



*A study commissioned by the McGrath  
Institute for Church Life*

***Eucharist Beliefs: A National  
Survey of Adult Catholics***

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**By Mark M. Gray, Ph.D.**





CARA is a national, non-profit, Georgetown University affiliated research center that conducts social scientific studies about the Catholic Church. Founded in 1964, CARA has three major 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. 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.

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## Executive Summary

The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) and NORC conducted the national survey using the AmeriSpeak® Panel with the guidance of the McGrath Institute for Church Life at Notre Dame University. This research was done to better understand what the current Catholic population (self-identified) believes about the Catholic Church's teaching on the Eucharist. The survey was offered in English and Spanish, and it was administered in two modes depending on the preference of the respondent provided during the panel recruitment: 1) self-administered by the respondent online via the Web; or 2) administered over the telephone by a live interviewer. The survey included 1,031 respondents resulting in a margin of sampling error of  $\pm 4.45$  percentage points. The survey was in the field from July 11, 2022 - August 2, 2022.

### Major Findings

- Seventeen percent of adult Catholics attends Mass at least once a week. An additional 5% currently watch Mass on television or online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior, to the pandemic, 24% of Catholics attended Mass weekly in 2019. Eighteen percent of adult Catholics attends less than weekly but at least once a month. Twenty-six percent attends Mass a few times a year, likely on Ash Wednesday, Easter and/or Christmas. Thirty-five percent rarely or never attend Mass.
- Ninety-three percent of adult Catholics have received their First Communion and 86% were Confirmed.
- Respondents are most likely to say Baptism is a meaningful sacrament to them (71% "very" meaningful and 17% "somewhat" meaningful). The next most meaningful are marriage (69% "very" meaningful and 16% "somewhat" meaningful) and then Eucharist/Holy Communion (66% "very" meaningful and 19% "somewhat" meaningful).
- Forty-nine percent of adult Catholics always receive Communion when attending Mass and 18% do so frequently or usually. Eighteen percent seldom receive Eucharist at Mass. Fifteen percent never receive Communion at Mass.
- Respondents were asked to explain in their own words what they believe happens to the gifts of bread and wine after Consecration during Mass. Responses were recoded into four categories. Thirty-five percent of respondents responded in a manner that they believed in the Real Presence. Eight percent of respondents remarked that they believe the gifts to be unchanged by Consecration and that these are symbols. Eighteen percent of respondents answered about what happens in a procedural manner after Consecration. Finally, the remaining responses, 39%, could not be categorized into any of the previous groupings of responses.<sup>1</sup>
- Forty-nine percent correctly believe that the Church teaches, "Jesus Christ is truly present under the appearance of bread and wine." Fifty-one percent incorrectly believes the Church teaches, "Bread and wine are symbols of Jesus' actions at the Last Supper, meaning that Jesus is only symbolically present in the consecrated bread and wine." Results of this question indicate that

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<sup>1</sup> This group includes those who skipped the question which represents 18% of all respondents.

there is substantial confusion about what the Church teaches about the Eucharist with slightly more adult Catholics not knowing this correctly than those correctly identifying the teachings.

- Among the highest levels of awareness of Church teachings about the Eucharist are among those who attend Mass weekly or more often. Nearly nine in ten correctly identify the Church teaching the Real Presence.
- After asking the open-ended question about the respondents' beliefs in the Eucharist and a closed-ended question about their understanding of Church teachings about the Eucharist, respondents were asked more questions to help clarify their beliefs. When presented with a direct question about the Real Presence, 44% of adult Catholics say they believe "Jesus Christ is truly present under the appearance of bread and wine." Forty-eight percent said they personally believe that the "bread and wine are symbols of Jesus' actions at the Last Supper, meaning that Jesus is only symbolically present in the consecrated bread and wine." Nine percent selected "neither of the above" options.
- Combining the results from the closed-ended questions about Church teachings and their personal beliefs, 38% of respondents correctly know what the Church teaches and believe in the Real Presence. Forty-eight percent of respondents don't know what the Church teaches and believes that the bread and wine are symbols or have some other belief. Thus, most who do not believe in the Real Presence are not rejecting the teaching as they do not know this is what the Church teaches. Nine percent of respondents know what the Church teaches but do not believe it. Five percent believe in the Real Presence but are unaware that this is what the Church teaches.
- Following the open-ended and closed-ended question respondents were asked directly, "Just to clarify, do you personally believe that after the Consecration during a Catholic Mass, that Jesus Christ is truly present under the appearance of bread and wine upon the altar?" Fifty-seven percent of respondents said that they believe Jesus is truly present under the appearance of bread and wine.
- Three of the four previous questions provided different inquiries about respondents' personal beliefs regarding the Eucharist and these questions did not always receive consistent answers. The responses were examined and used to code a new variable representing the best understanding of what respondents were expressing as a whole. The first question was open-ended and considered to offer an unprompted view of respondents' beliefs as the closed-end questions provide the opportunity to make a choice between multiple presented answers. Analysis revealed that some respondents stated a belief in the Real Presence in the open-ended question but then selected that they believe the bread and wine are symbols in the closed-end question, among other combinations or responses. After examining each respondent's answers collectively, 64% of respondents provided responses that indicate they believe in the Real Presence.
- Among all respondents stating a belief in the Real presence, 95% of weekly Mass attenders believe in the Real Presence. Eighty percent of those who attend less than weekly but at least once a month believe as well.

- Those who entered the Church as adults or who have served in parish ministry are especially likely to believe in the Real Presence.
- Those who have attended Catholic schools at any level are more likely than those who have not to believe in the Real presence.
- Respondents were asked where they learned the information leading to their beliefs about the Eucharist. A majority, 53%, said they learned from their parents followed by sacramental preparation or religious education in a parish (44%), at Mass (41%), or at Catholic school (37%).
- Seventy-eight percent of those who said they learned from the Bible believe in the Real Presence as do 76% of those who learned about the Eucharist at Mass. Learning from parents is less effective, as only 67% of those who said this is a source for their beliefs about the Eucharist stated a belief in the Real Presence. Learning about the Eucharist from parish-based programs schools results in 73% believing in the Real Presence and learning from Catholic schools 75%. Seventy-two percent who learned from the Catechism believe in the Real Presence as do 60% who learned about the Eucharist on the Internet.

## Methods

The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) and NORC conducted the national survey using the AmeriSpeak® Panel with the guidance of the McGrath Institute for Church Life at Notre Dame University. This research was done to better understand what the current Catholic population (self-identified) believes about the Catholic Church's teaching on the Eucharist. The survey instrument included questions on respondents' past and current Mass attendance, experience celebrating and receiving different Sacraments, and the Catholic Church's teaching and individuals' beliefs and knowledge of the Eucharist.

The survey was offered in English and Spanish, and it was administered in two modes depending on the preference of the respondent provided during the panel recruitment: 1) self-administered by the respondent online via the Web; or 2) administered over the telephone by a live interviewer.

Study Target Population: Nationally representative self-identified Catholics 18+

Completes: 1,031

Margin of Error: ±4.45 percentage points

Survey Field Period: July 11, 2022 - August 2, 2022

AmeriSpeak is a probability-based panel, where respondents must be chosen by us to join, where access to surveys is controlled by the panelist secure log-in information to a web portal or app. E-mails, text invitations, or interview-operated telephone calls go directly to the address/number of the recruited panelist. When being called by phone, the panelist is requested by name. The way AmeriSpeak surveys are programmed and panelists are invited, panelists cannot take the survey more than once, and each panelist is always identifiable based on a unique ID. For these reasons, AmeriSpeak does not suffer the problem of "bots," fabricated profiles, non-invited respondents, or individuals or members of the household repeatedly and illegitimately taking the same survey.

### Sampling

A sample of self-identified Catholics 18 years of age or older was selected from the panel for this study. Previously collected panel profile variables on religious affiliation were used to pre-screen these panelists. At the beginning of the survey, panelists needed to reconfirm their Catholic status in order to be eligible to complete the survey.

The sample for a specific study is selected from the panel using sampling strata based on age, race/Hispanic ethnicity, education, and gender (48 sampling strata in total). Sample selection considers the expected differential survey completion rates across the sampling strata. The size of the selected sample per stratum is determined such that the distribution of the complete surveys across the strata matches that of the target population as represented by census data. If a panel household has more than one active adult panel member, only one adult panel member is selected at random.

### Field

A small sample of English-speaking web-mode panelists was invited on Monday, June 27th for a pretest. In total, 65 pretest interviews were collected. The initial data from the pretest were reviewed.

For the main survey, a sub-sample of web-mode panelists was invited to the survey on Monday, July 11th in a soft launch. The initial data from the soft launch were once again reviewed to confirm that

there are no processing or programming errors. Once reviewed, the remainder of sampled panelists was invited to the survey on Thursday, July 14th.

In total, 1,031 of final interviews were collected, 980 by web mode and 51 by phone mode. This does not include interviews that may have been removed for data quality purposes (see below).

Panelists could take the survey online through a password-protected mobile app, a password-protected web portal, or by following a link in the e-mail invitation sent to them. Multiple reminders were sent to potential respondents while the study was in the field.

