

**2000 to 2010:
Trends in Parish Life and Ministry
from the *Faith Communities Today*
Interfaith Research Project**

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FAITH *Communities* TODAY

OVERVIEW

- **Project Background & Resources from an interfaith perspective**
- **2010 Catholic Survey Insights**
- **Initial 2000 to 2010 Catholic Survey Comparisons**



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FAITH COMMUNITIES TODAY

Faith Communities Today (FACT) is a series of ongoing research reports about congregational life conducted by the Cooperative Congregations Studies Partnership (CCSP), an interfaith group of religious researchers and leaders. <http://faithcommunitiestoday.org/>

CCSP consists of members from 25+ different faith groups, working in conjunction with Hartford Seminary / Hartford Institute for Religion Research. The first national benchmark study was issued in 2000 with 41 groups. National studies were done in 2005 and 2008. The latest 2010 FACT research is being reported.



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PARTICIPATION

Denominations and religious groups participating can be clustered as follows:

- **Catholic**
- **Historic Black Protestant**
- **Independent Protestant**
- **Mainline Protestant**
- **Evangelical Protestant**
- **Orthodox Christian**
- **Other Christian**
- **Jewish**
- **Baha'is**
- **Muslim**



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WHO RESPONDS TO THE SURVEY?

- **A “Key Informant” in each congregation was asked to complete the survey.**
- **A “Key Informant” is a designated senior leader within a congregation.**



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TYPE OF QUESTIONS ASKED

**Data from the survey touches
on every aspect of congregational life:**

- **worship**
- **outreach**
- **organization**
- **history**
- **participation**
- **programs**
- **leadership**
- **identity & ethos**
- **location & building**
- **finances**



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RESOURCES AVAILABLE

NATIONAL RESEARCH REPORTS:

- **Conducted every 5 years, these reports have addressed useful data about aspects of congregational life such as growth, social outreach, conflict and finances**
- **Reports are currently available for 2000, 2005, 2008 – and will be for 2010.**



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RESOURCES AVAILABLE

INSIGHTS MONOGRAPHS:

These topical reports seek to connect research findings with potential steps for action. You'll find the publications easy to read and filled with helpful ideas for dealing with important issues facing your congregation today.

- [Insights Into: The Compassionate Congregation](#)
- [Insights Into: Congregational Conflict](#)
- [Insights Into: Financial Giving](#)
- [Insights Into: Church Growth](#)
- [FACTS on Growth](#)
- [Interfaith Facts: Meet your neighbor](#)



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RESOURCES AVAILABLE

E-NEWSLETTER:

Timely articles are written by experts on congregational life. Topics include congregational vitality, attracting new members, the importance of youth ministries, what small churches can learn from mega churches, how baby boomers are remaking American religion, social media as an outreach tool, and stewardship in hard times. [Subscribe to this newsletter](#) on the FACT website.



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RESOURCES AVAILABLE

WEBINARS AND ON-LINE COURSES:

Part presentation, part classroom course, part roundtable dialogue group, these webinars help you share your concerns, pose questions and learn from experts.

Go online to find out about future webinars.



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FACT INSIGHTS: FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO CONGREGATIONAL GROWTH

- **Clear sense of mission**
- **Uplifting joyful worship**
(And music matters!)
- **Strong commitment to social justice
and community outreach**

(Breadth of social ministries correlates
with high-vitality congregations)



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INSIGHTS FROM THE 2010 CATHOLIC SURVEY IN THE FACT PROJECT



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- Oldest founded in 1704 and the newest in 2010. Half are at least one hundred years old, founded in 1913 or before.
- The average parish seats about 500 people and the median seating capacity is 425.
- Half report that they have enough space for worship, parking, and religious education. A third need more space for social gatherings, meetings, and religious education and two in five need more space for parking.

