

FAITH AND CHURCH ATTENDANCE SURVEY REPORT

Client: ***Archdiocese of Malta***
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A MISCO International Report

1. Introduction

The results of this survey present a picture that tends to indicate a lack of clarity in thinking among the population. The salient data of the survey demonstrates this.

95% believe in God
92% believe are Catholic
69% would become baptised today
61% consider religion to be very important
64% believe that there is life after death
50% attend Sunday Mass
74% attend Mass at least once a month
37% state that one must follow a religion if one believes in God

1. Faith

92% of respondents claimed to follow the Catholic religion while 7% claimed not to follow any religion. The other 1% mentioned other religions. Adherence to the Catholic religion increases with age. Moreover, men are more likely not to follow any religion than women. There may also be an element among respondents, that some would claim to follow the Catholic religion, even though, in effect they would not be.

Of those who claimed that they do not follow the Catholic religion, 76% claimed that they had once been Catholic.

Respondents were then asked if they believe in God. 95% replied in the affirmative. Again, men are less likely to claim that they believe in God than women. Age is also a factor as the older the respondent is, the more likely that one believes in God.

Of those that claim that they do not believe in God, 20% stated that they believe that there is someone or something that moves everything, 18% said that they are not sure, while 62% claimed that there is no such being or thing.

Respondents were asked if an individual must follow a religion if one believes in God. 37% replied in the affirmative, 33% stated that not necessarily, while 26% replied in the negative. The other 4% did not give a response. Of those that claimed to have attended Mass the Sunday previous to the survey, 46% replied in the affirmative.

66% claimed that religion is very important for them in their daily life. 27% stated that it is important, while 6% stated that religion is not so important and 2% stated that it is not important at all. On a four point scale this gives an average rating of 3.6. Importance of religion in one's daily life increases the older one gets.

When analysing results by geographic region, one does not note any marked distinctions among the different parts of Malta. Gender could be another determining factor, but not so significantly.

Respondents were also asked if they believed in life after death. 64% claimed to believe in life after death, 19% said that they doubted there was life after death, while 11% said that they did not believe there is life after death. The other 6% did not give a response.

Older respondents are more likely to believe in life after death as are females. Of those who claim to believe in God, 67% stated that they believe in life after death, while among those who claimed to have attended Mass the weekend previous to the survey, 77% stated that they believe in life after death.

2. Attendance at Church

Respondents who stated that they are Catholic, were asked if they attended Mass the weekend before the survey was held. 54% replied in the affirmative, 43% replied in the negative while 3% stated that they were ill. This means that 50% of the population aged 16 years and over stated that they attended Mass. Overall, 74% of respondents claimed to attend Mass at least once a month. This also includes the 7% who said that they attend Mass daily.

Analysing results by age group, one notes that 37% of respondents aged 34 years and under and who claimed to be Catholic, stated that they attended Mass. 47% of those aged 35 to 54 years stated that they attended Mass, while among those aged 55 years and over, 73% replied in the affirmative.

Mass attendance among males is lower, as it is lower among persons living in the southern and western parts of Malta. 55% of those who claim to believe in God attended Mass the weekend previous to the survey.

These respondents were then asked how often they attended Mass in the month prior to the survey, with exception of weddings funerals or baptisms. 7% replied daily, 11% replied twice or three times a week, and 40% replied every Sunday. 26% claimed to have never attended Mass.

One needs to keep in mind the social desirability bias, which causes over reporting of perceived "good" behaviour and under reporting of perceived "bad" behaviour.

Respondents who stated that they never attended Mass, were asked why they do not attend Mass. Five main reasons emerged. The reason that received most mentions was that they do not agree with what the Church or the priest say. This reason was mentioned by 20% of respondents.

Other reasons given were laziness (12%), lack of time (12%), Mass is not relevant (10%) and they do not like going to Church (10%). The various demographic segments have generally tended to follow this pattern, with the exception of persons aged 16 to 24 years. With this age group, disagreement with the Church or the priest is a far less

significant reason (5%) while lack of time (27%) and laziness (22%) are far more significant.

Catholics were also asked, how often they pray, aside from attending Mass and receiving the Sacraments. 33% stated that they pray several times a day and 42% said that they pray daily. 17% stated that they do pray but not daily, while 8% stated that they never pray.

The frequency of praying increases among older respondents as well as among females. Persons that have completed post-secondary or tertiary education are likely to pray less frequently.

Respondents were asked if they were not baptised, would they become baptised today. 69% replied in the affirmative. 21% stated that they were not sure while 10% replied in the negative. 64% of those aged 34 years and under replied in the affirmative, compared to 67% of those aged 35 to 54 years and 76% of those aged 55 years and over.

Males are less likely to want to be baptised today than females. There is also a very clear geographic indication that persons living in the Southern Harbour region are less likely to want to be baptised today than other regions. Level of education is also a determining factor as persons who have completed post-secondary or tertiary education are less likely to want to be baptised today.

73% of those that claim to believe in God would want to be baptised today, while 82% of those that claimed to have attended Mass the Sunday previous to the survey stated that they would want to be baptised.

Respondents who said that they are Catholic, were asked if their children are baptised, received Holy Communion and received their Confirmation. 29% of such respondents said that they have or had no children. 67% said that their children are baptised, 55% said that their children received Holy Communion, and 53% said that their children received their confirmation.

3. *Technical note*

This survey was conducted among a random sample of 1000 respondents between the 4th and 8th December 2017. Interviews were conducted on the telephone by trained interviewers under the direct supervision of MISCO coordinators. Respondents were selected using the random digit dialling method.

Data was weighted according to age, gender, and region. Weighting is used to adjust the results of a study to bring them more in line with what is known about a population. The weighting was done according to the Demographic review of 2013.

The age groups used were:

16 – 24 years

25 – 34 years

35 – 44 years

45 – 54 years
55 – 64 years
65 years and over

The regions used were those listed in the Demographic review of 2013, namely:

Northern
Northern Harbour
Southern Harbour
South Eastern
Western

The data was also analysed by level of education, marital status and occupation.