



IRISH CATHOLIC
BISHOPS' CONFERENCE
COMHDHAIL EASPAG CAITLÍDEACH ÉIREANN

Practice and Belief among Catholics in the Republic of Ireland

A summary of data from the European Social Survey Round 4
(2009/10) and the International Social Science Programme Religion
III (2008/9)

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March 2011

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Introduction

The European Social Survey (the ESS) and the International Social Science Programme (ISSP) are academically-driven social surveys. They examine attitudes and beliefs in a range of topics including the media usage, occupation and income, social trust, political interests, participation in socio-political structures and other beliefs and values.

The ESS is now in its fourth round (after 2002, 2004 & 2006) and the survey covers Ireland, the UK and 30 other nations and employs the rigorous and standardised social scientific methodologies. It is funded via the European Commission's 5th and 6th Framework Programmes, the European Science Foundation and national funding bodies in each country. The Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) is the archive and distributor of the ESS. In Ireland, the National Coordinator is Dr Susana Ferreira, University College Dublin, and the project is funded by the Irish Research Council for the Humanities & Social Sciences (IRCHSS). The survey organisation is the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI).

The ISSP Religion module is now in its third iteration having previously been deployed in 1991 and 1998. Currently 47 countries are members of the ISSP and each member country has a representative. It has a rotating secretariat, currently housed in Israel. The GESIS Data Archive, the ISSP's data archive, is responsible for archiving, integrating data and documentation and for the distribution of the merged international datasets for the Programme. Since 1997 the GESIS Data Archive is supported in the processing of data by the Spanish ISSP partner ASEP, Madrid. In Ireland, the ISSP representative is the Social Science Research Centre which is a research institute of University College Dublin. The SSRC has commenced a programme of co-operation with ARK (Northern Ireland Social and Political Archive, a joint venture of Queen's University and the University of Ulster). This includes making available, on publicly accessible websites, the ISSP modules which have been fielded in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

This report is a follow up to the reports produced by the Council for Research & Development in 2006 and 2008. It includes the most up to date data for the Republic of Ireland and tabulates data from the most recent ESS round 4 survey, compares selected data across the four rounds of the ESS as well as a tabulation of relevant data from the ISSP III module on religion.

In all of these analyses, the approved design weight has been applied and a filter on respondents' current religious denomination has been run to extract only those who self-identified as Roman Catholic. The data was analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics 18.

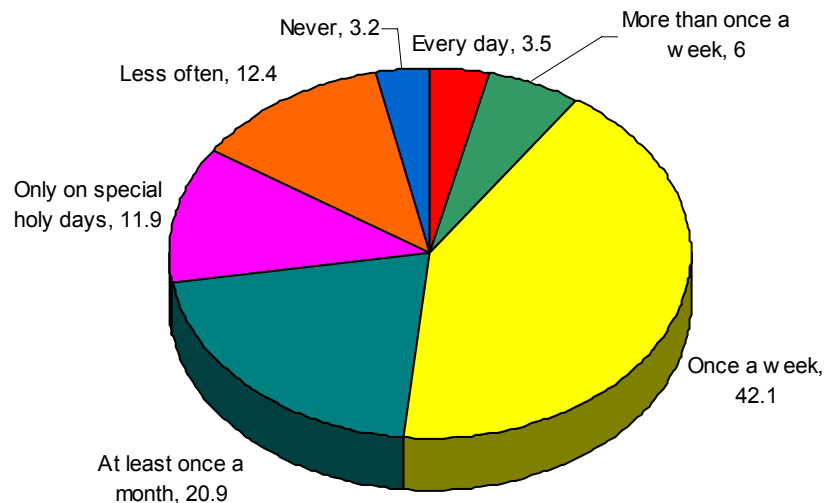
Table 1: total sample sizes and Catholic sample sizes, ESS4 and ISSP.

	Total sample size	Number of Catholics	Percentage of Catholics in the sample
ESS Round 4	1422	1306	92%
ESS Cumulative dataset	6488	6126	94%
ISSP Religion III	2048	1761	86%

Practice amongst Catholics in the Republic of Ireland

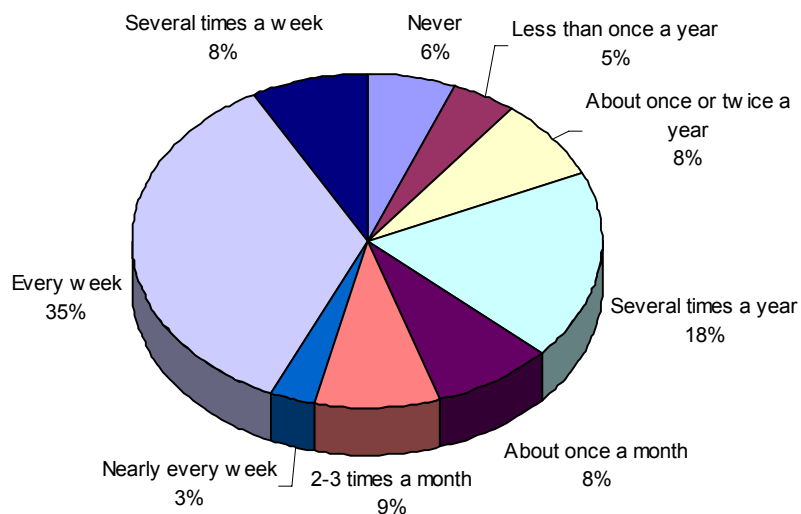
In 2008, it was reported that there had been a steady decline in the rate of decline of the proportion of Catholics in Ireland attending Mass weekly or more often. Weekly or more often Mass attendance was declining from the late 1980s but had levelled off at 64% of Catholics by the late 1990s. In 2006 the ESS data showed that weekly or more often Mass attendance in the Republic currently stands at 56.4% of the Catholic population. In ESS 4 (2009/10), the percentage of Catholics in the Republic of Ireland attending Mass weekly or more often stood at 51.6%. While this represents a further decline in the number of weekly Mass attendees, the decline is consistent with recent trends. The chart below shows the breakdown in Mass attendance figures from the ESS 4 survey.

Figure 1: Attendance at religious services apart from special occasions, 2009/10. Base: ROI Catholics. Source: ESS 4.



42.1% of Catholics in the Republic of Ireland attend Mass once per week with a further 9% (down from 12.5% in ESS3) attending more often than that. About 21% attend at least once per month and a further 12% of Catholics in the Republic of Ireland attend only on special holy days. The suggested generalised pattern of recent reports to a shift in monthly routine Mass attendance patterns is reinforced. The religion module of the 4th wave of the ISSP shows a similar pattern of change. In the chart below we can see how attendance at Mass amongst Catholics in the Republic is structured.

Figure 2; Attendance at religious services apart from special occasions, 2008. Base: RoI Catholics. Source: ISSP.



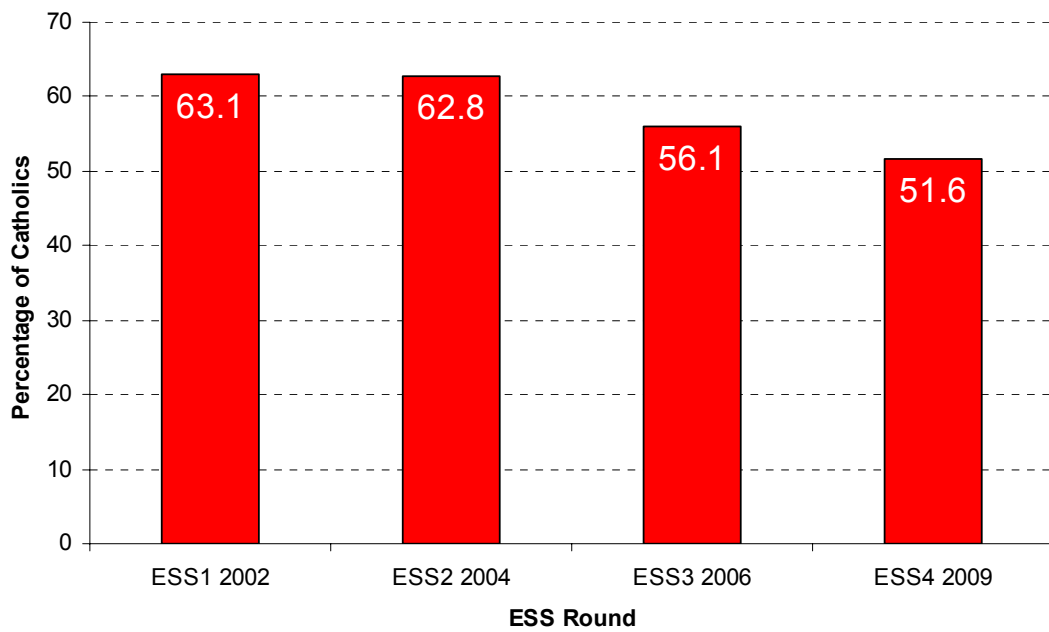
35% of the sample attends every week and a further 8% attend several times per week. This gives an aggregate score of 43%, which is lower than the ESS data. It should be remembered however that the ISSP presents respondents with 9 categories, the ESS with 7. A further 3% attends Mass nearly every week. We can generally say that, between the ESS and ISSP data that about one half of self-identified Catholics in the Republic of Ireland attend

Table 2: Attendance at religious services apart from special occasions, ESS rounds 1-4. Base: RoI Catholics. Source: ESS Cumulative file.

