



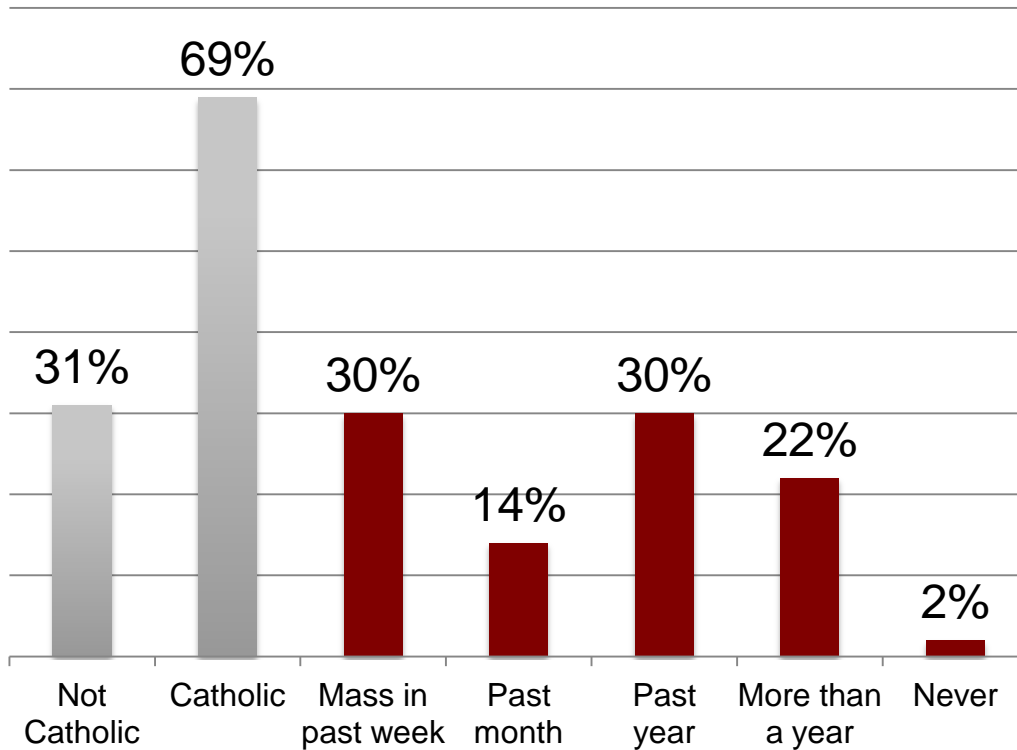
Attitudes towards the Catholic Church
An Amárach Report for the Iona Institute

October 2011



- The Catholic Church in Ireland has been the subject of considerable criticism in recent years.
- The Iona Institute commissioned a survey of Irish attitudes towards the Catholic Church to gauge the impact of recent reports.
- This report summarises the main findings, and are based a nationwide survey of 1,000 Irish people in September 2011, using the Amárach Research omnibus service.

Catholics in Ireland



- 7 in 10 Irish adults describe themselves as Catholic, including the majority of those aged 15-24.
- Just under half of all Catholics attend Mass on a weekly or monthly basis.

