

SUNDAY MASS ATTENDANCE SURVEY

**PREPARED FOR
THE PASTORAL COUNCIL OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
IN HONG KONG**

**BY
Research & Development Centre
1973**

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Pastoral Council of the Catholic Church in Hong Kong commissioned the Research & Development Centre (R & D) to conduct an opinion survey on Sunday Mass attendance. The objectives of the survey are:

- (1) to obtain a better and clearer insight into the reasons why Catholics do not attend Sunday Mass and
- (2) to gather comments, ideas and suggestions on improving Sunday Mass so that it becomes more relevant to the spiritual and daily life of the faithful in Hong Kong.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A number of meetings were held between the research team of the Pastoral Council and research consultants of R & D in order to find out the most suitable research design. Both parties agreed that it was hardly possible to obtain relevant data direct from a large number of Catholics who did not attend Sunday Mass, hereafter called non-mass-goers or non-attendance. On the other hand, members of lay associations could be important sources of information on non-attendance who could be their friends, classmates, work associates or contacts through their lay apostolate. Also, lay association members who are normally more active and involved in the Catholic community would have more comments, ideas and suggestions pertinent to integrating the Sunday Mass with the spiritual and daily life of the faithful.

In view of the above, it was decided to conduct a self-administered questionnaire survey among members of lay associations and any Catholic members who had close friends being non-attendance (Appendix 1).

The sample size was decided to be in the range of 300 to 400 which would give enough cases for analysis and would be within the budget limitations.

It was also decided that the sample for non-attendance should consist of :

- (1) three major occupational groups students, factory workers and others,
- (2) both male and female, and
- (3) both single and married.

A pilot study was conducted during December, 1972. Results of the pilot test were useful in formulating the final questionnaire (Appendix 2). The actual survey was conducted during January and early February. After editing, a total of 407 questionnaires could be used for analysis.

III. PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Before we analyse the survey findings, it is important that we have an idea about the profile of our respondents who supplied information on the non-attendance as well as views and suggestions on Sunday Mass.

Occupation

About two-thirds of our respondents were either students or teachers and the balance included clerical workers, factory workers/technicians, businessmen/shopkeepers, housewives and other occupations.

Occupation of Respondents

	No.	%
Students	147	36.1
Teachers	110	27.0
Clerical Workers	47	11.5
Factory Workers/ technicians	42	10.3
Businessmen/ shopkeepers	14	3.4
Housewives	9	2.2
Others	23	5.7
No answer	15	3.7
Total	407	100.0

Age & Sex

Most of our respondents (78%) belonged to the younger age group of 30 years of age or less and nearly three in four (72%) were female.

Age of Respondents

	No.	%
20 or less	157	38.6
21 to 30	161	39.6
31 to 40	26	6.4
41 or above	48	11.8
No answer	15	3.7
Total	407	100.0

Sex of Respondents

	No.	%
Male	104	25.6
Female	293	72.6
No answer	10	2.4
Total	407	100.0

Education

Out of every 10 respondents, at least 6 had secondary education and another 3 had post-secondary or university education.

Education of Respondents

	No.	%
No schooling	3	0.7
Primary	12	2.9
Secondary	263	64.6
Post-secondary/ university	118	29.0
No answer	11	2.7
Total	407	100.0

IV. PROFILE OF NON-MASS-GOERS

Our respondents were each asked to supply information on a non-mass-goer whom they knew best. This survey produces non-mass-goers of the following characteristics:-

Occupation

About 50% of the sample of non-attendance was either a student or a factory worker. The rest of the sample consisted of housewives, clerical workers, teachers businessmen/shopkeepers, and others.

Occupation of Non-Attendance

	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Students	110	27.0
Factory workers & technicians	91	22.4
Housewives	55	13.5
Clerical workers	54	13.3
Teachers	31	7.6
Businessmen & shopkeepers	23	5.7
Others	38	9.3
No answer	5	1.2
Total	407	100.0

Age & Sex

Our non-mass-goers were primarily younger people below 30 years of age, 45% belonging to 21-30 age group and 28% 20 & below.