	<i>Every day</i>	<i>More than once a week</i>	<i>Once a week</i>	<i>At least once a month</i>	<i>Only on special holy days</i>	<i>Less often</i>	<i>Never</i>
<i>ESS1 2002</i>	4.4	8.4	50.3	14.3	9.6	9	3.9
<i>ESS2 2004</i>	5	10.8	47	14.1	10.1	10.2	2.8
<i>ESS3 2006</i>	3.6	8.9	43.6	16.4	10.1	13	4.3
<i>ESS4 2009</i>	3.5	6	42.1	20.9	11.9	12.4	3.2

The trend toward monthly Mass attendance is evident from the table above where this particular percentage goes from 14% in 2002 to almost 21% in 2009/10. The percentage of Catholics attending more than once per week is also getting smaller. Once per week or more often Mass attendance across the four rounds of the ESS can be summarised in the following graph. In 2002/03, once per week or more often attendance was 63.2% of the Catholic population. By 2006/07 this had declined to 56.4%. In the most recent round, this figure has fallen to 51.6% of Catholics in the Republic.

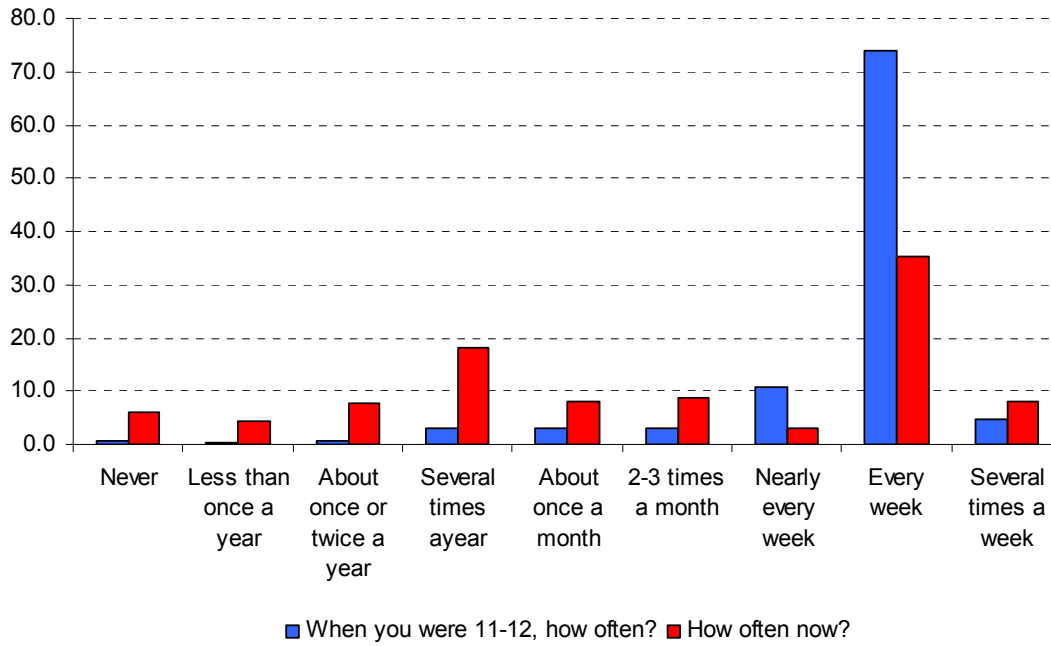
Figure 3: Once per week or more often, attendance at Mass rounds 1-4. Base: RoI Catholics. Source: ESS Cumulative file.



The proportion of regular Mass attendees is not evenly distributed across the age range, the provinces or even the occupations of the sample. The following sections show how there is some relationship between where the respondent lives currently, her or his occupation, age range and regular Mass attendance. While there is some relationship arising from the cross tabulation of these data, there is little statistical significance related to these factors.

The ISSP survey asks respondents about attendance at religious services at age 12 and current attendance patterns. From the graph and table below, we can see the difference in attendance at age 12 and attendance now. Subsequent tables show how this patterns can be differentiated by broad age group. This would imply that Catholics in younger age groups in 2008 are less likely to be attending at a young age than those in older age groups in 2008.

Figure 4: Frequency of Mass attendance at age 11-12 and now. Base: RoI Catholics. Source: ISSP.



The graph above shows that about 35% of Catholics attend Mass weekly now compared to about 75% when aged 12. Attendance at Mass aged 12 is quite high but has differentiated itself by frequency as people got older. What about inter-generational frequency rates? The table below compares weekly or more often Mass attendance for Catholics at age 12 and now. This is broken down by current broad age bracket. It implies that for the cohort of 20 year olds in 2008, Mass attendance at aged 12 is lower than for the cohort of 55 year olds in 2008.

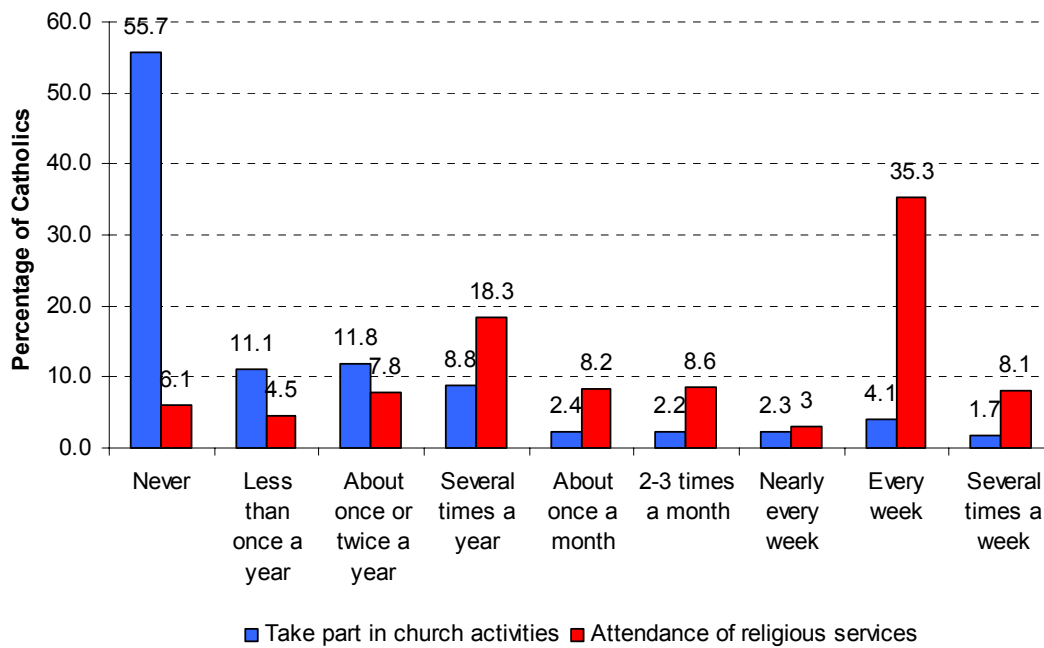
Table 3: Mass attendance now and aged 12 broken down by broad age band. Base: RoI Catholics. Source: ISSP.

