

## Need to Know What Catholics Are Thinking and Doing Today?

The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University is accepting submissions for questions to be included in the Fall 2010 CARA Catholic Poll (CCP). This omnibus survey gives organizations and individuals the chance to purchase and design

questions that will be asked of a national sample of adult Catholics.

Clients may purchase as few as one to 12 or more questions. Those who purchase questions receive the results for their items along with the results for the demographics (e.g., age, gender, race and

ethnicity) and core Catholic background questions (e.g., frequency of Mass attendance, parish registration, sacramental background).

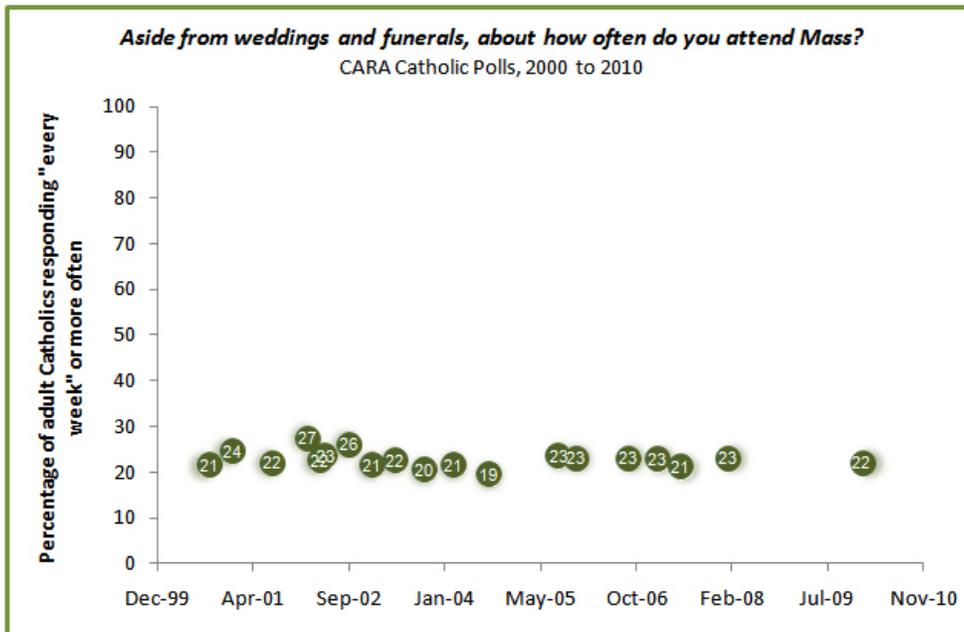
Since 2000, CARA has conducted 20 of these national surveys of self-identified Catholic adults, which have... *See pg. 2*

CARA, a non-profit, Georgetown University-affiliated research center that conducts social scientific studies about the Catholic Church, has three dimensions to its mission:

- to increase the Church's self understanding
- to serve the applied research needs of Church decision-makers
- to advance scholarly research on religion, particularly Catholicism

Founded in 1964, CARA offers a range of research and consulting services for dioceses, parishes, religious institutes, and other Catholic organizations.

[cara.georgetown.edu](http://cara.georgetown.edu)



## CCP Shows Stability in Mass Attendance since 2000

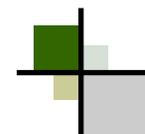
The CCP estimates that 22% of adult Catholics attend Mass weekly or more often. Nineteen percent do not attend weekly but attend at least once a month. Twenty-seven percent attend a few times a year, 31% rarely or never attend, and 1% are unable to attend because they are homebound by illness or a disability.

Given that those who attend less than weekly have some probability of attending Mass in any given week, CARA estimates that about 30% of Catholic adults overall attend Mass in any given week.

As shown in the figure above, there has been very little change over time in

the percentage of Catholics who say they attend Mass at least once a week. Differences in CCP observations are within sampling margins of error indicating overall stability.

The first CCP estimate for weekly attenders was 21% in September 2000. In the most recent survey (Jan. 2010) this was 22%.



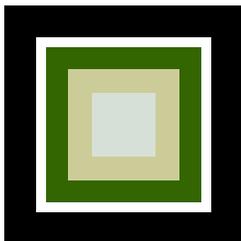
**“According to Georgetown University's Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, one in four U.S. Catholics favors having the Latin Mass as a liturgical option, 12% oppose it, and 63% have "no opinion.”**

**CCP results quoted in *USAToday*, Aug. 28, 2009.**



Follow CARA research up to the minute on twitter at **caracatholic** and on our research blog:

**nineteensixty-four.blogspot.com**



## Need to Know *cont.*

*From pg.1...* included more than 23,000 respondents.

CARA works with each client to design question wording that best obtains and measures the information needed. Questions typically utilize 4- or 5-point response scales (e.g., “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.”). Other question types are also possible—including open-ended questions for respondents to answer in their own

words. Questions may include skip patterns so they are asked only within selected sub-groups.

