

**Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate
Georgetown University
Washington, D.C.**

***CARA Catholic Poll 2011: Fordham Center
on Religion and Culture Questions***

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Introduction

In spring 2011, the Fordham Center on Religion and Culture commissioned the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University to include questions in its CARA Catholic Poll (CCP) to measure awareness and use of the U.S. bishop's *Faithful Citizenship* document.¹ CARA partnered with Knowledge Networks to conduct the survey in May and June 2011. The survey was completed by 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 panel members invited to take the survey completed it.

Knowledge Networks maintains a large national sample of households. Its panel (the set of participating households) is updated frequently and has been assembled by regular random telephone and mail survey methods, with attempts to closely approximate known demographic characteristics of the U.S. population.² Panel members receive subsidized Internet access and other incentives. For those who do not own computers, Knowledge Networks provides a television-based Internet system (MSN TV) for free. These steps ensure that the Knowledge Networks panel is as reflective as possible of the national population and that it is not biased towards only those who have pre-existing access to the Internet. At the time of the survey, 17 percent of those invited to be a part of the Knowledge Networks panel, accept this invitation.

The questionnaire for the survey was developed collaboratively, in a back and forth review process, between CARA and a representative of the Fordham Center on Religion and Culture. This questionnaire and response frequencies are available in the Appendix.

This report includes, where possible, comparisons to a survey conducted by CARA in November and December 2005 for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Department of Communications. This 2005 survey was completed by 1,260 self-identified adult Catholics resulting in a sampling margin of error or ± 2.8 percentage points.

As a rule of thumb, every 1 percentage point of the total sample is approximately equivalent to 570,000 Catholic adults.³

¹ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). 2007. *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*.

² A recent study by Stanford University researchers shows that the Knowledge Networks panel is representative to well within one percentage point of the U.S. Census Current Population Survey (CPS) demographics for gender, age, race and ethnicity, education, and region (Baker et al. 2003. "Validity of the Survey of Health and Internet and Knowledge Networks Panel and Sampling.").

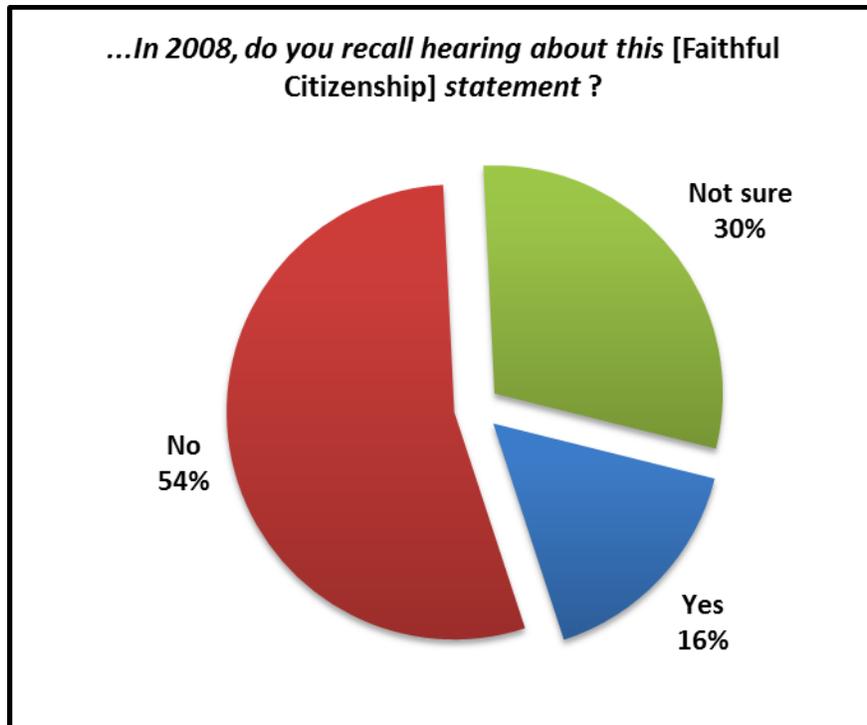
³ Knowledge Networks panel estimates that 24.5 percent of the adult population in the United States self identifies as Catholic. Taking this proportion of the most recent Census Bureau estimates for the size of the U.S. adult population, 1 percent of adult Catholic population is approximately equivalent to 570,000 persons.

Faithful Citizenship Questions

Respondents were shown the following introduction to the *Faithful Citizenship* questions onscreen.

Late in the year preceding presidential elections, the Catholic bishops have usually issued a statement on “Faithful Citizenship” outlining how Catholics should use their religious values in shaping their political election choices.