	Now attend Mass weekly or more often	Weekly or more often Mass attendance at 12
18-24 years	18.6%	65.8%
25-34	23.4%	69.5%
35-44	38.2%	77.8%
45-54	44.3%	82.2%
55-64	69.3%	88.4%
65+ years	79.1%	91.8%

For the current 25 to 34 year olds, weekly or more often Mass attendance is about 23%. When this group were aged 12, 69% of them went to Mass weekly or more often. When compared to their older peers, for example, those in the 55 to 64 age group, the disparity between current weekly Mass attendance and when they were aged 12 is smaller.

The ISSP survey also points out some differences in frequency of Mass attendance and involvement in church based activities, other than attending for Mass. Respondents were asked “How often do you take part in the activities or organizations of a church or place of worship other than attending services?” and these responses are tabulated below. The graph below shows these differences using a 9 point scale for the 2008 survey.

Figure 5: Frequency of Mass attendance and taking part in Church activities outside of regular services. Base: RoI Catholics. Source: ISSP.



As can be seen, almost 56% of Catholics never take part in Church activities outside of Mass. Further proportions of about 11% take part in these activities less than once or about once or twice a year. It would seem that Church involvement outside of Mass is quite limited. There is a statistically significant relationship between age and involvement in Church activities outside of Mass. The table below enumerates these data.

Table 4: Taking part in Church activities outside of regular services broken down by broad age categories. Base: RoI Catholics. Source: ISSP.

	Never	Less than once a year	About once or twice a year	Several times a year	1-3 times a month	Nearly every week or more often
18-24 years	66.9%	9.9%	11.8%	4.6%	3.0%	3.8%
25-34	59.8%	13.1%	10.7%	7.8%	3.4%	5.2%
35-44	55.0%	12.2%	11.6%	10.3%	5.5%	5.5%
45-54	52.5%	12.5%	13.9%	7.1%	3.9%	10.0%
55-64	47.5%	11.3%	16.0%	10.9%	5.5%	8.8%
65+ years	50.6%	6.7%	7.5%	11.6%	7.5%	16.1%

For the 65 or older age group, 16% of them take part in Church activities other than Mass nearly every week or more often. Among younger age groups, particularly those under 25, the proportion is much smaller, just under 4%. Just over two thirds of this age group never engage with Church activities outside of Mass.

From the ISSP we can also gauge gender differences in attendance at religious services when the respondent was a child. Respondents are asked in two sequential questions “When you were a child, how often did your mother / father attend religious services?” The results from these two questions are below.

Table 5: childhood attendance at Mass broken down by frequency of Mass attendance. Base: RoI Catholics. Source: ISSP.

	Mother attended when I was a child	Father attended when I was a child
Never	0.5	1.4
Less than once a year	0.7	1.2
About once or twice a year	0.9	2.8
Several times a year	3.2	3.4
About once a month	1.5	2.2
2-3 times a month	2.5	2.5
Nearly every week	8.5	8.6
Every week	71.4	71.7
Several times a week	10.5	5.2
No mother/ mother not present	0.2	1.1

While 1.4% of fathers never attended when the respondent was a child, just under half that proportion of mothers never did. The differences for weekly Mass attendance are insignificant when compared side by side but for more frequent Mass attendance, it would seem that mothers attended more often with the respondent than fathers.

Region and Mass attendance

From the table below we can note some interesting regional patterns. Those Catholics who never attend Mass is highest in the Dublin area at 4.5% but this region also sees the highest proportion of those who attend every day. The Once per week proportion in this region is the lowest of the entire State, just under one quarter of Dublin’s Catholics attend on this basis. There is nothing to suggest that living in these areas means you are a less frequent attendee.

Table 6: Attendance at religious services apart from special occasions by province. Base: RoI Catholics. Source: ESS4.

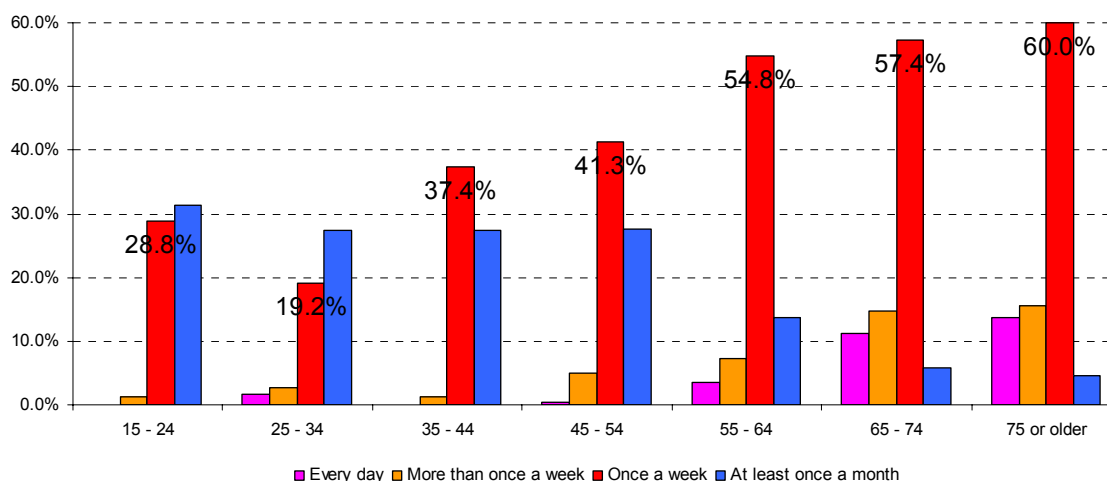
	Every day	More than once a week	Once a week	At least once a month	Only on special holy days	Less often	Never
Connaught	3.7	7.0	47.3	18.7	8.4	10.6	4.4
Dublin	8.4	5.4	23.8	23.3	15.8	18.8	4.5
Munster	2.7	5.6	47.3	17.9	11.8	11.8	2.9
Rest Of Leinster	2.0	5.6	40.1	23.4	13.2	13.5	2.3
Ulster	1.8	7.0	47.4	26.3	9.6	5.3	2.6

In the three Ulster counties of the Republic, 26.3% of the Catholics attend Mass at least once per month and 47.4% do once per week. On a more general basis, the region with the highest proportion of those attending once per week or more often is Connaught at 58% of the Catholic population in that region.

Age and Mass attendance

Turning towards the broad age bands of the samples, there is some differentiation clear from the analysis based on age. In the graph below, only the most frequent categories are shown. As has been seen in previous reports, frequent Mass attendance among teenagers tends to be higher than average with a drop in the 20s and 30s. So it is with this ESS4 data where, almost 29% of 15 to 24 year olds attend Mass Once per week but just 19% of 25 to 34 year olds do. From age 35 onwards, regular Mass attendance increases again when it peaks at the age range 65 to 74.

Figure 6: selected frequency of Mass attendance by broad age groups. Base: RoI Catholics. Source ESS4.



Of the 1,306 Catholics in the sample, we can see how many in each recoded age group attend Mass once per week or more often. From the chart above, we can see that at least weekly Mass attendance is higher for older age groups. Weekly only Mass attendance is just under 30% of the 15 – 24 year old age group and about 19% for those in the 25 – 34 age group. It is evident that it is the older age cohorts in this sample who attend Mass weekly in greater numbers. About 41% of 45 to 54 year old Catholics attend weekly Mass while for those aged over 65, the figure is above 55%. More than once per week Mass attendance is also significantly more prevalent amongst those aged 65 and over.

Occupation and Mass attendance

Round 4 of the ESS allowed for some analysis of the occupational structure of those who attend Mass regularly. In the following section, I provide an aggregate of the data for weekly Mass or more often by broad occupation. While there is no statistical significance of these data to the entire population resident in the Republic of Ireland, it does yield some insight into those who attend frequently. The data is broken into decile ranges to allow for some comparison, e.g. the nine values that divide the sorted data into ten equal parts, so that each part represents one tenth of the sample. I have highlighted selected occupations of interest.

Table 7: Weekly or more often Mass attendance broken down by occupation and decile. Base: RoI Catholics. Source: ESS4.

