



# ***NORTH CAROLINA CATHOLICISM PROJECT***

## **SUMMARY REPORT** **MARCH 2010**

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# NORTH CAROLINA CATHOLICISM PROJECT (NCCP)

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# NORTH CAROLINA CATHOLICISM PROJECT (NCCP)

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## **Highlights of the Study**

- The vast majority of Catholics in participating parishes are originally from the Northeastern region.
  - Respondents from the states of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and Massachusetts make up 51 percent of the total number of transplants to the Diocese.
  - Fifteen percent moved to NC within the past 2 years.
  - Forty-two percent moved to the region within the past 6 years.
- Catholics in the Diocese of Raleigh participating in this study have much higher Mass attendance rates than a comparable national sample.
- Being part of a religiously homogeneous marriage is significantly correlated with Mass attendance rates.
- Most respondents attend their current parish because it is the closest one to their home; although, 42 percent report that one reason (of many) they attend their current parish is because they like their priest.
- Literal interpretation of the Bible is high (13 percent) considering Catholic teaching on Scripture. The same is true for adhering to a literal account of the creation story in Genesis (15 percent).
- Praying the Rosary and receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation appear to be on the decline. Older generations may take part in these rituals and sacraments, but younger Catholics typically do not.
- One surprising finding is that the younger cohort-groups provide the least amount of support for married priests, celibate women priests, and married women priests. The Baby Boomers agreed with the notions in the greatest number.
- Upon moving to North Carolina, nearly one-quarter of respondents increased their Mass attendance. Monetary contributions increased 48 percent. Bible reading outside the Mass increased 28 percent upon moving to the region.
- Fifty-four percent of Catholics of respondents perceive themselves to be a religious minority, with 24 percent feeling that they have been treated differently because of their faith. The youngest generations report both feeling like a religious minority *and* being treated differently because of their faith.
- With questions addressing personal morality, the Baby Boomers report the highest level of individual autonomy concerning premarital sex and birth control. The youngest generations report the highest level of personal moral autonomy with reference to abortion and homosexual activity.
- Fifty-five percent of respondents claim that abortion is always morally wrong, 30 percent suggest it is wrong except under certain conditions. When it comes to the death penalty, only 49 percent support a federal ban on the practice.
- Catholics participating in the study are highly educated with over 60 percent having earned a college degree.
- Over 62 percent of the respondents are retired or semi-retired from the workforce.

## **Research Design**

The North Carolina Catholicism Project (NCCP) is being conducted by Christopher Born as the primary research for a doctoral dissertation through *The Catholic University of America* (Washington, DC). The NCCP seeks to examine the explosive growth and changing complexion of Catholicism in the Diocese of Raleigh, NC. In 1980, only 1.6 percent of population in the counties making up the Diocese of Raleigh were registered Catholics. In 2008, 4.8 percent of the population in the Diocese were registered Catholics.

The NCCP Survey was distributed in the spring and summer of 2009 to selected parishes in high-growth areas of the Diocese of Raleigh, NC. Parishes selected to participate in the study did not include any in the city or suburbs of Raleigh itself. Instead, parishes in regions with high concentrations of retirees were contacted to seek their cooperation in the study.<sup>1</sup> Fifteen parishes were initially contacted; some declined the request and others were ruled out due to their size or proximity to other participating parishes. In total, six parishes in three distinct regions of the Diocese participated in the study.

In all, 3,172 surveys were distributed either by mail or by hand. Of the distributed surveys, 1,941 surveys were returned via mail. The overall response rate for the study is 61 percent.

The first method of survey distribution occurred at the back of Mass on three different weekends in May and June of 2009. Parishioners could voluntarily take a survey upon exiting the Church. In the majority of cases, the Pastor made an announcement to the parish during services. If the investigator was not present, surveys were available in marked boxes. The survey included a stamped, addressed envelop for return. The response rate for this method is 73 percent.

The second method of survey distribution was by mail. In parishes where the roll was made available to the investigator, surveys were mailed out to registered parishioners. The survey included a stamped, addressed envelop for return. The response rate for this method is 43 percent.

The impetus behind multiple distribution methods is two-fold. First, per conversations with Diocese of Raleigh pastors, some individuals and couples who attend Mass on a weekly basis are not officially registered with the parish. Distributing the surveys at the back of Mass allows for these individuals to be included in the study. Second, a substantial number of Catholics may not attend Mass in a given week (or three in succession). To capture individuals who may not always be attending, surveys were mailed to addresses on the parish roll. The study is aware of the potential bias in measures such as commitment and regularity of attendance in the group who received the surveys *after* attending Mass. In the majority of the analyses that follow, the two groups are parsed out into distinct cohorts. Where applicable, statistically significant differences are noted between the two groups (distributed and mailed).

Over 97 percent of the respondents reported their race to be “white” in the study. As a result, racial categories are not sectioned out for comparison.

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<sup>1</sup> For a detailed analysis of how the regions and parishes were selected, please contact the investigator, Christopher Born ([2010NCCP@gmail.com](mailto:2010NCCP@gmail.com)).

**Part I: Demographics****A. GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE**

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Male	725	<b>37.4</b>
Female	1215	<b>62.6</b>
	1940	100%

**B. AGE/COHORT-GROUP DISTRIBUTION**

<i>Age Cohort-group</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percent</i>
G.I. Generation (1901-24)	58	<b>3.0</b>
Silent Generation (1925-42)	834	<b>43.4</b>
Baby Boomers (1943-60)	760	<b>39.6</b>
<i>Wave 1 (1943-51)</i>	<i>545</i>	<i>28.4%</i>
<i>Wave 2 (1952-60)</i>	<i>215</i>	<i>11.2%</i>
13 <sup>th</sup> Generation/Gen X (1961-81)	251	<b>13.1</b>
Millennial Generation (1982+)	19	<b>1.0</b>
<b>Average year of birth: 1945.4</b>	1922	100%

**C. NATIVE OR TRANSPLANT TO NORTH CAROLINA**

<i>Resident status</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Native to NC	105	<b>5.4</b>
Transplant	1806	<b>93.4</b>
Other	23	<b>1.2</b>
	1934	100%

**D. REGION OF ORIGIN – TOP 20 STATES FOR TRANSPLANTS TO DIOCESE OF RALEIGH**

<i>State of origin</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>State of origin</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>		
1. New York	281	<b>22.6</b>	11. Michigan	32	<b>2.6</b>
2. Virginia	145	<b>11.6</b>	12. Illinois	27	<b>2.2</b>
3. New Jersey	140	<b>11.2</b>	13. Texas	21	<b>1.7</b>
4. Pennsylvania	96	<b>7.7</b>	14. Georgia	19	<b>1.5</b>
5. Ohio	75	<b>6.0</b>	15. New Hampshire	11	<b>.9</b>
6. Maryland	72	<b>5.8</b>	16. Indiana	10	<b>.8</b>
7. Connecticut	71	<b>5.7</b>	17. Wisconsin	10	<b>.8</b>
8. Massachusetts	42	<b>3.4</b>	18. Minnesota	8	<b>.6</b>
9. Florida	41	<b>3.3</b>	19. Tennessee	8	<b>.6</b>
10. California	34	<b>2.7</b>	20. Kentucky	7	<b>.6</b>
			<i>Total</i>	1246	

Table D. notes the states of origin for those who moved to the state of North Carolina. The table illustrates that the vast majority of transplants to the Diocese of Raleigh are, originally, from the North and Northeastern parts of the country. Respondents from the states of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and Massachusetts (all in the top eight) make up 51 percent of the total number of transplants to the Diocese. This finding is consistent with migratory data based on recent census reports. The trend shows no sign of abating. In fact, as more of the Baby Boomer cohort-group reaches retirement age, the influx of Northeasterners to the Southeast is expected to rise. With the continuing patterns of North-to-South migration, the cohort-group distribution in Table B. is also expected to change in favor of more Baby Boomers. This study focused on high-growth regions outside of the major metropolitan area of Raleigh, NC.

