**Question 1 responses**

***Positives***

* Believe in the power of prayer and pray at home and feel that the church is relevant in my life
* I attend mass due to tradition and my upbringing-I like the old rituals-they are of personal importance to me
* Feel good when I go to mass
* Love the church-get a great sense of peace there
* Spiritual needs being met in Armagh-homilies give spiritual food for the week ahead. Administrator cares for his ‘flock’
* Couldn’t imagine life without the church
* Engagement with the church helps me to reject the negativities in life and aim for positivity
* ‘Who else will listen to our woes, if not God in the Church’
* Priests’ job is very busy and difficult. They’re not appreciated enough
* Priest is always available to us-we are foreign nationals-got married and receive the sacraments here
* My faith helps me to think more openly
* I volunteer with my church and feel that the more you give, the more you get back
* For my children, I may return to mass
* Good support from our church
* Acknowledge efforts to address scandals
* Feel closer to God in the church
* Feel supported in prayer by my Community
* This survey is the first time that my opinions have been requested/considered
* Christianity is about deeds and action-I get comfort and solace from the church

***Negatives***

* Lost all respect for the church re issue of child abuse and the fact that no-one at the top seems to be doing anything about it
* Church’s protection of self rather than doing the right thing
* Other Christian religions seem to be more connected
* The institution of Catholicism does not cause me to feel at home in the church-my own personal spirituality is the main reason that I attend
* Have a connection/relationship with God, not with the priest
* Cardinal should have resigned
* Put off attending mass due to the scandals and how they were handled
* Only attend mass on special occasions-Christmas, anniversaries, etc
* Children and Young people don’t understand what’s being said at mass and therefore don’t go-many never return-how do we keep them engaged
* Children need to be included earlier than at school e.g. Sunday classes at mass
* Parishioners didn’t feel consulted re suitable mass times in their parish
* I don’t know what is going on in my parish-no information distributed
* Don’t feel I need to attend church to practice my beliefs
* See the church as a divisive force rather than a unifying one
* Don’t feel comfortable taking my young children to mass-could do with a ‘crying chapel’
* Priest should be able to find me-I don’t know any priest
* I pray, but the ‘church’ does not attract me
* No scientific reason to believe in God/find it hard to believe
* Don’t feel valued-some people get asked to do everything
* No sense of community
* Feel misled and angry
* Those working for the church need to be involved in Parish clubs/organisations
* I don’t feel like I belong/a second class citizen
* Bad experience on my wedding day with our priest
* Feel freer without religion

**Predominant issues from Question 1**

**(issues affecting relationship with the church)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Issue | Priest issues-mass boring, priest unapproachable, always looking for money, out of touch, sermons irrelevant | | | |
| Number of responses mentioning this issue | 24 | | | |
| Breakdown by gender | 13 Female | | 11 Male | |
| Breakdown by age profile | 6 (18-35 yrs old) | 14 (35-65 yrs old) | | 3 (>65 yrs old) |
| Breakdown by location | 21 South | | 3 North | |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Issue | Clerical sexual abuse | | | |
| Number of responses mentioning this issue | 18 | | | |
| Breakdown by gender | 12 Female | | 6 Male | |
| Breakdown by age profile | 4 (18-35 yr olds) | 13 (35-65 yr olds) | | 1 (>65 yr olds) |
| Breakdown by location | 11 South | | 7 North | |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Issue | Nothing for young people (children and teenagers) | | | |
| Number of responses mentioning this issue | 8 | | | |
| Breakdown by gender | 7 Female | | 1 Male | |
| Breakdown by age profile | 6 (18-35 yr olds) | 2 (35-65 yr olds) | |  |
| Breakdown by location | 3 South | | 5 North | |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Issue | Is mass attendance necessary for faith development (feel comfortable just with personal prayer)? | | | |
| Number of responses mentioning this issue | 10 | | | |
| Breakdown by gender | 6 Female | | 3 Male | |
| Breakdown by age profile | 3 (18-35 yr olds) | 6 (35-65 yr olds) | | 1 (>65 yr old) |
| Breakdown by location | 7 South | | 3 North | |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Issue | Bad personal experiences | | | |
| Number of responses mentioning this issue | 5 | | | |
| Breakdown by gender | 5 Female | |  | |
| Breakdown by age profile | 1 (18-35 yr old) | 4 (35-65 yr olds) | |  |
| Breakdown by location | 5 South | |  | |

