice of local priests when making decisions. Three out of five simply don't know. Over riding believe that laypeople are not being heard on religions issues by the Catholic Church.

Relationship Between Catholic Church & Rome

(Base: All Roman Catholic Adults – 1,005)

On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is completely subservient and 5 is completely independent, how would you rate the relationship between the Irish Bishops and the Church in Rome?

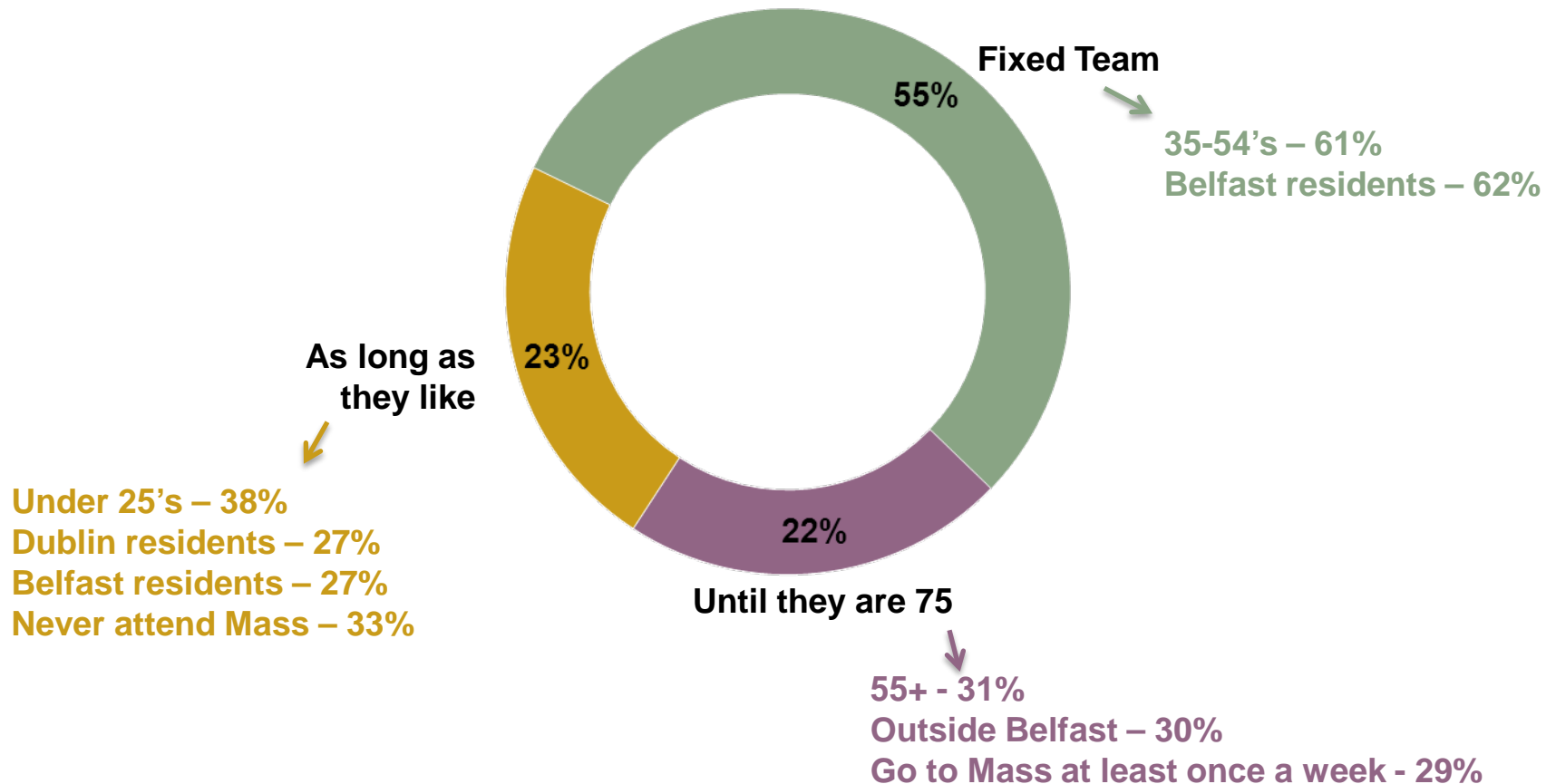


Five times as many Catholics believe that the Church is subservient to Rome versus those who believe it is independent, with more than one in four (28%) believe it to be completely subservient.

Bishop Serving Term

(Base: All Roman Catholic Adults – 1,005)

Do you think Bishops should serve for a fixed term, for as long as they like or, as present, until the age of 75?