**E. TRANSPLANT TIMEFRAME**

Moving to the South as a child and moving during one’s adult years may have different influences on an individual’s accommodation and effects on religious behaviors. Therefore, the survey asked respondents who identified themselves as transplants when they moved to North Carolina. Forty-two percent of respondents moved to North Carolina within the last six years. Thirty-one percent moved seven to fifteen years ago, and 26 percent moved to the area more than fifteen years ago.

**F. EMPLOYMENT STATUS**

<i>Employment</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Retired</i>	1101	<b>57.0</b>
Working full-time (35+ hours/week)	444	<b>23.0</b>
Working part-time	117	<b>6.1</b>
Homemaker (not employed outside home)	104	<b>5.4</b>
<i>Semi-retired (retired &amp; part-time work)</i>	98	<b>5.1</b>
Unemployed	35	<b>1.8</b>
Other (In school/On leave)	33	<b>1.7</b>
	1932	<b>100%</b>

The density of retirees in the research regions is notable. Over 60 percent of respondents report being either retired or semi-retired. Retirees make up the largest share of transplants to the region. One goal of this study is to examine the religious behaviors of retired parishioners in contrast to those who are currently in the work force.

**G. MARITAL STATUS AND EDUCATION**

Of the parishioners surveyed, 78 percent are currently married, 10 percent are widowed, and seven percent are divorced or separated. Less than 5 percent have never been married.

The parishioners surveyed are, on average, highly educated with 84 percent having had at least some college education. In response to the question, “What is the highest grade you completed in school?”, 33 percent completed an undergraduate degree with an additional 28 percent receiving an advanced graduate degree.

## **Part II: Religious belief and behavior**

### **A. RELIGIOUS IDENTIFICATION AND SALIENCE**

The vast majority of survey respondents are “cradle Catholics” – 86 percent were baptized into the Church as an infant. Nearly 12 percent converted to Catholicism as adults. Analyzing data from the *Official Catholic Directory*, the increase in Catholics in the region is primarily due to migrating Catholics. In 1980, only 1.6 percent of population in the counties making up the Diocese were registered Catholics. In 2008, 4.8 percent of the population in the Diocese were registered Catholics. In 2008, the population of Catholics in the region approached 205,000.

Twelve percent of the sample did convert to Catholicism as an adult (n=226). The majority (86 percent) of the adult switchers converted from a Protestant denomination. Eight percent converted from “no religion,” while the rest converted from Judaism, Orthodox, or another faith.

Of the respondents who reported they were currently married, 79 percent are married to other Catholics. Thirteen percent are currently married to members of various Protestant denominations and 6 percent are married to spouses of no specific religion or no religion.

Religion is quite important to parishioners in the selected parishes in the Diocese of Raleigh. When asked how important religion is in their lives, respondents overwhelmingly asserted it was very important – 80 percent answered “very important,” 19 percent answered “somewhat important.” Only 2 percent responded that religion was “not too important” or “not at all important” in their lives.<sup>2</sup> An additional question asked how much guidance religion provides in the respondents’ lives. Fifty-one percent of respondents report that their religion provides a “great deal of guidance” and 36 percent state their faith provides “quite a bit of guidance.”

Research on religious changes in the life-cycle note that salience of religious belief tends to increase as one approaches older stages of the life-cycle. The data here appears to corroborate this thesis. The G.I. Generation (1901-24) and the Silent Generation (1925-42) have the highest percentage of respondents answering that their faith provides either a “great deal” or “quite a bit” of guidance; the younger generations, 13<sup>th</sup> (1961-81) and Millennial (1982+), have the lowest percentage on the same measures.

The study is also consistent with past research on differences in religious salience between men and women. Fifty-six percent of women (compared to only 44 percent of men) answer that their religion provides them a “great deal” of guidance. On the flip side, 17 percent of men claim religion provides “some guidance” compared to only 10 percent of women.

The group receiving surveys at the back of church reports slightly higher levels of guidance than those registered parishioners receiving the survey in the mail. Since it took an act of religious commitment to (1) attend Mass in the first place and (2) to voluntarily take a survey upon exiting, this finding is not surprising. The difference between the groups will be analyzed more in relation to religious activity.

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<sup>2</sup> The number of respondents who find religion very important in their lives is not surprising. Past research notes this bias in survey respondents. Those whose religion is more important to them are more likely to respond to surveys asking questions about religion.

**B. CHURCH ATTENDANCE**

The following table demonstrates the importance of identifying respondents who received the surveys in the mail from those who willingly picked up surveys after a Mass. The mailed surveys were sent to registered parishioners at selected parishes. Individuals in the other group may or may not be registered with the local parish, but they were attending Mass at least once during the three week survey timeline.

	ATTENDANCE		
	Less than 2-3 times a month (%)	2-3 times a month (%)	Weekly or more often (%)
Mailed surveys	14.0	13.0	<b>73.0</b>
Distributed surveys	2.8	6.6	<b>90.6</b>
<i><b>Total</b></i>	<i><b>5.8</b></i>	<i><b>8.4</b></i>	<i><b>85.8</b></i>

Noting the bias in the data with the group receiving surveys *while at Mass*, it is more accurate to base any assessment of attendance levels in the Diocese on the “mailed surveys” group. Granted, there is still a potential bias in this group – those who are more interested in their faith and discussing their faith with others are more likely to complete and return the survey. Other surveys may experience the same bias, so it does not prevent us entirely from making comparisons with national samples.

In 2008, the Center for Research in the Apostolate (CARA), a Catholic research organization, published a study of 1,007 self-identified Catholics. Of this number, 520 were registered at a Catholic parish.<sup>3</sup> The difference in church attendance rates between the NCCP sample and the CARA sample is staggering.