**Question 2 responses**

* Abuse allegations handled badly-dishonesty, secrecy, hidden agenda
* Corruption in the Vatican
* Let down by our Cardinal
* Role of women?-women do so much work on the ground to sustain ‘church’ but without any recognition-is there a need for their exclusion in the hierarchy of the church?
* Too dogmatic regarding divorce, contraception and treatment of gay people and single mothers
* Lack of consultation and lack of action following consultation-regardless of the outcome of the consultative process, we will still be dictated to.
* Priests should be allowed to marry and have families. They would then be more connected to modern society. I see celibacy as a big issue.
* Government run the country-priests should not have control of the people
* Clergy lead better lives than many in their communities-don’t have the same worries as people on the margins
* Should not have to pay to have a mass said
* Huge wealth within the hierarchical church
* Priests and religious have a long way to go to be as close to the laity as our Protestant neighbours-would really help if they were seen doing normal everyday things-I have never seen a priest at a concert or going shopping!
* Priests change too frequently
* Refusal of Church to discuss pertinent issues of today
* Mass boring and too long-priest’s tone is monotonous
* Would like my children to ‘want’ to come to mass with me
* Where do my grandchildren go from here? Prayers not being taught or experienced in their daily lives. Makes me sad.
* Faith development is left too much to schools-inadequate support for families.
* Priests not adequately prepared for modern society-too old fashioned and out of touch
* Low numbers attending mass
* Concern re declining numbers of priests
* Would love sermons to be more relevant to me and not a liturgical lecture
* Foreign priests saying mass in Ireland with poor understanding of English-makes it difficult to engage with mass and understand what is being said
* Hierarchical, misogynistic attitude-does anyone listen?
* Too domineering and don’t listen to people’s opinions
* Would love if there was bible study in my parish
* Don’t appreciate the idea of priests being treated like ‘Gods’
* Priests not friendly/approachable/difficult to get in touch with/no empathy
* Priests don’t call/visit like they used to
* I find confessions difficult/I don’t believe in confessions
* Election process for Pope is outdated
* Have a problem with all priests being tarred with the one brush-the good ones deserve respect
* Local priests are making an effort-it’s the hierarchy which is out of touch.
* Lack of accountability for the abusers-should be defrocked
* Afraid to let my children be involved in church
* Church has lost moral authority
* Conflict between faith in God versus faith in the organisation which is the church
* Church not at all supportive
* If you hold different values/opinions, you are excluded
* Response from a single mother-my child was baptised and was subsequently omitted from the weekly bulletin-know others that this has happened to too
* Children should not have to leave school to serve mass during the week
* I disagree with mandatory attendance at pre marriage courses in order to marry in a church
* Delays in church annulments cause more pain in an already difficult time
* Find it difficult to say the ‘Our Father’ in Irish-doesn’t have the same impact for me
* Church does not connect with my age group (18-35)
* Sermons should be an opportunity to build spirit within the community-they’re not