As far as sex distribution is concerned, we had slightly more female 54% than male 44%. The remaining 2% did not answer this question.

Age of Non-Attendance

	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
20 or below	112	27.5
21 to 30	183	45.0
31 to 40	50	12.3
41 or above	58	14.3
No answer	4	1.0
Total	407	100.0

Sex of Non-Attendance

	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Male	178	43.7
Female	220	54.1
No answer	9	2.2
Total	407	100.0

Education

Most of our non-mass-goers had secondary (57%) or higher education (22%). Some of them had primary only (15%) and some no schooling at all (4%). The balance 2% did not answer this question.

Education of Non-Attendance

	No.	%
No schooling	15	3.7
Primary	60	14.7
Secondary	231	56.8
Post-secondary/ university	92	22.6
No answer	9	2.2
Total	407	100.0

Marital Status of Non-Attendance

58% of our non-attendance were single, 36% married and 1% divorced. This information is not available for the remaining 5%.

Marital Status of Non-Attendance

	No.	%
Married	145	35.6
Single	238	58.5
Divorced	4	1.0
No answer	20	4.9
Total	407	100.0

V. RESPONDENTS' AWARENESS OF NON-ATTENDANCE

The profile of our non-attendance provides us with a framework for studying our survey findings. It does not necessarily reflect the actual demographic proportion of the total non-mass-goers in Hong Kong, which is outside the scope of this present survey. However, since we asked our respondents each to provide information on a non-mass-goer whom they knew best their awareness would give us an indication of who is more likely not to attend Sunday mass. For example, only 2% of our respondents were housewives but as many as 14% of our non-mass-goers belonged to this occupation category. On the other hand, awareness of teacher non-mass-goers was relatively very low since 27% of respondents were teachers, but only, 8% of non-attendance belonged to this occupation group.

Demographic Comparison of Respondents & Non-Attendance which shows above Average Awareness

	<u>Respondents (%)</u>	<u>Non-Attendance (%)</u>
Factory workers	10.3	22.4
Housewives	2.2	13.5
Clerical workers	11.5	13.3
Businessmen/ shopkeepers	3.4	5.7
Others	5.7	9.3
31-40 years of age	6.4	12.3
41 & above	11.8	14.3
Male	25.6	43.7
No schooling	0.7	3.7
Primary	2.9	14.7

From the viewpoint of respondents' awareness, the survey findings indicate that respondents were more aware of factory workers, and housewives, and to a lesser extent clerical workers and businessmen/shopkeepers as non-mass-goers. Respondents were also more aware of Catholics above 31, particularly the 31-40 age group, as non-attendance. The awareness was also higher for male Catholics and those who received only primary education or no schooling at all.

Religious Background of Non-attendance

The non-attendance were more likely to come from non-Catholic families (65%). Many of them (59%) were not the only Catholic members of the families and the majority (71%) were baptised 5 years ago — as many as 46% or nearly one in two non-attendance were baptised ten years ago. 1 in 2 did not attend mass for more than 1 year, another one-fourth at least 3 months to 1 year and the balance did not attend Sunday mass occasionally. The latter group was highly represented by students and factory workers (55%).

Religious Background of Non-attendance

	No.	%
Catholic family	129	31.7
Non-Catholic family	263	64.6
Don't know	8	2.0
No answer	7	1.7
Total	407	100.0

Whether Non-attendance Have Other Family
Folks Being Catholics

	No.	%
Yes	238	58.5
No	110	27.0
Don't know	9	2.2
No answer/not applicable	50	12.3
Total	407	100.0

For How Long Non-attendance
Have been Baptised

	No.	%
More than 10 years	185	45.5
5 - 10 years	105	25.8
1 - 5 years	61	15.0
Less than 1 year	3	0.7
Don't know	13	3.2
No answer/not applicable	40	9.8
Total	407	100.0

Length of Time Without Attending Sunday Mass

	No.	%
Occasionally	98	24.1
Less than 3 months	23	5.7
3 months to 1 year	71	17.4
1 year to 3 years	86	21.1
More than 3 years	125	30.7
No answer	4	1.0
Total	407	100.0

Non-attendance Give Explanation

According to the respondents, 57% of the non-attendance explained why they did not attend Sunday Mass. Housewives (63%) appeared to be more eager to give an explanation.