	ATTENDANCE		
	Less than almost every week/less than 2-3 times a month (%)	Almost every week/2-3 times a month (%)	Weekly or more often (%)
NCCP	14.0	13.0	<b>73.0</b>
CARA (National sample)	45.2	16.2	<b>38.7</b>

It does appear that the Diocese of Raleigh has higher attendance rates than the national average. Before solidifying this assertion, it should be noted that the parishes selected to participate in the NCCP study were not a random sample. They were selected due to their growth rates – growth that is the result of an influx of retirees. Older Catholics have a higher attendance rate than the younger generations. As a result, it may be better to compare age cohort-groups across the surveys.

<sup>3</sup> In survey research, distinctions need to be made between “believing” and “belonging”. While survey respondents may self-identify with a religious group (“believing”), they may not officially “belong” to that group. As a result, they may not exhibit the same behaviors and level of commitment than those who have taken the step to “join” a religious organization. For this reason, it is more accurate to compare this study’s findings of mailed surveys with CARA’s sub-sample of self-identified Catholics who are also registered with a parish.



	ATTENDANCE		
	Less than almost every week/less than 2-3 times a month (%)	Almost every week/2-3 times a month (%)	Weekly or more often (%)
<i>G.I. and Silent Generations (1901-42)</i>			
NCCP	6.4	6.0	<b>87.6</b>
CARA 2008 National Sample	25.2	14.6	<b>60.2</b>
<i>Baby Boomer Generation (1943-60)</i>			
NCCP	16.5	12.9	<b>70.6</b>
CARA 2008 National Sample	47.5	12.6	<b>39.9</b>
<i>13<sup>th</sup> and Millennial Generations (1961+)</i>			
NCCP	27.6	29.5	<b>42.9</b>
CARA 2008 National Sample	54.7	20.1	<b>25.2</b>

The initial findings suggest that the Catholic Mass attendance rates in portions of the Diocese are significantly higher than the national averages. These results also illustrate the generational differences in Mass attendance. Further study is needed to determine if attendance trends are a function of generational make-up or a function of life-cycle effects. In other words, are the older generations more religious vis-à-vis Mass attendance than other generations or will the younger generations come to resemble the oldest generations over time?

Unlike measures of religious salience and guidance which find higher rates in women, Mass attendance in this study does not demonstrate significant differences between genders. In fact, male respondents attend weekly Mass slightly more than women. Widowed and married respondents attend more than divorced/separated and never married respondents. Transplants to North Carolina attend weekly at higher rates than native North Carolinians.

Being part of a religiously homogeneous marriage appears to have a (statistically) significant correlation with Mass attendance rates:

	ATTENDANCE		
	Less than 2-3 times a month (%)	2-3 times a month (%)	Weekly or more often (%)
<i>Mailed Surveys</i>			
Respondent (R) married to Catholic	9.2	10.8	<b>80.1</b>
R married to Protestant	17.6	23.5	<b>58.8</b>
R married to No Rel/Other Religion	30.2	20.8	<b>49.1</b>
<i>Distributed Surveys</i>			
Respondent (R) married to Catholic	2.0	4.5	<b>93.6</b>
R married to Protestant	3.6	10.9	<b>85.5</b>
R married to No Rel/Other Religion	4.5	15.2	<b>80.3</b>

Another measure of commitment is the rate with which individuals attend Holy Days of Obligation when they do not fall on Sundays. The difference between the group that was mailed surveys and the group picking them up is not that stark: 56 percent of the prior group “regularly” attends Mass on Holy Days of Obligation while 61 percent of the latter group attends these Mass on these days.

When asked, “How often do you attend Mass on Holy Days of Obligation?” the different age cohort-groups vary widely:

	Never or Rarely (%)	Sometimes (%)	Regularly (%)
G.I. and Silent Generations (1901-42)	9.5	20.9	<b>69.4</b>
Baby Boomer Generation (1943-60)	18.7	27.7	<b>53.4</b>
13 <sup>th</sup> and Millennial Generations (1961+)	21.9	31.5	<b>44.8</b>
<b>Total</b>	13.9	25.1	<b>59.6</b>

Again, the differences among the generations may be a factor of the cohort-group itself, the life-cycle effects, or the amount of time available to attend Mass on these days when they do not fall on a Sunday; even the older wave of Boomers (1943-51) attends Holy Day services more often than the younger wave of the Boomers (1952-60). This may be indicative of the life-cycle effects since the older wave of Boomers (along with the older generations) may not have children living in the home, may be retired, and have more free time. Needless to say, the rate of attendance should be tracked in the future to determine if the younger generations begin to replicate the findings of the older generations or if they are fundamentally distinct.<sup>4</sup>

### C. OTHER RELIGIOUS BEHAVIORS

The survey also asked about other religious behaviors that are known to be waning among the younger generations in the Church. For example, questions asked about the frequency of prayer, Bible reading, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and praying the rosary. Past evidence suggests that Reconciliation and praying the rosary will be more prevalent in the older generations.

Frequent reading of the Bible outside of Mass is not traditionally known to be a habit of Roman Catholics. The results from this survey find that this proposal is more true than false. Generational differences in Bible reading outside of Mass are not as staggering as other measures. In fact, in the oldest two cohorts (G.I. and Silent), 56 percent of Catholics read the Bible once or twice (or less) in the past year outside of Mass. This number is similar to other groups: 58 percent of Boomers and 60 percent of the youngest two generations read the Bible once or twice (or less) outside of Mass in the past year. Considering that Catholics in the Diocese of Raleigh are widely outnumbered by Protestant denominations, which are more inclined to focus on the Bible, the practice has not “spilled over” in great numbers to Catholics in the area. The religion of one’s spouse has little to no impact on this measure; however, Catholics native to North Carolina do read the Bible with more frequency than transplants. Nearly one-third of Catholics native to North Carolina read the Bible at least two to three times a month outside of Mass compared to only one-fifth of transplants. This suggests, but needs to be investigated further, that Catholics native to the region may have absorbed Protestant religious behaviors from the surrounding (overwhelmingly Protestant) culture.

With respect to the Bible, it is interesting to note that 13 percent of respondents adhere to a *literal* interpretation of the Bible. In response to a question asking about their personal beliefs of the Bible, this group answered, “It means exactly what it says. It should be taken literally.” On

<sup>4</sup> This proposition dives into larger issues with the impact of the counter-culture of the 1960s on religious expression in general in the United States. Also, what kind of long-range (negative and positive) did the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) have on subsequent generations of Catholics? Does one still have to attend Mass and Holy Days of Obligation to be a “good Catholic”? These questions will be briefly addressed later in this summary report, but will be analyzed in depth in the publication of the dissertation.

the flip side, nearly as many (11 percent) answered that the Bible “is an ancient book of history and legends.” There may have been confusion in the answer choices (chosen to replicate another study) because 13 percent responded “I don’t know” to the question. There are no significant differences among the generational cohort-groups, but region of origin is significant: 19 percent of respondents *native* to North Carolina adhere to a literal interpretation of the Bible versus 13 percent of transplants. Seventeen percent of respondents receiving the mailed survey think the Bible should be interpreted literally while only 12 percent of others adhere to the same belief. Frequency of attendance is not related to Biblical interpretation except on the low end. One-in-four of rare attendees (less than 2-3 times per month) think the Bible is “an ancient book of history and legends” compared to only 11 percent of weekly (or more) attendees.