The cost per question varies by the type of data and analysis needed.

Academic researchers often only need the survey data set for their questions and then do their own analysis.

Most other CARA clients prefer the results of the survey in a report with

CARA conducting the analysis of the survey data.

All those purchasing questions own their results and data. CARA does not release any data or findings without the permission of the owner.

The CCP typically includes a sample of at least 1,000 adult self-identified Catholics nationally, resulting in a margin of sampling error for all respondents of  $\pm 3.1$  percentage points.

## CCP Methodology

CARA samples from Knowledge Networks’ national household panel, a large national random probability sample of U.S. households.

Knowledge Networks was founded by academic social scientists and is widely used in peer-reviewed academic research and government studies.

Knowledge Networks panel members are contacted initially by phone (i.e., through random digit dialing) or mail (i.e., through random address-based sampling), and each participating household in the panel agrees to be available for surveys that they take on-screen with a computer or through their television.

Thus, the panel is not restricted to existing computer and/or Internet users and includes

households with cell-phones only (i.e., those without land line phones who are invited by mail). Those persons who are sampled by Knowledge Networks and asked to join the panel are supplied with subsidized Internet access or a MSN TV appliance to take the self-administered on-screen surveys.

Surveys are presented to respondents in English or Spanish and other language options are available. These methods ensure that the panel is reflective as possible of the national population and the research is not biased towards only those who have pre-existing access to the Internet or who own a computer.

CARA’s experience with this type of data collection also indicates that the self-administered on-screen methods lead to a substantially beneficial

reduction in social desirability response bias. Many questions asked by pollsters are known to generate over-reports such as questions about voting, giving to charity, and attending religious services. Respondents often exaggerate about how often they do things that they know they “should” do to be a good citizen or good member of their faith when they are responding to a person interviewing them to avoid embarrassment or shame.

Because self-administered surveys do not involve interaction with a person for data collection (rather, responses are made on-screen) questions with social desirability issues end up eliciting more honest responses. Evidence of this this can be seen in CARA’s Mass attendance estimates that closely match diocesan headcount estimates.

### CCP Estimates the Effects of Attending a Catholic College

CCP respondents are asked if they ever attended a Catholic college or university. Those who have are more likely than those who attended a non-Catholic college to now:

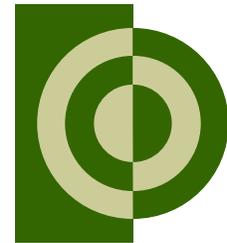
- Attend Mass every week (34% compared to 19%) and register with a parish (75% compared to 55%)
- Agree that “I seriously consider the Church’s

statements, such as those of the Pope and U.S. Bishops on social, political and moral issues” (55% compared to 38%)

- Disagree that “a woman should have the right whether or not to abort an unwanted pregnancy” (44% compared to 24%), oppose the death penalty (51% compared to 33%) and oppose “making it legal for a physician to help a dying

person commit suicide” (53 percent compared to 43 percent)

- Agree that “Catholics have a duty to close the gap between the rich and the poor” (54% compared to 38%) and that “It is important to me to do what I can do to help poor and needy people in countries outside of the United States” (71% compared to 54%)



### Catholic Generations and Growing Diversity

The CCP shows a Catholic population in the United States undergoing change. Through immigration and different fertility rates among sub-groups, racial and ethnic identities of the Catholic population now vary significantly by generation.