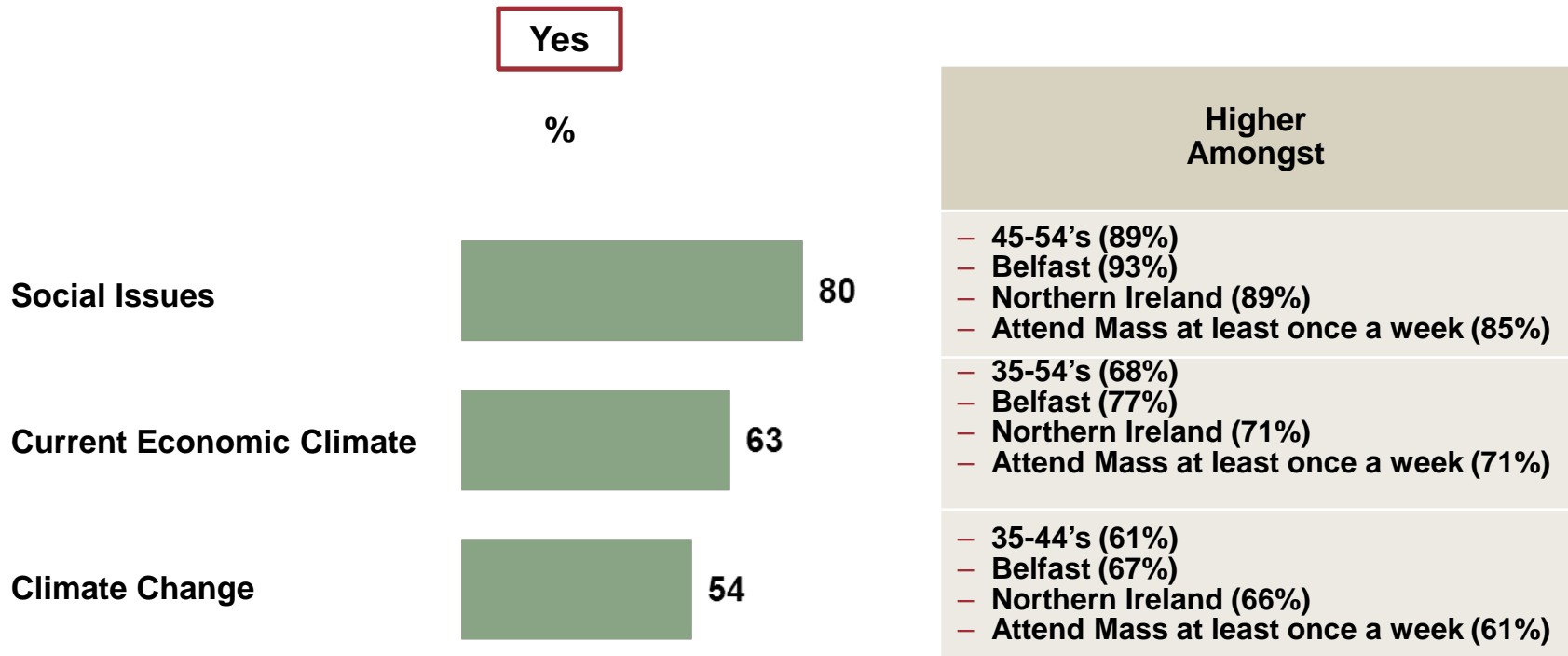


A small majority (55%) believe that Bishops should serve for a fixed term while the remaining are divided between until 75 years or as long as the Bishop likes.

Catholic Church Speaking Out on Issues

(Base: All Roman Catholic Adults – 1,005)

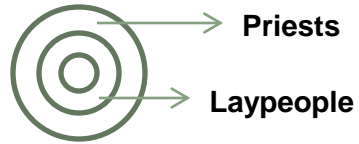
Should the Catholic Church speak out on issues such as the current economic climate, social issues and climate issues facing Ireland?



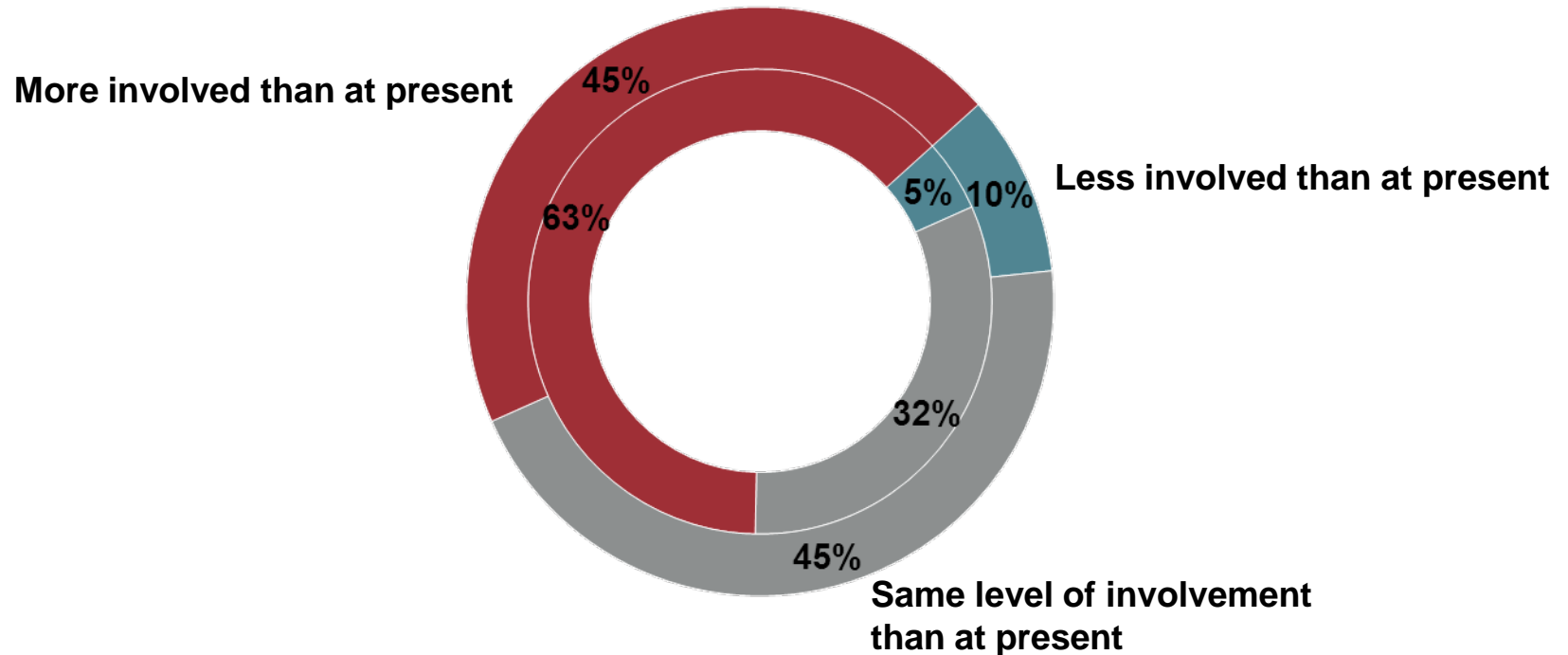
Majority agree with the Church speaking out on issues with 4 in 5 believing that the Catholic Church should speak out on social issues.