Additionally, 16 percent of the overall sample adheres to a literal interpretation of Genesis – the world was created in 6, 24 hour days. One-fourth of native North Carolina Catholics adhere to a literal reading of Genesis with respect to creation in 6, 24 hour days. The intriguing difference is found between the genders. Twenty percent of women understand the world as being brought about in 6, 24 hour days compared to only 8 percent of men. Additionally, men prefer natural selection as an explanation for creation at a higher rate than women.

The frequency of prayer outside of Mass, praying the rosary, and receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation are all highest in the older generations, lower in the Boomers, and even lower in the younger generations. The finding itself is not surprising, but whether or not the younger generations will eventually match the older generations in frequency of these acts of commitment requires long-range study. Other studies suggest that younger Catholics are not as ritually inclined as the older (Pre-Vatican II) generations. Are other means of expressive faith going to emerge? <sup>5</sup> The question, while necessary to gauge the future of the Church, is outside the scope of this project.

Of the total sample, only 15 percent have received the Sacrament of Reconciliation “several times” or more over the past year. It is not surprising that the oldest generations receive the sacrament most frequently with 18 percent receiving Reconciliation “several times” in the past year. There were some complaints among parishioners that confession was not offered at their parish frequently enough. Unfortunately, this study does not investigate the *willingness* to receive the sacrament if it were offered. The youngest two generations (13<sup>th</sup> and Millennial) receive the sacrament least frequently – 58 percent did not receive it at all in the past year (compared with 53 percent of Boomers and 42 percent of oldest generations answering “never in the past year”).

Praying of the rosary follows the same pattern as the Sacrament of Reconciliation. One in five of the total sample prayed the rosary at least weekly in the past year. Nearly half (45 percent) prayed the rosary “several times” or more in the past year. Again, the oldest generations (G.I. and Silent) pray the rosary most frequently with 26 percent praying the rosary at least weekly. This is compared to only 19 percent of Boomers and merely 9 percent of the youngest generations. This generational drop-off with the Boomers (and especially the younger generations) may be a direct result of the changes instituted in the Mass during the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). The council document on the Mass (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* – The Constitution on the Liturgy, 1963) initiated changes that required more lay participation and,

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<sup>5</sup> For a detailed study of young Catholics, see Dean R. Hoge et al., *Young Adult Catholics: Religion in the Culture of Choice* (University of Notre Dame Press: 2001).

eventually, changed the presentation of the Mass from Latin to the vernacular. With these changes, the younger generations did not grow up saying the rosary during Mass – a practice instilled in many of the older generations that they continued.

Catholics in the Diocese of Raleigh exhibit high levels of volunteering. Out of the entire sample, 21 percent volunteer once a month or more through parish programs. Non-parish programs have an even higher rate – 32 percent of respondents volunteer at least once a month in the community through programs unaffiliated with the parish. With the potential for more free time among retirees, it is not surprising that older generations volunteer more both through parish (25 percent once a month or more) and non-parish programs (36 percent once a month or more). Women volunteer more frequently than men in parish programs, but not more often in non-parish programs.

#### D. RELIGIOUS BELIEFS – GENERAL

Belief about Jesus did not vary much across generations, distribution method, or status as a native or transplant. Nearly 96 percent of respondents believe that Jesus in the Son of God. There was also little variance in belief in life after death across sub-groups. Women were slightly more certain in their belief in life after death than men (72 percent to 63 percent). In all, 69 percent have no doubts about life after death; 28 percent adhere to the belief with some doubts. This leaves only 3 percent that is not certain in life after death or definitively do not hold the belief.

The sub-groups do vary in their level of religious exclusivism pertaining to the afterlife. The question asks: “Which of the following statements BEST fits your view of salvation?”<sup>6</sup>

	<b>Belief in Jesus Christ as the <i>only</i> way to salvation. (%)</b>	<b>Belief in Jesus Christ as <i>one</i> way to salvation, but there are other ways as well. (%)</b>	<b>Belief in Jesus Christ is <i>not</i> relevant to salvation. (%)</b>
<i>Overall</i>	<b>44.9</b>	<b>52.7</b>	<b>2.3</b>
<i>Gender *</i>			
Male	40.5	56.8	2.7
Female	47.6	50.3	2.1
<i>Age cohort-group</i>			
G.I. and Silent (1901-42)	46.1	52.0	1.8
Baby Boomer (1943-60)	42.2	55.3	2.6
13 <sup>th</sup> and Millennial (1961+)	48.4	48.0	3.5
<i>Distribution method *</i>			
Mailed	49.7	46.2	4.1
Distributed in back	43.2	55.1	1.7
<i>Origin *</i>			
Native	62.6	36.4	1.0
Transplant	43.9	53.7	2.4

\* Statistically significant at the  $p < .01$  level.

<sup>6</sup> The differences among the various groups are not always statistically significant. The asterisk notes where the correlations are statistically significant at the  $p < .01$  level.

**E. RELIGIOUS BELIEFS – CATHOLIC**

Concerning belief about the Eucharist, significant generational differences emerge. The question asks: “Which of the following statements BEST reflects your belief about the Eucharist/Holy Communion?” The older generations tend to adhere to the belief in the *actual* presence (rather than the *symbolic* presence) of Jesus in the Eucharist (89 percent). The Baby Boomers were less inclined to accept the same teaching (85 percent), and the youngest Catholics even more so (77 percent). There was also a slight difference (approaching statistical significance) between women (87 percent) and men (84 percent) believing in the *actual* presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

**F. ATTITUDES TOWARD CHANGING THE REQUIREMENTS OF PRIESTHOOD**

The Catholic Church has no plans at this time to change the qualifications for become a priest in the Catholic Church, but this position has not quieted discussion among the laity about their feelings pertaining to the issue. Debate can become heated when the topic of married and female priests is broached. This study does not endorse one view over the other; but getting a sense of opinions of the faithful on these issues is essential for understanding Catholicism in the Diocese.

The charts below demonstrate the strength of opinions on both sides of these various proposals.

<b>It would be a good thing if priests who have married were allowed to return to active ministry.</b>	<b>Strongly agree (%)</b>	<b>Somewhat agree (%)</b>	<b>DK/no opinion (%)</b>	<b>Somewhat disagree (%)</b>	<b>Strongly disagree (%)</b>
<b>Overall</b>	<b>45.9</b>	<b>27.4</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>11.2</b>
<i>Gender *</i>					
Male	41.8	29.0	7.3	8.3	13.6
Female	48.2	26.5	8.6	6.9	9.8
<i>Age cohort-group *</i>					
G.I. and Silent (1901-42)	46.5	28.5	7.8	7.7	9.6
Baby Boomer (1943-60)	47.5	28.0	7.2	6.9	10.4
13 <sup>th</sup> and Millennial (1961+)	39.6	22.6	11.7	7.9	18.1
<i>Distribution method *</i>					
Mailed	43.5	22.5	9.2	9.7	15.1
Distributed in back	46.7	29.3	7.7	6.5	9.8
<i>Origin *</i>					
Native	35.6	21.8	12.9	7.9	21.8
Transplant	46.7	27.8	7.5	7.4	10.5

\* Statistically significant at the  $p < .01$  level.