Respondents Opinions

However, respondents considered that of all the explanations given, only 39% could be treated as true and complete and 60% as not true or incomplete. For the balance 1%, the respondents did not know whether they were true or not. Respondents appeared to be more sympathetic with the explanations given by housewives and teachers and the least sympathetic with those given by businessmen/shopkeepers.

% of Respondents Considered Non-mass-goers' Explanations As True & Complete

Teachers	56.3%
Housewives	55.9%
Factory workers/technicians	38.5%
Students	33.9%
Clerical workers	33.3%
Businessmen/shopkeepers	25.9%

Feelings of Non-attendance for not Attending Sunday Mass

As far as the respondents were aware, the non-attendance were likely to feel uneasy (27%) when they first stopped attending Sunday Mass but this feeling gradually gave way to a sense of indifference, feeling nothing (39%). All along, a considerable number of non-attendance (6-7%) were feeling a sense of liberation for not observing the Sunday obligation.

It is interesting to note that students (11% initial; 9% present) were more likely than the others to derive a sense of liberation for not attending Sunday Mass while housewives (39% initial; 22% present) were more inclined to feel uneasy.

Non-attendance: Feeling Towards not Attending Sunday Mass as Understood by Respondents

	<u>Initial Feelings</u>		<u>Present Feelings</u>	
	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Feeling nothing	78	19.2	160	39.3
Feeling a sense of liberation	29	7.1	26	6.4
Uneasy	109	26.8	41	10.1
Others	7	1.7	7	1.7
Don't know	162	39.8	143	35.1
No answer	22	5.4	30	7.3
Total	407	100.0	407	100.0

Whether Non-attendance Continued to Pray

Non-attendance were not synonymous with non-believers. In fact, according to our respondents, a considerable number of the non-attendance (20%) continued to pray privately, although as far as known cases were concerned, there were more non-attendance who did not pray (23%) than those who did (20%).

Over half of our respondents did not know whether the non-attendance had private prayers or not. However, it is reasonable to believe that the majority of these unknown cases did not believe in prayer.

Whether Non-attendance Still Pray Privately

	No.	%
Yes	80	19.7
No	94	23.1
Don't know	218	53.6
No answer	15	3.7
Total	407	100.0

The survey also indicates that the non-attendance who had higher education (29%) were more likely to carry on their prayer life.

It is interesting to note that of the known cases of non-attendance, factory workers (13%) and businessmen, shopkeepers (16%) were less likely to continue to pray while students (24%) teachers (23%) clerical workers (22%) and particularly housewives (29%) were more likely to continue to pray.

Whether the Close Friends of Non-attendance Have Any Religious Belief.

Overall, an almost equal number of non-attendance had close friends with religious belief as well as without any religious belief. However, a further analysis shows that factory workers (35%) and businessmen/shopkeepers (36%) were more likely to be deprived of close friends with religious belief whereas students (58%), teachers (58%), clerical workers (59%) and housewives (57%) tended to have close friends with religious belief.

Also, non-attendance who were single (54%) and who had higher education (58%) were more likely to have close friends with religious belief.

Whether The Close Friends of Non-attendance
Have any Religious Belief

	No.	%
Yes	193	47.4
No	189	46.4
Don't know	11	2.7
No answer	14	3.5
Total	407	100.0

VI. REASONS FOR NON-ATTENDANCE

Why Catholics do not attend mass? The survey attempts to answer this question by collecting respondents' knowledge of non-mass-goers' explanations for their non-attendance and by examining respondents' analysis of the real causes as far as they could see them. A total of 55% of the non-mass-goers gave their explanations and 67% of the respondents provided their analysis of the real causes as much as they knew.