Respondents were then asked if they recalled hearing of this statement in 2008. As shown in the figure below, only 16 percent of adult Catholics recall hearing of this. Thirty-percent are unsure if they had heard of it or not and a majority, 54 percent, say they were not aware of *Faithful Citizenship* in 2008.



Respondents were then shown the following text:

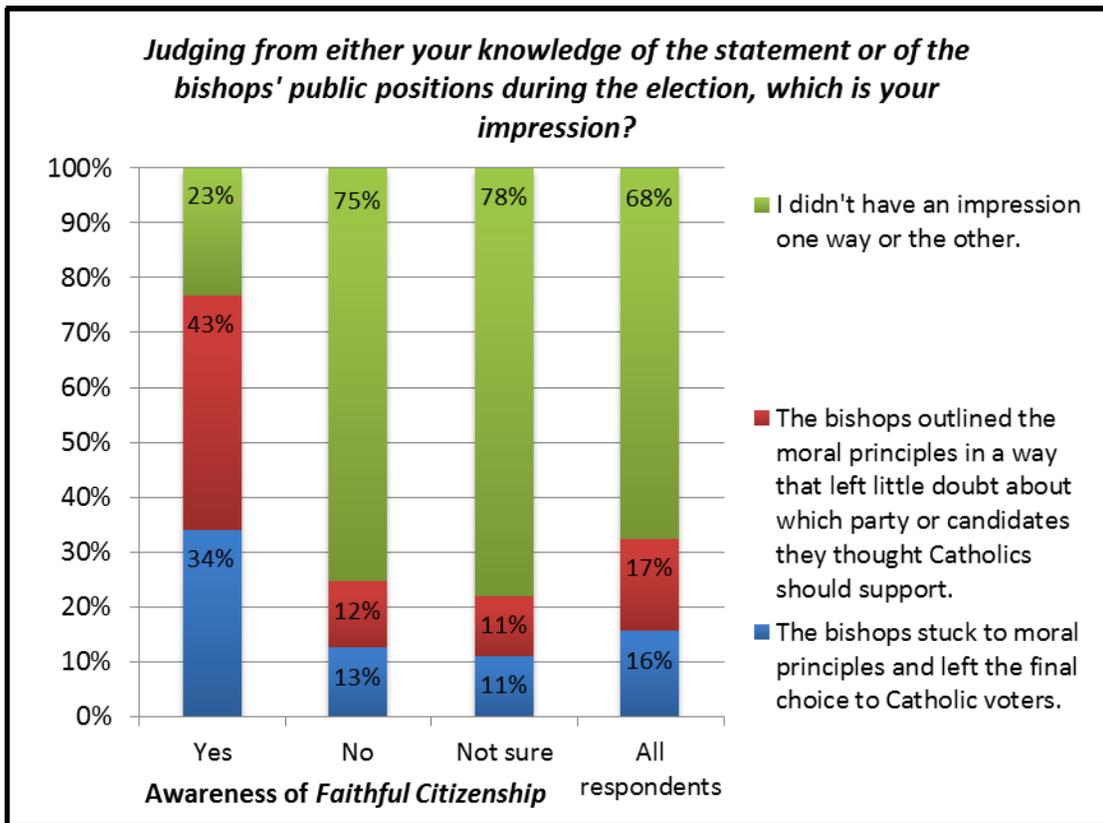
The bishops' statement declared that they did "not intend to tell Catholics for whom or against whom to vote." Some people said that, despite that disclaimer, the statement clearly signaled how Catholics should cast their votes.

They were then asked,

Judging from either your knowledge of the statement or of the bishops' public positions during the election, which is your impression?

1. *The bishops stuck to moral principles and left the final choice to Catholic voters.*
2. *The bishops outlined the moral principles in a way that left little doubt about which party or candidates they thought Catholics should support.*
3. *I didn't have an impression one way or the other.*

