



Who goes when?

Mass attenders and their usual Mass time

A report to the Australian Catholic Bishops based on the 2001 National Church Life Survey.

Bob Dixon and Sharon Bond

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference
Pastoral Projects Office

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Results at a glance

Parishes with Sunday evening Masses

In the major cities, parishes which provide a Sunday evening Mass tend to have:

- Z** a larger overall attendance
- Z** a higher proportion of people aged 15-29 among their attenders,
- Z** a higher proportion of attenders who live outside the parish, and
- Z** higher attendance measured as a proportion of the Catholic population of the parish.

Attenders in these same parishes tend to have a weaker sense of belonging than attenders in parishes which don't have a Sunday evening Mass.

Only one of these effects is found in parishes outside the major cities: those which have a Sunday evening Mass tend to have a larger overall attendance than those which do not.

Providing a Sunday evening Mass is potentially one way in which a parish can increase its attendance and, in the major cities at least, attract more young adults. On the other hand, a parish which discontinues its Sunday evening Mass risks losing its best opportunity of contact with young adults.

Characteristics of attenders at different Mass times*

People who attend Mass at different times are quite different from one another. They differ in their demographic makeup, their levels of parish involvement and in their experience of the liturgy.

In particular, Sunday evening congregations differ markedly from those that meet on Saturday evenings and Sunday mornings. They have a much younger average age, a much more even gender balance, more people with a tertiary education and a much higher proportion of people who do not live in the parish where they attend Mass. Sunday evening attenders tend to attach less importance to the place of the parish in their lives and to derive less satisfaction from the liturgy than attenders at other Mass times.

These differences have pastoral implications that need to be considered by all those interested in the mission of the parish.

Age

- Z** Early Sunday morning is the most popular Mass time for people age 60 or more.
- Z** Sunday evening is easily the most popular time for older teenagers and young adults.
- Z** Mass attenders aged 80 have a strong preference for a single Mass time, and prefer not to go to Mass at different times from week to week.

Education

- Z** People with higher levels of education favoured Sunday evenings.
- Z** Congregations at early Sunday morning Masses have a lower percentage of people with university degrees than at any other Mass time.

Length of attendance

- Z** The early Sunday morning Mass time has the highest proportion of people who have been going to Mass in the same parish for twenty years or more.
- Z** Sunday evening Masses have the highest proportion of visitors.

Home location

- Z** The early Sunday morning Mass time has the highest proportion of people who live in the parish where they attend Mass.
- Z** Even after taking account of the high level of visitors at Sunday evening Masses, attenders at that time include the highest percentage of people who attend Mass in a parish other than the one in which they live.

Sense of belonging

- Z** The highest percentage of people with a strong and growing, or stable, sense of belonging are found among people who often attend Mass at different times, but not on Sunday evening.
- Z** The lowest percentage of people with a strong and growing or a stable sense of belonging are found among people who go to Mass on Sunday evening.

Preferred style of music

- Z** Early Sunday morning attenders expressed the strongest preference for traditional hymns at Mass.
- Z** Sunday evening and Saturday evening attenders expressed the strongest preference for contemporary liturgical music.

Experience of liturgy

- Z** Sunday evening attenders were the least likely to experience joy and a sense of God's presence during Mass, and the most likely to say they experienced boredom.
- Z** Sunday evening attenders were also the least likely to say they found the preaching they heard at Mass helpful to them in their everyday lives.

** Age plays a part in many of the findings presented here, but in most cases the differences between attenders at different Mass times remain even after controlling for age. One exception is attenders' experience of liturgy: most of the difference between groups attending Mass at different times is due to variation in their age profiles.*

Introduction

For young people aged 15 to 29, Sunday evening is the most popular time for attending Mass. This is just one finding from an analysis of more than 56,000 Catholics' Mass attendance patterns as reported in their responses in the 2001 National Church Life Survey. It confirms what many priests and people have already noticed about attendance in their own parish.

The analysis makes it quite clear that certain groups of people prefer to attend Mass at particular times during the weekend, and that it is therefore important, where feasible, to provide people with a selection of Mass times to choose from.

When the National Church Life Survey was conducted in Catholic parishes in May 2001, the majority of people present at Mass received a version of the questionnaire which contained the following question:

**What is the STARTING TIME of the Mass that you usually attend in this parish?
(Mark more than one time if you often attend different Masses.)**

Saturday Evening

Sundays:

Before 9.00 am

Afternoon (12.00 – 5.59 pm)

9.00 – 9.59 am

Evening (from 6.00 pm)

10.00 – 10.59 am

11.00 – 11.59 am

I don't usually go here

This report provides a description of how the different groups of people who usually attend Mass at particular times vary both demographically and in their experience of parish life.