The major reasons for non-attendance including respondents' analysis and non-mass-goers' explanations are classified and tabulated as follows:-

Major Reasons for Non-attendance

	<u>According to Respondents</u>	<u>According to Non-mass-goers</u>
Non-belief	17.0%	6.4%
Influence of family & friends	15.9%	3.2%
Unable to find meaning in mass	11.1%	11.8%
Busy Urban life (too much work, household work & social functions)	13.7%	20.6%
Laziness	10.8%	2.7%
Dissatisfied with some priests/ religious	3.2%	1.5%

Non-belief

(Respondents: 17%; Non-mass-goers: 6.4%) As many as 17% of all respondents felt that the non-mass-goers had in fact, rejected Christianity, they no longer believed in God, they "lost faith" or were "about to lose faith". Some of them had wrong expectations from the Church and they became lapsed Catholics when their expectations were not fulfilled. Others found that their motivation in becoming a Catholic changed and found no base in remaining to be member of the Church. One typical case was that a female non-attendance frankly admitted that some years ago she became a Catholic in order to obtain better grades in class. For some time now, the had left her school, this need no longer existed. Another non-mass-goer plainly said that he did not attend mass because he did not need to receive any more Catholic welfare.

Many non-attendance were probably rather shy to admit that they did not believe in Christianity or that they had wrong expectations from the church. As a result, this group of non-attendance accounted for only 6.4% of the total which were less than 50% of the total awareness of respondents (17%).

Also, according to respondents, non-belief was a more important cause of non-attendance of Sunday Mass for factory workers (21%) and clerical workers (22%) than for any other groups.

In this connection, it is interesting to note that about one-quarter of secondary school students in Hong Kong (24%) did not believe in the existence of God according to the survey "Youth and Religion" conducted by the Hong Kong Office of Lutheran World Federation Broadcasting Service in 1969. It is known that Christianity has the greatest influence on secondary education according to the survey

"The Image of the Catholic Church in Hong Kong" and therefore, it can be expected that this non-belief or agnostic attitudes are certainly more prevalent in the adult community.

A more recent survey conducted by the Catholic Students Society of Sir Robert Black Teachers Training College in 1972 shows that less than one-quarter of both Catholic and non-Catholic students considered that the Catholic Church has caught up with the time. This another indication of negative attitude on the Catholic Church.

In Taiwan, it is reported, as many as 25% of Catholic students at Colleges do not believe in the existence of God or are at least agnostic, according to a recent survey conducted by the Association of Catholic College and University Students in Taiwan.

All these research findings point to the fact that Christians in Hong Kong (for that matter in other countries where Christians are a minority) are acting against social trends to keep and particularly to manifest their faith in liturgical celebrations such as attending Sunday Mass.

It is the in-thing to be agnostic, to believe only in the material and it is easier to be a non-believer than a believer (or a Catholic).

Influence of Family and Friends

(Respondents: 15.9%; non-mass-goers: 3.2%) According to our respondents, as many as 16% of total non-attendance did not go to mass because of influence from family and friends. Some of them were actually discouraged by their parents, and husband or wife who were not Catholic. Others were influenced by their friends who did not observe the Sunday obligation. At this point, it is important to note that two-thirds of the non-attendance (65%) came from non-

Catholic family although they might not be the only Catholic members in their families. They were nevertheless first-generation Catholics.

It is interesting to note that students (25%) and clerical workers (20%) were apparently more easily influenced by their families and friends and many of them became non-mass-goers because of this influence according to our respondents.

Non-mass-goers were less likely to explain their non-attendance by this reason.

Only 3% of our non-mass-goers used this explanation 'influence of family and friends' to excuse themselves indicating possibly that this is more of a background condition. Also, this is not a good excuse because it shows that the non-mass-goers cannot make his own decision.

Unable to Find Meaning in Mass

(Respondents: 11.1%; Non-mass-goers: 11.8%) Other than non-belief, and influence of family and friend, many respondents (11%) felt that some non-attendance could not find any meaning in Sunday mass as they were not aware of its meaning. They became disinterested. The non-mass-goers were only too quick to point out this as a major cause of their non-attending Sunday mass. As many as 12% of them indicated that this was the reason for their non-attendance.