In looking at the entire sample, support is relatively high for priests who have left and married to return to the priesthood. Nearly three-fourths of respondents agree (either somewhat or strongly). An interesting finding is that the youngest generations have the lowest levels of agreement and are most strongly opposed to allowing former priests who married to return to the priesthood; native North Carolinians have significantly lower levels of agreement than transplants. Does this suggest the South is more religiously conservative? Even in Catholicism?

There is also strong overall support for allowing married men to be ordained as priests. Seven in ten (72 percent) strongly agree or somewhat agree that it would be a “good thing.” Again, the youngest generations have the highest rates of opposition to the notion, with 31 percent disagreeing (strongly or somewhat). Likewise, natives are more reluctant than transplants to agree that it would be a good idea to allow married men to be ordained as priests in the Catholic Church.

<b>It would be a good thing if married men were allowed to be ordained as priests.</b>	<b>Strongly agree (%)</b>	<b>Somewhat agree (%)</b>	<b>DK/no opinion (%)</b>	<b>Somewhat disagree (%)</b>	<b>Strongly disagree (%)</b>
<b>Overall</b>	<b>45.8</b>	<b>26.1</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>13.5</b>
<i>Gender **</i>					
Male	43.5	26.6	5.9	7.9	16.1
Female	47.1	25.9	7.7	7.3	12.0
<i>Age cohort-group *</i>					
G.I. and Silent (1901-42)	45.6	27.6	7.8	6.4	12.5
Baby Boomer (1943-60)	48.6	26.2	5.6	7.1	12.6
13 <sup>th</sup> and Millennial (1961+)	38.8	21.7	8.4	12.2	19.0
<i>Distribution method</i>					
Mailed	43.5	25.8	6.7	7.8	16.2
Distributed in back	46.7	26.3	7.2	7.4	12.5
<i>Origin *</i>					
Native	33.7	22.8	11.9	8.9	22.8
Transplant	46.8	26.2	6.7	7.5	12.8

\* Statistically significant at the  $p < .01$  level. \*\* Statistically significant at the  $p < .06$  level.

<b>It would be a good thing if celibate women were allowed to be ordained as priests.</b>	<b>Strongly agree (%)</b>	<b>Somewhat agree (%)</b>	<b>DK/no opinion (%)</b>	<b>Somewhat disagree (%)</b>	<b>Strongly disagree (%)</b>
<b>Overall</b>	<b>25.4</b>	<b>19.3</b>	<b>15.8</b>	<b>10.3</b>	<b>29.3</b>
<i>Gender *</i>					
Male	21.9	21.0	14.3	9.6	33.2
Female	27.4	18.3	16.7	10.7	26.9
<i>Age cohort-group</i>					
G.I. and Silent (1901-42)	25.2	19.4	17.6	9.4	28.4
Baby Boomer (1943-60)	27.1	18.9	14.3	11.3	28.3
13 <sup>th</sup> and Millennial (1961+)	21.1	20.0	14.0	10.2	34.7
<i>Distribution method *</i>					
Mailed	19.5	17.9	17.7	7.3	37.6
Distributed in back	27.6	19.9	15.0	11.4	26.1
<i>Origin</i>					
Native	24.8	15.8	10.9	9.9	38.6
Transplant	25.5	19.5	15.9	10.4	28.6

\* Statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

Embracing the ordination of women is a contentious subject in the Catholic Church. The results of the survey illustrate strong opinions on either side. Overall, 45 percent of Catholic laity polled agrees that the ordination of celibate women as priests is a good idea. Nearly as many, 40 percent, oppose the notion. What is more telling is the strength of the opinions – 25 percent “strongly agree” and 29 percent “strongly disagree.” The difference between genders is statistically significant, but the significance level has more to do with the strength of the opinions – one in three males “strongly disagree” (7 percentage points higher than females) and over one in four females “strongly agree” (5 percentage points higher than males) that it would be a good idea for celibate women to be ordained in the Catholic Church.

There is significantly more resistance to the notion among those who were mailed the survey than those who willingly picked one exiting Sunday Mass. While there is more resistance, again, in the younger generations to the practice, the differences among the age cohort-groups are not statistically significant. Almost half (49 percent) of native North Carolinians disapprove of the proposition, while 39 percent of transplants disapprove.

<b>It would be a good thing if married women were allowed to be ordained as priests.</b>	<b>Strongly agree (%)</b>	<b>Somewhat agree (%)</b>	<b>DK/no opinion (%)</b>	<b>Somewhat disagree (%)</b>	<b>Strongly disagree (%)</b>
<b>Overall</b>	<b>25.1</b>	<b>15.6</b>	<b>14.8</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>34.4</b>
<i>Gender</i>					
Male	22.2	16.8	14.7	10.0	36.3
Female	26.9	14.9	14.9	10.1	33.2
<i>Age cohort-group *</i>					
G.I. and Silent (1901-42)	22.5	14.8	17.1	10.4	35.2
Baby Boomer (1943-60)	28.6	16.8	13.0	9.9	31.7
13 <sup>th</sup> and Millennial (1961+)	23.8	15.1	13.2	9.8	38.1
<i>Distribution method *</i>					
Mailed	22.4	12.6	15.7	9.2	40.2
Distributed in back	26.2	16.8	14.5	10.4	32.2
<i>Origin</i>					
Native	19.8	11.9	13.9	7.9	46.5
Transplant	25.6	15.9	14.8	10.2	33.5

\* Statistically significant at the  $p < .01$  level.

The final question relating to ordination propositions in the Church pertain to allowing married women to be ordained as priests. With this question, the differences among the generational groupings become statistically significant. The highest level of support for the notion is found among the Baby Boomer generation. Again, those who received mailed surveys and responded are more likely to disapprove (49 percent) than their counterparts (43 percent). More than half native North Carolinians disagree (strongly or somewhat) with the ordination of married women.

**G. IMPORTANCE OF MASS ATTENDANCE**

Roman Catholics are obliged to obey a set of church laws known as the Precepts of the Church, which are “meant to guarantee to the faithful the very necessary minimum in the spirit of prayer and moral effort, in the growth in love of God and neighbor” (Catechism of the Catholic Church 204).<sup>7</sup> There are six precepts, and the First Precept cites weekly Mass attendance as a requirement of the Catholic faithful:

“You shall attend Mass on Sundays and on holy days of obligation and rest from servile labor” (CCC 2042).

The survey asked how essential Mass attendance is to being a “good Catholic.” The survey item states: “I can be a good Catholic without going to Mass every Sunday.” Respondents are asked how strongly they agree or disagree with this statement. Remarkably, respondents are nearly identically split on the issue: 46 percent agree with the statement while 44 disagree; 10 percent neither agree nor disagree.