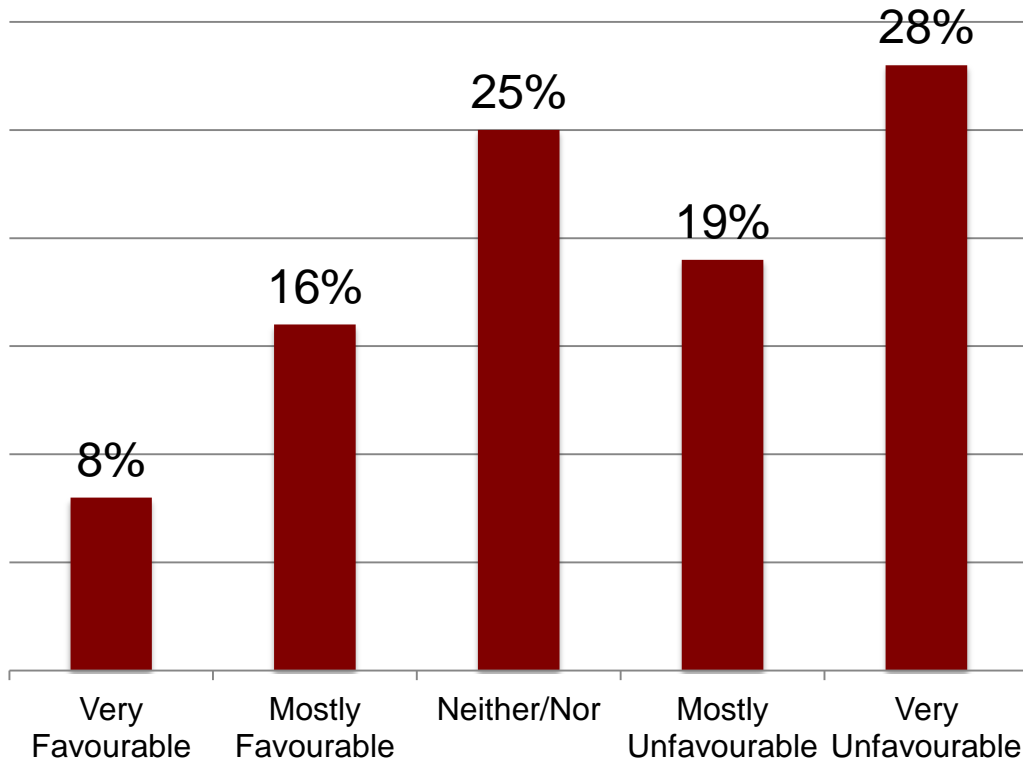
	% Catholic	% Past Week
All Adults	69	30
15-24s	58	16
25-34s	63	17
35-44s	71	20
45-54s	76	31
55+	77	52

Source: Amárach Research, September 2011

Q. What is your religion?

Q. If Catholic: When was the last time you attended Mass?

Views on Catholic Church



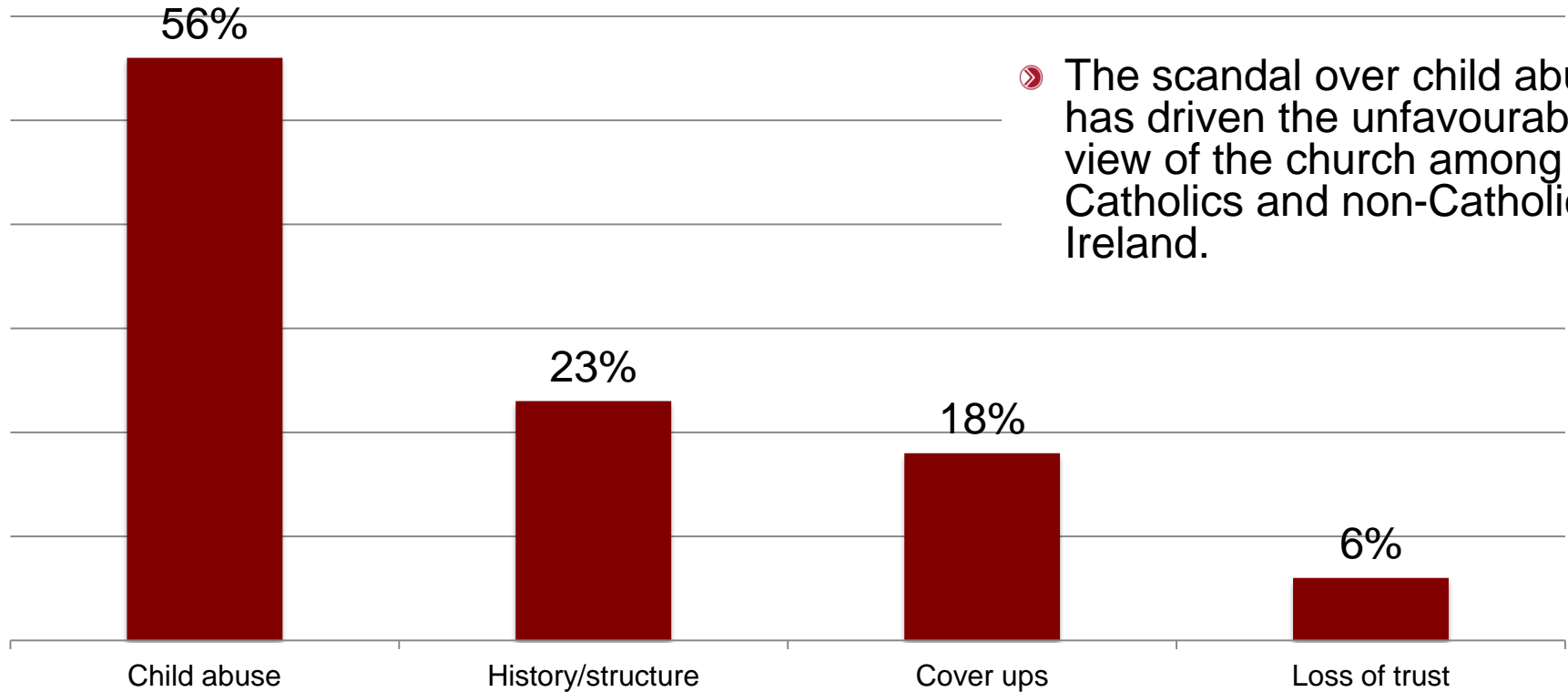
- Middle aged Irish people have the most unfavourable view of the Catholic Church.
- Indeed, only 27% of all Catholics have a favourable view of the Church at present.