Results

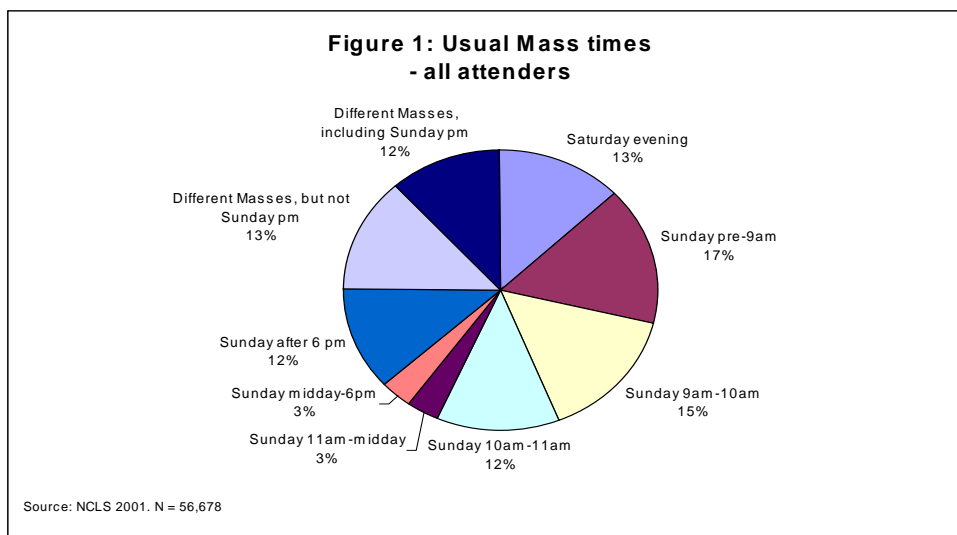
As Table 1 and Figure 1 show, one-quarter of Mass attenders tend to go to Mass at different times from week to week. Among the other 75 per cent, there are roughly equal numbers who usually attend Mass in each of the five time slots of Saturday evening, early, mid-, and late morning on Sunday, and Sunday evening. In Table 1 and for the rest of this report, the small numbers attending Mass on Sunday afternoon have been included with Sunday evening attenders (since most Masses in the period 12.00 to 5.59 pm would be in the early evening), while the two time slots 10.00 - 10.59 am and 11.00 to 11.59 am have been combined into a single 'late morning' period.

Table 1: Usual Mass time of attenders, including those who often attend Mass at different times

Mass time	Number	Percent
Saturday evening	7,394	13
Sunday early morning (pre-9am)	9,027	16
Sunday mid-morning (9am-10am)	8,502	15
Sunday late morning (10am-midday)	8,875	16
Sunday evening	8,743	15
Often attend different Masses	14,081	25
Total	56,623	100

Source: NCLS 2001; N = 56,678

However, while the numbers of people attending Mass in the different time slots are relatively uniform, their demographic make up and the extent of their involvement in parish life are not. It appears that different types of attenders prefer different times. Detailed results for attenders in each Mass time can be found in the Appendix 1, while Appendix 2 displays the age and sex distribution of attenders at each Mass time.



Early Sunday morning

Early Sunday morning is the time that many older Catholics prefer to go Mass. More than half the people who usually choose a pre-9am Mass are aged 60 or more.

Many men also like to go to Mass early on Sunday morning: there are more men aged over 50 age at Mass early on Sunday morning than there are at any other Mass time.

This time slot also has the highest proportion of attenders who live in the parish where they attend Mass. Almost one-fifth of them go to Mass more than once a week and almost two-fifths have been attending Mass in their parish for over 20 years.

Other characteristics of early Sunday morning attenders include:

- they are the least likely to have a university degree.
- they are the least likely to have been born in a non-English-speaking country.
- half have no difficulty accepting the Church's teaching authority.
- half say that attending Mass in their parish always strengthens them spiritually.
- 77% always or usually experience a sense of God's presence during Mass in their parish, and only 5% say they always or usually feel bored during Mass.
- four-fifths agree or strongly agree that the preaching they hear in their parish helps them in their everyday lives.

Sunday mid-morning and late morning

Sunday mid-morning and late morning attenders are, not surprisingly perhaps, quite similar in many respects, although the later attenders are considerably younger (mean age 51 compared to 54 in the mid-morning time slot), partly because late Sunday morning is the second-most popular time for teenage boys. These two time slots have the highest proportions of parents with young children.

Late-morning attenders are the most likely of all attenders to attend Mass once to three times per month (13%).

Well over a third (37%) of the late-morning attenders were born overseas, compared to just over a quarter of those who go to Mass in the mid-morning time-slot. In most other respects, as measured in the survey, mid- and late morning Mass attenders are virtually identical. Their scores usually lie somewhere between those of the early-Sunday morning and the Sunday evening attenders.

Saturday evening

Saturday evening attenders have the second oldest age profile, with only early Sunday morning attenders being older than them. They are the most likely to be Australian-born (70%) and to attend Mass at least once a week (92%). For most other characteristics considered in this report, their scores fall between those of Sunday morning and Sunday evening attenders.