To administer the phone survey, sampled panelists were called who prefer to take surveys on the phone from Thursday, July 14th to Monday, August 1st. Although most panelists who have stated a preference to take the survey on the phone do take them in that mode, they also have the option of taking the survey online via the web portal or the app or can ask the interviewer to e-mail them an invite instead. These rare phone-preferred panelists who end up taking the survey online are coded in the data based on the mode they took the survey, not their previously stated mode preference.

Panelists were offered the cash equivalent of \$3 for completing this survey.

### **Processing**

Cleaning rules were applied to the survey data for quality control. In total, 73 cases were removed from the final set of completed interviews based on three cleaning rules. Descriptions of the cleaning criteria and the counts from each are below (counts are overlapping).

- Removing Speeders (i.e., those that completed the survey in less than one-third the median duration)
  - o 18 removed for speeding
- Removing Respondents with High Refusal Rates (i.e., those that skip or refused more than 50% of the eligible questions)
  - o 12 removed for high refusal rates
- Removing Straight-liners (i.e., those that straight-lined eligible grid item questions)
  - o 54 were removed for straight-lining all three of Q8, Q11, and Q15 grid series.

Of those 73 cases removed:

- 65 cases were marked with one of the three flags above
- 5 cases were marked with two of the three flags above
- 3 cases were marked with all three flags above

### **Weights**

Study Specific Final Weights were created by first adjusting the base weights for survey nonresponse through a weighting class method, where the weighting classes are defined by age, race/ethnicity, gender, and education. After that, a raking ratio adjustment is applied to the nonresponse adjusted base weights to align the sample with known population benchmarks made up of the topline socio-demographic characteristics of the following:

Age: 18-24, 25-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-64, and 65+

Gender: Male and Female

Census Division: New England, Middle Atlantic, East North Central, West North Central, South Atlantic, East South Central, West South Central, Mountain, and Pacific

Race/Ethnicity: Non-Hispanic White, Non-Hispanic Black, Hispanic, and Non-Hispanic Other  
 Education: Less than High School, High School/GED, Some College, and BA and Above  
 Age x Gender: 18-34 Male, 18-34 Female, 35-49 Male, 35-49 Female, 50-64 Male, 50-64 Female, 65+ Male, and 65+ Female  
 Age x Race/Ethnicity: 18-34 Non-Hispanic White, 18-34 All Other, 35-49 Non-Hispanic White, 35-49 All Other, 50-64 Non-Hispanic White, 50-64 All Other, 65+ Non-Hispanic White, and 65+ All Other  
 Race/Ethnicity x Gender: Non-Hispanic White Male, Non-Hispanic White Female, All Other Male, and All Other Female

These sociodemographic characteristics are weighted to benchmarks from the General Social Survey. Raking and re-raking are done during the weighting process such that the weighted demographic distribution of the survey completely resembles the demographic distribution in the target population. The assumption is that the key survey items are related to the demographics. Therefore, by aligning the survey respondent demographics with the target population, the key survey items should also be in closer alignment with the target population.

At the final stage of the weighting process, any extreme weights are trimmed based on a criterion of minimizing the mean squared error associated with key survey estimates. Weights after trimming are re-raked to the same population totals to produce the final study weights.

### Benchmark Comparisons

The following table shows the weighted and unweighted estimates for key demographics and compares them to population benchmarks.

Demographic	Subcategory	Unweighted %	Weighted %	Benchmark %
Age	18-34	21.0	26.2	26.2
	35-49	34.1	22.5	22.5
	50-64	21.9	25.4	25.4
	65+	22.9	25.8	25.8
Race/Ethnicity	Non-Hispanic white	54.4	60.2	60.0
	Non-Hispanic black	5.8	3.1	3.1
	Hispanic	35.8	32.7	32.8
	Asian/Pacific Islander	2.0	2.5	3.0
	Others	1.9	1.5	1.1
Education	Less than high school	6.1	12.5	12.6
	High school	22.4	28.5	28.5
	Some college	49.4	34.4	34.4
	Bachelor's Degree	12.3	15.0	15.3
	Graduate Degree	9.8	9.6	9.3
Sex	Male	58.9	50.5	50.5
	Female	41.1	49.5	49.5



## Background: State of the Question

The 2008 American National Election Study (ANES) asked U.S. adult citizens who self-identified as Christians the following yes/no question, "Do you believe that when people take Holy Communion, the bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus Christ, or do you believe that does not happen?" At that time, 74% Catholics surveyed indicated a belief that the bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Significant numbers of non-Catholic Christians also stated they had this same belief. Nearly six in ten Protestants (59%) surveyed expressed a belief in transubstantiation and 70% of Lutherans specifically expressed this. In fact, at the time, a majority of all sub-groups of non-Catholic Christians in the United States (i.e., those with a sufficient size that the number of interviews allows for an estimate) expressed a belief regarding the Eucharist that is consistent with the Catholic Church's teachings on transubstantiation.

In 2010, the Pew Research Center released their U.S. Religious Knowledge Survey.<sup>2</sup> They found, "More than four-in-ten Catholics in the United States (45%) do not know that their church teaches that the bread and wine used in Communion do not merely symbolize but actually become the body and blood of Christ."

These findings did not address a potential gap in Catholics' knowledge of their Church's teachings and what their beliefs were personally about the Eucharist. The aforementioned ANES study as well as polls conducted by The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) during the 2000s were finding that between six in ten to three-quarters of self-identified Catholics believed in the Real Presence and that this was most common among those who attend Mass frequently. This new Pew study led to the realization that many Catholics believe what their Church teaches without realizing that their Church teaches it.

From this point, CARA began placing Catholics into four groups regarding the Real Presence. The first knows what the Church teaches regarding the Eucharist and also expresses a belief in this teaching. Next, there are the Catholics who believe in the Real Presence but who believe they are doing so in opposition to what the Church teaches. A third group are those Catholics who are unaware of what the Church teaches and is also unbelieving in the Real Presence. The final group are those who are aware of what the Church teaches but say they do not believe it.

Surveys conducted for *American Catholics in Transition* (2013) by William V. D'Antonio, Michele Dillon, and Mary L. Gautier allowed for the first estimate for the size of these four groups. In comparison to the Pew study, D'Antonio et al. find that half of self-identified adult Catholics (50%) are unaware that the Catholic Church teaches the following about the bread and wine used for Communion: "the bread and wine really become the body and blood of Jesus Christ." However, 63% of adult Catholics, regardless of what they think the Church teaches, believe that "at the Consecration during a Catholic Mass, the bread and wine really become the body and blood of Jesus Christ."

The largest group in this study were the "knowledgeable believers," representing 46% of adult Catholics, who are aware of the Church's teachings about the Real Presence and say they believe these to be true. Additionally, there is another 17% who believe in the Real Presence but who are unaware that this

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2010/09/28/u-s-religious-knowledge-survey-who-knows-what-about-religion/>

represents a Church teaching.<sup>3</sup> These are the "unknowing believers." The second largest group is the "unknowing unbelievers" who do *not* believe in the Real Presence (i.e., they believe the bread and wine are only symbols) and do *not* know what the Church teaches about the Eucharist. This group represents a third of adult Catholics (33%). The smallest group, representing only 4% of adult Catholics, is someone who knows about the Church's teachings regarding the Real Presence *and* who states they do not believe this teaching to be true. These are the "knowledgeable doubters" who actively reject Church teachings.

Then in 2019, the Pew Research Center found, "Transubstantiation – the idea that during Mass, the bread and wine used for Communion become the body and blood of Jesus Christ – is central to the Catholic faith. ... But a new Pew Research Center survey finds that most self-described Catholics don't believe this core teaching. In fact, nearly seven-in-ten Catholics (69%) say they personally believe that during Catholic Mass, the bread and wine used in Communion 'are symbols of the body and blood of Jesus Christ.' Just one-third of U.S. Catholics (31%) say they believe that 'during Catholic Mass, the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Jesus.'"<sup>4</sup>

The question used for this survey, similar but not identical to those used in the past, was the following:

*Regardless of the official teaching of the Catholic Church, what do you personally believe about the bread and wine used for Communion? During Catholic Mass, the bread and wine...*

1. *Actually become the body and blood of Jesus Christ*
2. *Are symbols of the body and blood of Jesus Christ*
3. *No answer*

The question presents a dichotomy of substantive responses with a no answer that may indicate the respondent doesn't know or does not wish to answer. A problem with this question is that a respondent could say both 1 and 2 and be correct (but of course are forced to choose one by the survey structure). As the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) explains, "The whole Christ is truly present -- body, blood, soul, and divinity -- under the appearances of bread and wine, the glorified Christ who rose from the dead. This is what the Church means when she speaks of the 'Real Presence' of Christ in the Eucharist... The transformed bread and wine are truly the Body and Blood of Christ and are not merely symbols."<sup>5</sup>

The bread and wine truly become the Body and Blood of Christ and this is the Real Presence. However, the Eucharist still appears to be bread and wine. We cannot observe it as a scientist would and see human cells as if it were "actually" blood and flesh. The Pew question uses the phrasing "actually become." This ignores the "accidents" of the appearance of bread and wine remain symbolically. Yet, it is the case that the Eucharist is not "merely symbols." It is substance and symbol where Christ is truly present in the gifts that still symbolically appear as bread and wine.

