Understanding the 21st Century Catholic

Presentation to Catholic Bishops Conference
Hinsley Hall, 17th November 2009
Raymond Perrier – Head of Communities

www.cafod.org.uk
Understanding the Catholic Community

- Through various community activities we are probably very good as a Church at talking to at least some of our community.
- We are also *sometimes* good at listening to them, at least informally.
- In the last year CAFOD has spent more time and money listening to them *formally* as well.
- And also listening to those we are less likely to see.
- We all benefit from a better understanding of who is engaged with the Church – and who might be – even if that picture is challenging.
Sharing these insights

- CAFOD conducted this research to help with our own engagement strategies; but we have been pleased to share it with a variety of other groups who work with the Catholic community:
  - Staff at Eccleston Square
  - Seminarians at Wonersh and Oscott
  - Diocesan Financial Secretaries
  - Education Advisors (Primary, Secondary, Adult Formation, RCIA)
  - LiveSimply network
  - Pastoral teams from Portsmouth and A&B
Surveys with Ipsos MORI and nfp Synergy

- Research commissioned by CAFOD to put some hard numbers on the Catholic Community
- Conducted in October/ November 2008
- Same technique/ agencies as used for political polls
- Scientifically robust samples:
  - face to face with 5,500 people aged (15+)
  - on-line survey of 1,000 Catholics (18+)
- Sampled to be representative of the population as a whole in terms of age, class, ethnicity, etc (though in England & Wales only)
How many Catholics are there?

- Church head count only captures those in Mass (c. 900,000)
- The Baptismal roll captures c. 4 M but would miss many immigrants
- The MORI survey
  - Someone who self-defines as Catholic
  - Instead of us deciding what makes them a Catholic, they decide for themselves
  - Same principle as applied in the 2001 census
  - But the census only asks for ‘Christian’
“Do you consider yourself...?”

Equivalent to 5,180,000 Catholic adults and children
How do Catholics compare to the wider population?

- One significant area of difference you would expect is in terms of ethnicity.
- The next table shows the ethnic make-up of the Catholic population compared to the population as a whole.
  - These are self-defined categories so, for example, if someone’s parents came from Ireland, we left it to them whether they define themselves as ‘White British’ or ‘White Irish’
- Some differences are inevitable because of the match between ethnicity and religion.
  - But some differences are more surprising.

[Table]

[Text continues...].
“Do you consider yourself...?”

- Catholics
  - White British: 75%
  - White Irish: 4%
  - White Eastern European: 9%
  - White Other: 4%
  - Black African: 2%
  - Black Caribbean/ Other: 2%
  - Asian: 2%
  - Mixed/ Other: 2%

- General public
  - White British: 85%
  - White Irish: 4%
  - White Eastern European: 2%
  - White Other: 2%
  - Black African: 7%
How normal are Catholics?

- In many respects, the Catholic population is very normalised – even more so than the Anglican population.
- The next charts compare the Catholic and Anglican communities to the general population:
  - In terms of gender
  - In terms of age
  - In terms of working profile
  - In terms of number of children
  - In terms of class
  - In terms of location
  - In terms of marital status
  - In terms of media/ Internet usage
Catholics follow the gender profile of the general population
Catholics follow the age profile of the general population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Anglican</th>
<th>Catholic</th>
<th>General</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-24</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend:
- 15-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+
Catholics follow the working profile of the general population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Full Time/Self-Empl</th>
<th>Part Time</th>
<th>Houswife</th>
<th>In Education</th>
<th>Retired</th>
<th>Unemployed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Catholics follow the child-bearing profile of the general population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No children</th>
<th>1 child</th>
<th>2 children</th>
<th>3 or more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
But: Catholics are much more likely to be single

![Bar chart showing comparison between Anglican, Catholic, and General demographics regarding marital status.](chart.png)
Catholics are more likely to live in London or the North

![Bar graph showing percentage distribution of Catholics, Anglicans, and General population across different regions: North, Midlands, South, and London. Catholics have a higher percentage in London and the North compared to Anglicans and the general population.](Image)
Catholics are more likely to be either rising class or under-class.
But Catholics are more likely than Anglicans to use the Internet

- Anglican: 44% Every day, 16% Weekly, 2% Monthly, 37% Less/No Access
- Catholic: 49% Every day, 15% Weekly, 2% Monthly, 34% Less/No Access
- General: 51% Every day, 15% Weekly, 2% Monthly, 32% Less/No Access
And look at what Catholics read!

(Note that the claimed level of readership is much greater than the actual readership of newspapers. This reflects less what people read and more what they want to be seen to be reading.)
Do all people who call themselves Catholic go to Mass?

- As with all these questions, it is about what they claim rather than what is the truth
  - In surveys people generally over-claim when asked about a ‘virtuous’ behaviour
  - Cross-comparing figures with the number for ‘bodies in church’ would suggest a high degree of over-claiming
  - But useful broad indication about how important/unimportant Mass attendance is as a definer of Catholic identity
  - And broad consistency between 2 sets of data
Catholics no longer divide between ‘Mass-goers’ and ‘lapsed’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Go to church 1 a week</th>
<th>Go to church 1 a month</th>
<th>Go to church 1 or 2x a year</th>
<th>Never/ rarely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female Catholics</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Catholics</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Catholics</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Frequency of Mass attendance varies significantly by age group

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Go to Church 1 a Week</th>
<th>Go to Church 1 a Month</th>
<th>Go to Church 1 or 2x a Year</th>
<th>Never/Rarely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-24</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<td>29%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>19%</td>
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</tr>
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<td>45-54</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>31%</td>
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What is our image of the Typical Catholic?