Sunday evening

There are more older teenagers and young adults at Mass on Sunday evening than at any other Mass time – and this is true of both males and females – and a lower proportion of people aged 60 or more. Largely as a consequence of their younger age profile, there is a higher proportion of unmarried people at Mass on Sunday evening (25%) than at any other time. The Sunday evening time slot has the best educated attenders (26% with a university degree) and shares with early Sunday morning the distinction of having the highest proportion of males (43%). It also has the highest proportion who do not live in the parish where they completed the questionnaire (29%). Perhaps surprisingly, visitors to the parish account for very few of these people; the people coming from outside the parish to attend Sunday evening Mass are not, in general, on their way home from a weekend away, but rather are attenders who regularly attend the parish where they filled in the questionnaire, perhaps because their own parish does not have a Sunday evening Mass, or because they experience a more attractive celebration of the liturgy than they do when they go to Mass in the parish where they live.

Sunday evening also has the *highest* percentage of attenders:

- who have lived in the parish less than ten years, and
- who say they always or usually experience boredom during Mass.

Sunday evening has the lowest percentage of attenders who say that all or most of their friends are regular church attenders.

As well, even after allowing for the high levels of those who do not live in the parish, Sunday evening has the lowest percentage of attenders who say that:

- they experience a strong sense of belonging to the parish.
- the parish is very or extremely important in their lives.
- attending Mass in the parish strengthens them spiritually.

What about people who go to different Masses from week to week?

About 25% of the respondents to the question about the starting time of the usual Mass attended indicated that they often attended different Masses in the parish. One way of grouping these people is to allocate them to two groups: those who attend different Masses, one of which is a Sunday evening Mass, and those who attend different Masses, but not a Sunday evening Mass. The two groups turn out to be quite similar in many ways, but also to be very different in relation to several characteristics. For example, while the proportion of females in each group is about the same (55% to 56%), their age profiles differ markedly, with the group who include Sunday evening among their preferred Mass times having a much higher percentage of 15 to 29 year olds.

Both groups appear to include many of the most involved attenders of all, and perhaps the fact that they have selected more than one time when they usually attend Mass indicates a determination to get to Mass regardless of what circumstances affect their lives during the weekend. Ninety percent attend Mass at least once a week, and there are high percentages who have lived in the parish for ten years or more and who say that all or most of their friends are churchgoers. Furthermore, those who selected more than one Mass time, but not a Sunday evening, have the highest levels of sense of belonging to the parish and of the level of importance they attach to the place of the parish in their lives. They are more likely than any other Mass time group to attribute growth in their faith to the parish and to participate in parish decision-making. And they are the least likely to experience boredom during Mass.

Attendance of older teenagers & young adults

*Almost three-tenths (29%) of male Mass attenders aged between 15 and 29 go to Mass **only** on Sunday evenings, and a further 13% attend Mass on Sunday evening or at another time. For females of the same age, the corresponding figures are 25% and 16%.*

In other words, among Mass attenders of this age group, 42% of males and 41% of females either attend Mass on Sunday evening only, or do so with some regularity. In contrast, among attenders aged 30 and over, only 25% have this type of attendance pattern.

Parishes with Sunday evening Masses

According to the National Attendance Count conducted in 2001, of the 1,144 parishes which provided information about Mass times, 43 per cent have a regular¹ Sunday evening Mass. But there is a considerable difference between parishes in the major cities² and other parishes. Fifty-two per cent of parishes in the major cities have a Sunday evening Mass, compared to just 23 per cent of other parishes (See Table 2).

Among the 255 parishes in the national random sample for the 2001 National Church Life Survey, 60 per cent of parishes in the major cities and 26 per cent of other parishes had Sunday evening Masses (see Table 2).

Table 2: Parishes with Sunday evening Masses

All parishes	Percent
Parishes in major cities	52
Parishes in provincial cities and rural/remote areas	23
Overall figure	43

N = 1,144

Source: National Attendance Count 2001

Parishes in the NCLS national sample	Percent
Parishes in major cities	60
Parishes in provincial cities and rural/remote areas	29
Overall figure	50

N = 255

Source: National Church Life Survey 2001

In the major cities, parishes which provide a Sunday evening Mass tend to have:

- a larger overall attendance,
- a higher proportion of people aged 15-29 among their attenders,
- a higher proportion of attenders who live outside the parish, and
- higher attendance measured as a proportion of the Catholic population of the parish. (This is partly due to the impact of the previous point, namely, the number of people who come from outside the parish to attend the Sunday evening Mass.)

On the other hand, attenders in these same parishes tend to say they have a weaker sense of belonging than attenders in parishes which don't have a Sunday evening Mass. This is explained both by the higher proportion of young adult attenders, who tend to have a weaker sense of belonging than older attenders, and by the number of people who come to Sunday evening Masses from outside the parish.

For parishes outside the major cities, the only significant correlation is with overall attendance. That is, parishes in provincial cities and rural and remote areas which have a Sunday evening Mass tend to have higher attendances than those which do not.

Clearly, providing a Sunday evening Mass is potentially one way in which a parish can increase its attendance and, in the major cities at least, attract more young adults. Conversely, any parish considering terminating its Sunday evening Mass because of dwindling attendances at all Masses or a lack of available clergy would do well to think again.

¹ In almost all cases 'regular' means weekly, but it also includes a few parishes with fortnightly or monthly Sunday evening Masses.

² Major cities: State capitals, Canberra, Darwin, Newcastle, Wollongong and Geelong.