The survey and study in this report used a different approach to try to be as clear as possible. It first asked an unaided and open-ended question, "In your own words, what do you believe happens to the

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<sup>3</sup> This results in a total of 63% of self-identified adult Catholics believing in the Real Presence at that time.

<sup>4</sup> "Just one-third of U.S. Catholics agree with their church that Eucharist is body, blood of Christ." Accessed from: <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/08/05/transubstantiation-eucharist-u-s-catholics/>

<sup>5</sup> "The Eucharist" Accessed from: <https://www.usccb.org/eucharist>

gifts of bread and wine after Consecration during Mass?” No use of “symbol” or “Real Presence” are used and respondents could write as little or much as they wanted.

We then followed up with what we believe to be an improved closed-ended question:

*Which of the following statements do you personally believe about what happens to the gifts of bread and wine once consecrated at Mass?*

- 1. Jesus Christ is truly present under the appearance of bread and wine*
- 2. Bread and wine are symbols of Jesus’ actions at the Last Supper, meaning that Jesus is only symbolically present in the consecrated bread and wine*
- 3. Neither of the above*

We believe this more accurately reflects the Church’s teachings on the Eucharist. The first option being correct that Christ is Present under the appearance of bread and wine. The second option indicates Christ is *only* symbolically present.

Finally, we utilized a third question just to have another more direct reading on the matter:

*Just to clarify, do you personally believe that after the Consecration during a Catholic Mass, that Jesus Christ is truly present under the appearance of bread and wine upon the altar?*

- 1. Yes*
- 2. No*
- 3. Don’t know*

With these methods we hope that we have come to a better understanding of what Catholics believe the Church teaches and what they personally believe about the Eucharist themselves.

It is important to note that all of the studies cited above use scientific probability-based sampling and we have not included of other surveys that do not use these methods and instead use opt-in panels or that focus on some small sub-group of Catholics. All studies cited surveyed self-identified Catholic residents or citizens and were nationally representative at the time they were conducted.<sup>6</sup> Differences in findings between them can be attributed to changes in attitudes and beliefs over time as well as the differing question wording used. The poll results presented here provide a portrait of what adult self-identified Catholics believed in the Summer of 2022.

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<sup>6</sup> The ANES surveys citizens as the purpose of this study is to understand voting behavior in national elections.

## Demographics

This section of the report shows the demographics and background of the survey respondents.

The average age of adult Catholics is 50 (median of 51). Twenty-seven percent are under the age of 35. Twenty six percent are ages 65 or older. Forty-eight percent are between the ages of 35 and 64.

Age	
18 to 24	11%
25 to 34	16%
35 to 44	15%
45 to 54	14%
55 to 64	19%
65 to 74	16%
75 or older	10%

Social scientists do not agree on the spacing of birth years that define generational cohorts. CARA utilizes those created by Strauss and Howe (1992).<sup>7</sup> CARA defines the Silent Generation as those born 1925 to 1942. This generation is followed by the Baby Boomers born 1943 to 1960. Generation X is born 1961 to 1981. Millennials are born between 1982 and 2005. Someone born in 2006 would be 16 in 2022 when this survey was conducted so no adult Gen-Z members are interviewed by CARA’s definitions. However, the Pew Research Center defines Generation Z as those born between 1997 and 2012 and Millennials as those born 1981 to 1996.<sup>8</sup> We also provide a generational breakdown using the generational definitions used by Pew.

By CARA’s definition, 31% of adult Catholics are of the Silent or Baby Boom generations compared to 37% by Pew’s definition. A third are of Generation X compared to Pew’s 25%. Thirty-six percent are Millennials compared to Pew’s 26%. By CARA’s definition, Gen-Z is still too young to be surveyed as adults compared to 12% being present in the sample according to Pew’s definition.

	Generation	
	CARA Generations	Pew Generations
Silent Generation	5%	7%
Baby Boomers	26%	30%
Generation X	33%	25%
Millennials	36%	26%
Generation Z	--	12%

<sup>7</sup> Strauss, W. and N. Howe (1992). *Generations*. New York: Quill.

<sup>8</sup> Pew’s definition means that the Millennial Generation lasted 16 years. Pew defines Generation X as those born 1965-80. Baby Boomers are born 1946-64 and Silent Generation members were born 1928-45.

About half of respondents are male (51%) and about half are women (49%).

<b>Sex</b>	
Male	51%
Female	49%

Six in ten adult Catholics self-identify as non-Hispanic white and 33% as Hispanic or Latino. Three percent self-identify as black or African American and 3% as Asian. Four percent self-identify as some other race or ethnicity or as multi-racial/ethnic.

<b>Race and Ethnicity</b>	
Non-Hispanic white	60%
Hispanic or Latino	33%
Black or African American	3%
Asian	3%
Other or multi-racial/ethnic	4%

Forty-two percent of adult Catholics have a high school diploma (29%) or less (13%). Thirty-four percent have a vocational or Associate’s degree. Fifteen percent have a Bachelor’s degree and 10% have a post-graduate or professional degree.

<b>Highest Level of Education</b>	
Less than high school	13%
High school graduate or equivalent	29%
Vocational school or Associate’s degree	34%
Bachelor’s degree	15%
Post-graduate or professional degree	10%

Fifty-six percent of adult Catholics are married or widowed. Thirty-one percent have never married. Thirteen percent are divorced or separated.

<b>Marital Status</b>	
Married or widowed	56%
Divorced or separated	13%
Never married	31%

Nearly three in ten adult Catholics reside in households with annual incomes of \$100,000 or more. About a quarter, 24%, reside in homes earning less than \$30,000 a year.

<b>Annual Household Income</b>	
Less than \$30,000	24%
\$30,000 to \$59,999	26%
\$60,000 to \$99,999	22%
\$100,000 or more	29%

Thirty-two percent of adult Catholics reside in the South and 26% in the West. Twenty-four percent reside in the Northeast and 19% in the Midwest.

<b>Census Region</b>	
Northeast	24%
Midwest	19%
South	32%
West	26%

## Religious Background

Three-fourths of adult Catholics became Catholic as infants with their Baptism. Fifteen percent became Catholic as children and 2% as teenagers. Eight percent became Catholic as adult converts.

<b><i>When did you become Catholic?</i></b>	
Infant (under age 1)	74%
Child (ages 1-12)	15%
Teenager (ages 13-17)	2%
Adult (ages 18 or older)	8%

Among those who converted to Catholicism, half were not affiliated with any religion when becoming Catholic. One in five were Mainline Protestants and one in ten were Evangelical Christians. Eight percent were some other type of Christian, 1% were Jewish, and 14% were some other religion than Christian or Jewish.

<b><i>What was your religion before becoming Catholic?</i></b>	
Of those who became Catholics as adults	
I had no religious affiliation	49%
Mainline Christian or Protestant	19%
Evangelical or “born again” Christian or Protestant	10%
Other Christian affiliation	8%
Jewish	1%
Some other religious affiliation	14%

Ninety-three percent of adult Catholics have received their First Communion and 86% were Confirmed.

<b><i>Which of the following Catholic sacraments have you celebrated?</i></b>	
First Communion or Eucharist	93%
Confirmation	86%

A majority of adult Catholics, 57%, received religious education as a youth in a parish-based religious education program. Twenty-six percent were active in a parish youth group. Fourteen percent participated in scouting groups. Seven percent were involved with Catholic campus ministry while in college. Seven percent reported activity in other youth programs.<sup>9</sup>

<b><i>Have you ever participated in any of these Church-related programs, groups, or activities growing up?</i></b>	
A parish-based Catholic religious education program for youth (e.g., CCD)	57%
Parish youth group	26%
Scouting groups	14%
Catholic campus ministry on a college or university campus	7%
Other	7%
None of these	25%

Four in ten adult Catholics attended Catholic primary school as a youth (K-8). Twenty-four percent attended a Catholic high school and 8% a Catholic college or university.

<b><i>Have you ever attended?</i></b>	
Catholic elementary, middle, or junior high school	40%
Catholic high school	24%
Catholic college or university	8%

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<sup>9</sup> The most commonly noted were being an altar server, attending Catholic school, youth sports, participation in RCIA, and activity in other Catholic groups.



## Religious Practice and Belief

Fifty-eight percent of adult Catholics are registered at a Catholic parish.

<b><i>Are you registered at a Catholic parish?</i></b>	
Yes	58%
No	42%

Seventeen percent of adult Catholics attends Mass at least once a week. An additional 5% currently watch Mass on television or online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior, to the pandemic 24% of Catholics attended Mass weekly in 2019. Eighteen percent of adult Catholics attends less than weekly but at least once a month. Twenty-six percent attends Mass a few times a year, likely on Ash Wednesday, Easter and/or Christmas. Thirty-five percent rarely or never attend Mass.

<b><i>Aside from weddings and funerals, about how often do you attend Mass?</i></b>	
Rarely or never	35%
A few times a year	26%
Once or twice a month	8%
Almost every week	10%
Every week	14%
More than once a week	3%
Homebound, shut-in, sick, unable to get out	<1%
Currently, watching Mass online or television due to the COVID-19 pandemic	5%

There are substantial differences in frequency of Mass attendance by CARA’s generational definitions (results are similar using Pew’s definitions). Fifty-six percent of Silent Generation Catholics attends weekly or more often compared to 21% of Baby Boomers, 14% of Gen-X Catholics and 9% of Millennials.