Further analysis indicated that non-attendance who were students (17%) and who had higher education (14%) were more evident in complaining that the lack of meaning in observing this Sunday obligation. This is a classic example that education creates curiosity and opens up a person's questioning mind. In the past, the emphasis on the aspect of obligation rather than the meaning of mass possibly

created a sense of resentment on the part of some of the more educated, or "enlightened" Catholics who simply refused to go to mass. Their explanations were usually "I am not interested," or "This is no longer meaningful to me" or "I don't understand the liturgy in mass".

Busy Urban Life

(Respondents: 13.7%; Non-mass-goers: 20.6%) A person living in an urban city like Hong Kong is subject to a lot of pressure — pressure for his attention by various competing interests and calls of duty. This is but the characteristic of city life: Without any exception, attendance of Sunday mass has to **compete** with many other interests or duties of the faithful for his attention and time including rest and recreation, social functions and household duties. This may explain why "I am too busy", "I have no time", "too much work" and "too much occupied with taking care of children" became the most popular excuses of non-mass-goers in rationalizing their not attending Sunday mass. A total of 21% of all non-mass-goers gave this kind of explanations.

Many respondents appeared to be sympathetic with the situation of these non-mass-goers. As many as 14% of the respondents said that the non-attendance were indeed too busy to go to mass.

Further analysis indicated that the pressure of urban life was particularly heavy on married people (29%), factory workers (31%) and housewives (31%).

Laziness

(Respondents: 10.8%; Non-mass-goers: 2.7%) Respondents felt that the fifth major cause for non-attendance of Sunday mass was laziness. As many as 10.8% of total respondents felt that this was

the case. Although non-attendance would not admit or, at least, were not so straight forward in explaining their action. As far as the respondents were aware, only 2.7% of the non-attendance admitted that this was the cause. Non-attendance were more inclined to say "Sunday mass is only a formality", "Belief alone is enough" or "It is not necessary". A total of 7.1% of all non-attendance mentioned one of these excuses.

According to our respondents, students (13%) and businessmen (14%) were more likely not to attend Sunday mass because they were lazy to do so.

Dissatisfied with Some Priests/ Religious

(Respondents: 3.2%; Non-mass-goers: 1.5%) Some respondents (3.2%) were aware that a certain number of non-attendance did not go to mass because of the bad examples of some priests and religious, or for some reasons they **simply** did not like them.

It appears that these non-mass-goers related their faith to their interpersonal relationship with a few **persons** in the Church. Non-mass-goers giving same explanation for their non-attendance accounted for 1.5% of the total.

Other Reasons

A few other explanations worthy of note are poor health, Church being too far away from home, too sinful to go to church, bad sermons, and don't know anyone in the parish. These explanations were either given by non-mass-goers, **or respondents or both.**

VII. RESPONDENTS' VIEWS & SUGGESTIONS

One in two of respondents (52%) recalled that his best-liked Sunday Mass was on a special occasion which might be on a liturgical feast day, a retreat or a special gathering. Slightly more than 2% of our respondents were of the opinion that no one Sunday mass was very much liked by them. The balance 46% gave no response. This might indicate that they could not recall one Sunday Mass which they liked best or that there was none at all.

Which Sunday Mass Respondents Like Best

	No.	%
Special occasion	211	51.8
Not one single Sunday Mass	10	2.5
No answer	186	45.7
Total	407	100.0

Basic Elements of a Best Liked Sunday Mass

Asked about why respondents liked the specified Sunday Mass, 17% of them simply replied that it was a special occasion. The other major reasons given were the atmosphere was good, solemn, touching and/or friendly 14%, they felt a sense of participation, closeness and/or community 10%, they liked the sermon which was good,

well prepared and/or adaptate to life, 8% and they felt a sense of unity, a sense of belonging to the church, 6%.

The other factors of some **importance** which helped to explain respondents' liking of the specified Sunday mass were the music and hymns 3%, the fact they could concentrate in prayer and hence felt close to God 2%, they had peace of mind 1%, that was a folk mass 1% and respondents could communicate with God in a freely and expressive manner 1%.