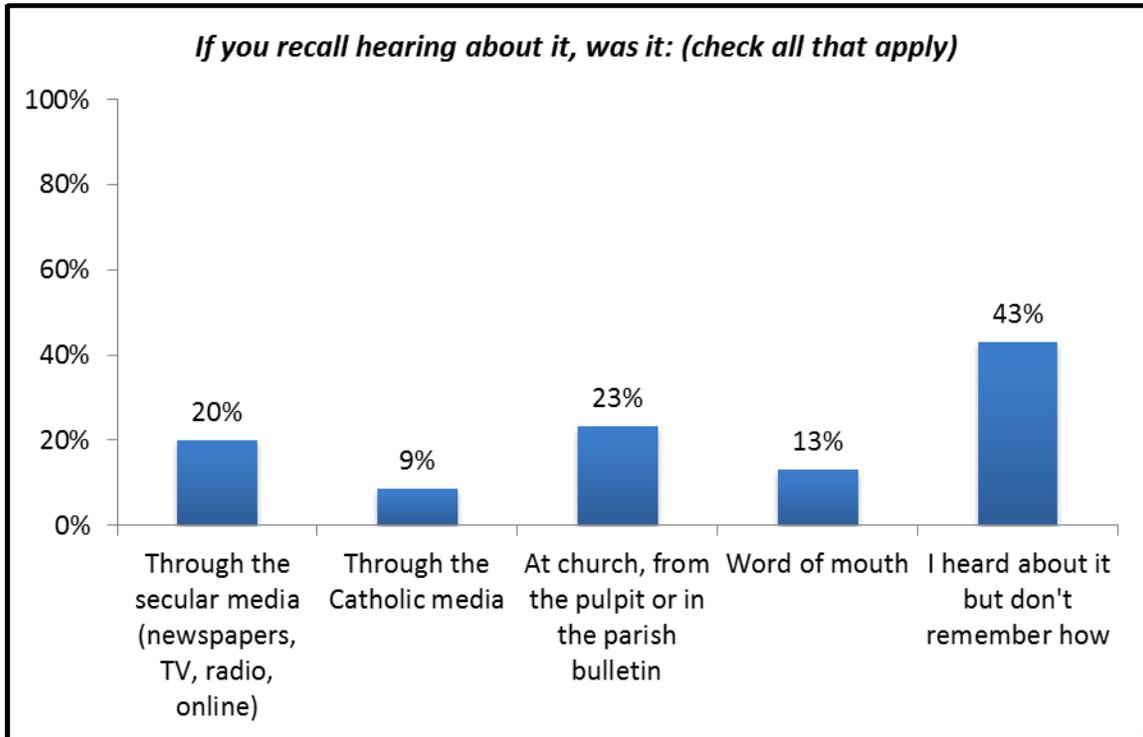
As shown below, among Catholics overall, and those with little or no awareness of *Faithful Citizenship*, respondents did not have an opinion on the intentions of the bishops. Nearly seven in ten of all respondents (68 percent) said that they did not have an impression one way or the other regarding the intent of *Faithful Citizenship*.



However, among Catholics who were aware of *Faithful Citizenship* in 2008, there are more mixed opinions. A plurality of 43 percent indicated that they felt the bishops outlined the moral principles in a way that left little doubt about which party or candidates they thought Catholics should support. A third (34 percent) said the bishops stuck to moral principles in *Faithful Citizenship* and left the final choice to Catholic voters. Fewer than one in four (23 percent) of those who were aware of *Faithful Citizenship* said that they did not have an impression one way or the other.

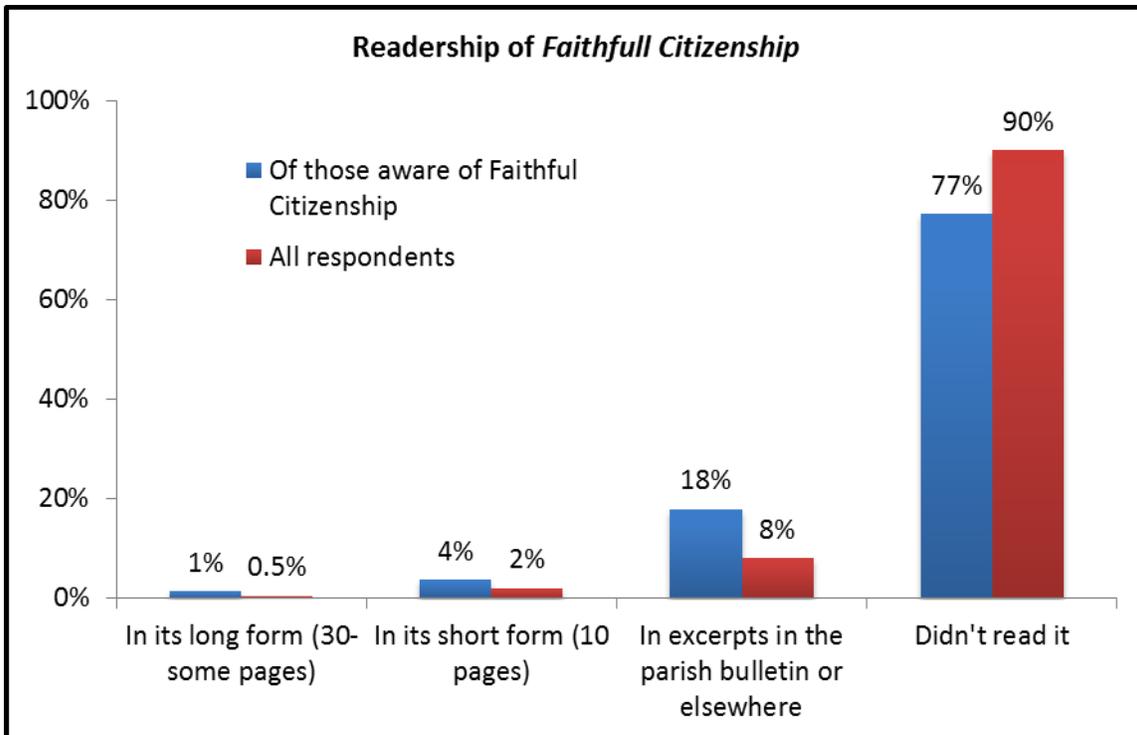
Of respondents who have awareness of *Faithful Citizenship* from 2008, most, 43 percent do not recall how they heard of it. A quarter (23 percent) recalls hearing about it in their parish (either in church or in their bulletin). One in five (20 percent) say they were made aware of the bishop's statement from the secular media and one in ten (9