Twenty percent of Catholics in the Midwest attend weekly or more often compared to 16% in the South, and 15% in the West and Northeast.

A third of Catholics with a graduate or professional degree attend Mass weekly or more often compared to 11% with a Bachelor’s degree only, 14% of those with some college, 19% of those with a high school diploma only, and 9% of those with less than high school.

Thirty-one percent of Asian Catholics attend Mass weekly or more often compared to 20% of non-Hispanic white Catholics, 16% of black Catholics, and 10% of Hispanic Catholics.

Men and women report similar Mass attendance frequencies.

The most important aspects of Mass for respondents are “feeling the presence of God,” “prayer and reflection,” “feeling welcomed at Mass,” and “receiving Eucharist/Holy Communion.” Half or more of all respondents said these aspects are “very” important to them. Less likely to be “very” important are the “church environment and decorations” (20%) “worshiping with other people” (20%), “the music” (24%), and “hearing the homily” (36%).

<b>How important are each of the following aspects of Mass to you?</b>				
	<b>Very</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Only a little</b>	<b>Not at all</b>
Feeling the presence of God	61%	24%	8%	7%
Prayer and reflection	56%	28%	11%	5%
Feeling welcomed at Mass	51%	29%	11%	10%
Receiving the Eucharists/Holy Communion	50%	22%	16%	13%
The Mass is celebrated in a language I most prefer	49%	25%	11%	15%
Hearing the readings and the Gospel	43%	29%	16%	12%
Hearing the homily	36%	33%	17%	14%
The music	24%	32%	26%	17%
Worshiping with other people	20%	30%	27%	23%
The church environment and decorations	20%	35%	26%	18%

Weekly Mass attenders are more likely than others to respond “very” important to all aspects. This is especially the case for “receiving Eucharist/Holy Communion” where 91% of weekly Mass attenders find this “very” important compared to 65% of those who attend less than weekly but at least once a month, and 33% of those who attend a few times a year or less often. For weekly Mass attenders these aspects are also “very” important: “feeling the presence of God” (82%), “hearing the readings and the Gospel” (81%), “prayer and reflection” (80%), “the Mass is celebrated in a language I most prefer” (73%), and “hearing the homily” (70%).

Seventeen percent of adult Catholics say they are “somewhat” (14%) or “very” (3%) involved with their parish outside of attending Mass. Twenty-one percent say they are “involved a little.” Most, 62% are not involved with their parish outside of attending Mass.

<b>Besides attending Mass, how involved are you in parish activities or ministries?</b>	
Very involved	3%
Somewhat involved	14%
Involved a little	21%
Not involved at all	62%

Fourteen percent of weekly Mass attenders say they are “very involved” with parish activities and ministries besides Mass.

Adult Catholics are most likely to report having served as an altar server (21%), lector (10%), or an usher or minister of hospitality in their parish (10%). A majority of Catholics, (53%) have never served in any ministries in a Catholic parish.

**Have you served in any of these ministries in a Catholic parish?**  
**Check all that apply**  
 Percentage responding "Yes"

Altar server	21%
Lector	10%
Usher/minister of hospitality	10%
Minister of Holy Communion	9%
Catechist	7%
Cantor or music minister	6%
Youth minister	6%
Visiting the homebound	5%
Young adult minister	4%
St. Vincent de Paul Society	4%
Social ministry outreach	3%
RCIA team member/sponsor	2%
High school campus ministry	2%
None of these	53%

Respondents are most likely to say Baptism is a meaningful sacrament to them (71% "very" meaningful and 17% "somewhat" meaningful). The next most meaningful are marriage (69% "very" meaningful and 16% "somewhat" meaningful) and then Eucharist/Holy Communion (66% "very" meaningful and 19% "somewhat" meaningful). The least meaningful to respondents is Reconciliation/Confession.

**How meaningful for you are each of the Catholic sacraments listed below?**

	<b>Very</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Only a little</b>	<b>Not at all</b>
Baptism	71%	17%	8%	3%
Marriage	69%	16%	8%	6%
Eucharist/Holy Communion	66%	19%	9%	5%
Anointing of the Sick	61%	21%	11%	8%
Confirmation	59%	24%	12%	6%
Holy Orders/Ordination	46%	26%	17%	11%
Reconciliation/Confession	45%	27%	16%	12%

We get a slightly different rank order when asking respondents the sacrament that is *most* meaningful to them. Thirty-four percent selected Baptism and 26% selected Eucharist/Holy Communion. The sacrament least likely to be selected as most meaningful was Holy Orders/Ordination (2%).

<b><i>Which of these Catholic sacraments is the most meaningful to you?</i></b>	
Baptism	34%
Eucharist/Holy Communion	26%
Marriage	21%
Reconciliation/Confession	6%
Anointing of the Sick	6%
Confirmation	5%
Holy Orders/Ordination	2%

Forty-nine percent of adult Catholics always receive Communion when attending Mass and 18% do so frequently or usually. Eighteen percent seldom receive Eucharist at Mass. Fifteen percent never receive Communion at Mass.

<b><i>When you attend Mass, how often do you receive Eucharist/Holy Communion?</i></b>	
Always	49%
Frequently or usually	18%
Seldom	18%
Never	15%

Half of adult Catholics say their local parish offers Eucharistic Adoration. Forty-five percent don't know if their parish offers this and 5% say their parish does not offer Eucharistic Adoration.

<b><i>Does your local parish offer opportunities for Eucharistic Adoration where the Eucharist/Holy Communion is exposed and people come to pray and worship?</i></b>	
Yes	50%
No	5%
I don't know	45%

Thirty-nine percent of those in parishes offering Eucharistic Adoration say they have participated in this, representing 19% of all adult Catholics.

<b><i>Have you participated in Eucharistic Adoration at your parish or elsewhere within the last year?</i></b>		
	<b>Among respondents in parishes offering adoration</b>	<b>Among all respondents</b>
Yes	39%	19%
No	61%	30%

The two factors most likely to be considered to be important to respondents' sense of what it means to be Catholic are "helping those in need," (60% "very" important and 30% "somewhat" important) and "receiving the Eucharist" (56% "very" important and 21% "somewhat" important). Fewer than half of adult Catholics say they consider other listed factors as "very" important.

<b><i>How important are the following factors to your sense of what it means to be a Catholic?</i></b>				
	<b>Very</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Only a little</b>	<b>Not at all</b>
Helping those in need	60%	30%	9%	2%
Receiving the Eucharist/Holy Communion	56%	21%	14%	9%
Devotion to Mary	42%	25%	20%	13%
Attending Mass	40%	27%	23%	11%
Celebrating the sacrament of Confirmation	40%	29%	22%	8%
Living my life consistent with Church teaching	36%	34%	19%	10%
Devotions to the Saints	33%	30%	24%	14%
Going to Reconciliation or Confession	31%	29%	22%	17%
Having my parish follow the teachings of the Vatican	29%	33%	21%	17%

Ninety-two percent of weekly Mass attenders say "receiving the Eucharist/Holy Communion" is "very" important to their sense of what it means to be Catholic. By comparison 76% of those who attends monthly responded as such as did 41% of those who attends a few times a year or less often.

Eighty-two percent of Silent Generation Catholics (using CARA's definitions) said that "receiving the Eucharist/Holy Communion" is "very" important to their sense of what it means to be Catholic. By comparison, 62% of Boomers respond as such as do 59% of Gen-X Catholics and 46% of Millennials.

## Beliefs about the Eucharist: Open-end Question

Respondents were asked to explain in their own words what they believe happens to the gifts of bread and wine after Consecration during Mass. Responses were recoded into four categories shown in the table below.

<i><b>In your own words, what do you believe happens to the gifts of bread and wine after Consecration during Mass?</b></i>	
Become the body and blood of Jesus	35%
They are a symbol, nothing happens	8%
Procedural response	18%
Other, including no answer and don't know	39%

Thirty-five percent of respondents responded in a manner that they believed in the Real Presence. Eight percent of respondents remarked that they believe the gifts to be unchanged by Consecration and that these are symbols or “nothing” happens. Eighteen percent of respondents answered about what happens in a procedural manner after Consecration (e.g., consumed by priest, handed out, gets put away for the next Mass, disposed). Finally, the remaining responses, 39%, could not be categorized into any of the previous groupings of responses. This group includes those who skipped the question which represents 18% of all respondents.

## Awareness of Church Teachings on the Eucharist

This section of the report looks at Catholic’s awareness of Church teachings. Respondents were asked the question in the table below. Forty-nine percent correctly believe that the Church teaches, “Jesus Christ is truly present under the appearance of bread and wine.” Fifty-one percent incorrectly believes the Church teaches, “Bread and wine are symbols of Jesus’ actions at the Last Supper, meaning that Jesus is only symbolically present in the consecrated bread and wine.”

<b><i>Which of the following statements best describes your understanding of the Catholic Church’s teaching about what happens to the gifts of bread and wine once consecrated at Mass?</i></b>	
Jesus Christ is truly present under the appearance of bread and wine	49%
Bread and wine are symbols of Jesus’ actions at the Last Supper, meaning that Jesus is only symbolically present in the consecrated bread and wine	51%

Results of this question indicate that there is substantial confusion about what the Church teaches about the Eucharist with slightly more adult Catholics not knowing this correctly than those correctly identifying the teachings. The tables that follow examine differences in Catholics education and background.