Weekly or more often Mass attendance	
Do not attend weekly or more often at all	Managers in construction; Managers in business services enterprises; Advertising and public relations managers Supply and distribution managers; Computing services managers; Research and development managers; Managers small enterprise personal care, cleaning, related services; Chemists; Statisticians; Computer systems designers, analysts, programmers; Architects, town and traffic planners ; Electrical engineers; Pharmacists; Other teaching professionals not elsewhere classified; Lawyers; Authors, journalists and other writers; Sculptors, painters and related artists; Film, stage and related actors and directors; Physical, engineering science technicians; Health associated professionals (except nursing) ; Dental assistants; Pharmaceutical assistants; Appraisers, valuers and auctioneers; Legal related business associate professionals Government licensing officials; Secretaries and keyboard-operating clerks; Data entry operators; Transport clerks
1 st decile (0-10%)	Nil
2 nd decile (11-20%)	Finance, sales associated professionals; Cashiers, tellers and related clerks
3 rd decile	Physiotherapists and related associated professionals; Biological, botanical, zoological and related professionals; Business professionals ; Mail carriers and sorting clerks
4 th decile	Other office clerks; Other specialised managers; Computer associated professionals; Veterinary assistants; Athletes, sportspersons, related associated professions; Cashiers and ticket clerks
5 th decile	Finance and administration managers; Personnel and careers professionals; Managers in wholesale and retail trade; Sales and marketing managers; Medical doctors ; Other teaching associate professionals; Social work associate professionals Receptionists and information clerks
6 th decile	Administrative secretaries, related associate professionals; Custom, tax, related government associated professions; Managers transport, storage, communications; Primary education teaching professionals ; Technical and commercial sales representatives; Manager small enterprise of restaurants and hotels; College, university, higher education teaching professionals ; Manager small enterprise wholesale and retail trade; Computing professionals; Veterinarians; Safety, health and quality inspectors; Buyers; Statistical and finance clerks; Library and filing clerks
7 th decile	Accountants; Managers in manufacturing; Secretaries; Managers not elsewhere classified; Mechanical engineers
8 th decile	Nursing associate professionals; Managers of small enterprise in agriculture, hunting, forestry, fishing;

	Secondary education teaching professionals ; Bookkeepers; Street, nightclub, other related musicians, singers, dancers
9 th decile	Managers of small enterprise not elsewhere classified; Architectural, engineering and related professions not elsewhere classified; Nursing and midwifery professionals; Accounting and bookkeeping clerks
10 th decile	Legislators; Senior government officials; Directors and chief executives; Managers of small enterprises; Agronomists and related professionals; Primary and pre-primary educational teaching professions; Electronics, telecom engineering technicians; Physical, engineering science technicians; Photographic, image, sound recording equipment operators; Air traffic controllers; Life, science technicians and related associated professionals ; Life science technicians; Securities and finance dealers and brokers; Insurance representatives; Stenographers and typists; Stock clerks

From the table, it is evident that second level teachers are more likely to be more frequent Mass attendees than primary level teachers. Additionally, doctors and legal representatives are amongst those least likely to be frequently attending. In the generality, there is some difference in the level of education attained by Catholics in Ireland and their frequency of Mass attendance, once per week or more often. The table below (ranked from highest to lowest rates) shows these differences. The differences are statistically significant.

Table 8: Weekly or more often Mass attendance broken down by educational attainment. Base: RoI Catholics. Source: ESS4.

	Once per week or more often
Primary or equivalent	67.7%
Intermediate/Group/Junior Cert or equivalent	60.5%
None/Primary not completed	57.9%
PhD	50.0%
Leaving Cert or equivalent	48.6%
Postgraduate Higher Diploma/Masters	45.9%
Diploma or Certificate	45.0%
Primary Degree	34.6%

Looking at the broad sector of employment, there are also some slight differences, although these are not dramatic as for those seen in education. From the table below, we can note the following differences in once per week or more often Mass attendance. Catholics working in private firms tend to attend Mass frequently in smaller proportions whereas those who are self employed and those working in central and local government tend to attend Mass more frequently in larger proportions.

Table 9: Weekly or more often Mass attendance broken down by employment sector. Base: RoI Catholics. Source: ESS4.

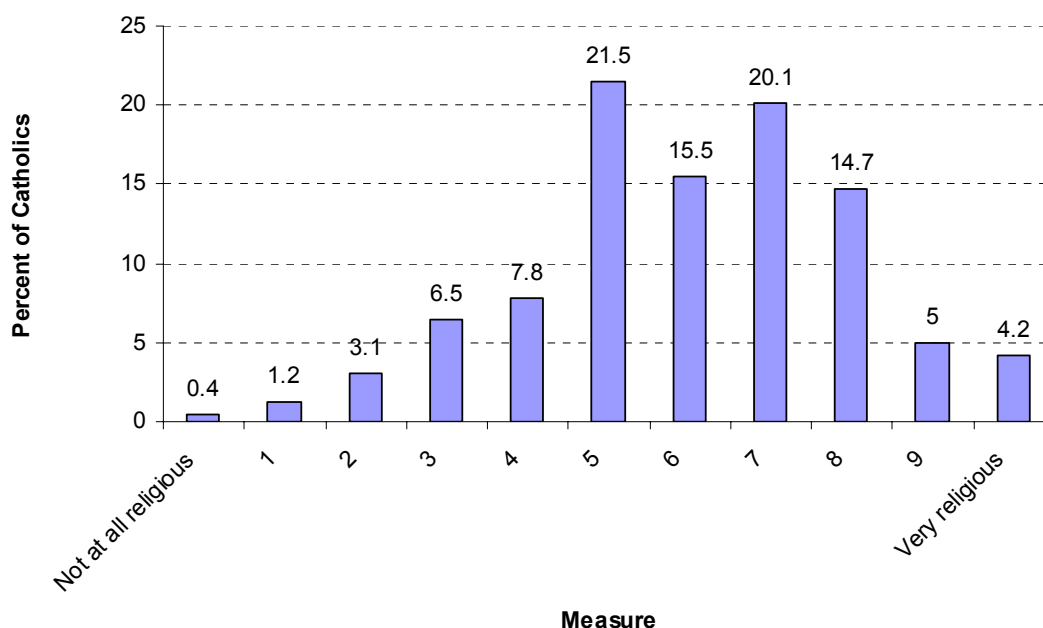
	Once per week or more often
Central or local government	61.3%
Self-employed	61.1%
Other public sector (such as education and health)	59.8%
A state owned enterprise	51.8%
Other	50.0%
A private firm	44.2%

The table above (ranked from highest to lowest rates) shows these differences. The differences are statistically significant.

Self-identified religiosity and prayer

The European Social Survey tabulates the self-identified religiosity of the respondent on a scale where the respondent is asked how religious they believe themselves to be. In Round 4, the data for Catholics in the Republic of Ireland is as follows:

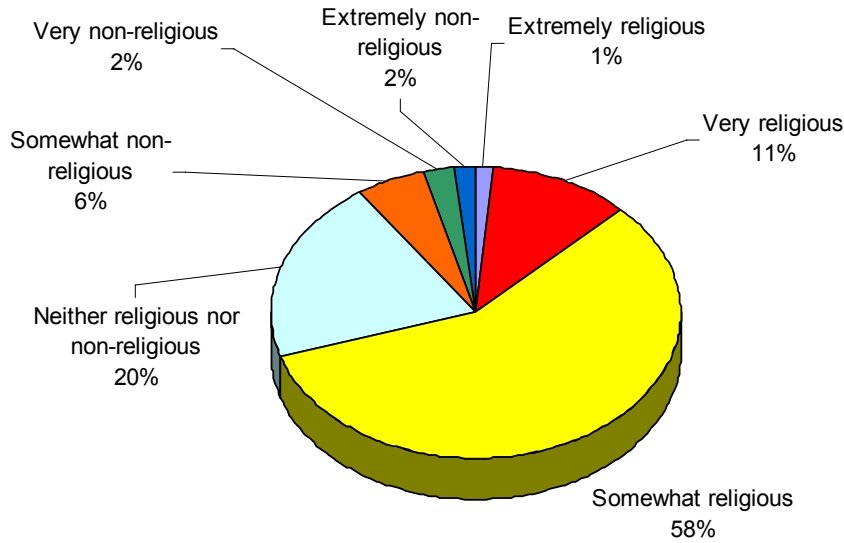
Figure 7: How religious are you? Base: RoI Catholics. Source: ESS4.



Most of the respondents declared themselves to be placed somewhere between 5 and 7 on the scale going from Not At All Religious to Very Religious. About 57% of the Catholic population believe themselves to be moderately religious on this self-identified scale. Respondents are also asked how often they pray and the results from this question can be seen from the graph below.