percent) say they heard of it from a Catholic media source. Thirteen percent say they heard just by way of word of mouth.



As shown in the figure on the following page, very few Catholics overall and even among those aware of it have read the full-length *Faithful Citizenship* document. Less than 1 percent of adult Catholics say they read the long-form statement from 2008. This is equivalent to about 300,000 individuals. Two percent of adult Catholics say they read the short-form document, 8 percent indicate reading excerpts in their parish bulletin or elsewhere. Thus, nine in ten adult Catholics did not read the 2008 *Faithful Citizenship* document in any form.

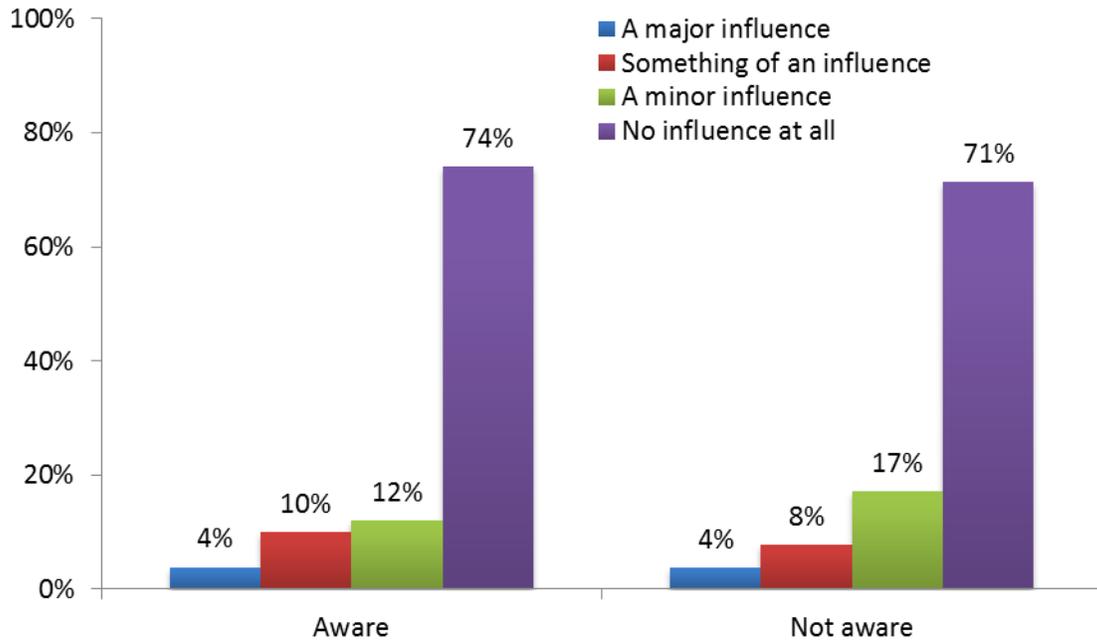
Of those Catholics aware of the bishop's statement, the most common way of accessing the material was through excerpts in parish bulletins or elsewhere (18 percent). Even among those who are aware of *Faithful Citizenship*, most did not read it (77 percent).



As the figure on the next page shows, most adult Catholics who were aware of *Faithful Citizenship*, 74 percent, say the document had “no influence at all” on the way in which they made their political choices in 2008. Among Catholics not previously aware of the document, a similar percentage, 71 percent, believe that *Faithful Citizenship* would not have influenced their decisions in 2008 if they had been aware of it.