Why Respondents Like The Specified Sunday Mass Best
(Multiple Choice)

	No.	%
That was a special occasion	71	17.4
Atmosphere was good/solemn/touching	56	13.8
Sense of participation/closeness/community	42	10.3
Sermon good/adaptable to life	34	8.4
Sense of unity/ belonging to the Church	23	5.7
Liked the music & hymns	12	2.9
I can concentrate in prayer/feel close to God	8	2.0
Had peace of mind	4	1.0
Folk mass	4	1.0
Communicating with God in freely/expressive manner	3	0.7
Others	18	4.4
No answer	23	5.7

Age

Some factors appeared to have a greater bearing on some respondents' reaction than the others. The elderly group of over 30 years of age were more concerned that it was a special occasion (24%) or that they could concentrate in prayer and hence felt closer to God (7%). The younger respondents of 30 years of age or less were paying more attention to the atmosphere (15%) their feeling of participation, closeness and community identification (12%), and the sermon (10%). In fact all respondents who mentioned sermon being their reason for their liking were all younger respondents aged 30 years or below.

Occupation

The factor of atmosphere had a greater bearing on factory workers (19%) and students (16%). Clerical workers (19%) were more concerned with a sense of participation, closeness and or community identification. Sermon had an above average influence on students (12%), while a sense of unity and belonging to the Church was particularly important for teachers (8%). The fact that the Sunday Mass was a special occasion had a greater impact on factory workers (26%) and clerical workers (21%).

The Best Part of Current Sunday Mass

Almost 1 in 2 younger respondents of 20 years or less favoured hymns as the best-liked part of the Sunday Mass. This figure gradually declined as respondents' age increased, it was 1 in 4 for the respondents of 40 years of age and above.

These older respondents of over 40 years of age liked receiving holy communion best, followed by consecration, sermon, exchange of sign of peace, private prayer and then hymns. The other parts

of some **importance** were offertory, gospel reading and espistle reading.

In fact, this pattern was more or less the same for all age groups except that the younger respondents under 30 years of age isolated hymns as the top attraction.

The Part of Sunday Mass Best Liked by Respondents
(Multiple Choice)

	No.	%
Hymns	168	41.3
Receiving holy communion	141	34.6
Consecration	137	33.7
Exchange of sign of peace	94	23.1
Sermon	82	20.1
Private prayer	80	19.7
Offertory	71	17.4
Gospel reading	44	10.8
Scripture reading	35	8.6
Not one single part I like	7	1.7

Family Mass

As many as two-thirds of all respondents (66%) agreed to have Sunday Mass in their own home. This porportion was more or less representative of different segments of the total respondents irrespective of occupation, age, **and sex.**

A third of the respondents would not like to have family mass in their homes. Some of them qualified by saying that other members

of their families were not Catholics or that there was not enough privacy at home.

Whether Respondents Agree to Have Family Mass
In Their Own Home

	No.	%
Agree	270	66.3
Disagree	131	32.2
Not certain	2	0.5
No answer	4	1.0
Total	407	100.0

Family & Community Mass

A higher proportion of respondents (70%) would like to have family mass joined by their Christian friends, relatives and neighbours. Student respondents (76%) were particularly keen on this idea.

Whether Respondents Agree to Have Family Mass
Joined by Their Christian Friends, Relatives & Neighbours

	No.	%
Agree	286	70.3
Disagree	88	21.6
Not certain	2	0.5
No answer	31	7.6
Total	407	100.0

Main Suggestions for Improving Sunday Mass

About half of all respondents gave suggestions to improve Sunday Mass. The other half did not answer this question. This may indicate that they were very satisfied with the present situation or they did not bother to answer this question.

Nearly 1 in 5 respondents was not happy with the Sunday sermon and suggested that priests should ~~make~~ every effort to improve their sermon (19%). Strong emphasis was placed on adapting sermons to practical daily life. A few respondents showed dissatisfaction over the poor Cantonese of some priests who preached.

Other main suggestions include introducing more hymns on Sunday Mass particularly more familiar and suitable hymns (8%); to encourage more participation by attendance in the whole celebration of Sunday Mass (6%), Some respondents (5%) suggested that parish priest and lay leaders should make more contacts with parishioners. A few younger respondents (3%) thought Sunday Mass was rather time-consuming and should be cut short.