<b>I can be a good Catholic without going to Mass every Sunday.</b>	<b>Strongly agree (%)</b>	<b>Somewhat agree (%)</b>	<b>DK/no opinion (%)</b>	<b>Somewhat disagree (%)</b>	<b>Strongly disagree (%)</b>
<i>Overall</i>	<b>17.3</b>	<b>28.2</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>19.1</b>	<b>25.2</b>
<i>Gender</i>					
Male	<b>14.9</b>	28.8	10.5	21.2	24.7
Female	<b>18.7</b>	27.9	9.9	17.9	25.6
<i>Age cohort-group *</i>					
G.I. and Silent (1901-42)	<b>11.7</b>	28.0	11.0	19.6	29.7
Baby Boomer (1943-60)	<b>20.8</b>	28.0	9.3	18.6	23.2
13 <sup>th</sup> and Millennial (1961+)	<b>24.5</b>	30.1	9.7	20.1	15.6
<i>Distribution method *</i>					
Mailed	<b>20.7</b>	24.3	10.0	17.6	27.4
Distributed in back	<b>16.0</b>	29.6	10.2	19.7	24.4
<i>Origin</i>					
Native	<b>24.8</b>	23.8	8.9	20.8	21.8
Transplant	<b>16.7</b>	28.6	10.2	19.0	25.5
<i>Attendance Rate *</i>					
Less than 2-3 times a month	<b>42.3</b>	35.1	9.0	4.5	9.0
2-3 times a month	<b>43.5</b>	34.2	6.2	13.0	3.1
Weekly or more	<b>12.9</b>	27.2	10.6	19.1	25.3

\* Statistically significant at the  $p < .01$  level.

Overall, those who *strongly* disagree outnumber those who *strongly* agree, but the even divide appears to be a generational one. With each generation, Sunday Mass attendance is less essential for being a good Catholic. It makes sense that those who deem Mass attendance non-negotiable

<sup>7</sup>The Catechism of the Catholic Church contains the essential and fundamental content of the Catholic faith in a complete and summary way. It presents what Catholics throughout the world believe in common in a way that facilitates their understanding.



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attend at a higher rate; however, 41 percent of weekly attendees do think you can be a good Catholic without going to Mass every Sunday. The question does not ask whether one can be a good Catholic without ever going to Mass, but attendance does not seem to be an essential criteria for being a “good Catholic” for the respondents.

Natives place less emphasis on Mass attendance than transplants. This may be an influence of Protestantism where attendance at weekly services is not a precept of faith. Ironically, more Christians attend services in the southeast than elsewhere, but it may not be viewed as essential for being a “good Catholic.”

### **Part III: Changing practices upon moving to the South**

#### **A. TRANSPLANTS AND CHANGING RELIGIOUS BEHAVIOR**

As noted earlier, the vast majority of respondents are transplants to the Diocese (93 percent). These transplants are typically from the North and Northeast. This study investigates changes in individual's religious behavior upon moving to the South. Did moving to the area have any impact on an increase (or decrease) on religious activity?

Since moving to NC, 22 percent of respondents increased (significantly or slightly) their attendance at Sunday Mass. Only 8 percent decreased their attendance (significantly or slightly). Individuals also increased their parish participation (36 percent) at a higher rate than decreasing it (28 percent) upon moving to the area. Monetary contributions increased nearly four times the rate that they decreased (48 percent versus 14 percent). Further analysis of this data along with conversations with parishioners and staff investigate theories explaining the substantial increase in religious behavior upon moving to the state.

Bible reading outside of Mass also increased more than it decreased in the overall sample (28 percent to 11 percent). Is this a result of the surrounding Protestant culture that places more emphasis on scripture or a function of more free time? This question will be addressed in the full-length study.

Prayer outside of Mass saw a dramatic increase in those who moved to the region. Nearly 40 percent increased their frequency of prayer while only 4 percent decreased the frequency upon moving the region. The South tends to be more religious in measures of prayer, attendance, giving, and Bible reading. The detailed study addresses whether the higher religious environment in the North Carolina "spills over" across denominational lines and has an impact on Catholics as well.

#### **B. CATHOLICS AS A RELIGIOUS MINORITY**

Roman Catholicism is a minority religion in the Diocese of Raleigh. Only 4.5 percent of the population is a registered Catholic. Being a religious minority can have an impact on belief and behavior as individuals may feel threatened by the more prevalent Baptist and Methodist Protestantism in the region. Minority status can provide group cohesion, prompt one to learn more about their own faith in order to defend it against questioning, and/or instill higher rates of participation to match the more religious southern milieu.

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The following table examines the perception of religious minority of Catholics in the Diocese of Raleigh:

Do you feel like a religious minority living in North Carolina? In other words, do you feel that the number of Catholics is far less than the number of people belonging to other religions?	Yes (%)	No (%)	Not sure/No opinion (%)
<i>Overall</i>	<b>54.0</b>	<b>34.1</b>	<b>11.9</b>
<i>Gender</i>			
Male	56.2	32.1	11.8
Female	52.7	35.3	12.0
<i>Age cohort-group *</i>			
G.I. and Silent (1901-42)	47.2	38.3	14.4
Baby Boomer (1943-60)	54.2	35.9	9.9
13 <sup>th</sup> and Millennial (1961+)	74.7	15.2	10.0
<i>Distribution method *</i>			
Mailed	68.3	22.4	9.3
Distributed in back	48.6	38.5	12.9
<i>Origin</i>			
Native	58.7	30.8	10.6
Transplant	53.6	34.3	12.0
<i>Attendance Rate *</i>			
Less than 2-3 times a month	67.0	22.3	10.7
2-3 times a month	62.1	29.2	8.7
Weekly or more	52.4	35.3	12.3

\* Statistically significant at the  $p < .01$  level

Over half of the overall sample perceives, correctly, being part of a religious minority in the Diocese. There is no significant difference between women and men or origin of the respondent. An interesting variation across generations emerges. Nearly three-fourths of the respondents in the youngest generations perceive themselves to be part of a religious minority. This result may be a function of the younger cohort-groups being more immersed in the workforce. Here they may have limited control over their encounters with others of different faiths. Retirees or others not in the workforce may interact primarily with a circle of friends comprised of more co-religionists.

The perception of minority status does not take into account any biased or anti-Catholic action on the part of others; however, religious minorities can feel as if they are “persecuted” or treated differently as a result of their faith.