Some conclusions and implications

Congregations at Mass at different times are quite different from one another. They differ in their demographic makeup, their levels of parish involvement and in their experience of the liturgy.

In particular, Sunday evening congregations differ markedly from those that meet on Saturday evenings and Sunday mornings. They have a much younger average age, a much more even gender balance, more people with a tertiary education and a much higher proportion of people who do not live in the parish where they attend Mass. Sunday evening attenders tend to attach less importance to the place of the parish in their lives, to have a weaker sense of belonging to it, and to derive less satisfaction from the liturgy than attenders at other Mass times.

These differences have pastoral implications that need to be considered by all those interested in the mission of the parish.

Firstly, it is important that parishes, especially parishes in the major cities, provide a Sunday evening Mass or at least cooperate with other neighbouring parishes to ensure that there is a Sunday evening Mass in the locality, as it is the most attractive time slot for older teenagers and young adults. The figures in this report show that Saturday evening is not a preferred time for people in their 20s (although it is reasonably popular for older teenagers), presumably because of their involvement in Saturday night social engagements. Nor is Sunday morning very attractive, for not only do sport and work intervene but it is seen as a time for relaxing and perhaps having a sleep-in. It may be too late to introduce a Sunday evening Mass into a parish which does not already have one, but to consider scrapping a Sunday evening Mass as part of a reorganisation of parish Mass times would be to risk the permanent loss of many young adult attenders. If any Mass has to be cut out, then on the evidence presented here the Saturday night Mass would be a better choice.

Secondly, the homily and the style of celebration of the liturgy needs to take account of the people who attend Mass on Sunday evening. Not only are they younger than attenders at other Masses, they are also better educated. What is more, the figures show that many are prepared to travel from the parish where they live in order to attend Mass at this time. Yet young adult Mass attendance is precarious, to say the least; previous reports have shown that the Mass attendance rate of young adult Catholics is very low — less than ten per cent (Dixon 2003) — and that the levels of acceptance of some key Catholic beliefs and moral teachings by young adult Mass attenders is considerably lower than among older people (Dixon 2004). Thus, while it is always important for homilies to be well-prepared and to take account of the faith and educational level of the congregation, and for the liturgy to be celebrated well and with vitality, it is especially important in this case. Sunday evening Mass may be the last opportunity the Church has for regular engagement with many young adult Catholics.

References

Dixon, Robert (2003). 'Mass attendance trends among Australian Catholics: A significant challenge for the Catholic Church', *South Pacific Journal of Mission Studies*, Number 28, July, pp. 3-8.

Dixon, Robert (2004). 'Acceptance of key Catholic beliefs and moral teachings by Generation X Mass attenders', *Australasian Catholic Record*, Vol. 81, No. 2, April, pp. 131-143.

Appendix 1: Characteristics of Mass attenders by usual Mass time

This table shows results for Mass attenders who selected only one response to the question about what time Mass they usually attend. These made up about 75 per cent of the people who answered that question. The other 25 per cent selected more than one Mass time.

Demographic characteristics

	Saturday evening	Sunday early morning	Sunday mid morning	Sunday late morning	Sunday evening	All respondents
Age	%	%	%	%	%	%
15-29yrs	11	6	9	12	20	12
30-59yrs	46	43	51	55	49	50
60+yrs	43	51	40	33	31	38
<i>Mean age (years)</i>	<i>54.5</i>	<i>57.7</i>	<i>53.7</i>	<i>50.9</i>	<i>48.2</i>	<i>52.5</i>

Number of respondents (N) = 41,384

	%	%	%	%	%	%
Sex						
Female	60	57	61	62	57	61
Male	40	43	39	38	43	39

N = 41,480

	%	%	%	%	%	%
Level of education						
Primary school	9	11	8	8	6	9
Secondary school	51	50	47	47	48	48
Trade certificate	9	9	9	8	8	9
Diploma / Associate diploma	11	11	13	12	12	12
Bachelor degree	13	12	14	16	17	15
Post grad. degree/diploma	8	8	9	9	9	8

N = 41,507

	%	%	%	%	%	%
Marital status						
Never married	18	11	13	17	25	17
In first marriage	64	68	65	64	59	65
Remarried after divorce	3	3	4	3	3	3
Remarried after widowhood	1	2	1	1	1	1
Separated / divorced / de facto	5	6	6	6	6	6
Widowed, not remarried	9	11	10	9	7	9

N = 41,644

	%	%	%	%	%	%
Birthplace						
Australia	70	69	62	56	64	63
Other English-speaking country	5	7	10	7	6	7
Non-English-speaking country	25	23	27	37	30	30

N = 41,484

Participation in parish life

	Saturday evening	Sunday early morning	Sunday mid morning	Sunday late morning	Sunday evening	All respondents
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Frequency of Mass attendance

	%	%	%	%	%	%
Hardly ever / less than once a month	2	2	4	4	3	4
Once a month	1	1	2	3	2	2
2 or 3 times a month	5	6	8	10	8	7
Every week	76	73	70	71	77	72
More than once a week	16	18	15	12	11	15