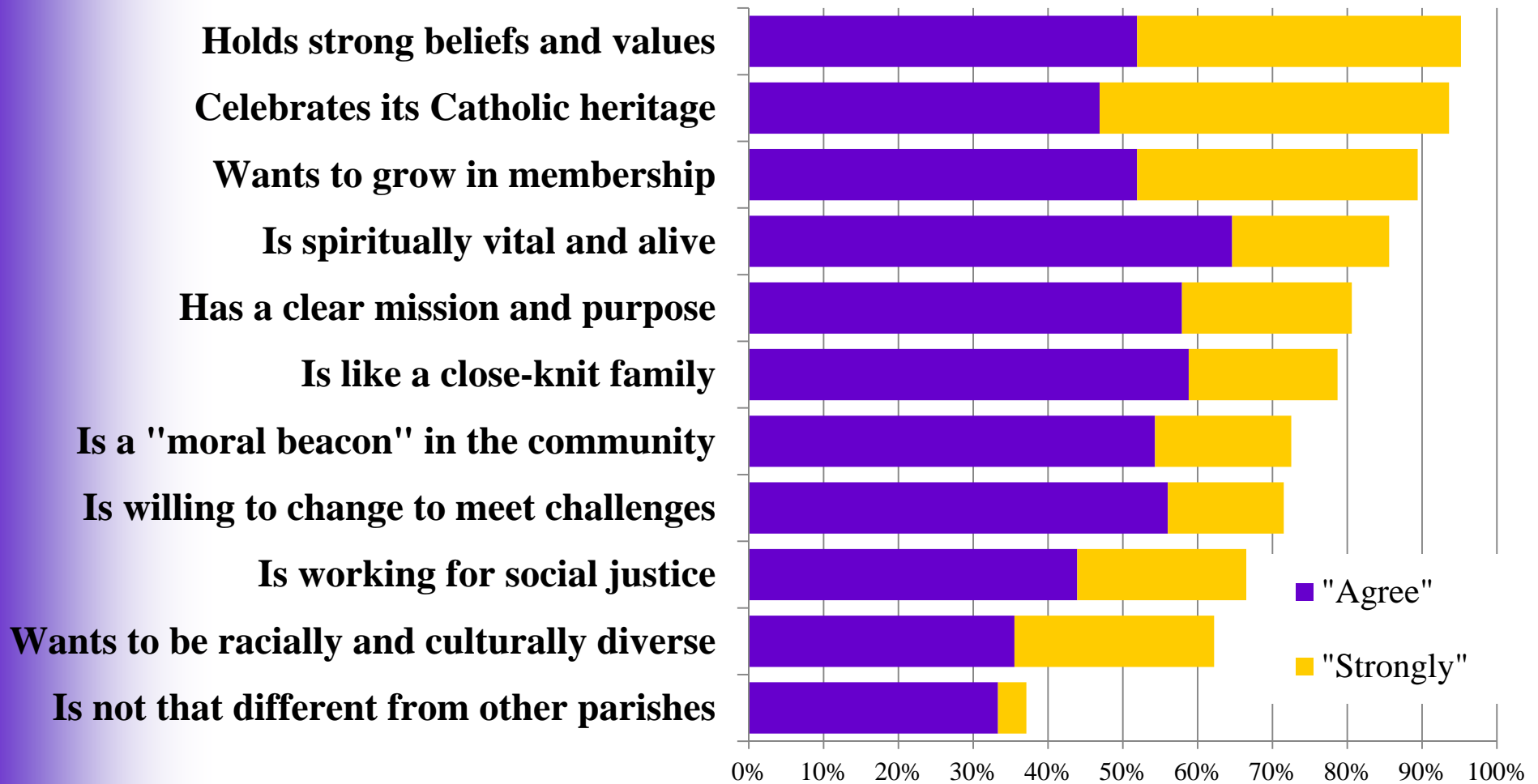


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- Three in four celebrate a Sunday Vigil Mass
- Typically have two Sunday morning Masses, but 28% have one and 25% have three
- Median parish attendance is 555
- The average parish is filled to about 45 percent of capacity on a typical weekend, but 10 percent are filled to three-quarters of capacity or more



Our Parish...