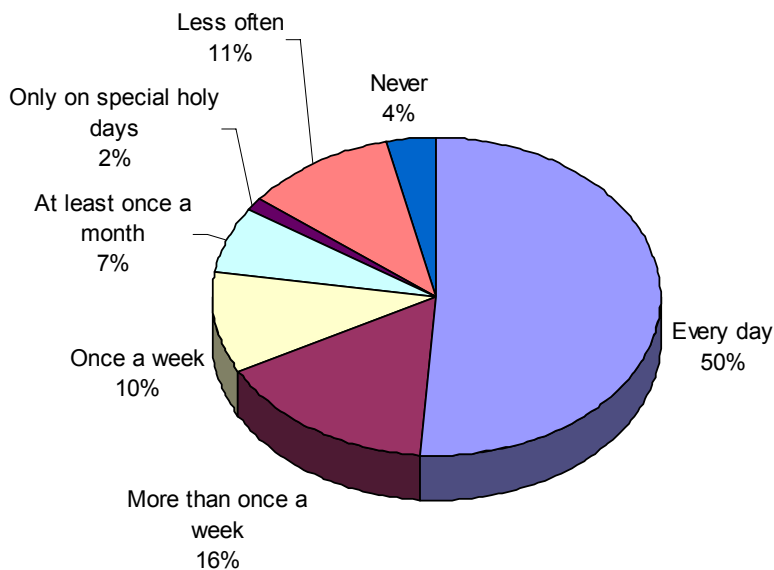
From the ISSP survey, we can note similar trends, albeit using a shorter scale. The graph below shows the responses given to the question “Would you describe yourself as ...”

Figure 8: Self-identified religiosity. Base: RoI Catholics. Source: ISSP.



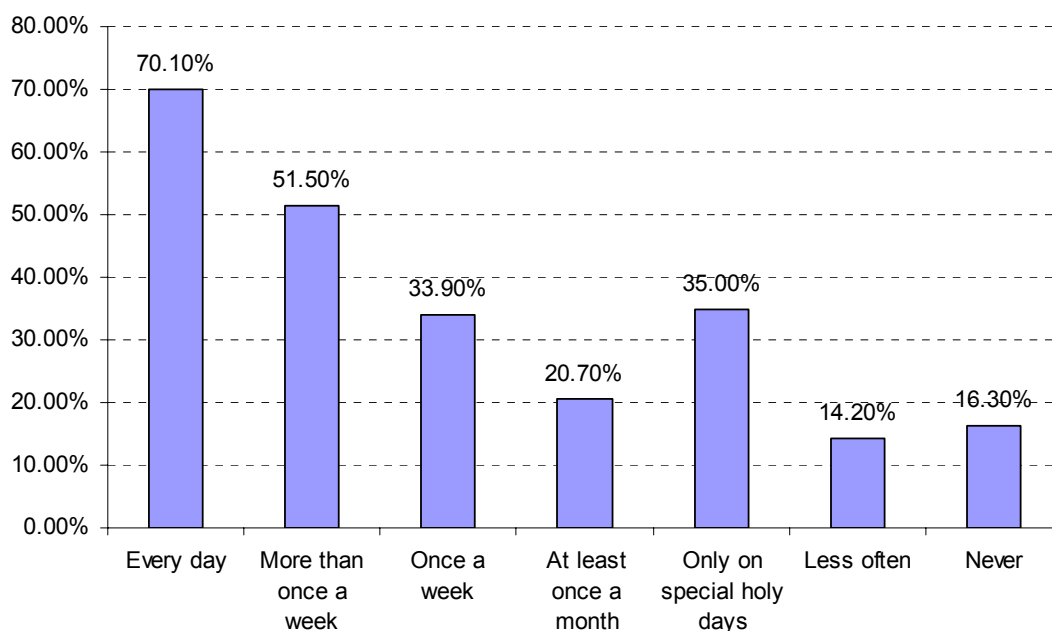
The ISSP allowed the respondents to choose their self-defined religiosity as a series of descriptors and not on a numeric scale like the ESS. It is therefore difficult to compare one with the other. 58% of Catholics in the Republic of Ireland describe themselves as somewhat religious which might be seen to correspond with points 6 to 8 above. 4% of Catholics describe themselves as very or extremely non-religious. 65% of the Catholics asked in the ISSP stated that they have a shrine, altar, or a religious object on display such as a Crucifix, sacred heart picture, holy water font, statue or picture of Mary. 15% visit a holy place for “religious reasons” about once or twice a year.

Figure 9: How often do you pray? Base: RoI Catholics. Source: ESS4.



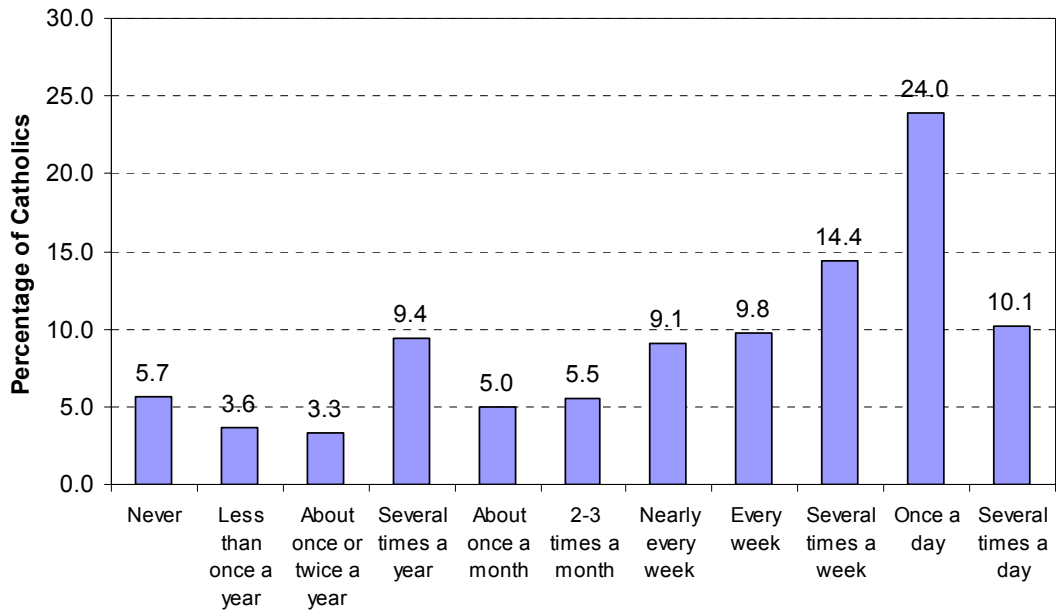
50% of the Catholics in the ESS4 sample stated that they pray every day with a further 16% stating that they pray more than once per week. While the frequency of prayer is consistently higher than Mass attendance, some deeper analysis shows some significant differences. Of those that pray every day, just over 70% of them attend Mass once per week or more often. Of those that pray only on special holy days, 35% do so. These differences are statistically significant and so the variation cannot be accounted for by chance alone.

Figure 10: How often do you pray broken down by weekly or more often Mass attendance. Base: ROI Catholics. Source: ESS4.



We can generally state then that frequency of prayer shows a strong relationship to frequent Mass attendance when examining those who attend weekly or more often only. From the ISSP we can see that prayer maintains its significance for Catholics in the Republic of Ireland. The graph below shows the frequency with which they pray.