N = 37,758

Frequency of Mass attendance at this parish

	%	%	%	%	%	%
Hardly ever / less than once a month	5	5	7	7	6	8
Once a month	2	2	3	4	4	3
2 or 3 times a month	7	8	10	13	12	10
Every week	72	69	68	66	70	66
More than once a week	13	16	13	10	7	12

N = 34,427

Length of attendance at this parish

	%	%	%	%	%	%
Less than 1 year	6	6	8	8	8	7
1-2 years	7	7	9	10	10	8
3-5 years	12	11	14	14	14	12
6-10 years	14	15	15	15	15	16
11-20 years	21	20	20	20	20	20
20+ years	36	38	29	29	27	31
Visiting: I usually go elsewhere	4	3	4	4	5	6
Visiting, don't attend elsewhere	0	0	0	1	1	1

N = 41,293

How many of your close friends attend church regularly?

	%	%	%	%	%	%
All	7	6	6	7	6	7
Most	30	30	29	31	28	30
Some	47	48	50	49	50	49
None	7	7	7	7	8	7
Don't know	8	8	8	6	8	7

N = 36,137

Do you accept the authority of the Church to teach that certain doctrines of faith and morals are true, are essential to the faith, and are to be believed by all Catholics?

	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes, with no difficulty	48	51	48	49	46	49
Yes, with some difficulty	39	38	39	37	40	38
Yes, with great difficulty	7	7	7	7	8	7
No	6	5	6	7	7	6

N = 34,479

For all the remaining tables, visitors to the parish have been removed from the analysis

	Saturday evening	Sunday early morning	Sunday mid morning	Sunday late morning	Sunday evening	All respondents (except visitors)
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Sense of belonging						
Strong and growing	40	41	44	43	37	41
Strong, same as last year	32	31	29	28	28	30
Strong, but not as strong as before	9	9	8	9	10	9
No, but I'm new here	4	4	5	5	5	5
No, and I wish I did by now	3	2	3	3	3	3
No, but I'm happy as I am	10	11	10	10	14	11
Don't know	2	2	2	2	3	2

N = 37,778

	%	%	%	%	%	%
Importance of this parish in my life						
A little or not at all important	27	26	25	26	32	26
Quite important	38	37	38	37	36	38
Very or extremely important	35	37	37	37	32	36

N = 31,404

	%	%	%	%	%	%
Attending Mass in this parish strengthens me spiritually						
Always	44	49	48	47	43	46
Usually	36	35	34	34	35	35
Sometimes	17	15	17	18	20	18
Never	2	1	1	1	2	2

N = 31,904

	%	%	%	%	%	%
Growth in my Christian faith over last year						
No real growth	21	21	20	19	20	20
Some growth	43	41	40	41	41	41
Much growth through this parish	16	18	18	18	16	17
Much growth through elsewhere	4	3	4	4	5	4
Much growth - privately	17	17	17	18	18	18

N = 37,614

	%	%	%	%	%	%
Awareness of parish vision						
Aware of vision & strongly committed to it	18	19	20	19	16	18
Aware of & partly committed to it	16	17	17	17	17	17
Aware of but not committed to it	15	16	13	14	14	14
There are ideas but no clear vision	17	17	17	18	17	17
Not aware of a vision	34	31	32	32	36	33

N = 35,156

	Saturday evening	Sunday early morning	Sunday mid morning	Sunday late morning	Sunday evening	All respondents (except visitors)
Participation in parish decision-making						
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Often participate	7	7	7	7	6	7
Occasionally participate	15	16	16	15	13	15
Don't usually participate	44	47	43	44	43	44
Not been given opportunity but feel OK	29	25	29	28	32	28
Not been given opportunity and that's not OK	6	5	6	6	6	6

N = 29,901

	Saturday evening	Sunday early morning	Sunday mid morning	Sunday late morning	Sunday evening	All respondents (except visitors)
Experience of parish liturgy						
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Strongly agree	25	27	27	28	25	27
Agree	52	54	52	53	50	52
Neutral/Unsure	18	15	17	15	19	17
Disagree	4	3	3	3	4	4
Strongly disagree	1	1	1	1	1	1

N = 31,558

	Saturday evening	Sunday early morning	Sunday mid morning	Sunday late morning	Sunday evening	All respondents (except visitors)
Preaching here is helpful in my everyday life						
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Always	42	45	44	45	42	44
Usually	33	32	31	30	30	31
Sometimes	21	19	20	20	22	20
Rarely/Never	5	4	5	5	6	5

N = 28,344

	Saturday evening	Sunday early morning	Sunday mid morning	Sunday late morning	Sunday evening	All respondents (except visitors)
At Mass here, I experience a sense of God's presence						
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Always	19	21	21	23	18	21
Usually	36	35	37	35	34	35
Sometimes	39	38	37	36	40	38
Rarely/Never	6	6	5	6	8	6

N = 24,545

	Saturday evening	Sunday early morning	Sunday mid morning	Sunday late morning	Sunday evening	All respondents (except visitors)
At Mass here, I experience joy						
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Always	2	1	2	2	3	2
Usually	5	4	4	5	7	5
Sometimes	41	37	39	40	45	40
Rarely/Never	52	58	55	53	45	53