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- Six in ten parishes are administered by one pastor with no associate pastors. A third are administered by a senior pastor with one or more associate pastors
- The average age of the parish leader is 59. Half of parishes have had this leader 5 years or less.
- The parish leader spends “a great deal” of time
 - Planning and leading worship (37%)
 - Administration, supervision, and meetings (37%)

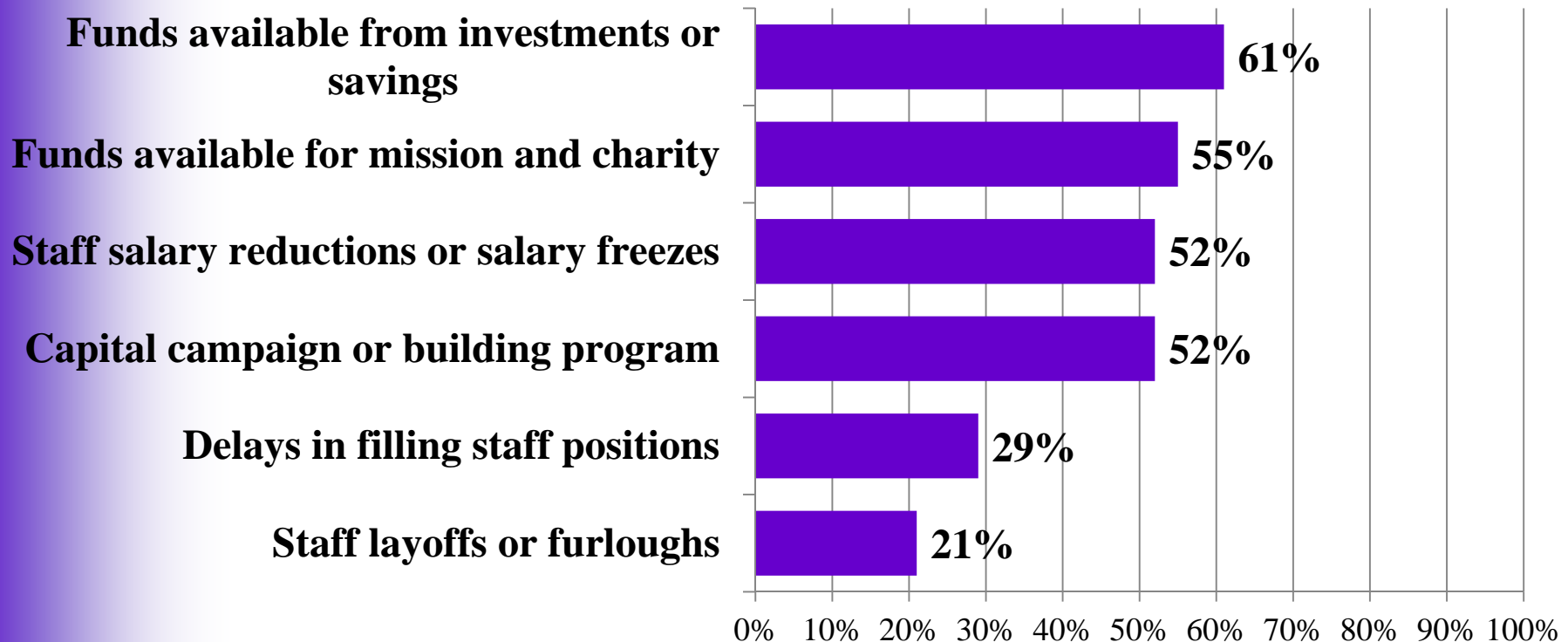


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- Median total budget of \$350,000 in 2009
- Half spent 40 percent or more of the total budget on staff salaries and benefits
- 57% report that the parish's income declined as a result of the 2008-2009 economic crisis. 13% initial decline, but has since rebounded. A fifth had no significant change in income and a tenth experienced income growth since the crisis.