**Predominant issues from Question 2**

**(Things which respondents found difficult/disagreed with within the church)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Issue | Child sexual abuse and its handling from church hierarchy | | | |
| Number of responses mentioning this issue | 64 | | | |
| Breakdown by gender | 36 Female | | 28 Male | |
| Breakdown by age profile | 21 (18-35 yr olds) | 38 (35-65 yr olds) | | 5 (>65 yr olds) |
| Breakdown by location | 44 South | | 20 North | |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Issue | Harsh judgement of and exclusion of those who don’t fit in (Homosexual, unmarried mothers, divorcees) and problems with church teaching on contraception) | | | |
| Number of responses mentioning this issue | 34 | | | |
| Breakdown by gender | 23 Female | | 11 Male | |
| Breakdown by age profile | 10 (18-35 yr olds) | 21 (35-65 yr olds) | | 3 (>65 yr olds) |
| Breakdown by location | 21 South | | 13 North | |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Issue | Priests being allowed to marry/celibacy | | | |
| Number of responses mentioning this issue | 25 | | | |
| Breakdown by gender | 19 Female | | 6 Male | |
| Breakdown by age profile | 13 (18-35 yr olds) | 11 (35-65 yr olds) | | 1 (>65 yr old) |
| Breakdown by location | 21 South | | 4 North | |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Issue | Role of women in the church/female ordination | | | |
| Number of responses mentioning this issue | 24 | | | |
| Breakdown by gender | 15 Female | | 9 Male | |
| Breakdown by age profile | 8 (18-35 yr olds) | 14 (35-65 yr olds) | | 2 (>65 yr olds) |
| Breakdown by location | 22 South | | 2 North | |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Issue | Priests unapproachable and out of touch with reality | | | |
| Number of responses mentioning this issue | 16 | | | |
| Breakdown by gender | 6 Female | | 10 Male | |
| Breakdown by age profile | 6 (18-35 yr olds) | 7 (35-65 yr olds) | | 3 (>65 yr olds) |
| Breakdown by location | 14 South | | 2 North | |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Issue | Wealth at the top | | | |
| Number of responses mentioning this issue | 8 | | | |
| Breakdown by gender | 4 Female | | 4 Male | |
| Breakdown by age profile | 1 (18-35 yr old) | 6 (35-65 yr olds) | | 1 (>65 yr old) |
| Breakdown by location | 6 South | | 2 North | |

**Question 3 responses**

* Priests should wear black-be recognisable
* Home Visits by local priests
* Priests too far removed from the people-on a pedestal-need to mix more with laity
* Connect with young people who struggle with the difficulties of the modern economic climate
* Be more supportive when called upon
* Be more inspiring
* Have more family friendly ceremonies
* Encourage a wide number of people in the Parish to get involved to avoid some being over burdened
* Clergy should practice bible values
* Engage with effective parish preparations for the sacraments
* Clergy should be more open to listening to the views of their parishioners, even if they are conflicting with church teaching-discuss rather than dictate
* Be more supportive towards single parents
* Organise more services of absolution rather than individual confessions
* Be more aware of financial difficulties within their parishes when looking for money
* Re-launch itself into a more modern and developed society
* Appoint more Deacons
* Give more concise, simpler sermons-easier to understand
* Get rid of Canon Law and ask relevant questions
* More brainstorming between parishes and diocese
* Ensure parochial is a focal point in the community-when it is not there, sense of community is different

**Question 4 responses**

Some people are not willing to get involved due to excessive personal commitments or problems, but of those who were willing, suggestions included:

* Could get involved in church based events-e.g. visiting an elderly neighbour. Organise new events if they are not already out there.
* I could give a friend/neighbour a lift to mass if they do not drive
* I could make more of an effort for young people
* I could go to mass more and bring my children
* Make myself more available for voluntary work
* I could put more in the weekly envelope
* I really enjoy organised Parish trips-possibly build some of them into parish fund raising occasions
* I would like a better relationship with God and know that I have to make a better effort
* Get involved in Parish meetings-problems shared-problems halved-problems solved!
* Organise large communal outdoor spiritual events-can help to find the lost sheep
* Possibility of a children’s mass with focus on different school every week(urban areas)-not too long and not too early on a Sunday!!!

Many people said that they would get involved if asked.

**Question 5 responses**

* Needs to lead
* Needs to eliminate corruption
* Might get too high a profile for only helping the poor
* More human face of the church-man of the people
* More aware of the realities of communities and peoples’ feelings
* More liberal and connected to the people
* No effect on Ireland yet
* Agree more with his views
* Pleased that he was elected
* Admiration for Pope Benedict for stepping down when he saw the need
* More open minded and respectful of people
* Restricted in his ability to make any real change
* Pppcy should possibly be for a fixed term
* His message is softer
* He has reinvigorated my faith
* He has given me hope that the church can change with the times
* Does not have a celebrity mentality
* Don’t feel that we need a ‘God’ representative-we all represent God
* Because of him, I was glued to the TV for Worls Youth Day in Brazil
* Cardinals are too old being promoted to their office
* Most like Christ of all the popes I’ve known
* Was moved when he was elected
* Hopefully his humility will filter down
* Feel better able to talk about him to lapsed relatives in a positive way
* He’s an inspiration to the world
* No-Another old man!