	Saturday evening	Sunday early morning	Sunday mid morning	Sunday late morning	Sunday evening	All respondents (except visitors)
At Mass here, I experience boredom						
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Always	2	1	2	2	3	2
Usually	5	4	4	5	7	5
Sometimes	41	37	39	40	45	40
Rarely/Never	52	58	55	53	45	53

Appendix 2: Age-Sex Profiles

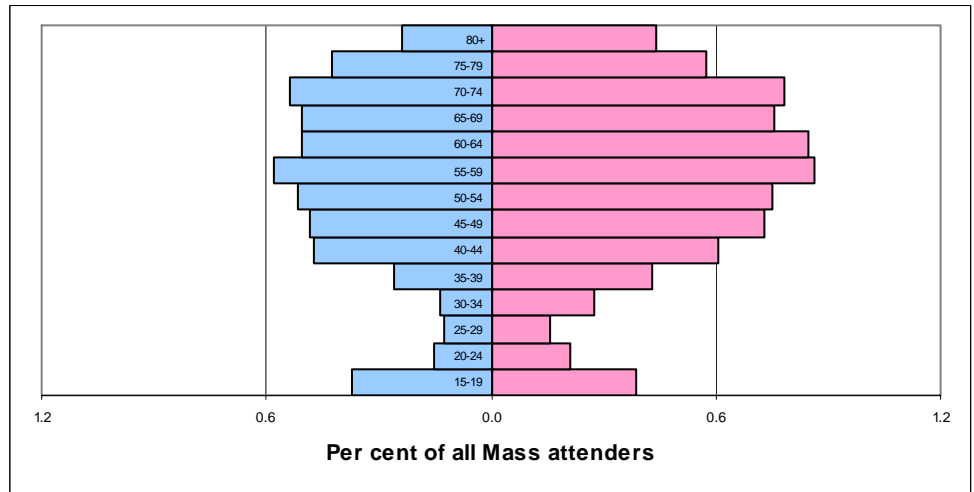
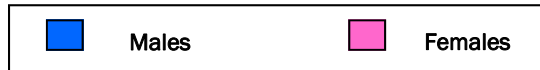
The following age-sex profiles show the percentage of all Mass attenders aged 15 and over by sex, age group and Mass time. So, for example, the first graph shows that women aged 40-44 who regularly attend Mass on Saturday evening make up 0.6 per cent of all Mass attenders. All the graphs have the same scale, making it is easy to compare the preferences of attenders for different Mass times — a longer bar in one graph represents more people than a shorter bar in another. It is immediately apparent, for example, that more 15-19 year old males attend Mass on Sunday evening than at any other time. The percentages represented by each bar **add to 100 over both sexes and all the graphs combined**.

Saturday evening

Mean age: Women: 54.8
Men: 53.8
All: 54.5

Per cent female: 60%

Second oldest age profile of all Mass times, and second highest in proportion of males.

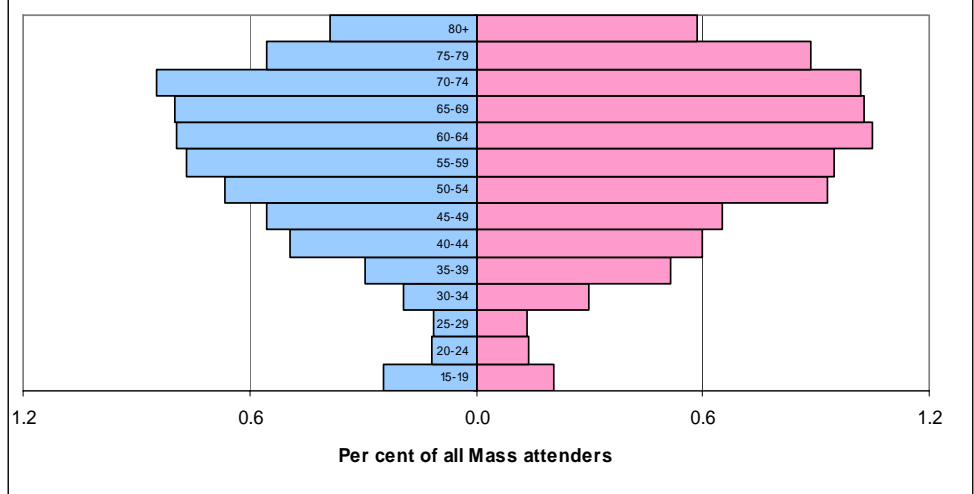


Sunday early morning (before 9 am)

Mean age: Women: 57.8
Men: 57.2
All: 57.7

Per cent female: 57%

Very popular among both men and women aged over 50.