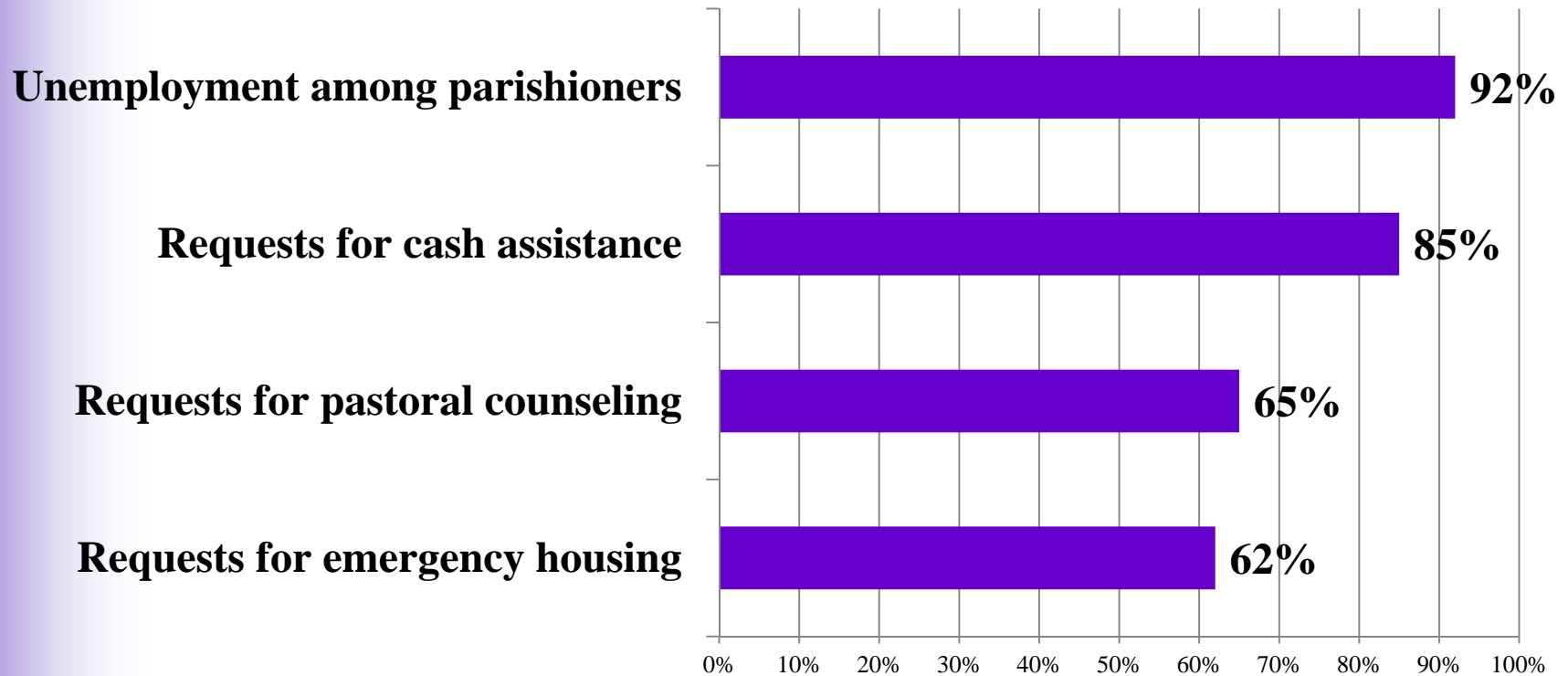
The 2008-2009 economic crisis had at least a "minor impact" on parish staff and operations in...





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The 2008-2009 economic crisis had at least a "minor impact" on individuals in...





- Nine in ten use e-mail on a regular basis
- Three in four have a parish website
- One in five use FaceBook or other social media
- Very few use blogs (5%) or podcasts (3%) on a regular basis



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**INITIAL COMPARISON
OF 2000 TO 2010
CATHOLIC SURVEY
RESPONSES**



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Sample size:

	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>
Catholic Parishes	719	395
Total congregations	14,300	11,077
Denominations/ Faith Groups	41	25+

(In 2000: 50% of all congregations had fewer than 100 regularly participating adults (RPA); 6% >1000 RPA; 52% were located in rural / small town settings)



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Parish Location:

	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>
Town <10,000 people or Rural area	41%	41%
Cities > 10,000 or Suburbs	59%	59%



Misc comparisons:

	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>
% of parishes with at least 1 Weekend Non-English Mass	almost 25%	25%
Parishes with no parish priest except for sacraments	4%	6%
Average age of pastor/leader	57	59



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Our Parish is:

2000

(Does Very well/
Quite well)

2010

(Strongly agree/
Agree)

**Spiritually vital
and alive**

73%

86%

**Clear mission
and purpose**

56%

81%



How would you describe your parish's financial health?