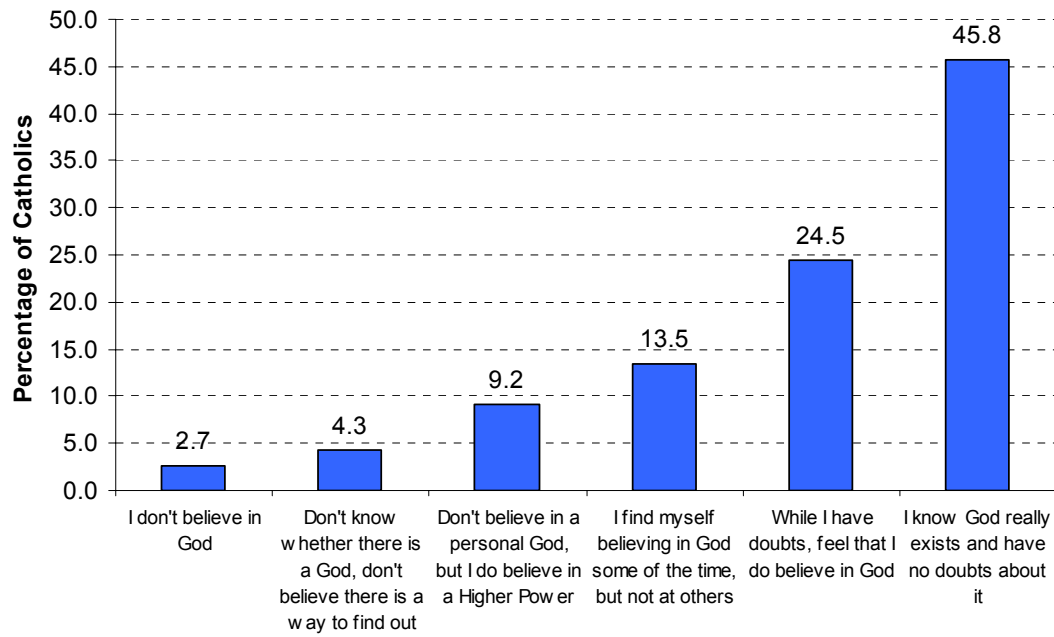
Figure 11: Frequency of prayer. Base: RoI Catholics. Source: ISSP.



In contrast to the ESS, the ISSP shows that just 24% of Catholics pray once per day. A further 10% pray more often than that. There are category differences in these two surveys however. Examining the correlation and relationship between Mass attendance and frequency of prayer in the ISSP survey, we can see that there is some differentiation by Mass attendance and also that the relationship is not attributable to chance alone. It might be notable that about 9% of Catholics who state they never got to Mass indicate that they pray once per day or more often. Prayer several times per week also seems to be somewhat prevalent particularly among those who are monthly Mass attendees.

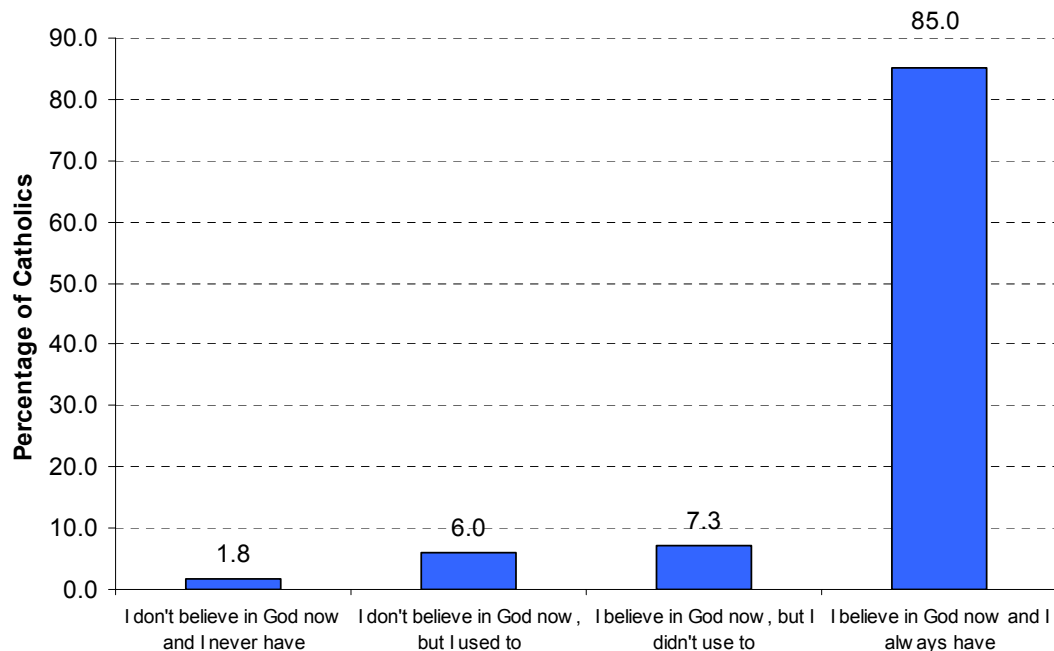
Respondents are asked to choose from a list which statement comes closest to expressing what they believe about God. Furthermore, they are also asked which statement best describes your beliefs about God now and in the past. The first is a measure of expression; the second is a measure of temporal description.

Figure 12: Percentage of Catholics in expression of their beliefs. Base: ROI Catholics. Source: ISSP.



About 46% of Catholics in the Republic of Ireland state that they know God really exists and that they have no doubt about that belief. 13% believe in God some of the time but not at others. Almost 3% of Catholics in Ireland do not believe in God. For the measure of description, respondents provide some other interesting data.

Figure 13: Percentage of Catholics in the expression of their belief in God. Base: ROI Catholics. Source: ISSP.



85% believe in God now and always have done. As can be seen, this is far and away the most frequently chosen description of their belief in God. The survey goes on to ask about further aspects of belief of the Christian faith (and some of other faiths which may have prominence in an Irish setting) and these are summarized in the table below.

Table 10: various aspects of Christian and other belief. Base: ROI Catholics. Source: ISSP.

	Christian beliefs				Other beliefs		
	Belief in life after death	Belief in Heaven	Belief in Hell	Belief in religious miracles	Belief in reincarnation	Belief in Nirvana	Belief in supernatural powers of deceased ancestors
Yes, definitely	43.2	45.5	27.5	32.6	10.9	6.2	11.1
Yes, probably	39.1	41.7	30.5	38.5	20.6	17.4	27.1
No, probably not	11.9	7.6	28.3	20.2	34.2	39.9	31.1
No, definitely not	5.8	5.3	13.7	8.8	34.3	36.5	30.7

As can be seen from this table, belief in life after death is congruent with a belief in Heaven with no striking differences across the categories of rows. Belief in Hell is much less likely given that about 27% are definitely sure that it exists contrasting with over 28% who think that it probably does not. A majority of Catholics do not believe in reincarnation and Nirvana. About 11% of Catholics do believe in the supernatural powers of deceased ancestors.

Within the ISSP, further understandings of respondents’ faith are also found. They are asked to provide agreement or disagreement with a series of statements relating to their understanding of God, their life and ways of connecting with God. Among the Catholics in the Republic of Ireland, a number of features can be discerned and these are seen in the table below.

Table 11: Agreement or disagreement with various statement in describing their faith. Base: RoI Catholics. Source: ISSP.

	There is a God who concerns Himself with every human being personally	There is little that people can do to change the course of their lives	To me, life is meaningful only because God exists	In my opinion, life does not serve any purpose	Life is only meaningful if you provide the meaning yourself	I have my own way of connecting with God without churches or religious services
Strongly agree	23.2	3.7	8.6	1.0	13.4	13.6
Agree	47.8	16.9	28.0	4.2	45.7	46.4
Neither agree nor disagree	16.2	12.2	24.5	8.0	19.8	19.0
Disagree	9.6	44.7	28.2	41.4	15.3	14.7
Strongly disagree	3.2	22.4	10.8	45.4	5.9	6.3

Almost 48% - just under half of Catholics – agree that God concerns Himself with every human being personally. This is almost the same proportion who agrees that they have their own way of connecting with God without churches. A relatively similar proportion also agree that life is meaningful if you provide the meaning yourself. At the same time, Catholics in the Republic are divided almost equally on agreement or disagreement as to whether God’s existence makes life meaningful. 28% agree with this statement compared with 28% who disagree with this statement. Seen in the light of other practices

tabulated above (the switch to less frequent Mass attendance and the relative importance of daily prayer), it might be said that Catholicism in Ireland is relatively individualistic in nature.

About 45% of Catholics disagree that there is little that people can do to change the course of their lives indicating a relatively high proportion that have a strong belief in self-determination. Life is only meaningful if you provide the meaning yourself is also the pre-eminent position among the sample with just 6% strongly disagreeing with the statement.