<b><i>Which of the following statements best describes your understanding of the Catholic Church’s teaching about what happens to the gifts of bread and wine once consecrated at Mass?</i></b>		
	<b>Jesus Christ is truly present...</b>	<b>Bread and wine are symbols...</b>
<b><i>Entrance to the Church</i></b>		
Infant	50%	50%
Child	36%	64%
Teenage	44%	56%
Adult	69%	31%
<b><i>Sacraments Celebrated</i></b>		
Received First Communion	52%	48%
No First Communion	16%	84%
Confirmed	51%	49%
Not Confirmed	36%	64%

Catholics who were adult converts are among the most knowledgeable about the Church’s teachings on the Eucharist. Sixty-nine percent correctly identified what the Church teaches about the Eucharist. These Catholics experienced religious education and formation as adults and thus may have a greater capacity to understand what the Church teaches compared to those who received their formation and instruction as minors.

Catholics who have gone through sacramental preparation and received their First Communion or Confirmation are much more likely than those who did not receive these sacraments to correctly

identify the Church’s teachings on the Real Presence. Yet, just slight majorities of Catholics receiving these sacraments knew what the Church teaches.

There is not a statistically significant difference between those who attended parish-based religious education than those who did not.

Catholics who were involved with a Catholic campus ministry program in college were more likely than those who did not (including those did not attend college) to correctly identify the Church teachings about the Real Presence.

Attendance at Catholic educational institutions—especially in high school and college—appears to boost awareness of Church teachings about the Eucharist.

<b><i>Which of the following statements best describes your understanding of the Catholic Church’s teaching about what happens to the gifts of bread and wine once consecrated at Mass?</i></b>		
	<b>Jesus Christ is truly present...</b>	<b>Bread and wine are symbols...</b>
<b><i>Religious Education</i></b>		
Parish-based religious education	50%	50%
No parish-based religious education	48%	53%
<b><i>Campus Ministry</i></b>		
Has participated in campus ministry	62%	38%
Has not participated in campus ministry	48%	52%
<b><i>Catholic Schooling</i></b>		
Attended Catholic primary school	56%	44%
Did not attend Catholic primary school	45%	55%
Attended Catholic high school	65%	35%
Did not attend Catholic high school	44%	56%
Attended Catholic college	62%	38%
Did not attend Catholic college	48%	52%

Across all of these questions, it appears that Church engagement and instruction with those in their later teens or in adulthood provides greater awareness of the Church’s teachings about the Real Presence than attempts to instruct about this during younger years in primary school, sacramental preparation, or in parish-based religious education.

As shown in the table on the next page, awareness of Church teachings about the Eucharist decline in more recent generations compared to older Catholics no matter which set of definitions are used to analyze generational differences.



***Which of the following statements best describes your understanding of the Catholic Church's teaching about what happens to the gifts of bread and wine once consecrated at Mass?***

	<b>Jesus Christ is truly present...</b>	<b>Bread and wine are symbols...</b>
<u><i>CARA's Generations</i></u>		
Silent	61%	39%
Boomers	53%	47%
Gen-X	49%	51%
Millennials	44%	56%
<u><i>Pew's Generations</i></u>		
Silent	54%	46%
Boomers	55%	45%
Gen-X	48%	52%
Millennials	45%	55%
Gen-Z	43%	57%

Among the highest levels of awareness of Church teachings about the Eucharist are among those who attend Mass weekly or more often. Nearly nine in ten correctly identify the Church teaching the Real Presence. Yet, we cannot interpret the directionality of this finding. Do people who understand the teachings therefore become more likely to attend understanding the importance of the Eucharist? Or, do people who attend frequently become informed by that practice and become more aware? Likely it is a combination of both.

***Which of the following statements best describes your understanding of the Catholic Church's teaching about what happens to the gifts of bread and wine once consecrated at Mass?***

	<b>Jesus Christ is truly present...</b>	<b>Bread and wine are symbols...</b>
<u><i>Mass Attendance</i></u>		
More than once a week	89%	11%
Every week	88%	12%
Almost every week	69%	31%
Once or twice a month	44%	56%
A few times a year	38%	62%
Rarely or never	32%	68%
Homebound, shut-in, sick, unable to get out	59%	41%
Currently, watching Mass online or television due to the COVID-19 pandemic	75%	25%

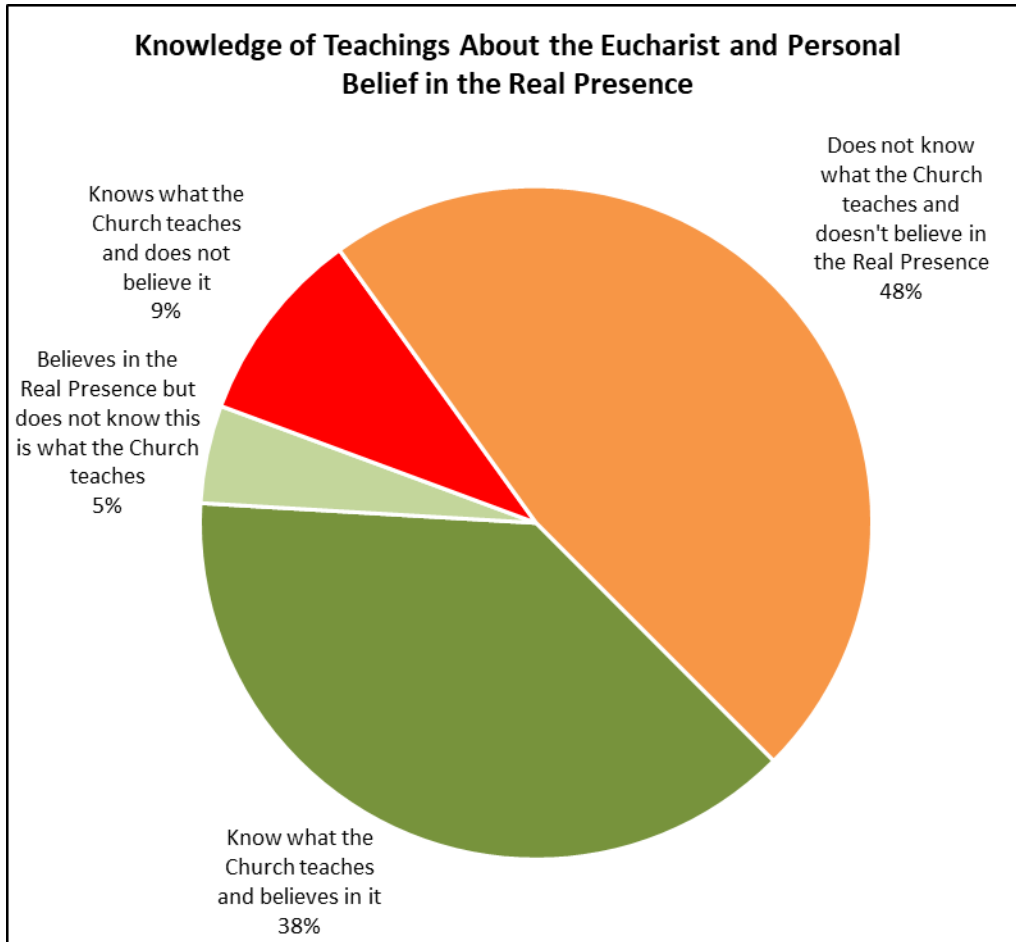
## Beliefs about the Eucharist: Closed-end Questions

After asking the open-ended question about the respondents' beliefs in the Eucharist and a closed-ended question about their understanding of Church teachings about the Eucharist, respondents were asked more questions to help clarify their beliefs. When presented with a direct question about the Real Presence, 44% of adult Catholics say they believe "Jesus Christ is truly present under the appearance of bread and wine." Forty-eight percent said they personally believe that the "bread and wine are symbols of Jesus' actions at the Last Supper, meaning that Jesus is only symbolically present in the consecrated bread and wine." Nine percent selected "neither of the above" options.

***Which of the following statements do you personally believe about what happens to the gifts of bread and wine once consecrated at Mass?***

Jesus Christ is truly present under the appearance of bread and wine	44%
Bread and wine are symbols of Jesus' actions at the Last Supper, meaning that Jesus is only symbolically present in the consecrated bread and wine	48%
Neither of the above	9%

Combining the results from the two previous questions, 38% of respondents correctly know what the Church teaches and believe in the Real Presence. Forty-eight percent of respondents don't know what the Church teaches and believes that the bread and wine are symbols or have some other belief. Thus, most who do not believe in the Real Presence are not rejecting the teaching as they do not know this is what the Church teaches. Nine percent of respondents know what the Church teaches but do not believe it. Five percent believe in the Real Presence but are unaware that this is what the Church teaches.



Following the open-ended and closed-ended question respondents were asked directly, “Just to clarify, do you personally believe that after the Consecration during a Catholic Mass, that Jesus Christ is truly present under the appearance of bread and wine upon the altar?” Fifty-seven percent of respondents said that they believe Jesus is truly present under the appearance of bread and wine.

