

CATHOLICS COME HOME CHICAGO

Summary - May 2010



The Catholics Come Home evangelization initiative was a collaborative effort among the Archdiocese of Chicago, and the Dioceses of Joliet and Rockford. At the center of this initiative was a media buy for 2,000 television ads, viewed on 10 major networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, WGN, Fox, Cable, Telemundo, Univision, PolVision, PolSat) during the seasons of Advent and Christmas. The viewing area for the ads covered 20 counties across the entire northern part of Illinois with the cost shared by all three dioceses.

This report reflects the information gathered from 201 Pastor Surveys and 239 Parish Contact Surveys. Also included is the February 2010 Mass Count conducted by the Office for Research and Planning.

Mass Count

The Office for Research and Planning requested that parishes and missions take a special February count of Mass attendance. The count was done during the 3rd and 4th weekends in February, just after the start of the Lent. The results are an average of the two-week totals. These results are compared to October 2009 results and compare only those parishes that responded to the February count.

In the February Mass Count 269 out of 367 parishes/missions, or 73%, responded to this special request. For those that reported, the count was 385,566. The October 2009 count for those same 269 parish/missions was 356,640. This was an increase of 28,926 persons or 8.1%.

"I am energized by larger crowds in attendance at Mass, and I believe CCHC had that effect."

- Pastor -

While we are heartened by the increase at many parishes, we need to take into account that the data was collected during Lent, which typically sees an increase in Sunday Mass attendance. The best understanding of church attendance will be a comparison between October 2009 and October 2010 Mass Counts.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

52% of Pastors responding to the survey said there was an increase in the number of confessions. 38% said that there was a change in the quality of confessions.

"Several of the penitents had been away from the Sacrament and the church for many years, and so their confession reflected maturity and not necessarily "rote" sins, but sin that had affected them deeply over the years and they were now ready to release it into the hands of a loving God."

- Pastor -

Marriage Validation

20% of Pastors report that they saw an increased interest in Marriage Validation. Returning Catholics with questions on marriage and annulment were encouraged to attend presentations by the Office for the Tribunal offered in 11 locations and 3 languages. There were 288 participants, 138 of which took Tribunal Applications at these events.

Pastor Survey

71% of Pastors reported that CCHC was a benefit to their parish (see graph), though there were different ways to define "benefit". Some parishes saw an increase in newcomers and people registering as parishioners — those Catholics who had "come home". An additional benefit was the energy and excitement among parishioners, who felt pride in their faith and a deeper sense of Catholic identity due to the ads and the efforts in the parishes. A third benefit was that Parish Staffs were engaged and enthusiastic about evangelization and they worked to improve many aspects of parish life.