Medium term trends across the four rounds of the ESS

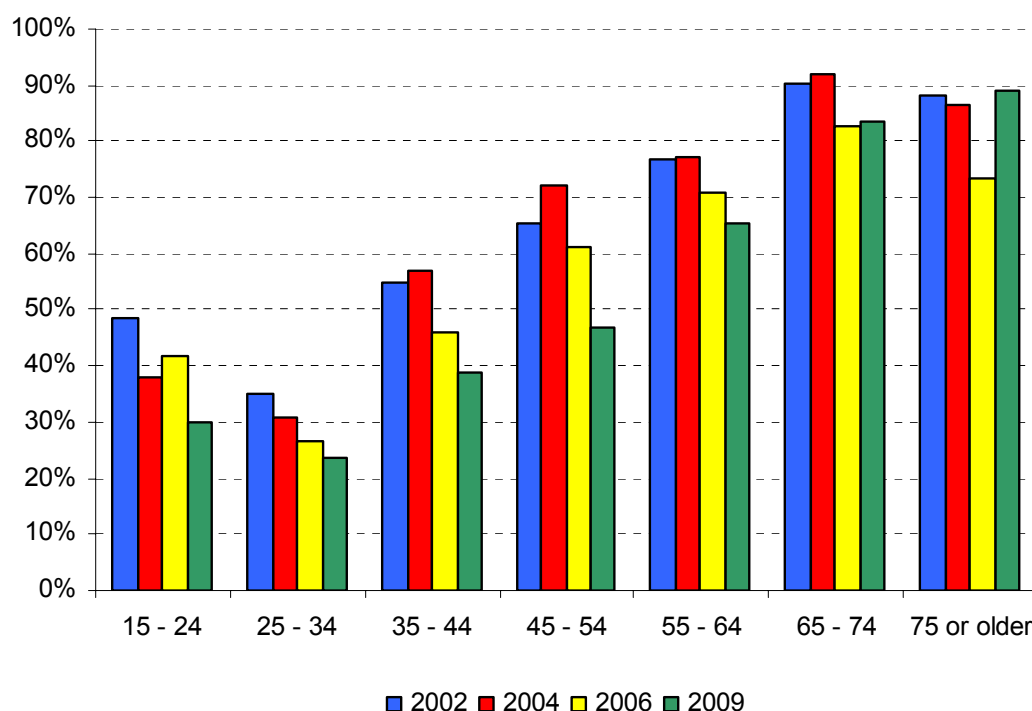
Figure 1 above shows that frequent Mass attendance amongst Ireland's Catholics is declining. Taking a selection of these data, we can note some trends over the medium term.

Table 12: Frequent Mass attendance by ESS round. Base: RoI Catholics. Source: ESS cumulative file.

	<i>Every day</i>	<i>More than once a week</i>	<i>Once a week</i>
<i>ESS1 2002</i>	4.4	8.4	50.3
<i>ESS2 2004</i>	5	10.8	47
<i>ESS3 2006</i>	3.6	8.9	43.6
<i>ESS4 2009</i>	3.5	6	42.1

For those Catholics that attend more than once per week, we can see significant declines over an approximately ten year period. There is a reduction of 8% in the number of Catholics attending Mass once per week only. If age is factored into this data, we can see a more nuanced trend.

Figure 14: Once per week or more often Mass attendance broken down by broad age groups. Base: RoI Catholics. Source: ESS cumulative file.



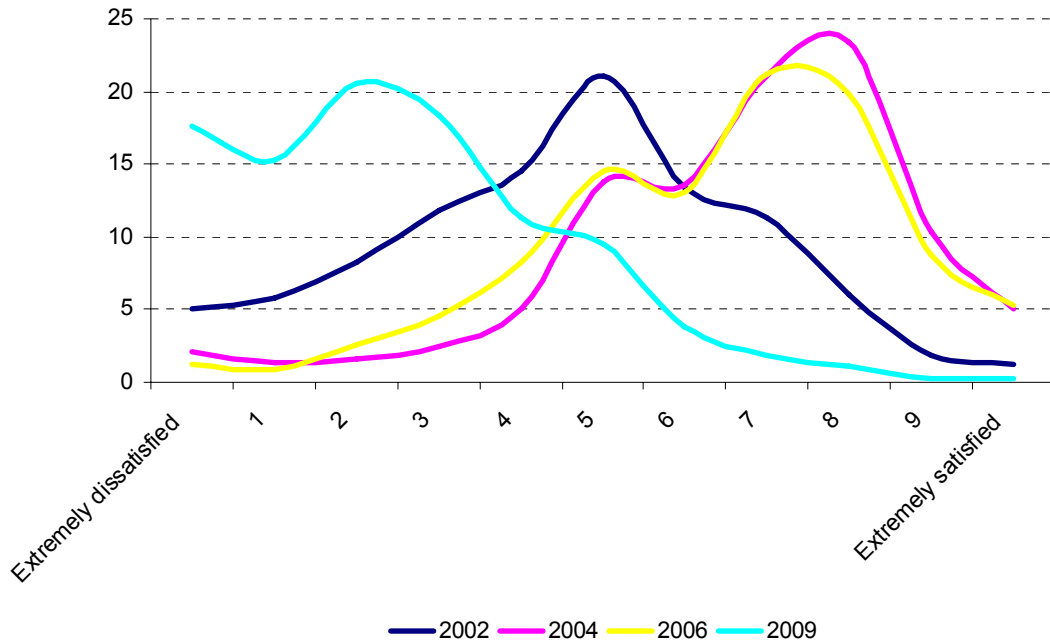
There is a consistent fall in once per week or more often Mass attendance among all age groups bar two in the period under examination. In 2002, about 50% of 15 to 24 year olds attend Mass this often. By 2009 (in the last two years), this frequency rate is about 30% for this age group. This is represented by the blue and green lines in the first set of columns above. Rises are falls across the age groups are recorded but the trend is downward across this time period for all but two age groups: the 55 to 64 and 75 or older age groups. This is confirmed by comparing the linear regression values for a log scale trendline for two selected age groups:

ESS1 to ESS4 for 15 to 24 year olds: 0.7441

ESS1 to ESS4 for 75 or older: 0.0847

The closer this figure is to 1, the better the ‘fit’ of the data to the model. This is not so much a predictor of the trend but a confirmation of the trend, i.e. downward for the younger age group. The model proposed suggests that there will be a continued downward trend in the once per week Mass attendance for the younger age group and a continuing stabilisation of the trend for the older.

Figure 15: Satisfaction with present state of the economy in Ireland. Base: RoI Catholics. Source: ESS cumulative file.



On a more general level, there are some other trends of note in the data across the period 2002 to 2009. Satisfaction with the present state of the economy over this time declines markedly amongst the Catholics in the sample. The graph below shows the trend lines for this rated scale (0 to 10) for the four time periods. In 2002, the majority of the respondents stated that they are satisfied, indicated by the central placing of the blue line below. In the 2004 and 2006 data, there is a congruence of the results with more and more respondents indicating increasing satisfaction with the state of the economy at this time. By the time of the administration of the 2009 survey, most respondents have moved their view to the left of the graph, indicating a shift in levels of satisfaction with the state of the economy.

General satisfaction with the “state of education in country nowadays” also changes across this time although the shift is markedly less dramatic. From the table below, we can compare 2002 and 2009 data. Amongst Catholics in 2002, approximately 58% believed that the education system is good or extremely good. By 2009, this has declined to 50%.

Table 13: Satisfaction with the state of education in country nowadays. Base: RoI Catholics. Source: ESS cumulative file.