Involvement in Choosing a Local Bishop

(Base: All Roman Catholic Adults – 1,005)



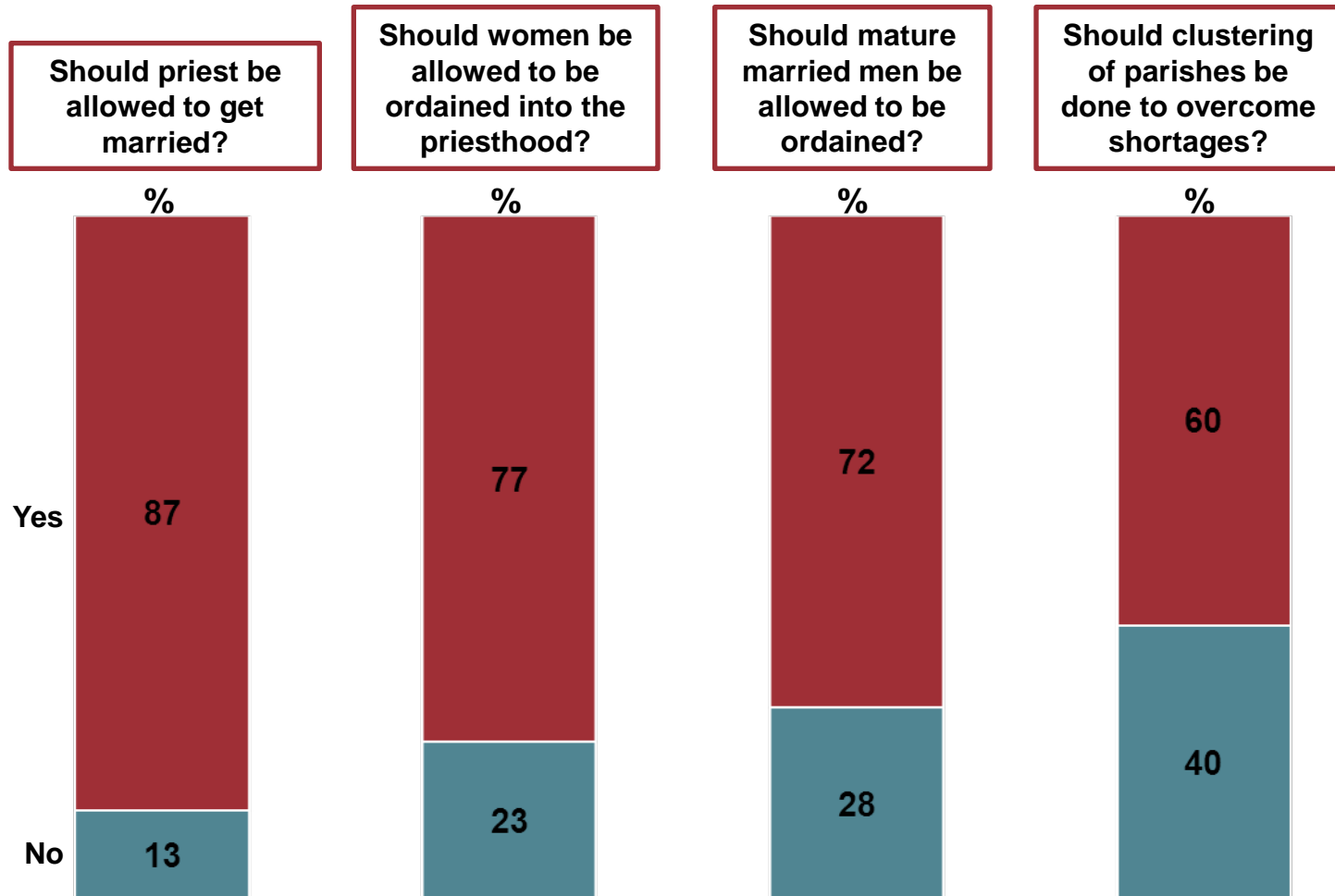
How involved should priests and laypeople in choosing their local Bishop?



Clear requirement for more involvement of Priests and Laypeople in the choice of Diocesan Bishop - with minimal support for less involvement.

Addressing the Shortage of Priests

(Base: All Roman Catholic Adults – 1,005)

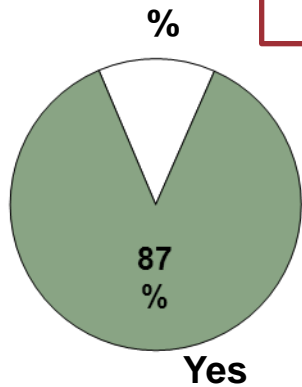


Circa 4 in 5 supporting priests getting married and women becoming priests. Clustering and the ordination of 'mature married men' well accepted by majority of Catholics to modernise church.

Addressing the Shortage of Priests

(Base: All Roman Catholic Adults – 1,005)

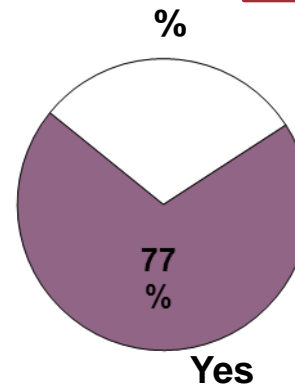
Priests allowed to marry



Higher amongst:

- Females (89%)
- 35-54's (90%)
- Attend Mass a few times a year (91%)
- Attend Mass less than once a year (92%)

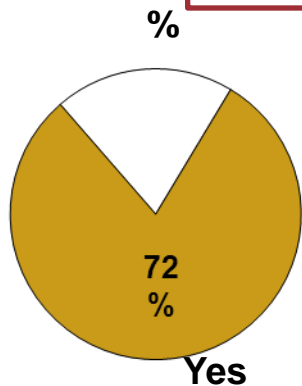
Women Ordained



Higher amongst:

- Females (81%)
- 25-34's & 45-54's (83%)
- ROL (84%)
- Attend Mass a few times a year (83%)
- Attend Mass less than once a year (87%)

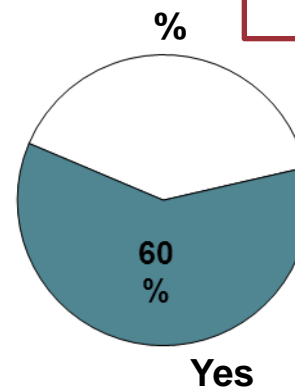
Married men ordained



Higher amongst:

- 35-44's (81%)
- Connaught/Ulster (76%)
- Attend Mass a few times a year (75%)
- Attend Mass less than once a year (76%)

Clustering parishes



Higher amongst:

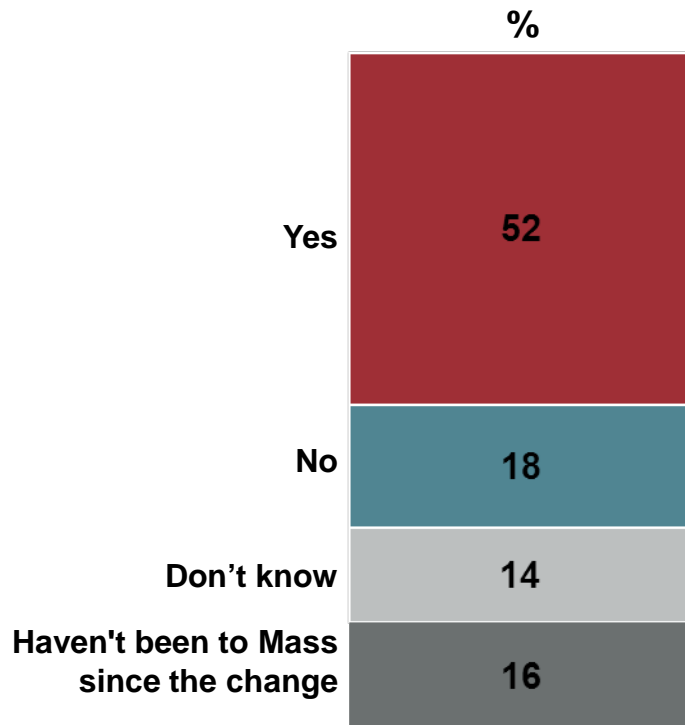
- 55+ (71%)
- Connaught/Ulster (66%)
- Belfast (67%)

SECTION 2: Liturgy

Change in Missal Wording

(Base: All Roman Catholic Adults – 1,005)

Have you heard the new wording being used during the Mass celebration?



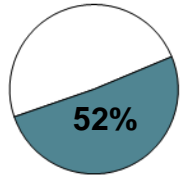
Higher Amongst

- Females (59%)
- 45-54's (59%)
- 55+ (66%)
- ABC1F50+ (60%)
- Northern Ireland (56%)
- Attend Mass at least once a week (80%)

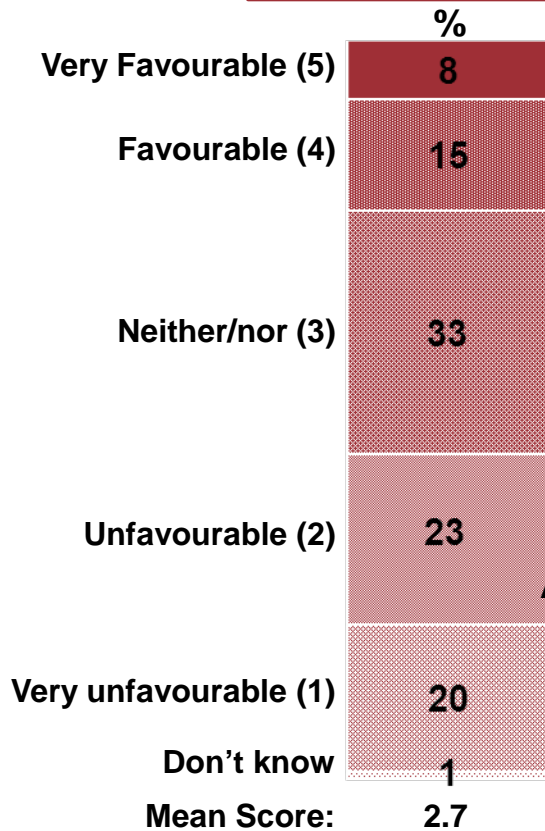
Just over 1 in 2 Catholics are aware of the new wording of Mass, higher among females and the older age cohorts.

Attitude Towards New Wording

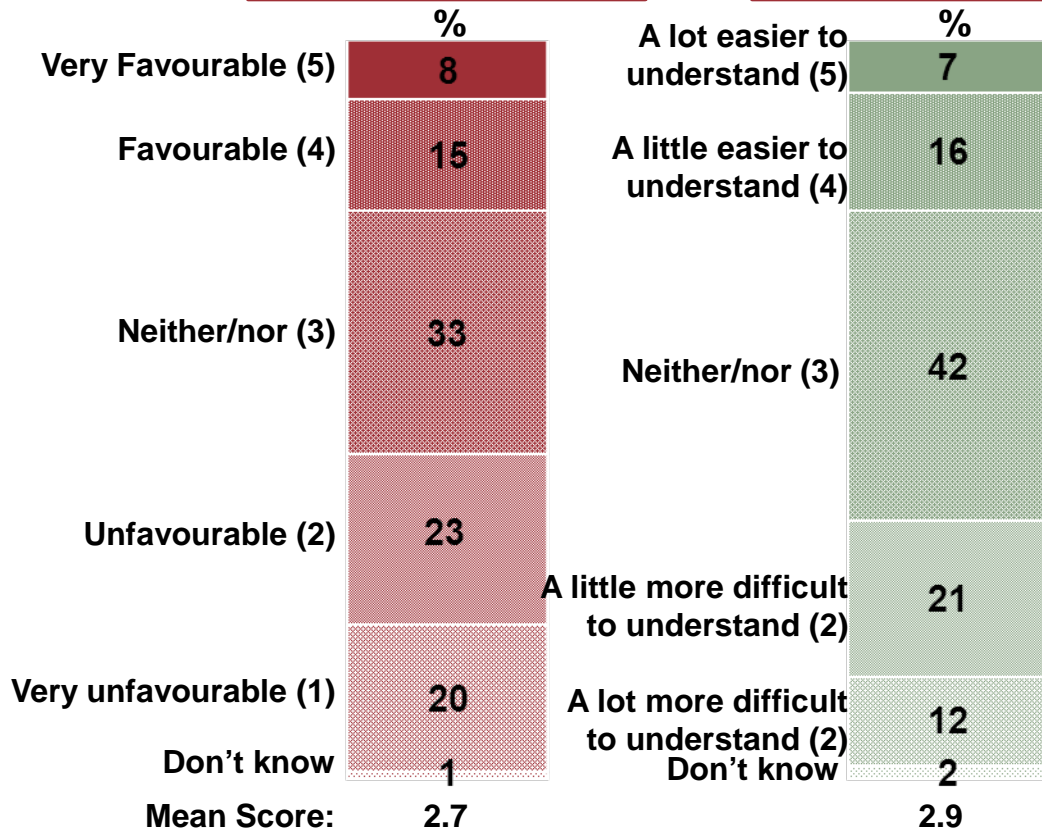
(Base: All who are aware of the new wording – 524)



