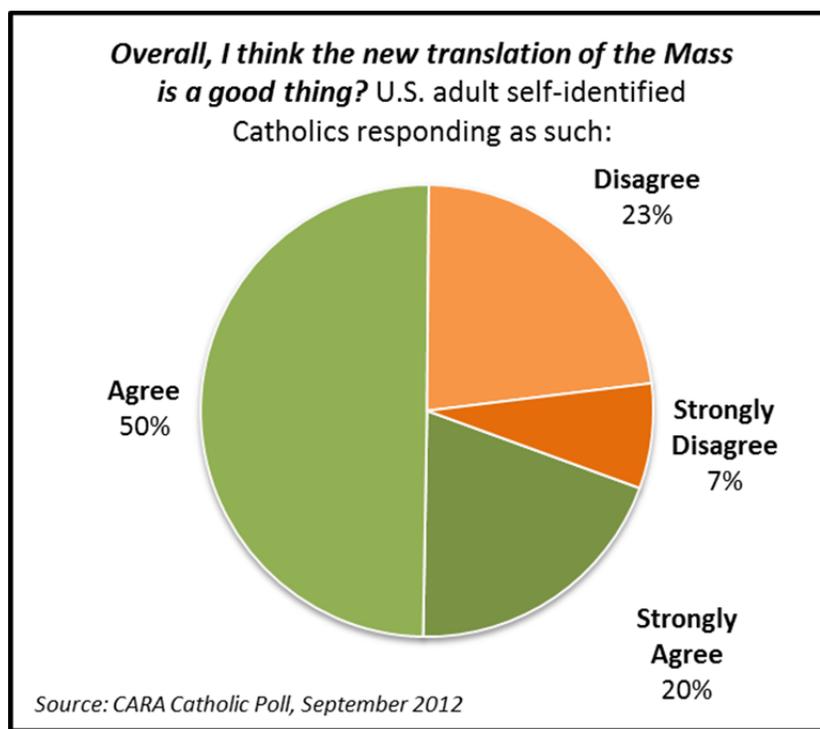


A Year After: Catholics React Positively to Changes to the English-language Mass

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Last November, revisions to the English-language liturgy used by the Catholic Church were put into effect. In September 2012, nearly a year after these changes, a national survey of U.S. adult self-identified Catholics reveals that seven in ten Catholics agree that the new translation is a good thing (with 20 percent agreeing “strongly”). Nearly a quarter “disagree” (23 percent) and 7 percent “strongly” disagree with this statement.



These findings are from a survey commissioned by the Institute for Policy Research & Catholic Studies at The Catholic University of America and conducted by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University. A related series of questions were asked in a 2011 CARA Catholic Poll (CCP), before the revised liturgy was used.

Catholics who attend Mass weekly are among the most likely to agree that the new translation of the Mass is a good thing. Eighty-four percent responded as such (47 percent “strongly” agree with this statement). By comparison, 63 percent of those who rarely or never attend Mass agree with this statement (only 4 percent “strongly” agree).

Overall, I think the new translation of the Mass is a good thing.
Responses among adult self-identified Catholics by frequency of Mass attendance

Frequency of attendance (% of respondents)	Strongly			Strongly
	Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree
Weekly or more often (24%)	47%	37%	12%	4%
Less than weekly, but at least once a month (19%)	21	47	25	8
A few times a year (25%)	11	53	27	9
Rarely or never (32%)	4	59	27	10

Weekly Mass attendance levels remained the same in the 2012 survey compared to 2011 with both polls estimating that about a quarter of adult Catholics (24 percent) attend Mass once a week or more often. However, there was a slight decline in the total percentage of Catholics saying they attend Mass at least once a month (43 percent compared to 49 percent). However, this difference is just within the surveys’ margins of sampling error and it is unlikely that a large number of Catholics dissatisfied with the translation reduced their frequency of attendance at Mass in 2012.

Respondents were asked, “During an average Mass, would you say that you have noticed that the language of the prayers that are said during Mass have (1) remained about the same, (2) changed to a small extent, (3) changed to a moderate extent, or (4) changed to a great extent?” Four in ten respondents (40 percent) said they had noticed the language of these prayers had changed to a small extent and 23 percent said these had changed to a moderate extent. Only 6 percent said they noticed changes to a great extent and 31 percent said that the language of these prayers had remained about the same as far as they noticed. Those who have perceived less change are those most likely to agree that the new translation is a good thing. Among those who feel the language was changed to a great extent, a majority *disagree* that the new translation is a good thing (65 percent).