	Extremely bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Extremely good
2002	1.7	2.2	3.9	5.3	5.8	11.3	11.7	16.6	23.1	11.3	7
2009	1.4	1.4	4	6.7	10	12.8	13.5	23.6	17.7	5.8	3

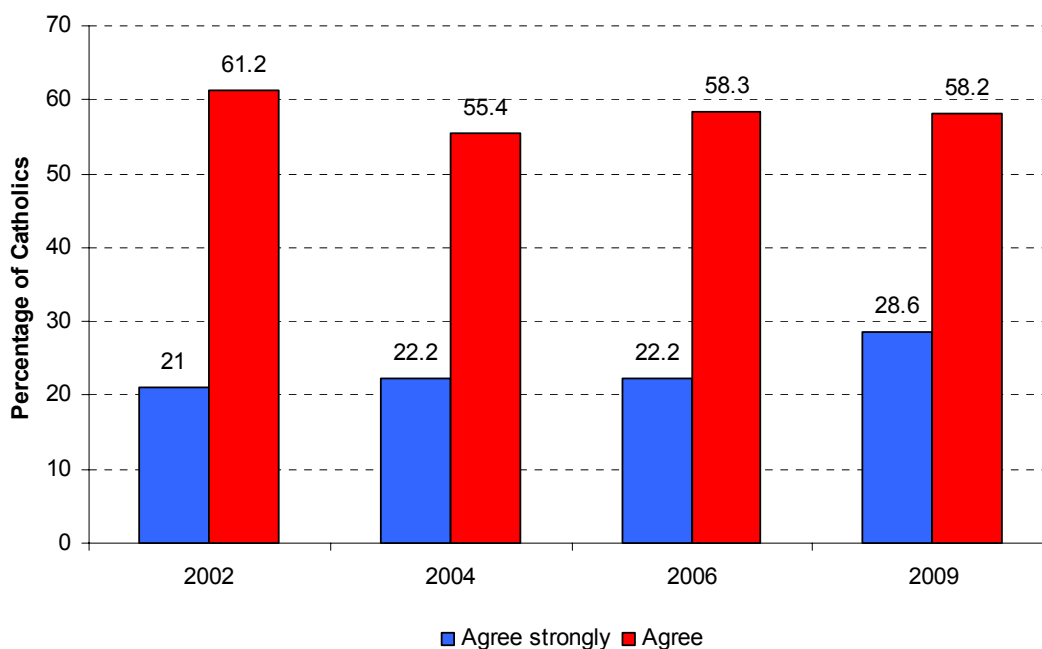
There was a particular shift away from a position of thinking that it is extremely good. There is also a corresponding move away from thinking that the “state of health services in the country nowadays” is good as the table below illustrates:

Table 14: Satisfaction with state of the health service in the country nowadays. Base: ROI Catholics. Source: ESS cumulative file.

	Extremely bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Extremely good
2002	10.6	9.9	14.1	12.5	11.3	13.1	8	8.1	7.4	3.2	1.7
2009	5.9	7.5	14.9	15.2	13.6	12.2	10.8	10.6	6.7	1.4	1.2

The European Social Survey also measures attitudes to particular issues of morality and ethics across this time period. Over time, we can chart changes to these attitudes amongst the Catholic population of the Republic of Ireland. The proportion of Catholics agreeing or strongly agreeing to the statement that “Gays and lesbians are free to live life as they wish” is shown in the chart below.

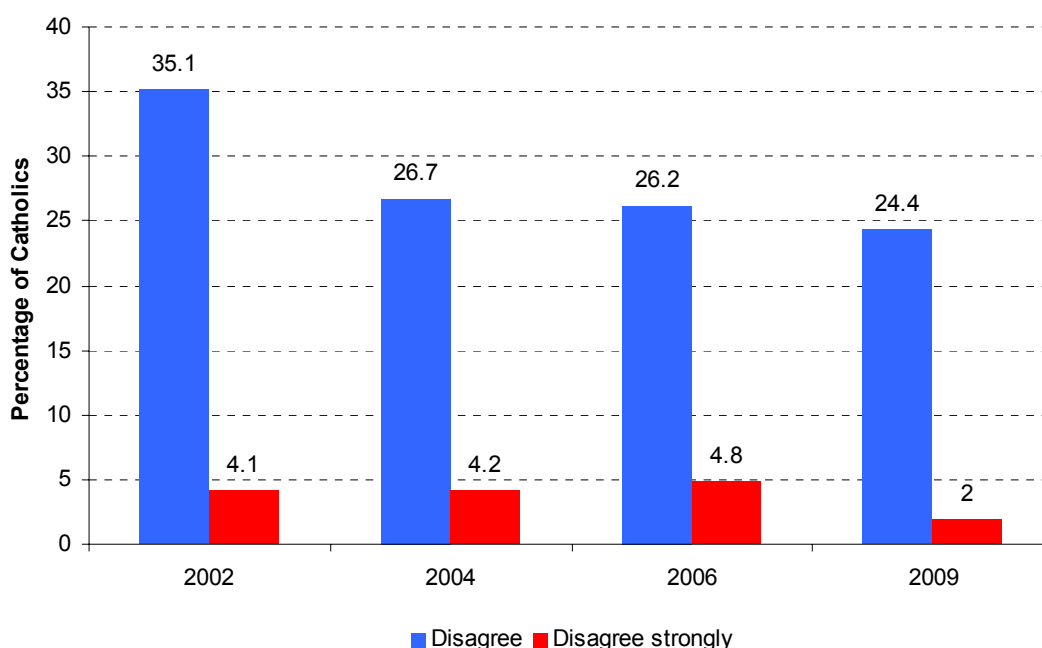
Figure 15: Percentage of Catholics agreeing / strongly agreeing with the statement “Gays and lesbians are free to live life as they wish.” Base: ROI Catholics. Source: ESS cumulative file.



There is an increase in the proportions of those strongly agreeing, from 21% of Catholics in 2002 to almost 29% in 2009. Similarly, a decline in the percentage of those agreeing with the statement which cannot be accounted for by examining the Disagreement end of the scale. This end of the scale also declines. Broadly speaking we can see that a greater proportion of Catholics believe strongly that gay and lesbian people are free to live as they wish.

Respondents are presented with the statement “Modern science can be relied on to solve environmental problems”. Amongst the Catholics of the Republic of Ireland at this time, there is a notable decrease in the number who disagree and strongly disagree with this statement. This is seen in the table below. This would tend to indicate a greater trust in science to solve these particular problems.

Figure 16: Percentage of Catholics disagreeing / strongly disagreeing with the statement “Modern science can be relied on to solve environmental problems.” Base: ROI Catholics. Source: ESS cumulative file.



Respondents are asked to respond to a series of statements about immigration by various groups in relation to their ethnicity and origin. The table below shows the responses of the Catholics in the sample to the Allow None measure across the period. We can note from the table that between ESS3 and ESS4, there is a hardening of attitudes toward migrants from poorer countries outside Europe and those of different race/ethnic group from majority. Generally speaking, the proportion of Catholics in the Republic of Ireland who wish there to be more controls on migration into Ireland, whether from groups different from themselves or not, has increased.

Table 16: Allow no immigrants from various categories. Base: ROI Catholics. Source: ESS cumulative file.

	Allow none: immigrants from poorer countries outside Europe	Allow none: immigrants of different race/ethnic group from majority	Allow none: immigrants of same race/ethnic group as majority
2002	6	6.5	3.7
2004	8.3	9.9	6.4
2006	9.4	9.6	6.5
2009	14.9	12.9	10.3

When presented with the statement “Immigration is bad or good for country's economy”, an increasing proportion of Catholics believe that it is good for the economy as time goes on. For example, in 2002, an aggregated 36% of the sample believed that it was bad for the economy (up to 4 on a ten point scale where 0 is bad). By 2009, this had increased to almost 42%.

Respondents are then presented with a range of statements about other people and their ethical positions and then asked to state how like that they consider themselves to be. In the following tables, we examine the aggregated categories of ‘Very much like me’ and ‘Like me’ as a pair. This is known as *third personing* where the respondent is allowed to compare themselves to someone else, someone notional to measure their attitudes and ethical positions indirectly. It is frequently used so as not to personalise the choices that people make in surveys and other forms of research. In

each statement presented, respondents are asked to identify themselves in relation to “It is important...”

Table 17: Not like me / at all for various statements. Base: RoI Catholics. Source: ESS cumulative file.

Not like me & Not like me at all.				
	2002	2004	2006	2009
to think of new ideas and be creative	9.9	9.8	8.3	7.4
to be rich, have money and expensive things	49.5	44.8	49.5	53.4
that people are treated equally and have equal opportunities	2.8	1.6	4.2	2.6
to show abilities and to be admired	19.7	17.3	20.4	15.4
to try new and different things in life	20.2	17.1	19.7	15.9
to do what is told and follow rules	17	16.2	23.5	19.9
to be humble and modest, not to draw attention to oneself	10.9	9.5	8.7	8.1
to have a good time	33.1	30.2	34	32.8
to make my own decisions and to be free	3.4	4.5	4.6	3.5

We can see from the table above that there is some variation in the lack of identification of the respondent with these statements. In particular, it can be noted that “it is important to what is told and follow rules” increases between 2002 and 2006 and then drops off sharply in the following survey. Respondents are here stating in increasing numbers that this is not like them or not like them at all. “It is important to show abilities and to be admired” is another measure which shows some variability.

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