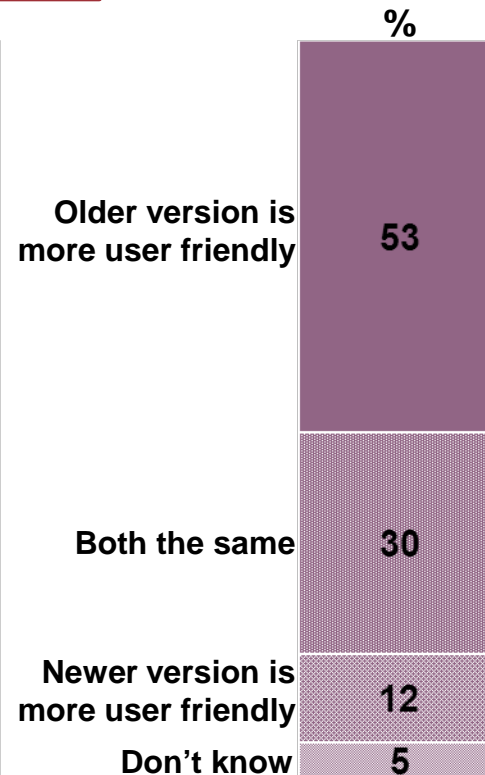
Favourable Towards Changes in Wording



Ease of Understanding New Versus Old



User friendliness

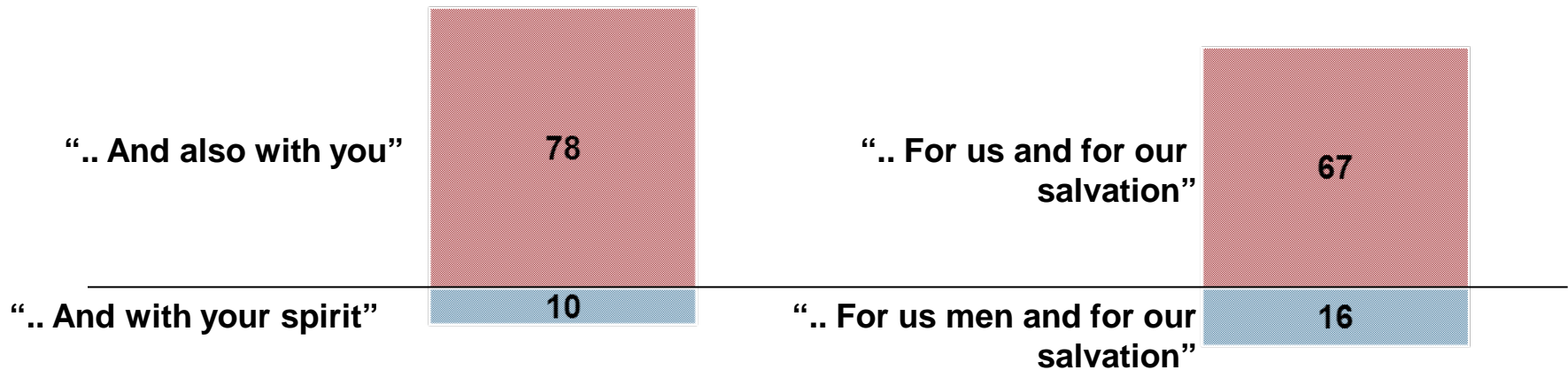


1 in 2 Catholics who have heard the new wording prefer the previous version, with 33% finding the new Missal more difficult to understand and 43% are unfavourable towards the changes.

Preferred Wording to Greeting & Creed

(Base: All Roman Catholic Adults – 1,005)

“The Lord be with you”



As a response to the greeting “*The Lord be With You*”, which would you prefer – “*And with your Spirit*” or “*And also with you*”?

In relation to the Creed, which would you prefer?

Clear preference among Catholics for the response ‘and also with you’ and ‘for us and our salvation’ at just under 8 in 10 and 7 in 10 respectively.

Favourability Towards 'National Level' Liturgy Development

(Base: All Roman Catholic Adults – 1,005)

Should local Catholic Churches at a National Level be allowed to develop their own liturgies within certain guidelines set out by Rome?

Don't know

No

Yes



- Under 25's (43%)
- Attend Mass less often than once per year (45%)



- 55+ (28%)
- Outside Belfast (33%)
- Northern Ireland (30%)
- Attend Mass at least once per week (29%)



- 45-54's (55%)
- Dublin residents (46%)
- Attend Mass a few times a year (46%)

2 in 5 Catholics believe that Liturgy's should be developed at a national level, while 1 in 5 don't think they should.

**SECTION 3:
Attitudes To Teachings on
Sexuality**

Relevance of Catholic Church Teachings on Sexuality

(Base: All Roman Catholic Adults – 1,005)

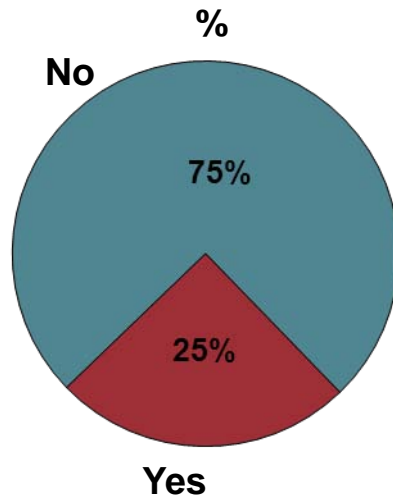
To me

Do you believe that the Catholic Church's teachings on sexuality are relevant to you or your family?