<b><i>Just to clarify, do you personally believe that after the Consecration during a Catholic Mass, that Jesus Christ is truly present under the appearance of bread and wine upon the altar?</i></b>	
Yes	57%
No	21%
Don't know	22%

Three of the four previous questions provided different inquiries about respondents’ personal beliefs regarding the Eucharist and these questions did not always receive consistent answers. The responses were examined and used to code a new variable representing the best understanding of what respondents were expressing as a whole. The first question was open-ended and considered to offer an unprompted view of respondents’ beliefs as the closed-end questions provide the opportunity to make a choice between multiple presented answers. Analysis revealed that some respondents stated a belief in the Real Presence in the open-ended question but then selected that they believe the bread and wine are symbols in the closed-end question. For a subset of respondents there appears to be a belief Christ is really present in the Eucharist but that the bread and wine are *also* symbols. This appears to be a way in which Catholics are trying to express their understanding of what theologians might speak of as the “substance” and the “accidents.”<sup>10</sup> The three questions were:

**Open-ended**

In your own words, what do you believe happens to the gifts of bread and wine after Consecration during Mass?

**Closed-ended**

Which of the following statements do you personally believe about what happens to the gifts of bread and wine once consecrated at Mass?

1. Jesus Christ is truly present under the appearance of bread and wine
2. Bread and wine are symbols of Jesus’ actions at the Last Supper, meaning that Jesus is only symbolically present in the consecrated bread and wine
3. Neither of the above

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<sup>10</sup> As explained by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2020, “In the celebration of the Eucharist, the glorified Christ becomes present under the appearances of bread and wine in a way that is unique, a way that is uniquely suited to the Eucharist. In the Church’s traditional theological language, in the act of consecration during the Eucharist the ‘substance’ of the bread and wine is changed by the power of the Holy Spirit into the ‘substance’ of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. At the same time, the ‘accidents’ or appearances of bread and wine remain.” Excerpt from “The Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of the Eucharist,” [https://www.usccb.org/resources/The%20Real%20Presence%20of%20Jesus%20Christ%20in%20the%20Sacrament%20of%20the%20Eucharist\\_0.pdf](https://www.usccb.org/resources/The%20Real%20Presence%20of%20Jesus%20Christ%20in%20the%20Sacrament%20of%20the%20Eucharist_0.pdf)

### Follow-up

Just to clarify, do you personally believe that after the Consecration during a Catholic Mass, that Jesus Christ is truly present under the appearance of bread and wine upon the altar?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know

A total of 25.2% of respondents indicated a belief in the Real Presence on all three questions. An additional 10.2% percent indicated a belief on the initial open-ended question answered in their own words but then only on one other question (6.2%) or no other question (4%). An additional 12.9% said they believed in the Real Presence on the closed-ended question and the follow-up while providing a neutral response to the open-ended question (e.g., procedural, unrelated to Real Presence/symbolism only). A total of 2.7% percent of respondents gave a neutral response to the open-ended question and answered that they believed in the Real Presence in the closed-ended question but then answered "no" to the follow-up question. A total of 12.1 percent gave a neutral open-end response and answered that they believed that Jesus is only symbolically present in the bread and wine in the closed-ended question but then answered "yes" to the follow-up question, clarifying that they personally believe that after the Consecration during a Catholic Mass, that Jesus Christ is truly present under the appearance of bread and wine.

<b>Percentage Indicating a Belief in the Real Presence on the Three Questions</b>	
Open-end, closed-end, and follow-up	25.2%
Open-end, and closed-end	1.4%
Open-end, follow-up	4.8%
Open-end only	4.0%
Closed-end, and follow-up (neutral open-end)	12.9%
Closed-end only (neutral open-end)	2.7%
Follow-up only (neutral open-end)	12.1%
	<hr/>
	63.1%
Closed-end, and follow-up ("symbol" open-end)	0.5%
Closed-end only ("symbol" open-end)	0%
Follow-up only ("symbol" open-end)	0.7%
	<hr/>
	1.2%
None of the questions indicate belief	35.8%

Very few respondents, 1.2% indicated they believed the bread and wine are only symbols in their open-ended question but then indicated a belief in the Real Presence in one or both of their closed-ended questions.

A total of 35.8% of respondents did not indicate a belief in the Real Presence in any of the questions.

The responses below show some example of how respondents who did *not* indicate a belief in the Real Presence on the closed-end or follow-up answered the open-ended question in their own words:

- *They become the body of Christ.*
- *They are changed into the body and blood of Christ*
- *It becomes the body and blood of Christ*
- *It is the body and blood of Jesus*
- *It becomes the body and blood of Christ*
- *The body and blood of Christ.*
- *We eat and drink the blood and body of Christ*
- *It is changed into Christ body and blood*
- *They turn into the body of Christ and His blood.*
- *I believe the gifts of bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ after Consecration during Mass*
- *They become body and blood of Christ*
- *They become the body and blood of Jesus Christ*
- *They are converted to the body and blood of Jesus*
- *I guess it turns into the blood and body of Christ.*
- *They become the body and blood of Christ*
- *They become Jesus*
- *Turns in to the body and blood of Christ.*
- *They become the body of Christ*
- *We receive the body and blood of Christ.*
- *They embody the spirit of Jesus.*
- *The spirit of Jesus enters them*
- *Turned into the body and blood of Christ*
- *Into the body and blood of Christ. As it is first blessed by our sacred Father prior to it being shared with its parishioners/neighbors/community members in attendance.*
- *They become the body and blood of Christ*
- *Becomes Jesus body*
- *Become the body and blood of Christ*
- *The body and blood of Christ*
- *Receive the body of Christ and remembrance of his sacrifice*
- *Is the Jesus Christ flesh and blood*
- *They turn into the body and blood of Jesus Christ.*
- *You give the body of Christ*
- *They become the body and blood of Christ*
- *Turn to the body and blood of Christ*
- *They become the body and blood of Christ*
- *They are converted to the body and blood of Christ through transubstantiation.*
- *They become the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Christ*
- *They become the body and blood of Christ*
- *Becomes body*
- *Body and blood of Christ*
- *Transubstantiation... It becomes the body and blood*
- *It became blood and body of Christ*

- *The blood and body of Jesus Christ*
- *They turn into the blood and body of Christ*
- *I was taught that they are transformed into the body and blood of Christ*
- *It is a physical representation of Jesus or a higher power being in our lives and entering into us physically*

Regardless of how they responded to the questions where they had to choose an answer, it appears these respondents believe in the Real Presence with little doubt and expressed this unaided and unprompted.

The next example comments come from respondents who stated a belief in the Real Presence in the open-ended question and the follow-up, but not the closed-end question:

- *You are given a piece of the Lord our savior, who died for us.*
- *It becomes God's body and blood*
- *They are blessed so You receive the body and blood in Christ if you are in good standing with the rules of the church; confessed, not living on sin, etc.*
- *Blessed and turned into the body of Christ*
- *Transformation into the body and blood of Christ*
- *Changes into the body of Christ*
- *They are a physical representation of holy blood and body of Christ*
- *The body and blood of Christ*
- *They become the body and blood of Jesus Christ.*
- *Body and blood of Christ*
- *The blood and the body of Christ*
- *It makes you whole again taking the body of Christ in your body.*
- *The Priest washes his hands and blesses the body and blood off Christ.*
- *Receiving bread is the body of Christ, and the wine is the blood of Christ, absorbing Christ into my body.*
- *Become the body and blood of Christ*
- *Body and blood of Jesus*
- *Se recibe el cuerpo de Cristo*
- *Flesh and blood of Christ.*
- *Change body and blood of Christ*
- *We consume them and become one*
- *Presence of Christ*
- *They become the body and blood of Jesus*
- *They become the body and blood of Christ*
- *Body and blood of Jesus*
- *Que uno celebra y se llena de la sangre de Jesús*
- *Become the body and blood of Christ*
- *Transformed into Christ*
- *Body and blood*
- *The bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ.*
- *Gods body and blood are fully contained*
- *Body of Christ*

- *It becomes the body and blood Christ*
- *Believe it becomes the body and blood of Christ*
- *Become the body and blood of Christ*
- *The bread and wine are transformed into Jesus's body and blood*
- *Recibimos el cuerpo y sangre de cristo*
- *The blessing is received and the Holy Spirit lives inside me*
- *Se convierten en el cuerpo y sangre de cristo*
- *Turn to blood and body of Christ*
- *Body and blood of Christ are converted into the bread wine.*
- *It becomes the body and blood of Jesus Christ*
- *We are receiving the body and blood of Jesus, and he remains with us.*

Again, it would be difficult to make the case that these respondents are not stating a belief in the Real Presence. They may do so imperfectly in answering the closed-ended question incorrectly but this may reflect respondents believing the gifts become the body and blood of Jesus while remaining symbolically in the form of bread and wine.

The next examples were provided by respondents who gave procedural type responses to the open-ended question but said they believed in the Real Presence in the closed-ended question and the follow-up.