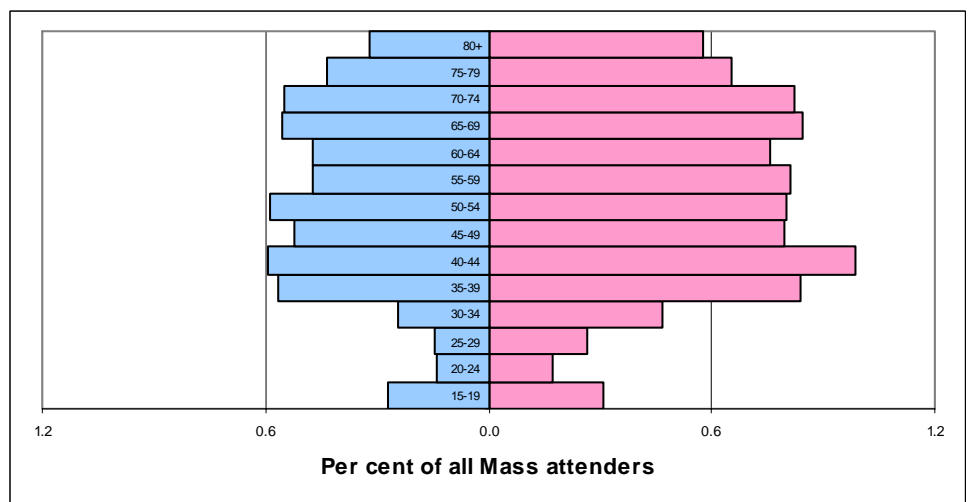


Sunday mid-morning (between 9 am and 10 am)

Mean age: Women: 53.8
Men: 53.3
All: 53.7

Per cent female: 61%

Fairly even spread across age groups for both men and women aged over 35.



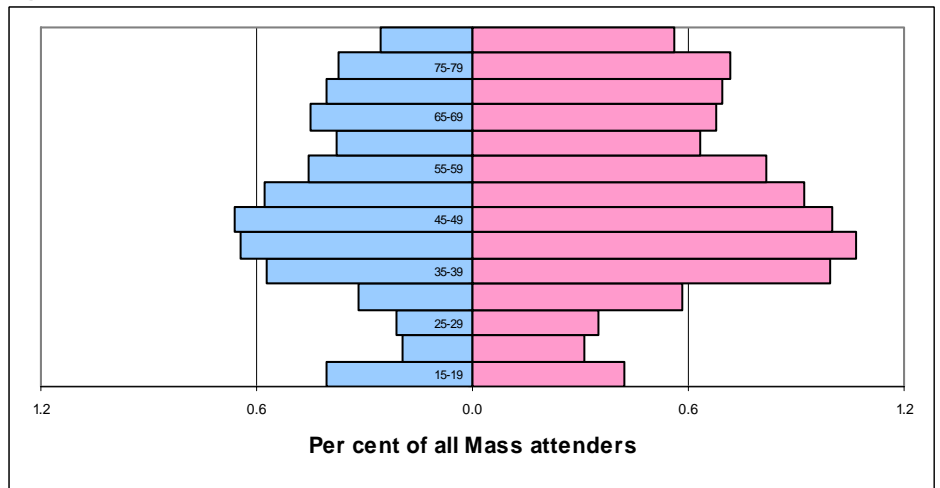
Age-Sex Profiles (continued)

Sunday late morning (after 10 am)

Mean age: Women: 51.3
Men: 49.9
All: 50.9

Per cent female: 62%

Relatively young age profile;
very high proportion of
women.

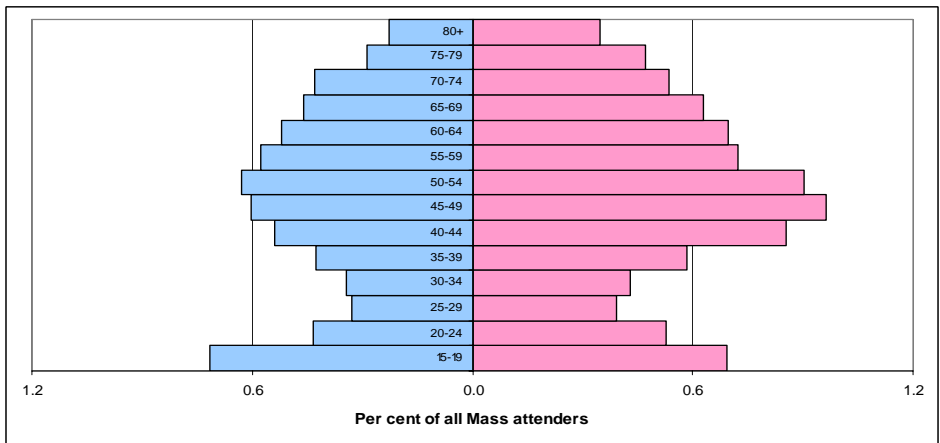


Sunday evening

Mean age: Women: 48.7
Men: 47.2
All: 48.2

Per cent female: 57%

Easily the most popular
time for people aged under
35.