Overall, 4 percent of adult Catholics indicate that *Faithful Citizenship* either was a major influence (if they were aware) or that would have been a major influence (of those not aware) to their political choices in 2008.

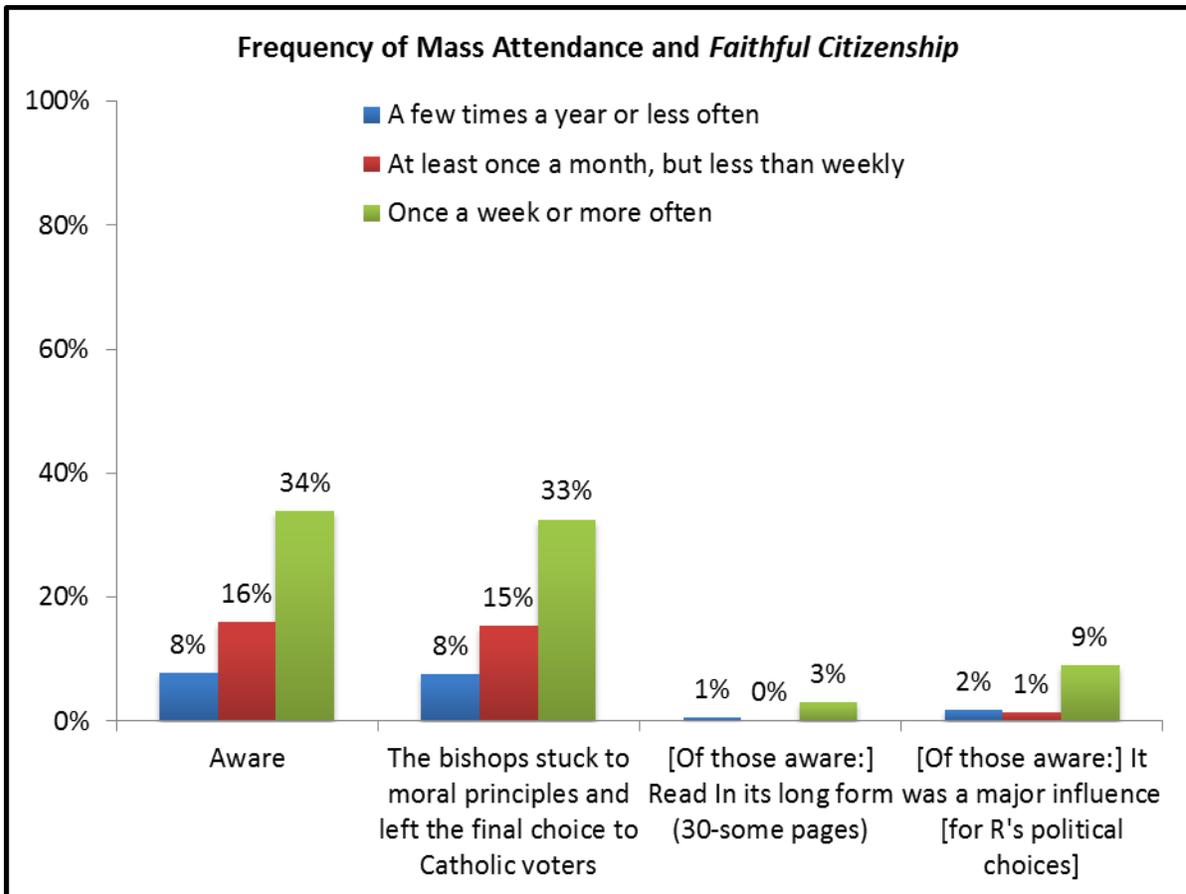
[Those aware:] To what extent did the bishops's statement affect the way you made your political choices in 2008? [Or, those unaware:] To what extent do you think the bishops's statement would have affected the way you made your political choices in 2008