	% Favourable	% Unfavourable
All Adults	24	47
15-24s	14	48
25-34s	18	46
35-44s	18	54
45-54s	19	58
55+	55	44

Source: Amárach Research, September 2011

Q. When you think about the Catholic Church in Ireland is your view favourable or unfavourable?

Abuse of Trust



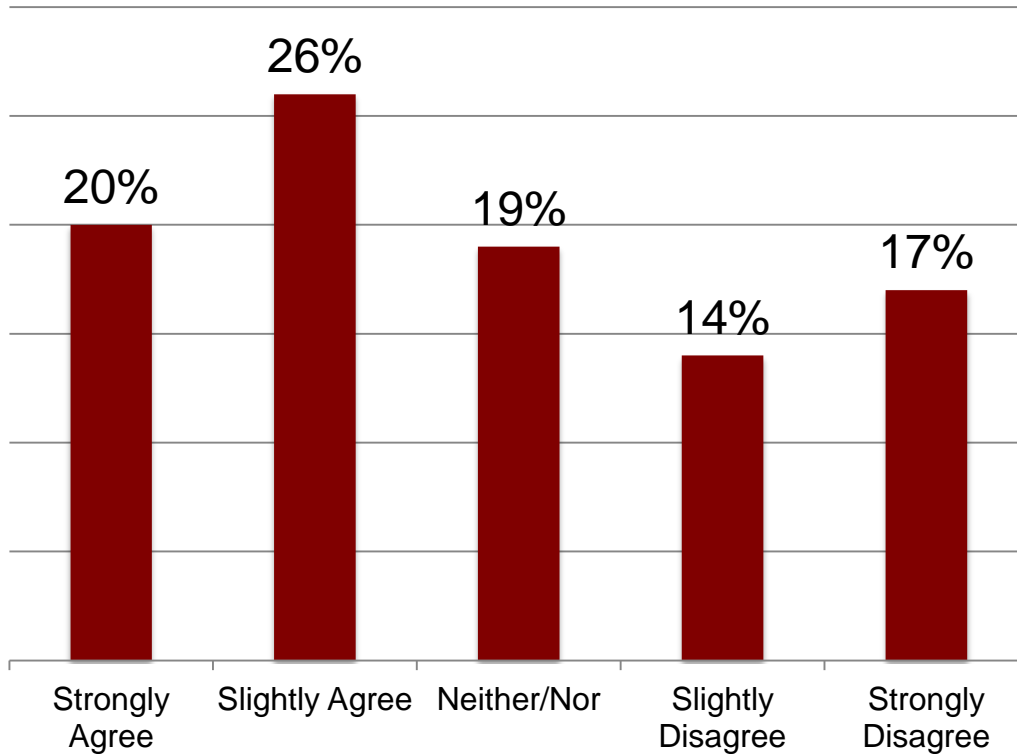
➤ The scandal over child abuse has driven the unfavourable view of the church among both Catholics and non-Catholics in Ireland.