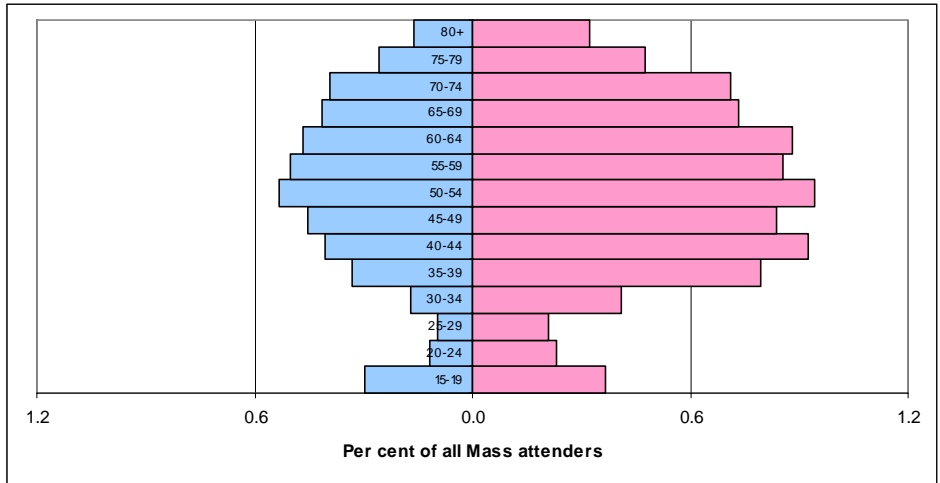


Various Masses— not including Sunday evening

Mean age: Women: 52.1
Men: 52.1
All: 52.2

Per cent female: 65%

Women outnumber men by
almost 2 to 1 when it
comes to varying the time
of Mass they attend .

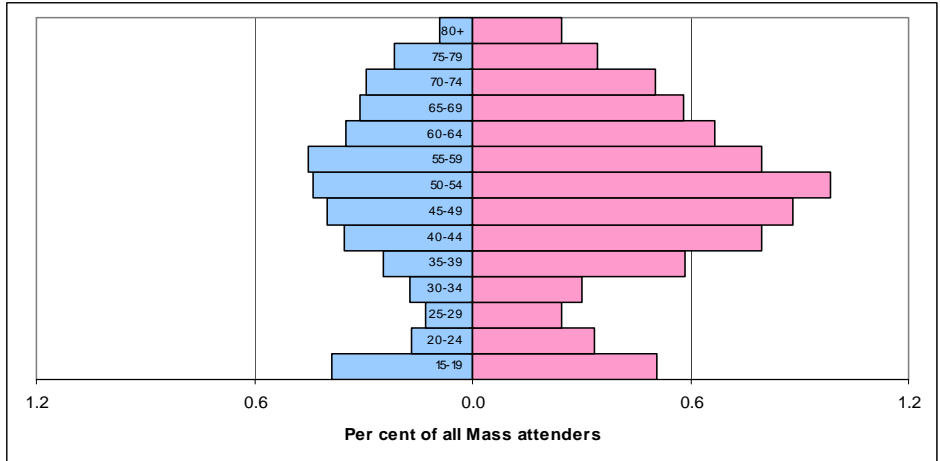


Various Masses— including Sunday evening

Mean age: Women: 49.9
Men: 49.3
All: 49.7

Per cent female: 66%

People aged 80 and over,
especially men, prefer to
stick to one Mass time.



Note on the data

This report is based on responses from 56,678 Mass attenders in the 255 parishes which formed the national random sample for the 2001 National Church Life Survey. A total of 78,255 respondents completed questionnaire, but some were excluded from this analysis because (a) the question about usual Mass time did not appear in all versions of the questionnaire or (b) some people did not provide a valid response to the question. Responses from a boarding school where students attend an on-site Sunday evening Mass were also excluded as they were sufficiently numerous to give a misleading picture of Sunday evening Mass attendance.

The National Church Life Survey

The National Church Life Survey is designed to assist churches to reflect on their own life and involvement with the wider community. The survey has been developed and resourced by the Uniting Church Board of Mission (NSW), ANGLICARE (Diocese of Sydney) and the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. It was first conducted in 1991 and again in 1996 and 2001. The 2001 Survey involved the following denominations:

- Anglican
- Apostolic
- Assemblies of God
- Baptist
- Bethesda Ministries
- Catholic
- Christian and Missionary Alliance
- Christian City Church
- Christian Revival Crusade
- Church of the Nazarene
- Churches of Christ
- Lutheran
- Presbyterian
- Reformed
- Salvation Army
- Seventh-day Adventist
- Uniting
- Vineyard Fellowship
- Wesleyan Methodist
- Some independent congregations and house churches

In 2001 the following organisations have also provided generous support:

African Enterprise, ANGLICARE NSW, the Bible League, the Bible Society, Catholic Church Insurances Limited, Christian Blind Mission International (CBMI), Christian Brothers, Don Bosco's Salesians, Family Care Sisters, Franciscan Friars, Integrity Music, International Centre for Eyecare Education (ICEE), Oxfam Community Aid Abroad, Sisters of St Paul de Chartres, Sisters of the Little Company of Mary, Word Bookstore, World Vision.

The National Church Life Survey is part of the International Congregational Life Survey (ICLS). The ICLS was initiated in 1999 as a collaborative effort of four countries. It was conducted in April and May 2001, with more than 15,000 congregations and over a million church attenders participating. Catholic parishes took part in the survey in Australia, New Zealand and the United States, but not in England.

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