Sub-group Differences Regarding *Faithful Citizenship*

Frequency of Mass Attendance

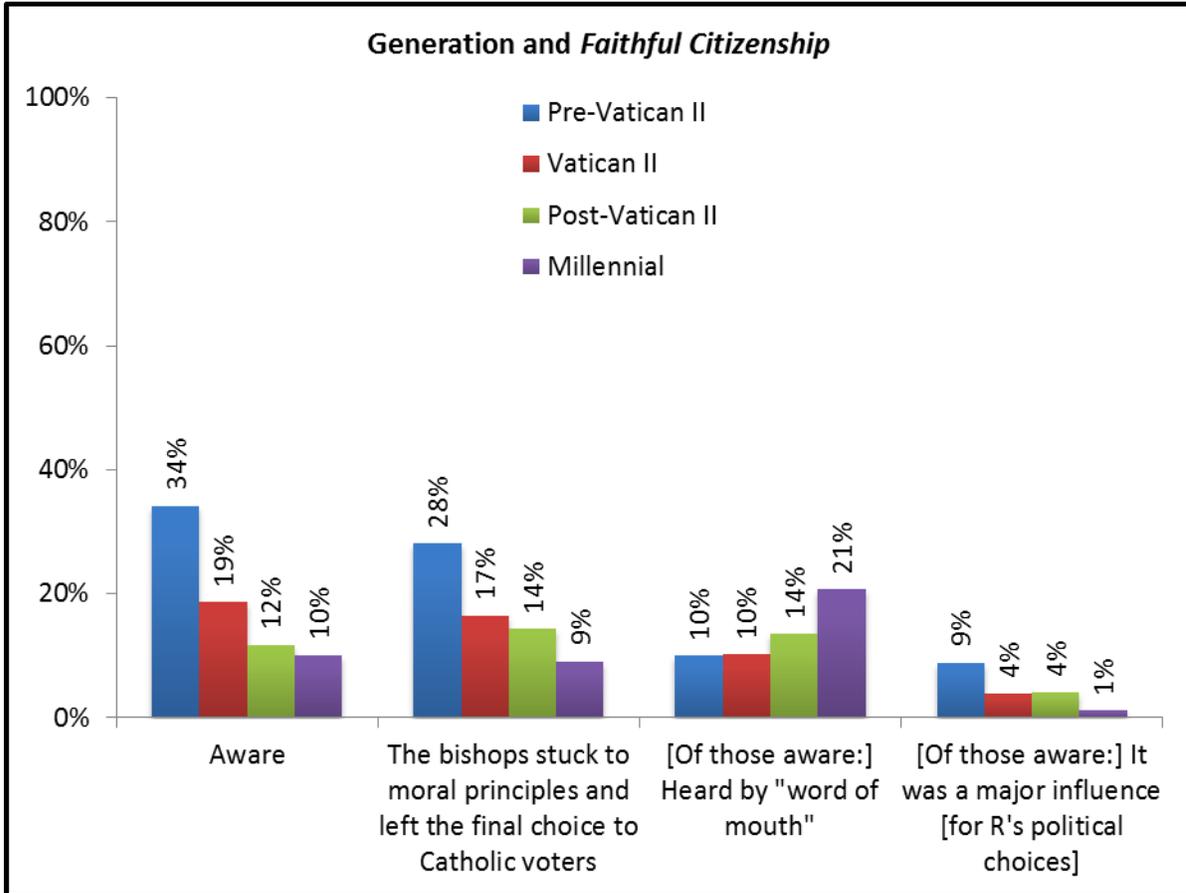
As shown in the figure below, weekly Mass attenders are more likely than those attending Mass less often to be aware of *Faithful Citizenship* (34 percent), and to have the perception that the bishops stuck to their moral principles and left the final choice to Catholic voters (33 percent) in this document.⁴ However, weekly attenders who were aware are only slightly more likely than those attending less often who were aware of *Faithful Citizenship* to have read the statement in its long-form. Only 9 percent of weekly Mass attenders who were aware of *Faithful Citizenship* say that it was a “major influence” for their political choices in 2008.



⁴ There are no statistically significant Mass attendance sub-group differences in the percentage who say they felt the bishops outlined the moral principles in a way that left little doubt about which party or candidates they thought Catholics should support.

Generation

The youngest Catholics, those of the Millennial Generation (under age 30 in 2011), are least likely to be aware of *Faithful Citizenship* (10 percent) and least likely to perceive that the bishops stuck to their moral principles and left the final choice to Catholic voters (9 percent) in writing this document.⁵