To my family

Higher amongst:

- 25-34's (82%)
- 45-54's (84%)
- Connaught/Ulster (84%)
- Never attend Mass (91%)

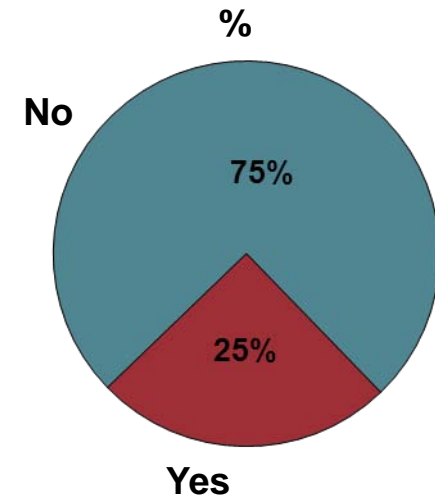


Higher amongst:

- 55+ (39%)
- Outside Belfast (32%)
- Attend Mass at least once a week (43%)

Higher amongst:

- 25-34's (80%)
- 45-54's (82%)
- Connaught/ Ulster (85%)
- Never attend Mass (89%)



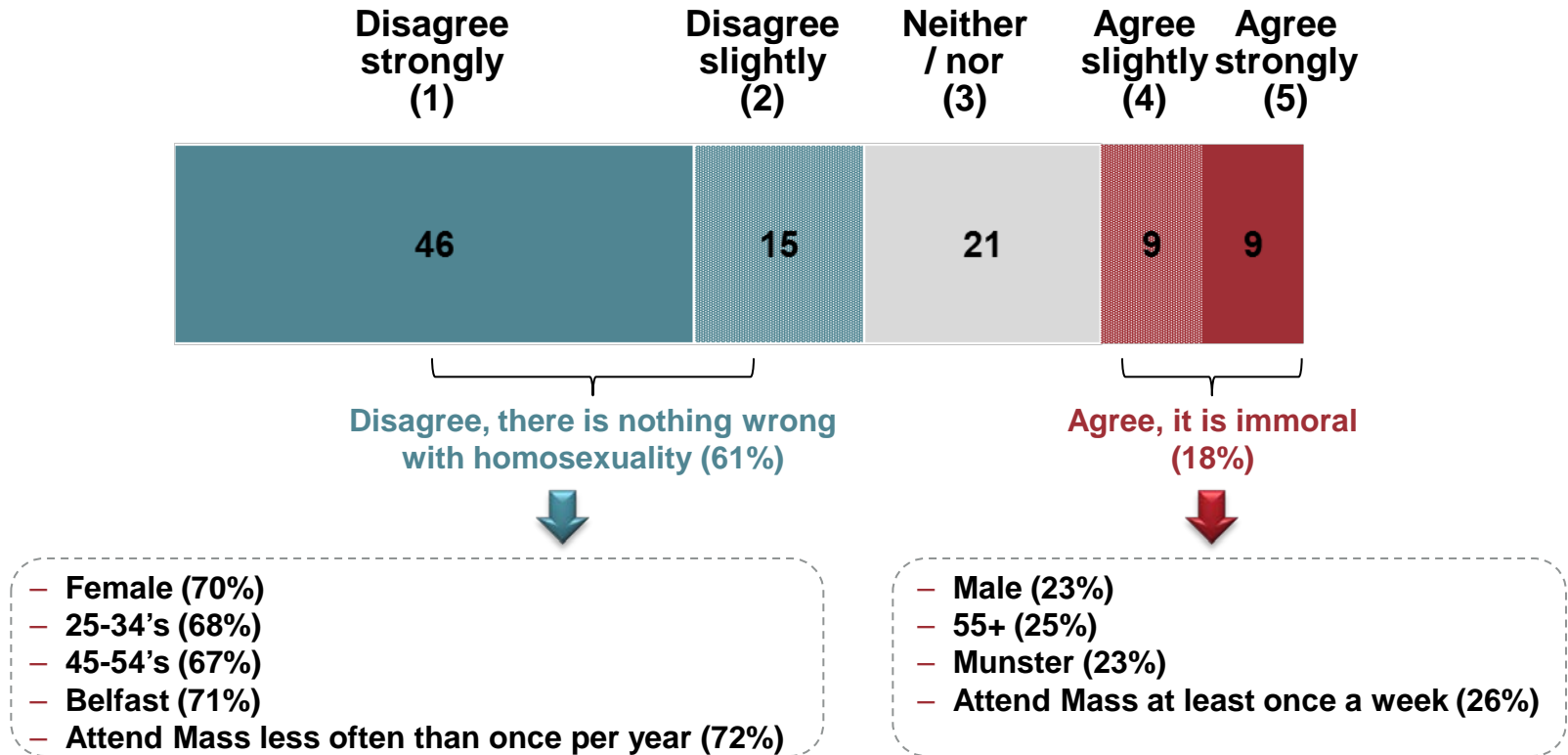
Higher amongst:

- 55+ (34%)
- Belfast (32%)
- Northern Ireland (31%)
- Attend Mass at least once a week (39%)

1 in 4 believe that the teachings at the Roman Catholic Church are relevant to them or their family.

Attitude to Catholic Church's Stance on Homosexuality

(Base: All Roman Catholic Adults – 1,005)



To what extent do you agree with the Catholic Church's teaching that any sexual expression of love between gay couples is immoral?

3 in 5 disagree with the Church's teachings on homosexuality, 1 in 5 agree and believe it to be immoral.

Receiving Communion for Those in Steady Second Relationships

(Base: All Roman Catholic Adults – 1,005)

Do you think that Catholics who are separated or divorced from their spouse and are in a second stable relationship should be receiving communion at Mass?

%

.



Highest Amongst:

- 35-54's (92%)
- Rest of Leinster (90%)
- Belfast (91%)
- Attend Mass a few times a year (92%)
- Attend Mass less than once per year (93%)

Yes, those who are divorced/separated and in a second relationship should be allowed to take communion

87

No, those who are divorced/separated and in a second relationship should not be allowed get communion