- *Stored by church*
- *They are blessed*
- *They remain concentrated*
- *They are consumed.*
- *The hosts are saved in secure tabernacle and blessed wine consumed by priest.*
- *They are blessed and put back safely*
- *Donated to the Needy*
- *I believe they are saved for the next mass...or brought to home of the sick so they can receive*
- *Las tiran*
- *Saved*
- *Distributed to those who receive them*
- *It's prayed over*
- *It gets blessed*
- *Shared with congregation for communion any leftover bread is put in tabernacle and wine is drunk.*
- *Disposed of*
- *It's a blessing*
- *Donated to food pantries*
- *Eaten*
- *The bread is returned to the tabernacle and the wine is consumed following mass.*
- *Las vuelven a usar*
- *Blessed*
- *Go in your body*
- *They are blessed*
- *El vino lo toma el sacerdote y las ostias se guardan*



- *Father takes it*
- *Its blessed and ready to be received*
- *It is being stored*
- *Stored in the tabernacle to be used at the next made.*
- *Recycle*
- *It is consumed by the parish community we live with it in our daily life we try to become Christ like*
- *They are blessed*
- *Blesses us*
- *It is given to the priests, ushers and clergy after mass.*
- *Save it for next time*
- *They go back to the parish*
- *It gets blessed*
- *Gets stored back?*
- *I believe they get disposed of?*
- *Se guardan*

These respondents state a belief in the Real Presence in the multiple-choice questions but did not address this in their open-ended response. None are indicating in the open-ended response that they believe the bread and wine are only symbolic.

Just four respondents gave an open-ended response that indicated a belief that the bread and wine were only symbols and then followed up saying they believed in the Real Presence in both the closed-ended and follow-up question. Their responses were:

- *They symbolize body and blood of Christ*
- *They represent the body and blood of Christ.*
- *Nothing "magical" or other-worldly happens. It is a shared experience of breaking bread and remembering/honoring the son, Christ's wholly unselfish sacrifice for me and others who believe*
- *Bread represents the body of Christ which took all sin. Wine represents blood of Christ forgiving our sins.*

The next examples come from respondents who clearly do not believe in the Real Presence. They indicated a belief in symbolism or that "nothing" happens in their response to the open-ended question and followed this by responding similarly to the closed-ended and follow-up questions.

- *Well its 2022 I am pretty sure that everybody know at this point that the water will not turn into wine*
- *It theoretically transforms into the body and blood of Christ*
- *Symbolic celebration of the body and blood of Christ*
- *Supposed to be the body and blood of Christ*
- *Nothing. Symbolism only*
- *Symbol of body and blood of Jesus*
- *They symbolize the body and blood of Jesus*
- *Nothing*
- *Nothing it's your beliefs that make it something*

- *It is supposed to simulate Gods body and blood.*
- *They are a blessed symbol*
- *Que representan el cuerpo y sangre de Jesucristo*
- *They are blessed and are meant to represent the body and blood of Christ. All are consumed*
- *Nothing. It's just a symbol*
- *According to ritual they turn into the body and blood of Christ, but I feel that this is more symbolism than actually.*
- *Nothing. It's purely symbolic*
- *Nothing happens.*
- *They represent nourishment from God to his people*
- *Transubstantiation is bogus. Tis but a symbol.*
- *Symbolic meaning of body of Christ*
- *It is still bread and wine.*
- *They are blessed and are there to symbolize the Body and Blood of Christ.*
- *Nothing, I think it is symbolic*
- *They represent to me breaking bread with others. Although the teaching is they become the body and blood of Christ, I do not believe that transformation actually takes place*
- *Se dan a la gente como un simbolo de la sangre y cuerpo de Jesucristo y la gente los recibe como el compromiso de que al recibir a Dios, se debe comportar de manera correcta.*
- *It's for show*
- *They are a symbol of the blood Christ gave and the body sacrificed*
- *They become representative of the body and blood of Jesus.*
- *Nothing, except get eaten. I don't believe in transubstantiation.*
- *It's nothing but a symbol but it's a nice touch and helps some people more than others.*
- *Nothing. It's a religious "tradition" to help one feel closer to Jesus/God.*
- *It's symbolic*
- *Just a metaphor of the body of Christ*
- *It then represents the body and blood of Christ*
- *I think it's a symbol and is overrated*
- *Not a damn thing happens. Still shitty bread and shitty wine.*
- *I don't believe anything happens. It's all what you make of it in your own spiritual journey.*
- *They are supposed to become the body and blood of Christ however I view it as pure symbolism*
- *They symbolically become the body and blood of Christ*
- *They are blessed so as to represent the body and blood of Jesus Christ.*
- *Blessed to represent the body and blood of Christ*
- *Nothing, but it symbolizes the turning into body and blood.*
- *Symbolically becomes body and blood of Christ*
- *They become a symbol of God's love and forgiveness.*
- *They are blessed and serve as a symbol of Christ*
- *Turns into the body and blood of Christ metaphorically speaking*
- *Jesus is symbolically present*
- *Nothing lol*

As discussed above, a total of 64% percent of respondents provided responses consistent with an indication that they believe in the Real Presence. The tables below show sub-group differences where

significant differences are evident between this group and those respondents that gave no indication of a belief in the Real Presence.

<b>Belief in Real Presence and Frequency of Mass Attendance</b>		
	<b>Real Presence</b>	<b>Something else</b>
Weekly or more often	95%	5%
Less than weekly but at least once a month	80%	20%
A few times a year or less often	51%	49%
Watching Mass remotely due to COVID or health/mobility issue	73%	27%

<b>Belief in Real Presence and CARA Generations</b>		
	<b>Real Presence</b>	<b>Something else</b>
Silent (b. 1925-42)	68%	32%
Boomers (b. 1943-60)	73%	27%
Gen-X (b. 1961-81)	63%	37%
Millennials (b. 1982-2005)	59%	41%

<b>Belief in Real Presence and Race/Ethnicity</b>		
	<b>Real Presence</b>	<b>Something else</b>
Non-Hispanic white	65%	35%
Hispanic	61%	39%
Black or African American	72%	28%
Asian	73%	27%
Other or multiple races/ethnicities	55%	45%

<b>Belief in Real Presence and Education</b>		
	<b>Real Presence</b>	<b>Something else</b>
Less than high school	71%	30%
High school graduate or equivalent	62%	38%
Vocational school or Associate's degree	61%	39%
Bachelor's degree	68%	32%
Post-graduate or professional degree	70%	30%

<b>Belief in Real Presence and Region</b>		
	<b>Real Presence</b>	<b>Something else</b>
Northeast	63%	37%
Midwest	65%	35%
South	69%	31%
West	59%	41%

<b>Belief in Real Presence and Catholic Background</b>		
	<b>Real Presence</b>	<b>Something else</b>
<u><i>Entrance to the Church</i></u>		
Infant	65%	36%
Child	56%	44%
Teenage	72%	28%
Adult	75%	25%
<u><i>Sacraments Celebrated</i></u>		
Received First Communion	66%	34%
No First Communion	46%	54%
Confirmed	72%	28%
Not Confirmed	59%	41%
<u><i>Religious Education</i></u>		
Parish-based religious education	67%	33%
No parish-based religious education	61%	39%
<u><i>Catholic Schooling</i></u>		
Attended Catholic primary school	72%	28%
Did not attend Catholic primary school	59%	41%
Attended Catholic high school	74%	26%
Did not attend Catholic high school	61%	39%
Attended Catholic college	71%	29%
Did not attend Catholic college	64%	36%
<u><i>Church Experiences</i></u>		
Has been an altar server	70%	30%
Has been a lector	87%	13%
Has been a minister of Holy Communion	91%	9%
Has been a catechist	83%	17%
Has been on a RCIA team	100%	0%
Has been a youth minister	76%	24%
Has been a young adult minister	83%	17%

Respondents were asked where they learned the information leading to their beliefs about the Eucharist. A majority, 53%, said they learned from their parents followed by sacramental preparation or religious education in a parish (44%), at Mass (41%), or at Catholic school (37%).

<b><i>Where would you say you learned the information that led to your beliefs about the Eucharist?</i></b>	
Percentage selecting each	
My parents	53%
Parish-based sacramental preparation or religious education	44%
At Mass	41%
Catholic school	37%
The Catechism	26%
The Bible	19%
The Internet	4%
Other	8%

Seventy-eight percent of those who said they learned from the Bible believe in the Real Presence as do 76% of those who learned about the Eucharist at Mass. Learning from parents is less effective, as only 67% of those who said this is a source for their beliefs about the Eucharist stated a belief in the Real Presence. Learning about the Eucharist from parish-based programs schools results in 73% believing in the Real Presence and learning from Catholic schools 75%. Seventy-two percent who learned from the *Catechism* believe in the Real Presence as do 60% who learned about the Eucharist on the Internet.

Forty percent of respondents receive just the Host at Mass. Two percent receive only from the chalice. Thirty-one percent receive from the Host and from the chalice. Twenty-seven percent typically do not receive the Eucharist at Mass.

<b><i>Prior to the pandemic which did you typically receive when receiving Eucharist at Mass?</i></b>	
The Host	40%
The cup chalice	2%
Both the Host and the cup chalice	31%
I typically did not receive Communion	27%

Twenty-four percent of respondents participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation at least once a year. Fifty-seven percent rarely or never go to Confession.

<b><i>How often, if ever, do you participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation or Confession?</i></b>	
Rarely or never	57%
Less than once a year	18%
Once a year	10%
Several times a year	11%
Once a month or more	3%

Forty-one percent of those who rarely or never go to Confession say they typically do not receive Communion when they attend Mass.

Forty-two percent of respondents said that it is either “somewhat” or “very” important to go to confession prior to receiving the Eucharist.