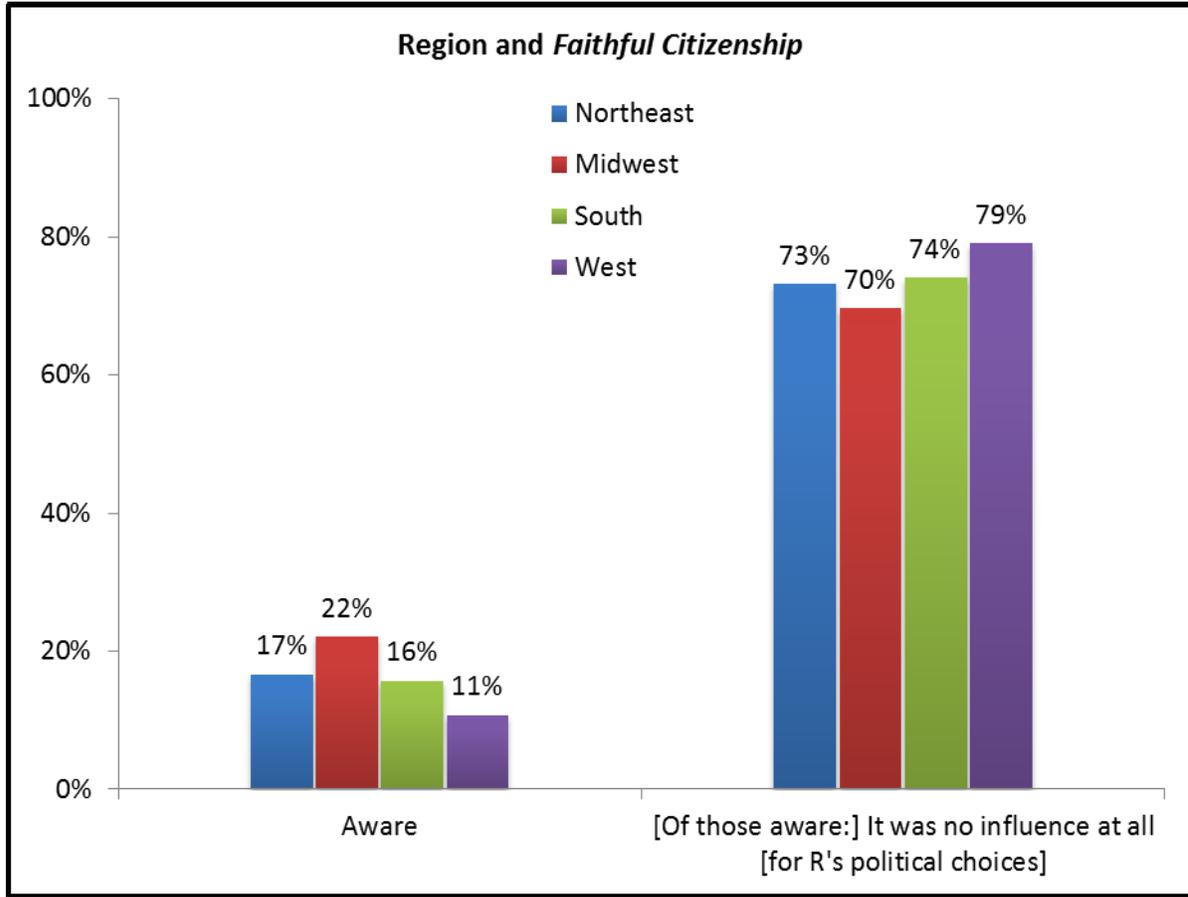
Of those adult Catholics who are aware of *Faithful Citizenship*, Millennials are among the most likely to say they became aware of this through “word of mouth” (21 percent). Only 1 percent of Millennials aware of *Faithful Citizenship* say that is was a “major influence” on their political choices in 2008.

Pre-Vatican II Catholics (age 69 or older in 2011) are the least similar to Millennials in their awareness, perception, and use of *Faithful Citizenship*.

⁵ There are no statistically significant Generation sub-group differences in the percentage who say they felt the bishops outlined the moral principles in a way that left little doubt about which party or candidates they thought Catholics should support.

Region

Catholics in the Midwest are more likely than those in other regions to be aware of *Faithful Citizenship*. Among those who are aware, Catholics in the Midwest are also among the *least* likely to indicate the document had “no influence at all” on their political choices in 2008.