Source: Amárach Research, September 2011

Asked if 'unfavourable':

Q. What are some of the reasons why you say you have an unfavorable opinion of the Catholic religion?

Catholic Teachings Still of Benefit



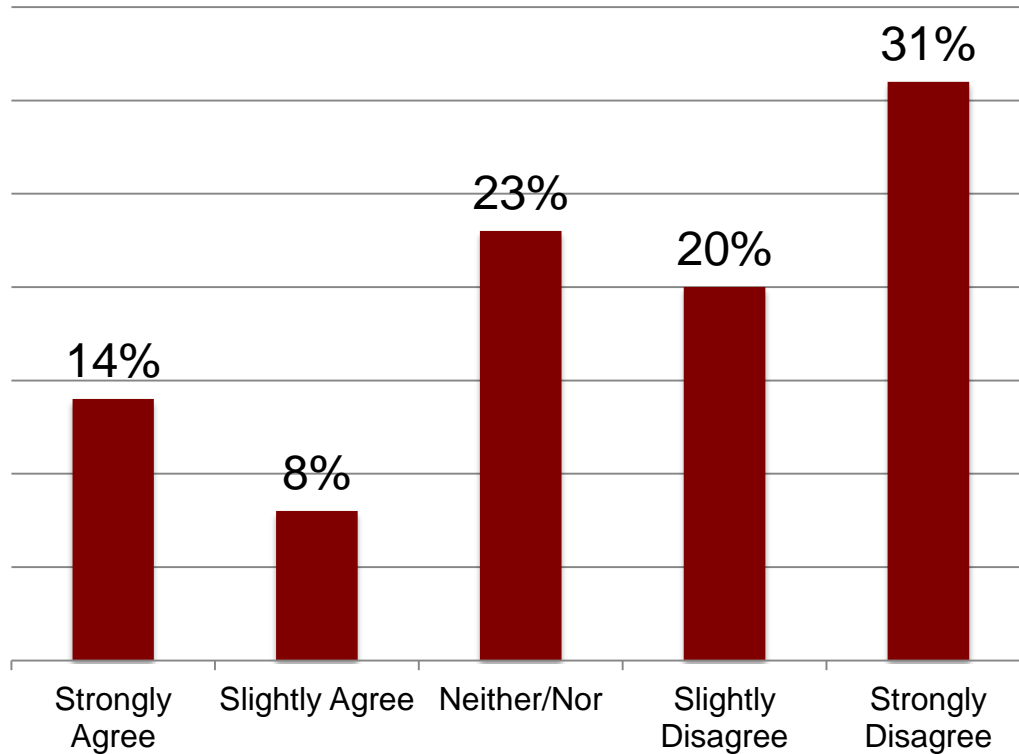
- Women are more likely to agree than men that Catholic teachings are still of benefit to Irish society (50% vs 43%).
- Almost half of the general public believe Catholic teachings are of benefit to society.

	% Agree	% Disagree
All Adults	46	31
15-24s	33	43
25-34s	36	34
35-44s	40	38
45-54s	58	32
55+	67	15

Source: Amárach Research, September 2011

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statement:
Despite the scandals, Catholic teachings are still of benefit to Irish society

Better Off Gone?