5

No opinion

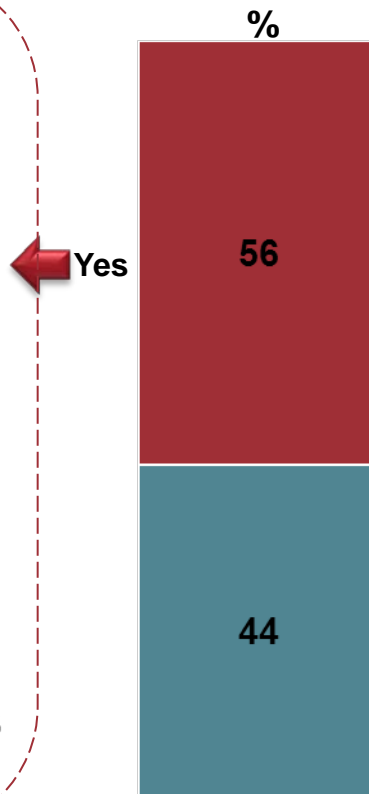
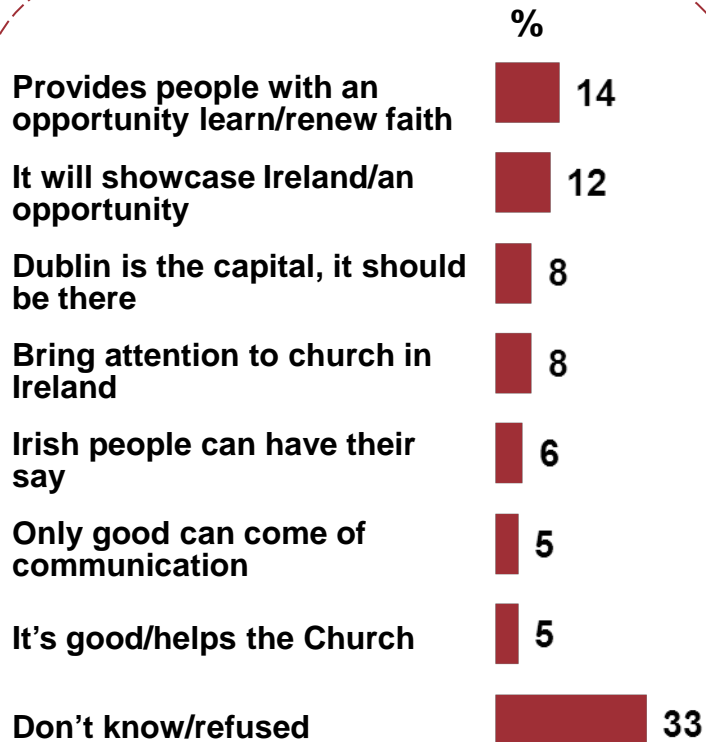
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High levels of support for allowing those in steady second relationship to receive communication, especially among 35-54's and Rest of Leinster residents.

SECTION 4: Eucharistic Congress

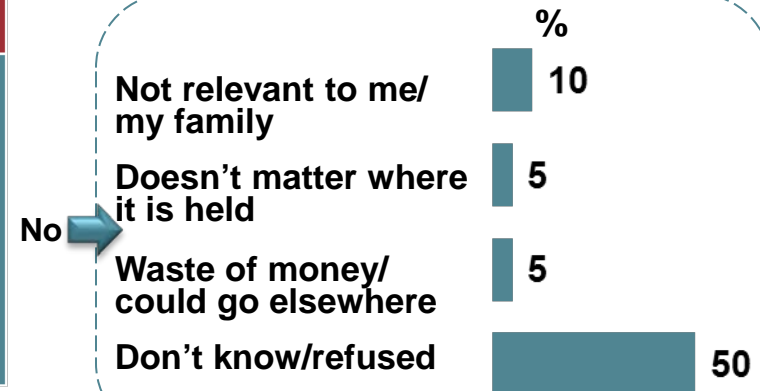
Value in the Eucharistic Congress

(Base: All Roman Catholic Adults – 1,005)



Do you see value in the Eucharistic Congress being held in Dublin?

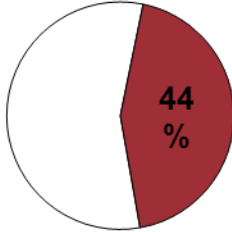
Why do you say that?



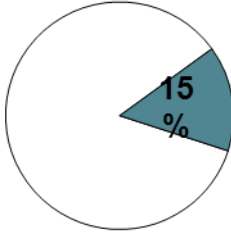
Almost 3 in 5 see a value in the Eucharistic Congress being held in Ireland. Some of the benefits include giving the Irish people a chance to renew their faith and show casing Ireland to the rest of the world.

Appropriate Time for Eucharistic Congress to be Held in Ireland

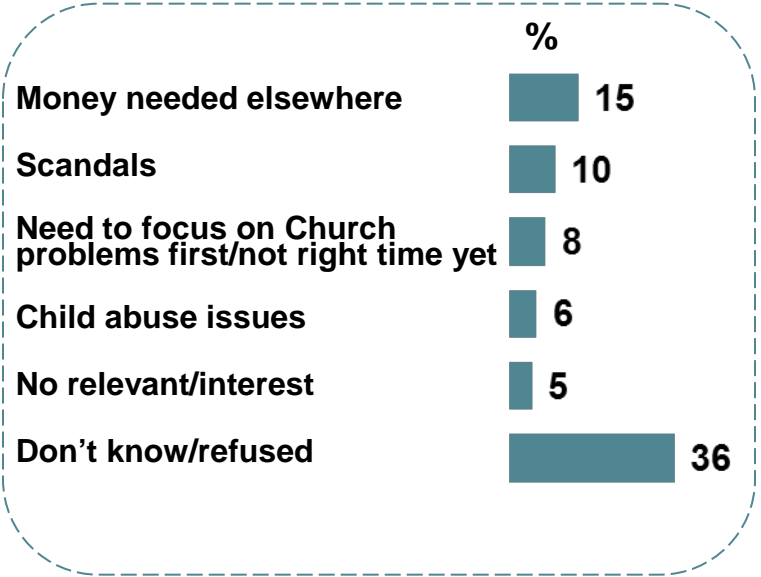
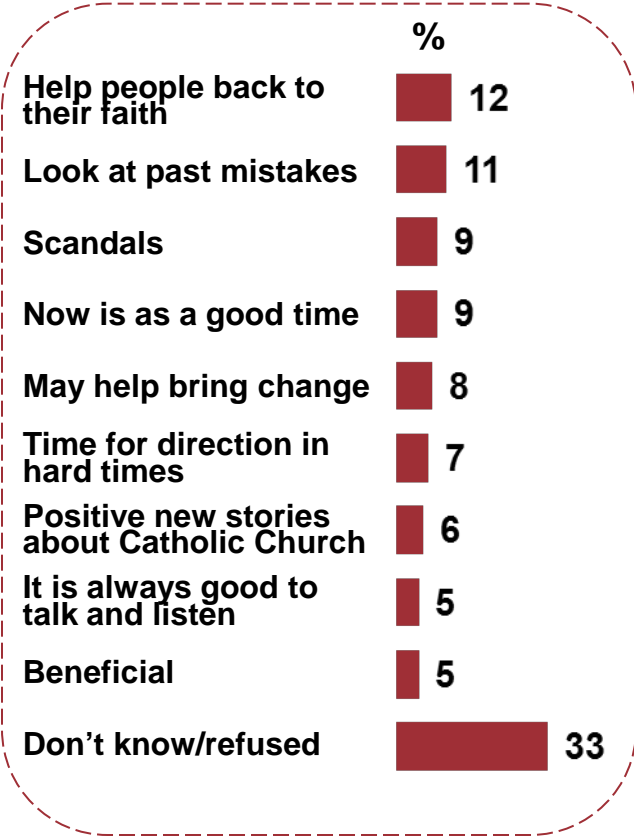
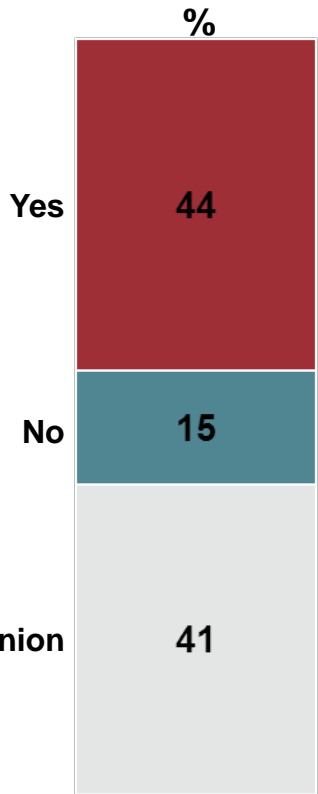
(Base: All Roman Catholic Adults – 1,005)