Overall, I think the new translation of the Mass is a good thing.
Responses among adult self-identified Catholics by perception of changes

Perceptions of change in liturgy	Strongly			Strongly
	Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree
Remained about the same	24%	53%	19%	4%
Changed to a small extent	19	58	18	4
Changed to a moderate extent	19	41	28	13
Changed to a great extent	10	24	43	22

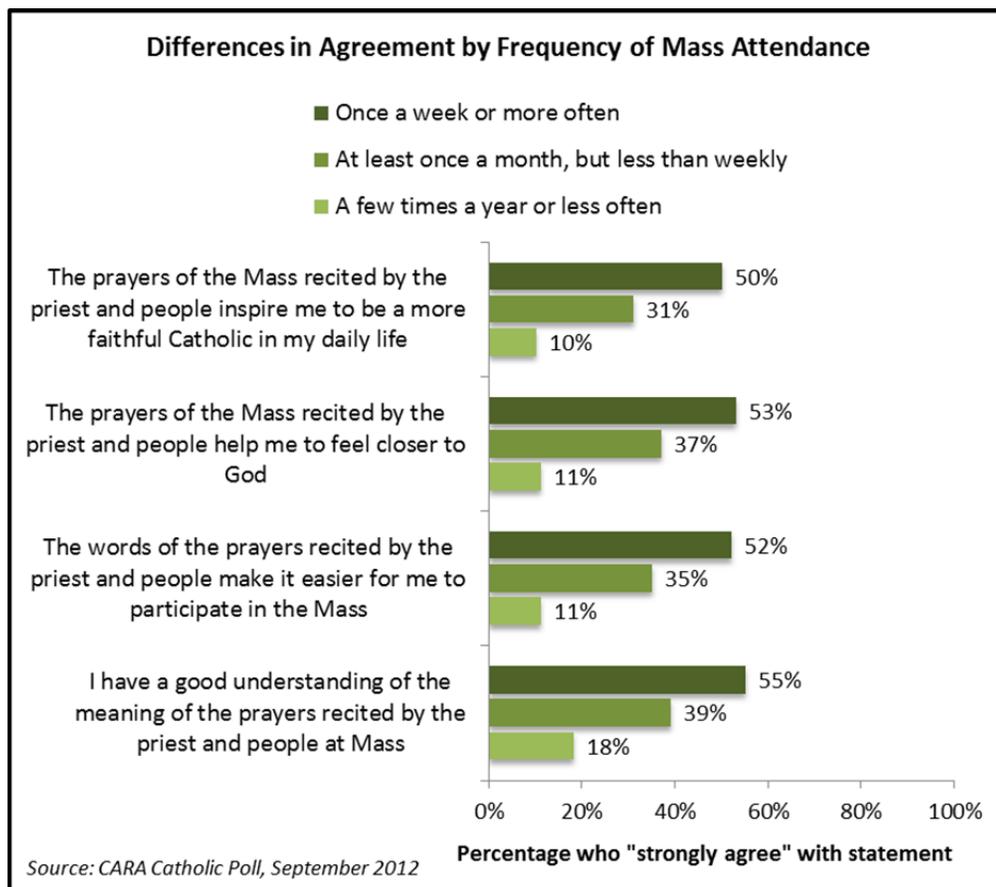
A series of agree or disagree questions were asked of respondents in both the 2011 and 2012 surveys. These are compared in the table on the next page which shows the 2012 results and the percentage point change in agreement from 2011.

Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

Percentage responding as such in 2012 with percentage point change from 2011:

	Agree/Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
I have a good understanding of the meaning of the prayers recited by the priest and people at Mass	88% (-4)	31% (-5)
The words of the prayers recited by the priest and people make it easier for me to participate in the Mass	79 (-7)	26 (-3)
The prayers of the Mass recited by the priest and people help me to feel closer to God	80 (-3)	27 (-2)
The prayers of the Mass recited by the priest and people inspire me to be a more faithful Catholic in my daily life	75 (-3)	24 (-4)

Respondents were less likely to agree with all statements in 2012 than in the 2011 survey. However, in most cases, the difference between the surveys is within the margin of sampling error. In one instance, respondents are discernibly less likely to agree at least “somewhat” with the statement: “The words of the prayers recited by the priest and people make it easier for me to participate in the Mass” (79 percent in 2012 compared to 86 percent in 2011).



As the previous figure shows, Catholics who attend Mass more frequently are more likely than others to “strongly” agree with all four of the statements regarding the Mass in 2012. Comparing the 2011 survey to the 2012 survey, there are no significant differences in responses to these questions among weekly Mass attenders.

The 2012 survey was completed by 1,047 self-identified Catholics who were 18 years of age or older resulting in a sampling margin of error of ± 3.0 percentage points. Sixty-seven percent of the GfK Custom Research (formerly Knowledge Networks) panel members invited to take the survey completed it. The survey was in the field from September 10 to September 18, 2012. The 2011 survey included 1,239 self-identified Catholics who were 18 years of age or older resulting in a sampling margin of error of ± 2.8 percentage points. Fifty-seven percent of the Knowledge Networks panel members invited to take the survey completed it.

Results from the survey were first presented at the annual meetings of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion and the Religious Research Association in Phoenix, AZ on November 9, 2012 by Rev. Anthony J. Pogorelc, S.S., M.Div., Ph.D. . For more information about the study contact Rev. Dr. Pogorelc of the Institute for Policy Research & Catholic Studies at The Catholic University of America at 202-319-5999 or pogorelc@cua.edu. Questions can also be fielded by CARA’s Director of Catholic Polls, Mark M. Gray, Ph.D. at 202-687-0885 or mmg34@georgetown.edu.