Living as a Catholic in the South, have you ever felt like an outsider or treated differently because of your faith?	Yes (%)	No (%)	Not sure/No opinion (%)
<i>Overall</i>	<b>23.9</b>	<b>69.0</b>	<b>7.0</b>
<i>Gender ***</i>			
Male	21.2	71.4	7.4
Female	25.6	67.6	6.8
<i>Age cohort-group *</i>			
G.I. and Silent (1901-42)	16.0	77.8	6.2
Baby Boomer (1943-60)	26.5	68.1	5.5
13 <sup>th</sup> and Millennial (1961+)	41.8	44.0	14.2
<i>Distribution method *</i>			
Mailed	30.1	62.3	7.6
Distributed in back	21.6	71.6	6.8
<i>Origin *</i>			
Native	39.8	50.5	9.7
Transplant	22.9	70.3	6.8
<i>Attendance Rate *</i>			
Less than 2-3 times a month	33.6	50.0	16.4
2-3 times a month	35.4	54.7	9.9
Weekly or more	22.1	71.7	6.1

\* Statistically significant at the  $p < .01$  level; \*\*\* Significant at the  $p < .10$  level.

Again, the youngest generations report the highest rates of being treated differently as a result of their faith. Natives feel they were treated differently because of their faith nearly twice as often as transplants. This difference may be a result of natives having more time to encounter negative experiences including school-age interactions that are recalled in a negative light. Natives have also witnessed the explosion of Catholicism in the region. Ten years ago, Catholics were even more in the minority than they are now in the Diocese.

### C. SOUTHERN CATHOLICISM – ANY DIFFERENCE?

Researches have noted the distinctive religious and cultural milieu of the southeastern region, sometimes called “The Bible Belt.” Do these particularities work their way into religious practice? Is there a distinctively “southern” Catholicism? One-third of respondents agree that “Catholicism in the South is different than Catholicism as [they] formerly experienced the faith.” Comments pertaining to this response range from noting people are more committed to their faith in the South and are not just “going through the motions” to Southern religion is more “formal”.

Respondents who attend more often are less inclined than infrequent attendees to notice differences between Southern Catholicism and other expressions. Females are much more likely to note differences; 37 percent of females answer that there is a perceived difference versus 27 percent of males. The younger generations see a large difference between Southern Catholicism and other regions. Forty-three percent respond in the affirmative, compared with 35 percent of Boomers, and only 28 percent of the oldest generations.

## IV. Other Attitudes

### A. PERSONAL AUTONOMY AND NORMATIVE MORALITY

The emergence of the counter-culture in the 1960s has been cited as a catalyst in changing the perceptions of personal autonomy when making moral decisions. One often noted consequence of the counter-cultural movement was a growing anti-institutional sentiment among the nation's youth. The intent behind questions addressing ethical/personal issues is not an inflammatory one, nor is not to show how wide the "ideal-real" gap has become with American Catholics. Instead, asking about contentious issues, such as premarital sex and the use of birth control, both prohibited by the Catholic Church, is useful in gauging the value Catholics place on personal autonomy.

The questions ask: "In your opinion, is this following behavior always morally wrong, wrong except under certain circumstances, or is it entirely up to the individual?"

<b>Use of condoms or birth control pills to prevent pregnancy.</b>	<b>Entirely up to the individual (%)</b>	<b>Wrong except under certain conditions (%)</b>	<b>Always morally wrong (%)</b>	<b>Don't know (%)</b>
<i>Overall</i>	<b>63.0</b>	<b>19.0</b>	<b>14.1</b>	<b>3.8</b>
<i>Gender ***</i>				
Male	59.5	20.9	15.7	3.9
Female	65.2	17.9	13.2	3.8
<i>Age cohort-group *</i>				
G.I. and Silent (1901-42)	53.5	26.1	16.7	3.7
Baby Boomer (1943-60)	72.2	13.6	10.1	4.1
13 <sup>th</sup> and Millennial (1961+)	68.9	11.6	16.5	3.0
<i>Distribution method *</i>				
Mailed	58.3	19.4	18.8	3.5
Distributed in back	64.8	18.9	12.3	4.0
<i>Origin *</i>				
Native	57.8	11.8	24.5	5.9
Transplant	63.5	19.3	13.5	3.7
<i>Attendance Rate *</i>				
Less than 2-3 times a month	83.8	9.9	1.8	4.5
2-3 times a month	81.3	13.1	3.1	2.5
Weekly or more	59.8	20.2	16.1	3.9

\* Statistically significant at the  $p < .01$  level; \*\*\* Significant at the  $p < .10$  level.

<b>Premarital sex.</b>	<b>Entirely up to the individual (%)</b>	<b>Wrong except under certain conditions (%)</b>	<b>Always morally wrong (%)</b>	<b>Don't know (%)</b>
<i>Overall</i>	<b>40.0</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>45.4</b>	<b>4.5</b>
<i>Gender *</i>				
Male	37.1	13.0	45.8	4.1
Female	41.8	8.3	45.2	4.7
<i>Age cohort-group *</i>				
G.I. and Silent (1901-42)	27.8	11.3	56.7	4.3
Baby Boomer (1943-60)	51.3	9.6	34.7	4.4
13 <sup>th</sup> and Millennial (1961+)	47.7	7.5	39.5	5.3
<i>Distribution method *</i>				
Mailed	33.5	10.0	51.3	5.2
Distributed in back	42.5	10.1	43.2	4.2
<i>Origin</i>				
Native	46.5	7.9	42.6	3.0
Transplant	39.8	10.2	45.4	4.5
<i>Attendance Rate *</i>				
Less than 2-3 times a month	64.0	9.0	20.7	6.3
2-3 times a month	57.5	10.0	25.6	6.9
Weekly or more	36.7	10.2	49.0	4.1

\* Statistically significant at the  $p < .01$  level.

<b>Termination of a pregnancy by having an abortion.</b>	<b>Entirely up to the individual (%)</b>	<b>Wrong except under certain conditions (%)</b>	<b>Always morally wrong (%)</b>	<b>Don't know (%)</b>
<i>Overall</i>	<b>13.6</b>	<b>29.7</b>	<b>55.5</b>	<b>1.2</b>
<i>Gender *</i>				
Male	10.5	31.4	57.3	0.8
Female	15.5	28.8	54.4	1.3
<i>Age cohort-group *</i>				
G.I. and Silent (1901-42)	8.8	27.8	62.4	1.0
Baby Boomer (1943-60)	16.8	32.6	49.5	1.1
13 <sup>th</sup> and Millennial (1961+)	19.0	28.0	51.1	1.9
<i>Distribution method</i>				
Mailed	13.1	26.2	59.5	1.2
Distributed in back	13.8	31.1	54.0	1.2
<i>Origin *</i>				
Native	19.6	19.6	58.8	2.0
Transplant	13.3	30.4	55.3	1.0
<i>Attendance Rate *</i>				
Less than 2-3 times a month	30.6	36.0	29.7	3.6
2-3 times a month	23.0	36.6	39.1	1.2
Weekly or more	11.5	28.6	58.9	1.0

\* Statistically significant at the  $p < .01$  level.