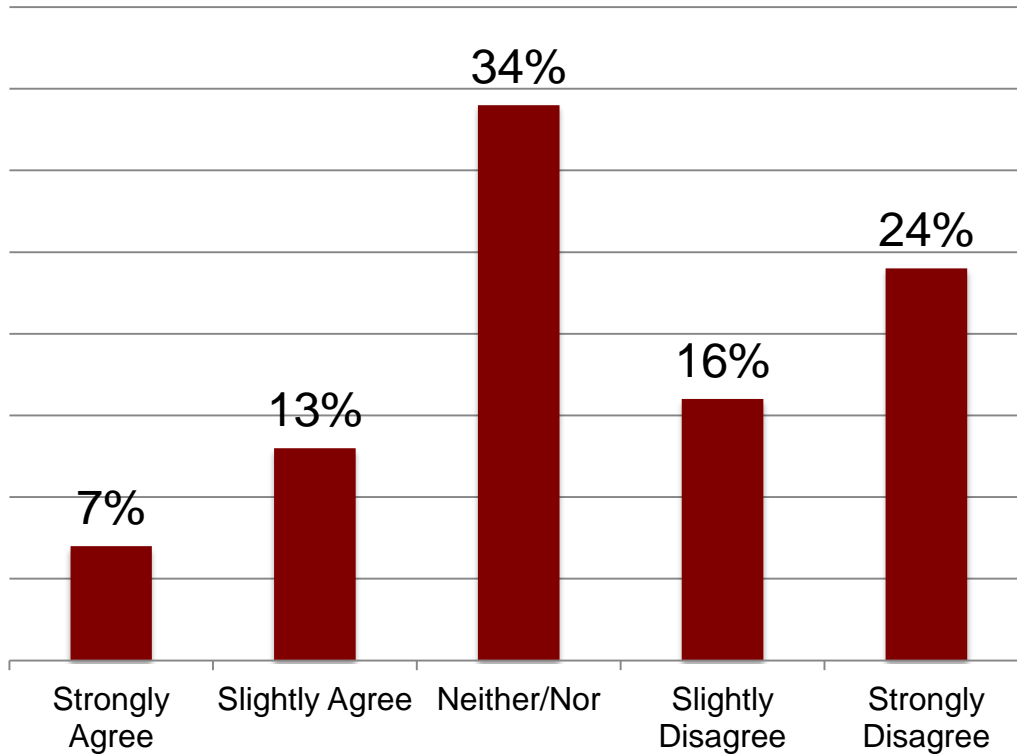
- Although attitudes are generally unfavourable towards the Catholic Church in Ireland right now, it is clear that only a minority would welcome its disappearance from Ireland.
- Men are more negative (27% agree) than women (18%).

	% Agree	% Disagree
All Adults	23	51
15-24s	31	41
25-34s	29	42
35-44s	25	44
45-54s	19	57
55+	12	65

Source: Amárach Research, September 2011

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statement:
I would be happy if the Catholic Church disappeared from Ireland completely

Government is Hostile?



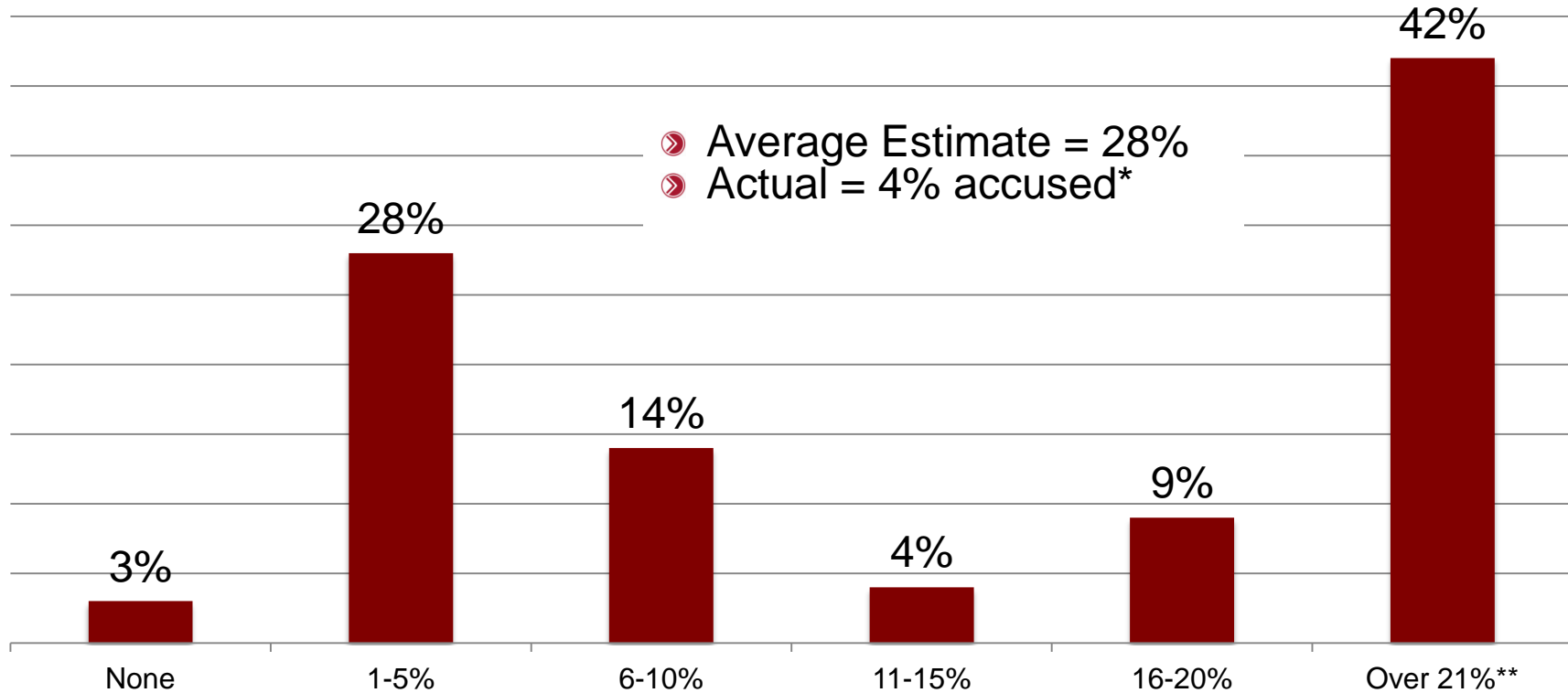
- One in five consider the Government to be excessively hostile towards the Catholic Church.
- Almost a third of weekly Mass-goers believe the Government is excessively hostile towards the Church.