Yes



No



Do you think that now is an appropriate time for such a Congress to be held in Ireland?

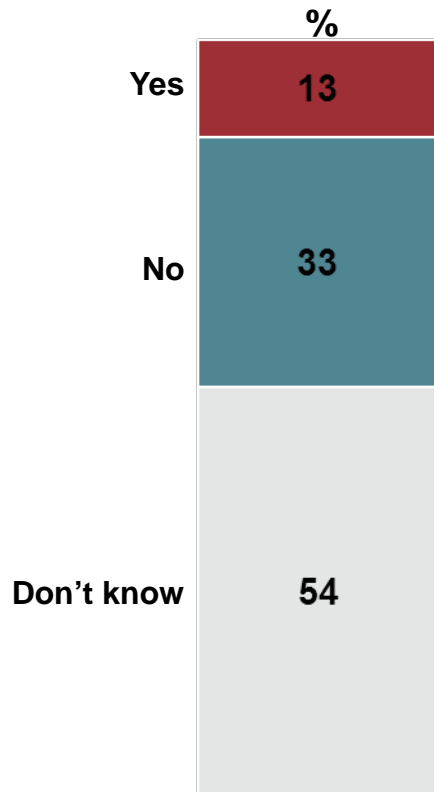
Why do you say that?

* All others 4% or less

Involvement of Laypeople in Eucharistic Congress

(Base: All Roman Catholic Adults – 1,005)

Are you or laypeople in your parish involved with the preparations for the Eucharistic Congress?



Highest Amongst:

- 55+ (18%)
- Munster residents (17%)
- Attend Mass at least once per week (23%)

Highest Amongst:

- Under 25's (37%)
- Connaught/Ulster (46%)

Just over 1 in 10 believe that the laypeople in their parish are involved with the preparation for the Congress of the Eucharist, while over 1 in 2 don't know.

Summary & Findings

Summary of Findings – Church Structures

- **Relatively even split on the Catholic Church’s understanding of the challenges faced by Catholics, although uncertainly surrounding Bishop’s listening to Irish priests and laypeople.**
- **Only 1 in 10 believe that the Catholic Church has some independence from Rome, with almost 3 in 5 (57%) believing them to be subservient.**
- **Majority favour Catholic Bishops serving a fixed term (55%), while relatively even split for as long as they like or until 75.**
- **Strong push for laypeople being involved in choosing their Bishop at 2 in 3 wanting a greater input than at present.**
- **The Church should speak out on issues facing the Irish nation, especially on social and economic issues.**
- **Support for priests being allowed to marry and married men becoming priests. Over 7 in 10 (72%) favour women being ordained into the Catholic Church as priests.**

Summary of Findings – Liturgy

- **Just over 1 in 2 Irish Catholics are aware of the changes made to the wording of the Missal in 2011. Regular Mass attendees and the older age cohorts showing the highest levels of awareness.**
- **Catholics are unsure about the change to the Missal wording, with just under 1 in 4 favorable towards it and finding it easier to understand. That said only 1 in 10 find it more user friendly than the older version.**
- **Overwhelming support for old response to greeting “The Lord be with you” with almost 4 in 5 preferring it to the new response. Similar level of support for the Creed “...for us and for our salvation” as opposed to “...for us men and for our salvation”.**
- **Although 2 in 5 support Liturgies being developed at a national level, 1 in 4 are opposed to the idea.**

Summary of Findings – Catholicism and Sexuality

- **3 in 4 find the Church's teaching on sexuality irrelevant to them and/ or their family. The older age cohorts and regular church goers find them most relevant. The younger age cohorts are the least likely to find the teachings pertinent to them.**
- **High levels of disagreement among Catholics surrounding the teaching that a sexual expression of love between homosexual couples is immoral with 3 in 5 believing that there is nothing wrong with homosexuality. The older age cohorts are more likely to agree with the immorality of homosexuality.**
- **Overwhelming majority believe that Catholics who are divorced or separated and in a second relationship should be allowed receive communion at Mass, with just under 9 in 10 believing they should. Only 5% agree with the current practice of not giving communion to divorcees/ those who are separated and in a second relationship.**

Summary of Findings – Congress of the Eucharist

- **Almost 3 in 5 believe that there is value in the Eucharistic Congress being held in Ireland in 2012, with the opportunity for people to renew their faith the primary benefit, followed by showcasing Ireland to the rest of the Catholic world.**
- **Slightly fewer believe that the timing is right for the Eucharistic Congress to be held in Ireland, with the expense of the Congress and the negativity surrounding the scandals which the Church are facing being cited as the primary reasons.**
- **Little awareness of parish laypeople being involved in the Eucharistic Congress with only 1 in 10 (13%) of Catholics being aware of their involvement. Just over 1 in 2 (54%) are not sure if local laypeople are involved in preparing for the celebration.**

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