# The Catholic "Man-Crisis" – Summary Points

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***Unchecked, the exodus of Catholic men from the faith is likely to continue as men become increasingly casual about Catholicism.***

- About 11 million adult men in the U.S. were raised Catholic but left the faith[1] and men are under-represented in the Church versus their share of the total population (46% of parishioners are male versus 49% of the population).[2]

***Casual Catholic men lack passion for the faith.***

- Men don't believe that Catholicism is unique and essential for a happy life.
    - 8 out of 10 men agree that "how one lives is more important than being a Catholic."[3]
    - 4 in 10 men believing that Catholicism does not have a "greater share of truths than other religions."[4]
    - Only 38% of Catholic men strongly agree that they are "proud to be Catholic."[5]
    - Only 26% of Catholic men consider themselves to be "practicing Catholics."[6]
    - Only 34% of Catholic men strongly agree that Catholicism is "among the most important part of life."[7]
- Men don't believe that the Sacraments and Devotions of Catholicism are important.
    - A large majority of Catholic men (57%) are not certain it is possible to have a personal relationship with God.[8]
    - Only 51% of Catholic men strongly agree that the "Sacraments are essential to their relationship with God."[9]
    - Only 32% of Catholic men strongly agree that the "Sacraments are essential to their faith."[10]
    - Many men are not moved by the Mass and are less moved than women across the various aspects of the Mass: the readings and the Gospel, homily, music, the Eucharist, prayer, worshiping with other people, the presence of God.[11]

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1 Luis Lugo et al., "Faith in Flux," *The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life* (April 2009): 1. Estimate based on: a) Pew notes that 9% of U.S. Adults have left Catholicism, b) U.S. Census data that shows there are 250 million U.S. adults and that men represent 49% of adults.

2 Luis Lugo et al., "U.S. Religious Landscape Survey," *The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life* (June 2008): 63.

3 "Gallup Poll of Catholics, 2005", Question 18, http://www.thearda.com/Archive/Files/Codebooks/GALLUP05_CB.asp.

4 Ibid., Question 19.

5 Mark M. Gray and Paul M. Perl, "Sacraments Today: Belief and Practice among U.S. Catholics", *Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate* – "CARA" (April 2008): 100.

6 Ibid., 100.

7 Ibid., 103.

8 Lugo, "U.S. Religious Landscape Survey", 29.

9 Gallup, 2005, Question 21.

10 CARA, 2008: 100.

11 CARA, 2008: 41.

- 48% of men agree that "Mass is boring"[12] and 55% agree that they "don't get anything out of the Mass."[13]
- Only 29% of men believe that weekly mass attendance is "very important."[14]
- Only 28% of Catholic men believe that Confession is "very important".[15]
- Only 31% of men strongly agree that it is "very important" to attend Mass on Holy Days. ***[16]***
- Only 39% of men strongly agree that the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick is "very important." [17]
- Only 43% of Catholic men believe that it is "very important to help those in need." [18]
- Only 30% of Catholic men believe it is "very important to have a Devotion to Mary" and only 23% believe it is "very important to have a devotion to the Saints." [19]
- Only 37% of Catholic men strongly agree that "daily prayer is important"[20] and only 33% of Catholic men pray on a daily basis.[21]
- 49% of Catholic men feel that they "cannot explain their faith to others."[22]

- During the last 20 years, men have become less certain about being Catholic: in 1987, 50.1% men said they would "never leave the Church"[23]; in 2005 the number had fallen to 42.3%.[24] This means that almost 60% of Catholic men *would* consider leaving the Church; these men have become "Casual Catholics", Catholics who are casual about the faith.

***Catholic men's ambivalence about Catholicism results in low involvement.***

- Only about 1/3 of Catholic men (33%) say they attend Mass on a weekly basis.[25]
- One third of Catholic men (34%) are not formally members of a parish.[26]
- A large portion (42%) of Catholic men attend Mass "a few times per year" or "seldom or never."[27]
- 75% of Catholics go to Confession "less than once a year" (30%) or "never" (45%).[28] While data is not available for men's participation, is likely worse given that men are significantly less likely to believe that Confession is very important.[29]
- Almost half of Catholic men do not engage in a routine of prayer; praying only "occasionally or