Respondents' Main Suggestions for Improving Parish
Sunday Mass

(Multiple Choice)

	No.	%
To improve sermon	79	19.4
More hymns/more familiar/ & suitable hymns	31	7.6
More participation by attendance	23	5.7
Parish priests/ leaders to have more contacts with parishioners	19	4.7
Mass should be brief	13	3.2
Liturgy to adapt to local needs & be well-prepared	12	2.9
More Private prayer time	10	2.5
To have more frequent mass	9	2.2
To introduce/explain meaning of mass	7	1.7
Social functions after mass	6	1.5

The rest of the suggestions dealt with adapting liturgy to local needs (3%); having more private prayer time (3%); more frequent mass (2%); introducing and explaining the meaning of mass (2%) and having social functions after mass (2%).

VIII. CONCLUSION

Unlike a census study, the present study cannot tell readers the number and demographic distribution of non-mass-goers in the Catholic population in Hong Kong. The present study, however is able to tell readers that a baptised Catholic who is male, first-generation Catholics, baptised 5 years ago, above 31 years of age, and has only primary education or less is relatively more likely to become a non-mass-goer. Also, if the baptised Catholic is not a student or a teacher, he or she is more likely than a student or a teacher to become a non-attendance.

The study also shows that the longer the non-mass-goer does not attend Sunday mass, the more he feels he is justified to do so and his initial sense of uneasiness tends to give way to feeling nothing bad about it.

Some non-mass-goers still believe in prayer or at least they say prayer occasionally.

There ~~is~~ a multitude of reasons explaining non-mass-goers not attending Sunday Mass. Apparently the agnostic social atmosphere, family and social influence, suspicion of meaning of mass attendance, hectic city life and laziness are the major causes.

There are some basic elements which help Sunday Mass to be better liked by the faithful. The most important elements are :

- (1) the nature of the occasion,
- (2) the atmosphere,
- (3) degree of faithful participation,
- (4) sermon and
- (5) a feeling of unity and belonging,

Both the third and fifth major factors relate to community identification and feelings reflecting the need for community mass for people with common background and interests. This is substantiated by respondents' suggestion that faithful should be encouraged to participate more in Sunday Mass. Younger respondents' liking of hymns and singing simply confirm the need of folk mass for youth groups.

The need for family mass is only too evident in the survey. Two out of three respondents agreed to have family mass in their homes. Even more respondents favoured to make the family mass, a community mass for more people including their Catholic friends, relatives and neighbours. This is reinforced by respondents' suggestion that parish priests and lay leaders should make more contacts with the parishioners.

To conclude this report, it may be meaningful to compare the Sunday mass with an opera which requires a great deal of preparation before the actual performance. Likewise, a good Sunday mass demands lots of preparatory and follow-up activities on the part of the Church leaders — the priests, religious and lay leaders. These activities may range from home visits, family/community mass, social functions after mass, education on meaning of mass to any activity which is conducive to Christian community formation. All these activities will help the parishioners to integrate, to form Christian community and to find meaning and satisfaction in the manifestation of their faith through this community action of Sunday mass attendance.

The Sunday mass in a parish pre-supposes the formation of a Christian community. Until greater efforts be directed to the formation of Christian community, the parishioners would tend to be passive spectators at their best. And, it is only too natural that a considerable number of them would gradually become occasional and then permanent non-mass-goers.

The Research & Development Centre does not attempt to advance any specific recommendations for pastoral action except to confirm the significance of the findings of this survey. Many recommendations on liturgical life and pastoral action in general have been prepared for and forwarded to the diocese by the First Diocesan Convention of Hong Kong. It is now important to sort out priorities among the many recommendations. Surely any activity that is conducive to the development of Christian community spirit should be given priority.

Appendix I

Association of the Blessed Sacrament
Diocesan Youth Council
Hong Kong Federation of Catholic Students
Legion of Mary
Serra Club
Young Christian Students
Young Christian Workers
Caritas Youth Centre, Ngau Tau Kok
Good Hope School (teachers and students)
Our Lady of the Rosary Church, Sai Wan (parishioners)
St. John the Baptist Church, Kwun Tong (parishioners)
Tak Ching Middle School (teachers and students)
Tak Oi Secondary School (students)

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