Gender

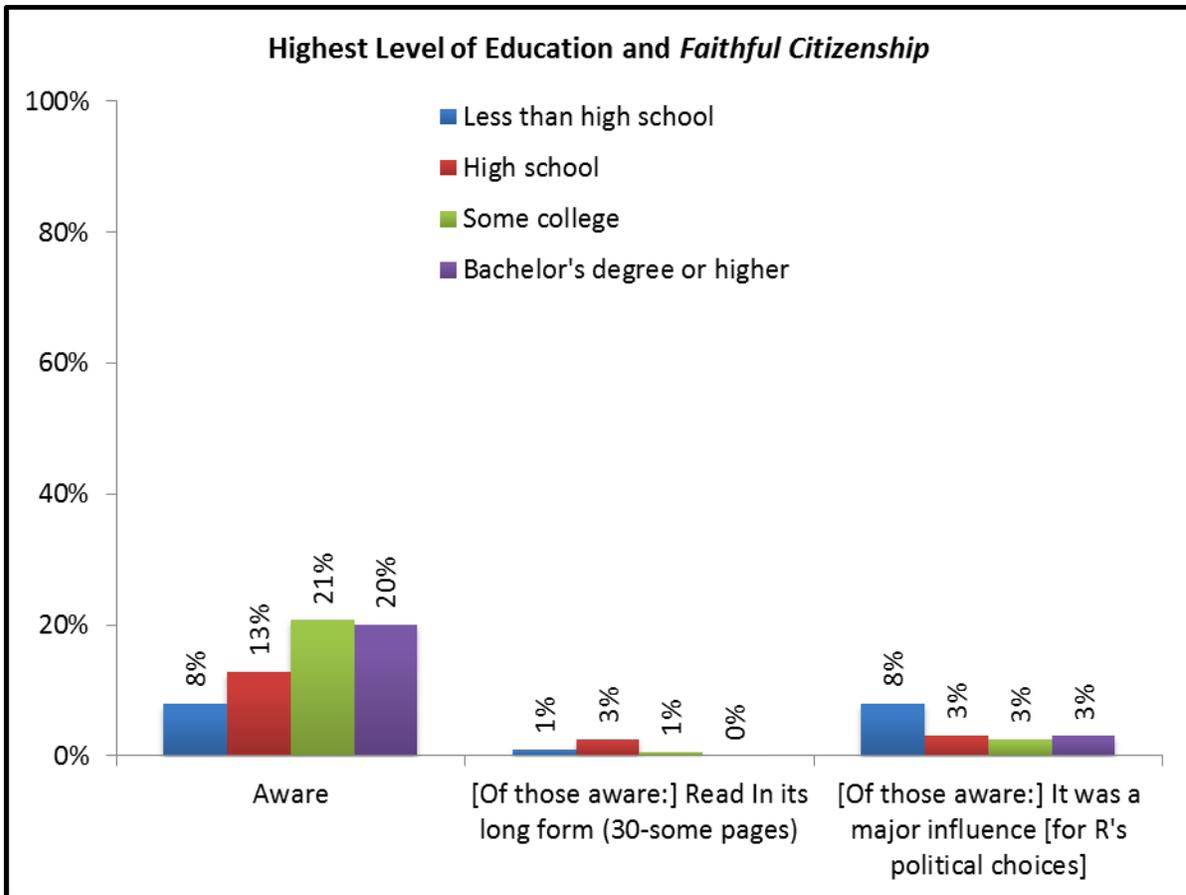
There are no statistically significant differences related to gender.

Race and Ethnicity

Non-Hispanic white respondents are more likely than Hispanic/Latino(a) respondents to say they were aware of *Faithful Citizenship* (21 percent compared to 8 percent). Hispanic/Latino(a) respondents are more likely than all other respondents to say they “didn't have an impression one way or the other” regarding the intent of the bishops’ statement (82 percent compared to 60 percent of non-Hispanic white respondents).

Education

As shown on the figure on the next page, although adult Catholics with more education are more aware of *Faithful Citizenship*, they are less likely than those with less education to have read the document or to say it influenced them.



Other Sub-group Differences

- Twenty-four percent of adult Catholics registered with a parish are aware of *Faithful Citizenship*. As one might expect, those registered are more likely than the unregistered to have indicated they heard of the bishops’ statement in church or from their parish bulletin (32 percent compared to 9 percent). *All* of the respondents that indicated reading the full-length *Faithful Citizenship* document were registered with a parish.
- There are no differences in the responses of those who attended a Catholic elementary school and those who did not. However, there are differences by Catholic high school and Catholic college or university enrollment. Twenty-six percent of those attending a Catholic secondary school or college or university were aware of *Faithful Citizenship* compared to 15 percent of those who did not attend these institutions. Seven percent of those respondents who attended a Catholic high school and who were aware of the document said it was a “major influence” on their political choices in 2008. Slightly fewer, 5 percent, of those who attended a Catholic college or university who were aware responded similarly.

- Eighteen percent of respondents who took the survey in English were aware of Faithful Citizenship compared to 5 percent of those who took the survey in Spanish.
- Catholics who entered the Church as adults (23 percent) are more likely than those who became Catholic as infants (16 percent), children (13 percent), or teens (11 percent) to be aware of the bishops' statement. However, *all* of the respondents who indicated that *Faithful Citizenship* was a "major influence" on their political choices in 2008 entered the Church as infants or children.
- Fifty-three percent of all those aware of *Faithful Citizenship* reside in households earning \$60,000 or more per year. By comparison, only 38 percent of all adult Catholics live in households with this level of income.