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12 "Gallup Survey of Chicago Catholics, 2007", Question 126, http://www.thearda.com/Archive/Files/Codebooks/CHICATH_CB.asp.
13 Gallup, 2007, Question 130.
14 Gallup 2007, Question 61.
15 Gallup 2007, Question 62.
16 CARA 2008, 47.
17 CARA 2008, 66.
18 CARA 2008, 108.
19 CARA 2008, 108.
20 Gallup 2007, Question 63.
21 Gallup 2007, Question 137.
22 Gallup 2005, Question 23.
23 "Gallup Poll of Catholics (1987)," Question 48, http://www.thearda.com/Archive/Files/Descriptions/GALLUP87.asp.
24 Gallup 2005, Question 75.
25 Gallup 2005, Question 59.
26 Gallup 2005, Question 5.
27 Gallup 2005, Question 94.
28 CARA 2008, 57.
29 CARA 2008, 38.

sometimes" or "seldom or never."[30]

- 83% of Catholic men rarely or never participate in a parish activity outside of the Mass.[31]

***For comparison, Catholic men are less passionate about faith than other Christian men.***

- Less than half of Catholic men (48%) feel that "religion is very important in their lives; this compares to 74% for Evangelical men."[32]
- Only about 4 in 10 Catholic men (43%) have an absolutely certain belief in a personal God; this compares to 69% of evangelical men.[33]
- Less than half of Catholic men (48%) pray outside of worship services, which compares to 71% of Evangelical men.[34] Clearly, there is a "passion problem" among Catholic men.

***The prevalence of so many Casual Catholic Men matters, for it will further weaken the Church in future years.***

- Catholic parents are doing a poor job at passing along the faith to their children,[35] especially fathers.[36]
- Indeed, less than 50% of men (47.5%) strongly agree that it is important for their children to be Catholic.[37]
- This is troubling since younger people are becoming increasingly vulnerable to leaving the Catholic Church, particularly young men. In 1987, 41.6% of 18-29 year olds agreed with the statement "I would never leave the Church";[38] by 2005, only 17.8% of those 18-30 years said they'd "never leave the Church."[39] This means that an astounding 82.2% of young people *would* consider leaving the Church.
- 42% of emerging adults have "very or somewhat different" religious beliefs as their Catholic fathers.[40]
- Males are particularly vulnerable to leaving the Church; 15% of the U.S. population have left religion and are now "unaffiliated"; the largest portion of this growing group are males who were formerly Catholic.[41]

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[30] Gallup 2005, Question 60.
[31] Gallup 2007, Question 157.
[32] "U.S. Religious Landscape Survey (2008)," 24.
[33] "U.S. Religious Landscape Survey (2008)," 29.
[34] "U.S. Religious Landscape Survey (2008)," 46.
[35] Christopher Smith and Patricia Snell, *Souls in Transition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 114.
[36] "Souls in Transition," 129.
[37] Gallup 2005, Question 22.
[38] Gallup 1987, Question 48.
[39] Gallup 2005, Question 75.
[40] Smith and Snell, 128-129.
[41] Barry A. Kosmin, et al., "American Nones: The Profile of the No Religion Population," *American Religious Identification Survey* (2008): 5,7.

***The loss of Catholic men and the growing numbers of Casual Catholic men have other negative effects on parishes and the Church.***

- Fewer men reduce the pool for priestly and religious male vocations.
- Lower levels of active adult men also influences young men to become disengaged from the Church. The "face" of the Church is feminine; men are underrepresented in the pews (only 37% of regular mass attendees are men).[42]
- Further, a Notre Dame study shows that 70-90% of catechesis, service, bible study activities are led by women, causing the authors to suggest that "young males…assume that serious religious studies are a women's business," resulting in greater numbers of younger men being disengaged.[43]
- Men are needed for healthy and growing parishes; research shows that congregations with greater portions of men are more likely to be growing.[44]
- Men are much more influential in the conversion of their families than women. Research shows that when a woman converts to Christianity, 17% of the time the whole family converts. When a man converts, 93% of the time the whole family converts.[45]

[42] Gallup 2005, Question 75.
[43] David C. Leege and Thomas A. Trozzolo, "Participation in Catholic Parish Life: Religious Rites and Parish Activities in the 1980s," *Notre Dame Study of Catholic Parish Life*, Issue 3 (1985): 14.
[44] C. Kirk Hadaway, "Facts on Growth," *Hartford Institute for Religion Research* (2006): 4.
[45] Attributed to evangelist, Sid Woodruff: www.e-n.org/2790-A-man%27s-influence.htm.