	% Agree	% Disagree
All Adults	20	40
15-24s	12	41
25-34s	17	38
35-44s	19	45
45-54s	20	47
55+	28	34

Source: Amárach Research, September 2011

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statement:
I believe the Government is excessively hostile towards the Catholic Church

Percentage of Irish Priests



Source: Amárach Research, September 2011

* Source: John Jay College of Criminal Justice

** Includes 18% who estimated over 50%

Q. In your opinion, approximately what percentage of Irish priests are guilty of child abuse?



- The Catholic Church in Ireland has been through an unprecedented crisis in recent years.
- The impact of that crisis on the values and beliefs of Irish Catholics has been profound.
- Although the impact has been mostly negative – as reported in our research – there remain other, positive attitudes towards the Church as well.

Questions used in Survey:

1. When you think about the Catholic Church in Ireland is your view (rotate first four):
 - Very favourable
 - Mostly favourable
 - Mostly unfavourable
 - Very unfavourable
 - Neither favourable nor unfavourable
 - Don't know
 2. If answer to question 1 is 'very or mostly unfavourable' than ask: What are some of the reasons why you say you have an unfavorable opinion of the Catholic religion? (Open-ended)
 3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:
[Agree Strongly/Agree Slightly/Neither-Nor/Disagree Slightly/Disagree Strongly]
 - Despite the scandals, Catholic teachings are still of benefit to Irish society
 - I would be happy if the Catholic Church disappeared from Ireland completely
 - I believe the Government is excessively hostile towards the Catholic Church
 4. In your opinion, approximately what percentage of Irish priests are guilty of child abuse? (Open-ended but code answer to one of the following):
 - None
 - 1% to 5%
 - 6% to 10%
 - 11% to 20%
 - 21% to 30%
 - 31% to 40%
 - 41% to 50%
 - Above 50%
 5. What is your religion?
 - Roman Catholic
 - Church of Ireland
 - Islam
 - Presbyterian
 - Orthodox
 - Other religion
 - No religion
- If Roman Catholic ask:
6. When is the last time you attended Mass?
 - Within the past week
 - More than a week but within the past month
 - More than a month but within the past year
 - More than a year
 - Never



About Amárach Research

We are an independent market research agency, providing a full range of research services to our Irish and international clients. We have worked with two thirds of Ireland's top 200 companies. Every year we survey over 100,000 people at home and abroad, as well as running hundreds of focus groups.

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