



What Kind of Church do Young People Want?

Figures from
“American Catholic Laity Survey” 2011
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Changes observed since 1987



- Catholics are more educated
 - 53 % having some post-secondary education
 - 27% with college and graduate degrees
- more affluent
 - 60% reported family incomes of \$40,000 or more
 - 22% reporting \$100,000 or more
- fewer are married
 - 54% with an additional 10% living with a partner
- more ethnically diverse
 - Hispanic Catholics now constitute 1/3 of all Catholics
 - other ethnic groups accounting for an additional 5%



How sociologists divided the generations:

- **Pre Vatican II:** born 1940 or earlier
- **Vatican II:** born 1941-1960 (coincides with baby boomers, now 33 % of Catholics)
 - Church as the people of God, community of believers
 - Society: assassination of President John Kennedy, Vietnam War, Watergate

+ Gen X: born 1961-78



- Follow Pope John Paul II's charisma,
 - ignore his pleas for sexual abstinence, natural family planning, going to mass and confession on a regular basis
- Individualism, self-actualization
- Disillusionment with Vietnam, Watergate, student, women's, and civil rights movements



Millennials: born 1979-93



- Now 23% of Catholics
 - 45% of millennials are Hispanic
- Identify with JP II's concerns for the poor, environment, common good,
 - decide for themselves the morality of homosexuality, sexual behavior in general
- Culture: digitalized world of iPods, BlackBerries, texting, globalization;
 - 9/11, Iraq, Afghanistan, the sex abuse scandal that assumed prominence in 2002

+ Religious Practices: Mass Attendance



- **Pre-Vatican II: 54%**
- **Post Vatican II: 29%**

+ Religious Practices: Mass Attendance



■ Millennials:

- 8% increase between 2005-2011
- 26 % Hispanic millennials attend mass weekly compared to 20% of non-Hispanic millennials
- More than 25% of non-Hispanic millennials say they seldom or never go to Mass,
- while only 10% Hispanics gave that response.
- 42 % pre-Vatican II to 34 % millennials gave reason “the church requires it”

+ Religious Practices: Mass Attendance



- **All generations gave as reasons to go:**
 - experience the liturgy,
 - feeling the need for the Eucharist,
 - enjoyment of the company of others at Mass.

- **Reasons not to go:**
 1. “I’m not a religious person” (4/10)
 2. family responsibilities
 3. health
 4. “it is not a mortal sin”



Social teachings:



■ Health care reform bill:

- bare majority of Pre-Vatican II Catholics and Vatican II Catholics oppose the bishops' opposition to the bill,
- majority of the two younger generations support the bishops

■ Immigration:

- majority support bishops call for immigration reform.

+ **Social teachings:**



■ **Opposition to same-sex marriage:**

- 2/3 pre-Vatican II support bishops
- other generations are evenly split

■ **Ordination of women:**

- majority in all generations support this,
- although the Vatican has declared the position not open to consideration

+ Social teachings:



- **Funds for poor children:**

- majority of all generations support this

- **Funds for military:**

- all generations support
- (context: Iraq and Afghanistan)

- **Death penalty:**

- majority across all generations support stiffer enforcement

- **Cuts in welfare programs:**

- majority support

+ Doctrinal beliefs ranked “very important”:

- Jesus’ resurrection from the dead: 73%
- Mary, Mother of God: 64%
- Sacraments such as the Eucharist: 63%
- Regular daily prayer life: 43%
- Devotions such as Eucharistic adoration or rosary: 36%
- Helping the poor: 67%



+ Doctrinal beliefs ranked “very important”:

- **Vatican’s teaching authority: 30%**
 - 46% somewhat important,
 - 20% not important at all
- **Abortion: fewer than 40%**
- **Opposition to same-sex marriage: fewer than 35%**
- **Opposition to death penalty: fewer than 29%**



+ **Doctrinal beliefs ranked “very important”:**



- **Celibate male clergy:**
 - 21 % say this is very important,
 - 46% say it is not important at all;
 - 62% support women as priests,
 - 75% support women as deacons.

+ **Being a “good Catholic”:**

- Without going to Church every Sunday (78%)
- Without obeying teaching on birth control (78%)
- Without marriage approved by the church (72%)
- Without obeying teaching on divorce and remarriage (69%)
- Without obeying church teaching on abortion (60%)
- Without donating time or money to help the poor (60%)
- Without donating time or money to the parish (74%)



+ Importance of Catholicism in one's life:

- Important (77%)
 - Most important (37%)
 - Quite important (40%)
- Not terribly important (20%)
 - Not at all important (4%)



+ Staying power:



- Would never leave (56%)
- Unlikely they would leave (37%)

+ Identity:



- Very important part of who I am (75%)
- Cannot imagine being anything but Catholic (68%)
- Important that younger generations of their family grow up as Catholics (75%)



Catholic values:



- Mass (84%)
- Other sacraments (80%)
- Church is universal (85%)
- Unbroken tradition to the apostles (80%)
- Papacy (71%)
- Church's active concern for poor (88%); compare with their perceived responsibility;
- Church's willingness to stand up for right of life of the unborn (72%)
- Disagree with aspects of church teaching an still remain loyal to the church (86%)
- Shared community with other Catholics (80%)

+ Hispanic differences:

- Hispanics: **more devout, more theologically conservative, more deferential** toward the institutional church and the Catholic tradition
 - Values: belief in the Resurrection, Mary, the sacraments, helping the poor
 - Least value: celibacy followed by Vatican's teaching authority
- **Both Hispanic (46%) and non-Hispanic (51%) endorse** as very meaningful the fact **that Catholics can disagree with aspects of church teaching and still remain loyal** to the church.



Conclusions:



1. Highly autonomous view of Catholic obligations
2. Strong attachment to the church and Catholicism
3. Agreement with what the church stands for
 - even if they do not agree with what the church teaches on a given issue
4. Meaningful that Catholics can selectively disagree with but remain loyal to the church

+ The Parish



+ Appeal to People in their Freedom

- Coercion isn't what it used to be.
- Persuasion through appeal to basic values and self interests



+ Attention to Ethnic Diversity



+ Attention to Ideological Diversity



+ More Open to Women



+ Authenticity