• In many situations we might have an image in mind of the typical Catholic:
  – Female, married, retired, reading a broadsheet, middle class, White Irish
  – The Catholic community is much more diverse/normal than that

• Even traditional indicators of Catholic identity are misleading:
  – Baptised, Catholic parents, went to a Catholic school, is married to a Catholic, and whose children go to a Catholic school
  – But this applies only to a small minority of the community

• Instead we have a multi-layered Catholic identity
Baptised, Catholic parents, 80%

Baptised, Catholic parents, 65%

Baptised, Catholic parents, attended Catholic school, 51%

Baptised, Catholic parents, attended Catholic school, children attend Catholic school, 13%

Baptised, Catholic parents, attended Catholic school and nothing else, 32%

Baptised, Catholic parents, attended Catholic school, married to a Catholic, 11%

Baptised, Catholic parents, attended Catholic school, Married to a Catholic, children attend Catholic school, 4%

Source: nfpSynergy/CAFOD
Base: 1000 Catholics, 18-65, UK, Oct 08
Can we engage with Catholics – if it’s not just about going to Mass?

• Mass attendance is an important part of identity for many Catholics
  – But it is less important for others
  – And entirely missing for some
• So what is Catholic identity about?
• Is there a way of still reaching out to the wider Catholic community?
• Are there ‘Catholic’ ways of behaving?
Catholics are no more or less likely to give to charities.
But the charities Catholics support reflect the focus of Catholic Social Teaching.

- **Cancer**: Catholics 60%, General Public 70%
- **Children**: Catholics 58%, General Public 58%
- **Health & Medical (excluding cancer)**: Catholics 29%, General Public 23%
- **Animal Welfare**: Catholics 28%, General Public 43%
- **Poverty & social welfare**: Catholics 16%, General Public 23%
- **Disaster & Emergency relief**: Catholics 20%, General Public 28%
- **Disability**: Catholics 19%, General Public 27%
- **Overseas aid and development**: Catholics 16%, General Public 12%
- **Religious/Faith-based**: Catholics 13%, General Public 13%
- **Housing & homelessness**: Catholics 12%, General Public 12%
- **Women's issues**: Catholics 11%, General Public 11%
- **Environment & conservation**: Catholics 9%, General Public 23%
- **Missionary societies**: Catholics 8%, General Public 23%

*Not asked for General Public*
Catholics are more likely to volunteer than the general public in (almost) every age group.
Catholics are engaged with ‘missio’ even if not always with ‘communio’

- Helping the poor at home: Not at all important (12%), Not very important (57%), Somewhat important (14%), Very important (12%)
- Giving money to charity: Not at all important (16%), Not very important (51%), Somewhat important (9%), Very important (25%)
- Praying and meditating: Not at all important (12%), Not very important (25%), Somewhat important (34%), Very important (17%)
- Helping the poor abroad: Not at all important (8%), Not very important (24%), Somewhat important (41%), Very important (7%)
- Campaigning for social justice: Not at all important (6%), Not very important (25%), Somewhat important (35%), Very important (8%)
- Receiving sacraments: Not at all important (17%), Not very important (29%), Somewhat important (25%), Very important (16%)
- Volunteering time to charity: Not at all important (5%), Not very important (29%), Somewhat important (33%), Very important (6%)
- Attending Mass: Not at all important (17%), Not very important (33%), Somewhat important (23%), Very important (15%)
- Reading the Bible/Scriptures/Religious books: Not at all important (19%), Not very important (39%), Somewhat important (21%), Very important (4%)
More people are open to the Church than are weekly Mass goers

My personal values are informed by the teachings of the Catholic Church

I take the Catholic Church’s teachings into account when I take important decisions in my life

I choose not to have anything to do with the Catholic Church

I think the Catholic Church does more harm than good
Surprisingly high among young adults – the ‘hockey stick effect’

- My personal values are informed by the teachings of the Catholic Church
- I take the Catholic Church's teachings into account when I take important decisions in my life
- I choose not to have anything to do with the Catholic Church

**Total**
- 61%
- 47%

**18-24**
- 59%
- 47%

**25-34**
- 53%
- 39%

**35-44**
- 59%
- 48%

**45-54**
- 64%
- 50%

**55-64**
- 72%
- 58%
Those who are open to teaching are more likely to give and to volunteer.
Lent is still a key part of Catholic identity

- 31% of those surveyed gave up something for Lent.
- 25% read a spiritual book or spiritual content online.
- 25% took part in services other than Mass (e.g., Vigil).
- 16% fasted during Lent.
- 13% served in the church (e.g., reading).
- 9% participated in other activities such as prayer or reflection.

For females:
- 36% gave up something for Lent.

For males:
- 18% read a spiritual book or spiritual content online.
- 25% took part in services other than Mass (e.g., Vigil).
- 16% fasted during Lent.
- 13% served in the church (e.g., reading).
- 8% participated in other activities such as prayer or reflection.
Young adults are more engaged than we might expect

Even though only 16% are ‘weekly’ Mass-goers!
Questions for reflection

• Do we have a fixed image of the Catholic community out of step with the 21st century reality?

• How do we work with a much more multi-layered identity – being Catholic is not everything but it is not insignificant?

• How do we nurture a community that is already generous, engaged and committed to Catholic Social Teaching (even if they don’t know it)?

• How do we link that community back to the sacramental and spiritual practices of the faith?

• Are we able to speak to them in the medium and the language they will hear?