<b>Engaging in homosexual acts.</b>	<b>Entirely up to the individual (%)</b>	<b>Wrong except under certain conditions (%)</b>	<b>Always morally wrong (%)</b>	<b>Don't know (%)</b>
<i>Overall</i>	<b>27.0</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>59.3</b>	<b>10.5</b>
<i>Gender *</i>				
Male	69.8	4.8	69.8	7.6
Female	52.9	2.3	52.9	12.2
<i>Age cohort-group *</i>				
G.I. and Silent (1901-42)	19.4	3.4	67.2	10.1
Baby Boomer (1943-60)	33.4	2.6	53.0	11.0
13 <sup>th</sup> and Millennial (1961+)	34.2	4.1	52.8	8.9
<i>Distribution method *</i>				
Mailed	22.2	4.1	65.8	7.9
Distributed in back	28.8	2.9	56.8	11.5
<i>Origin</i>				
Native	29.4	2.0	58.8	9.8
Transplant	27.1	3.2	59.3	10.5
<i>Attendance Rate *</i>				
Less than 2-3 times a month	43.2	3.6	41.4	11.7
2-3 times a month	41.3	3.8	45.6	9.4
Weekly or more	24.6	3.1	59.3	10.5

\* Statistically significant at the  $p < .01$  level.

## B. POLITICAL AFFILIATION

In the last few national elections, Catholics have been equally divided in the support of the two major political parties. The Catholic Church, being identified as a religious non-profit organization and thus tax-exempt, is not officially allowed to endorse one party's candidates over another. Traditionally, the Catholics voted democratic as evidenced by the overwhelming support of Catholics for Alfred E. Smith in 1928 and, successfully, for John F. Kennedy in 1960. Kennedy's campaign speech to the Southern Baptist Conference highlighted his independence from the Vatican and reassured the populace of his separation of church and state.

Since Kennedy, Catholics have become more split in their political alliances. Granted, the abortion issue is one that weighs heavily on Catholic consciences, but the USCCB (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops) issuing of *Faithful Citizenship* in 2007 (revised in 2008) urges Catholics to consider other life issues as well when making a political decision: the use of torture, unjust wars, the use of the death penalty, health care provisions for those most in need, destruction of human embryos, and cloning.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The document can be found online at: <http://www.usccb.org/faithfulcitizenship/FCStatement.pdf>. Two prescient sections of the document are noted here for reference:

(1) "In this statement, we bishops do not intend to tell Catholics for whom or against whom to vote. Our purpose is to help Catholics form their consciences in accordance with God's truth. We recognize that the responsibility to make choices in political life rests with each individual in light of a properly formed conscience, and that participation goes well beyond casting a vote in a particular election" (paragraph 7).

(2) "As Catholics, we should be guided more by our moral convictions than by our attachment to a political party or interest group. When necessary, our participation should help transform the party to which we belong; we should

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Neither major political party is the “Catholic” party; however, examining political affiliation is a way to understand the political pulse of a sub-section of American Catholics. The intent, again, is not to incite tension within the Catholic faithful, but to take a “snapshot” of a segment of the Catholic population at a particular place and time.

The table presents the breakdown of political party identification:

<b>In politics, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, Libertarian or independent?</b>	<b>Strong Repub. (%)</b>	<b>Weak Repub. (%)</b>	<b>Strict Indep. (%)</b>	<b>Weak Dem. (%)</b>	<b>Strong Dem (%)</b>	<b>Liber-tarian/ Other (%)</b>	<b>Other (%)</b>
<i>Overall</i>	<b>29.7</b>	<b>17.6</b>	<b>19.1</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>16.2</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>6.2</b>
<i>Gender *</i>							
Male	33.4	18.9	20.6	7.8	10.9	3.1	5.3
Female	27.5	16.8	18.2	9.8	19.4	1.6	6.7
<i>Age cohort-group *</i>							
G.I. and Silent (1901-42)	32.2	14.2	21.2	8.1	17.6	1.5	5.2
Baby Boomer (1943-60)	25.3	20.4	19.6	10.1	16.9	1.8	6.0
13 <sup>th</sup> and Millennial (1961+)	34.0	21.0	11.5	8.8	9.5	5.7	9.5
<i>Distribution method *</i>							
Mailed	36.7	16.0	18.9	5.7	12.8	2.8	7.1
Distributed in back	27.1	18.2	19.1	10.3	17.5	2.0	5.8
<i>Origin</i>							
Native	26.5	18.4	10.2	12.2	20.4	4.1	8.2
Transplant	29.7	17.7	19.7	9.0	15.8	2.1	6.0
<i>Attendance Rate **</i>							
Less than 2-3 times a month	23.4	21.5	16.8	8.4	15.9	5.6	8.4
2-3 times a month	22.7	24.0	16.9	8.4	20.1	1.9	5.8
Weekly or more	30.8	16.7	19.5	9.2	15.8	2.0	6.1

\* Statistically significant at the  $p < .01$  level.

Without a doubt, more men than women align with the Republican Party (52 percent versus 44 percent). In assessing the age distribution, the youngest generations of Catholics in the Diocese of Raleigh are the most Republican (55 percent). The “other” category is quite high, especially among the youngest respondents. Comments returned with the surveys reflected the unwillingness to identify with a political party; instead, the individuals vote race by race, issue by issue.

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not let the party transform us in such a way that we neglect or deny fundamental moral truths. We are called to bring together our principles and our political choices, our values and our votes, to help build a better world” (paragraph 14).



## C. CHURCH/STATE ISSUES

<b>To what extent do you agree or disagree that the <i>federal government</i> should...</b>	<b>Strongly agree (%)</b>	<b>Somewhat agree (%)</b>	<b>DK/No opinion (%)</b>	<b>Somewhat disagree (%)</b>	<b>Strongly disagree (%)</b>
...abolish the death penalty.	26.4	22.4	10.1	21.4	19.8
...fund faith-based organizations.	12.0	22.7	18.9	18.8	27.6
...allow the display of religious symbols in public spaces.	52.1	29.6	7.7	6.5	4.2
...allow prayer in public schools.	61.5	23.6	4.1	6.0	4.9
...provide vouchers to parents to help pay for their children to attend private or religious schools.	42.8	26.3	9.1	10.2	11.5

\* Statistically significant at the  $p < .01$  level.

Thirty-five states still utilize the death penalty in its penal system. While capital punishment gets less exposure with American Catholics than the Pro-Life anti-abortion movement, it is still antithetical to Catholic social teaching.<sup>9</sup> With this in mind, over 40 percent of respondents disagree that the federal government should ban the practice.<sup>10</sup> A strong division between church and state finds less support in the respondents to this survey than in other national surveys. Support for prayer in public schools is overwhelmingly 85 percent; support for display of religious symbols in public spaces is 82 percent; and 69 percent support vouchers to help pay for private and religious schools.

If you have questions or comments, please contact Christopher Born ([2010NCCP@gmail.com](mailto:2010NCCP@gmail.com)).

<sup>9</sup> For more information, see the statement issued by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), *A Culture of Life and the Penalty of Death* (2005): <http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/national/penaltyofdeath.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> One or two comments noted specifically that they disagreed with the “federal” part of the clause, arguing it was the role of the state to make such decisions.