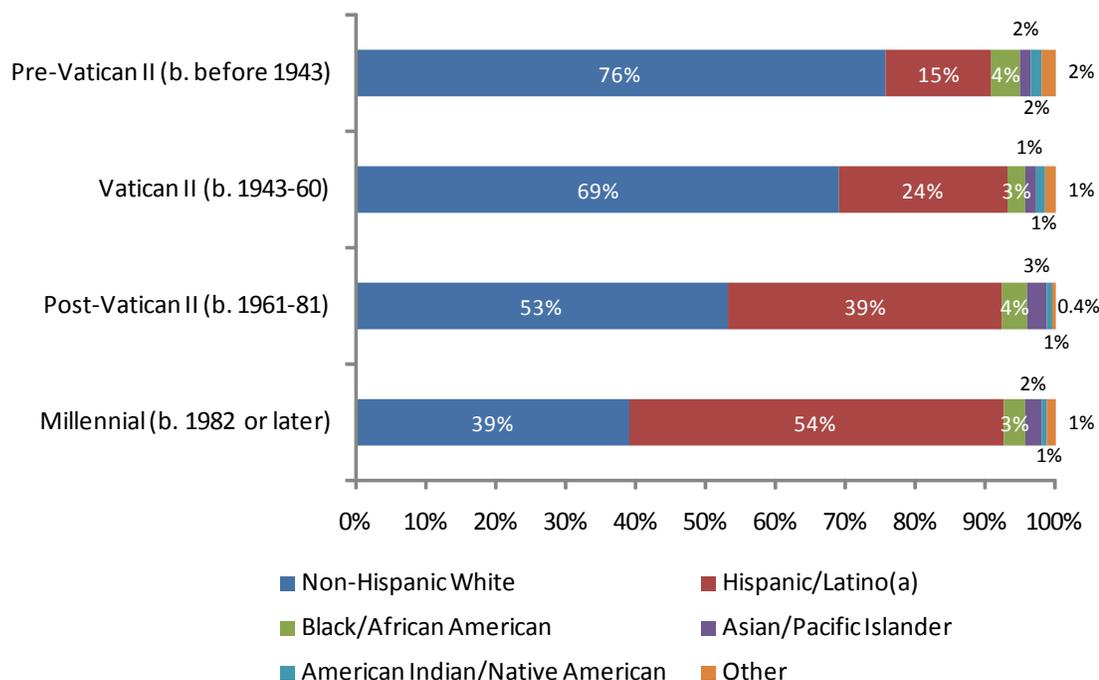
Three in four Pre-Vatican II Generation Catholics (born before 1942) self-identify their race and ethnicity as non-Hispanic White. By comparison, only about four in ten adults in the youngest Catholic generation, the Millennials (born 1982 or

later), self-identify as such. The Millennials are majority Hispanic/Latino(a) (54%). Similar proportions of Catholics self-identify as Black or African American, Asian or Pacific Islander, or Native American across generations.

**“A new study has found that the scandal over sexual abuse in the Roman Catholic Church has not caused American Catholics to leave the church, or to stop attending Mass and donating to their parishes.”**

**CCP results quoted in the *New York Times*, May 18, 2006.**

**Race and Ethnicity of the U.S. Adult Catholic Population by Generation**



## CCP Costs and Deliverables

The cost per question depends on the deliverables needed. For example, academic researchers often prefer only the survey data set for their questions and then do their own analysis in a statistics software package. Most other CARA clients prefer the results of the survey in a report with CARA conducting the analysis of the survey data. The cost of questions includes all aspects of the research from question design, sampling, data collection, data cleaning and set up, analysis, and reporting. CARA's survey reports follow a standard style and include the following sections:

- An executive summary highlighting major findings
- An introduction describing the background and methodology of the study
- Tables, charts, graphs, and maps for results
- Narrative description of all findings
- Comparisons of responses among pertinent sub-groups of survey respondents
- An appendix presenting the questionnaire, with top-line response frequencies

Projects requiring especially complex statistical analysis (e.g., segmentation, regression analyses) can be completed at additional cost. Call to ask about special pricing.

Number of Questions	Data and Analysis: Cost per Question	Data Only: Cost per Question
1 to 2	\$2,000	\$1,200
3 to 9	\$1,800	\$900
10 or more	\$1,500	\$750

## CCP Director: Mark M. Gray, Ph.D.

Mark M. Gray is the Director of the CCP and is a Senior Research Associate at CARA. Dr. Gray has a Ph.D. in Political Science and a M.A. in Social Sciences from the University of California, Irvine.

Dr. Gray has been a primary investigator for 13 national surveys of adult Catholics at CARA ranging from media use to sacramental practice. In addition to his research, he teaches Introduction to the Social Sciences at Georgetown University. As a graduate student he worked as

a journalist for *The Orange County Register*.

Dr. Gray's research has appeared in: *America Magazine*, *Our Sunday Visitor*, *CHURCH Magazine*, *Catholic Education Journal*, *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, *International Organization*, *PS: Political Science & Politics*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, and *Review of Religious Research*.

He has been quoted or cited



in: *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *USAToday*, *TIME*, *Boston Globe*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Newsweek*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *U.S. News & World Report*, and *The Christian Science Monitor*.

A National Omnibus  
Survey of Adult  
Catholics in the U.S.



Center for Applied  
Research in the Apostolate  
2300 Wisconsin Ave., NW  
Suite 400  
Washington D.C. 20007

Phone: 202-687-8080  
Fax: 202-687-8083  
E-mail: [cara@georgetown.edu](mailto:cara@georgetown.edu)

CARA has more than 45 years of experience in quality social science research on the Catholic Church. CARA's longstanding policy is to let research findings stand on their own and never take an advocacy position or go into areas outside its social science competence. All CARA researchers have advanced degrees in relevant academic disciplines. CARA researchers are active in the academic community publishing and presenting research about the Catholic Church.

Mark M. Gray, Ph.D.  
Director of the CARA Catholic Poll (CCP)  
Phone: 202-687-0885  
Email: [mmg34@georgetown.edu](mailto:mmg34@georgetown.edu)

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