<b><i>How important is it to you to have gone to Confession before receiving the Eucharist?</i></b>	
Not at all important	33%
A little important	25%
Somewhat important	21%
Very important	21%

Sixty-six percent of respondents “somewhat” or “strongly” agree that the Church considers the Eucharist as the central sacrament with all other sacraments oriented toward it. Fifty-six percent agrees that the Church teaches that the way Christ becomes present in the Eucharist is beyond our understanding. Sixty-three percent agrees that the Holy Spirit transforms the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. Forty-six percent agrees that the Church refers to the transformation of the bread and wine as “transubstantiation.”

<i>How much do you agree with the following statements?</i>						
	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Somewhat agree</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Somewhat disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
The Church considers the Eucharist as the central sacrament with all other sacraments oriented toward it	36%	30%	19%	3%	1%	12%
The Church teaches that the way Christ becomes present in the sacrament of the Eucharist happens in a way beyond understanding	27%	29%	24%	5%	3%	12%
The Holy Spirit transforms the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ at Mass	36%	27%	20%	4%	4%	10%
The Church teaches that the transformation of bread and wine into Christ's Body and Blood is referred to as “transubstantiation”	30%	16%	24%	2%	1%	26%

## **Appendix: Questionnaire**



## Eucharist Poll 2022

This survey is being conducted as part of a university-sponsored academic research project. All of your responses are completely confidential and will only be reported together with those of all other respondents in national figures.

- S1 What is your religion? Are you...
- 1 Catholic
  - 2 Evangelical or “born again” Christian or Protestant
  - 3 Mainline Christian or Protestant
  - 4 Eastern Orthodox Christian
  - 5 Other Christian affiliation
  - 6 Jewish
  - 7 Muslim
  - 8 Some other religious affiliation
  - 9 You have no religious affiliation

If S1 = 1; respondent self-identifies as Catholic continue

If S1 = 2-9; respondent thank and end

- Q1 When did you become Catholic? As an...
- 1 Infant (under age 1)
  - 2 Child (ages 1-12)
  - 3 Teenager (ages 13-17)
  - 4 Adult (ages 18 or older)

If Q1=4 (adult convert)

- Q2 What was your religion before becoming Catholic?
- 1 Evangelical or “born again” Christian or Protestant
  - 2 Mainline Christian or Protestant
  - 3 Eastern Orthodox Christian
  - 4 Other Christian affiliation
  - 5 Jewish
  - 6 Muslim
  - 7 Some other religious affiliation
  - 8 You had no religious affiliation

Which of the following Catholic sacraments have you celebrated?

- Q3a First Reconciliation or Confession
- 1 Yes
  - 2 No
- Q3b First Communion or Eucharist
- Q3c Confirmation

Have you ever participated in any of these Church-related programs, groups, or activities growing up?  
(Select all that apply)

- Q4a A parish-based Catholic religious education program for youth (e.g., CCD)
  - 1 Selected
- Q4b Scouting groups
- Q4c Parish youth group
- Q4e Catholic campus ministry on a college or university campus
- Q4f Other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- Q4g None of these

Have you ever attended a...?

- Q5a Catholic elementary, middle, or junior high school?
  - 1 Yes
  - 2 No
- Q5b Catholic high school?
- Q5c Catholic college or university?

- Q6 Are you registered at a Catholic parish?
  - 1 Yes
  - 2 No

- Q7 Aside from weddings and funerals, about how often do you attend Mass?
  - 1 Rarely or never
  - 2 A few times a year
  - 3 Once or twice a month
  - 4 Almost every week
  - 5 Every week
  - 6 More than once a week
  - 7 Homebound, shut-in, sick, unable to get out
  - 8 Currently, watching Mass online or television due to the COVID-19 pandemic

How important are each of the following aspects of Mass to you?

- Q8a Hearing the readings and the Gospel
  - 1 Not at all
  - 2 Only a little
  - 3 Somewhat
  - 4 Very
- Q8b Hearing the homily
- Q8c The music
- Q8d Receiving Eucharist/Holy Communion
- Q8e Prayer and reflection
- Q8f Worshiping with other people
- Q8g Feeling the presence of God
- Q8h The church environment and decorations
- Q8i That Mass is celebrated in a language I most prefer
- Q8j Feeling welcomed at Mass

Q9 Besides attending Mass, how involved are you in parish activities or ministries?

- 1 Very involved
- 2 Somewhat involved
- 3 Involved a little
- 4 Not involved at all

Q10 Have you served in any of these ministries in a Catholic parish? Check all that apply:

- 1 Altar server
- 2 Lector
- 3 Minister of Holy Communion
- 4 Cantor or music ministry
- 5 Usher/minister of hospitality
- 6 Catechist
- 7 RCIA team member/sponsor
- 8 Youth ministry
- 9 Young adult ministry
- 10 High School campus ministry
- 11 St. Vincent de Paul Society
- 12 Social ministry outreach
- 13 Visiting the homebound
- 14 None of these

How meaningful for you are each of the Catholic sacraments listed below? This includes celebrating, receiving, or living the sacrament yourself or in witnessing someone else close to you experience this sacrament.

Q11a Baptism

- 1 Very meaningful
- 2 Somewhat meaningful
- 3 A little meaningful
- 4 Not meaningful at all

Q11b Confirmation

Q11c Eucharist/Holy Communion

Q11d Reconciliation/Confession

Q11f Anointing of the Sick

Q11g Marriage

Q11h Holy Orders/Ordination

Q12 Which of these Catholic sacraments is the most meaningful to you? Select one.

- 1 Baptism
- 2 Confirmation
- 3 Eucharist/Holy Communion
- 4 Reconciliation/Confession
- 5 Anointing of the Sick
- 6 Marriage
- 7 Holy Orders/Ordination

Q13 When you attend Mass, how often do you receive Eucharist/Holy Communion?

- 1 Always
- 2 Frequently or usually
- 3 Seldom
- 4 Never

Q14 Does your local parish offer opportunities for Eucharistic Adoration where the Eucharist/Holy Communion is exposed and people come to pray and worship?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 I don't know

If Q14=1 (parish has Eucharistic Adoration)

Q14a Have you participated in Eucharistic Adoration at your parish or elsewhere within the last year?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

How important are the following factors to your sense of what it means to be a Catholic?

Q15a Receiving the Eucharist/Holy Communion

- 1 Very important
- 2 Somewhat important
- 3 A little important
- 4 Not important at all

Q15b Attending Mass

Q15c Helping those in need

Q15d Celebrating the sacrament of Confirmation

Q15e Going to Reconciliation or Confession

Q15f Living my life consistent with Church teaching

Q15g Devotion to Mary

Q15h Devotions to the Saints

Q15i Having your parish follow the teachings of the Vatican

Q16 In your own words, what do you believe happens to the gifts of bread and wine after Consecration during Mass?

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Q17 Which of the following statements best describes your understanding of the Catholic Church's teaching about what happens to the gifts of bread and wine once consecrated at Mass?

- 1 Jesus Christ is truly present under the appearance of bread and wine.
- 2 Bread and wine are symbols of Jesus' actions at the Last Supper, meaning that Jesus is only symbolically present in the consecrated bread and wine.

- Q18a Which of the following statements do you personally believe about what happens to the gifts of bread and wine once consecrated at Mass?
- 1 Jesus Christ is truly present under the appearance of bread and wine.
  - 2 Bread and wine are symbols of Jesus' actions at the Last Supper, meaning that Jesus is only symbolically present in the consecrated bread and wine.
  - 3 Neither of the above
- Q18 Just to clarify, do you personally believe that after the Consecration during a Catholic Mass, that Jesus Christ is truly present under the appearance of bread and wine upon the altar?
- 1 Yes
  - 2 No
  - 3 Don't know
- Q19 Where would you say you learned the information that led to your beliefs about the Eucharist? Check all that apply:
- 1 My parents
  - 2 Parish-based sacramental preparation or religious education
  - 3 Catholic school
  - 4 At Mass
  - 5 The Bible
  - 6 The Catechism
  - 7 The Internet
  - 8 Other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- Q20 Prior to the pandemic which did you typically receive when receiving Eucharist at Mass?
- 1 The Host
  - 2 The cup chalice
  - 3 Both the Host and the cup chalice
  - 4 I typically did not receive Communion
- Q21 How often, if ever, do you participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation or Confession?
- 1 Rarely or ever
  - 2 Less than once a year
  - 3 Once a year
  - 4 Several times a year
  - 5 Once a month or more
- Q22 How important is it to you to have gone to Confession before receiving the Eucharist?
- 1 Not at all important
  - 2 A little important
  - 3 Somewhat important
  - 4 Very important

How much do you agree with the following statements?

Q23a The Church considers the Eucharist as the central sacrament with all other sacraments oriented toward it

- 1 Strongly agree
- 2 Somewhat agree
- 3 Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 Somewhat disagree
- 5 Strongly disagree
- 6 Don't know

Q23b The Church teaches that the way Christ becomes present in the sacrament of the Eucharist happens in a way beyond understanding

Q23d The Holy Spirit transforms the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ at Mass

Q23e The Church teaches that the transformation of bread and wine into Christ's Body and Blood is referred to as "transubstantiation."

Thank you for responding to this survey.