<u>2000</u>		<u>2010</u>	
1995 (5 years ago)	2000 (Currently)	2005 (5 years ago)	2010 (Currently)
<u>Responses "Good" or "Excellent"</u>			
47%	68%	43%	40%
<u>Responses "Tight but we manage"</u>			
33%	25%	31%	40%
<u>Responses "Some" to "Serious" "Difficulty"</u>			
20%	7%	25%	20%



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Available space:

2000

2010

Need more space for:

Worship

25%

15%

Parking

50%

39%

Religious education

50%

41%

Meetings

45%

35%

Social gatherings

45%

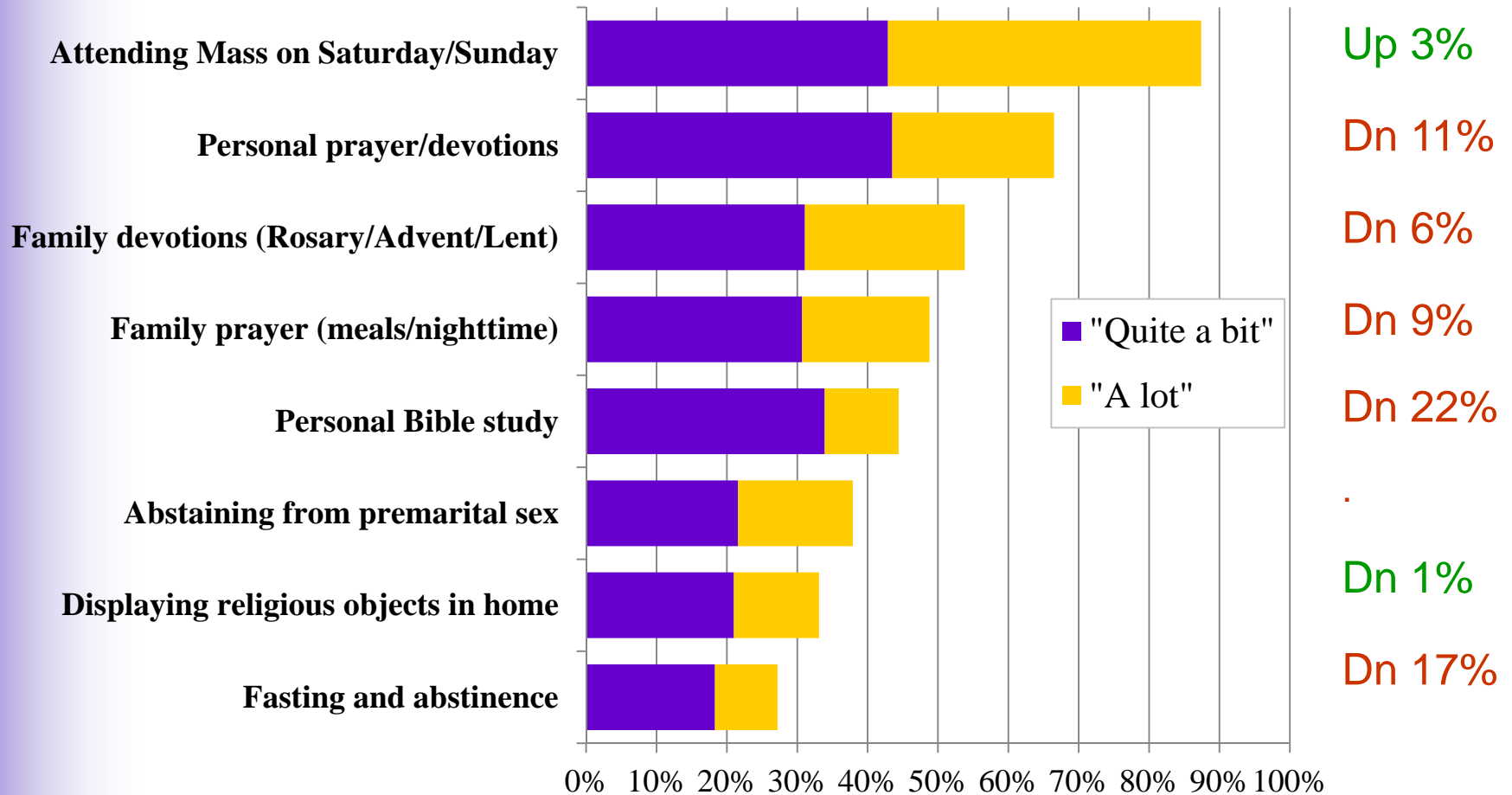
31%



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Parish emphasis on religious practices

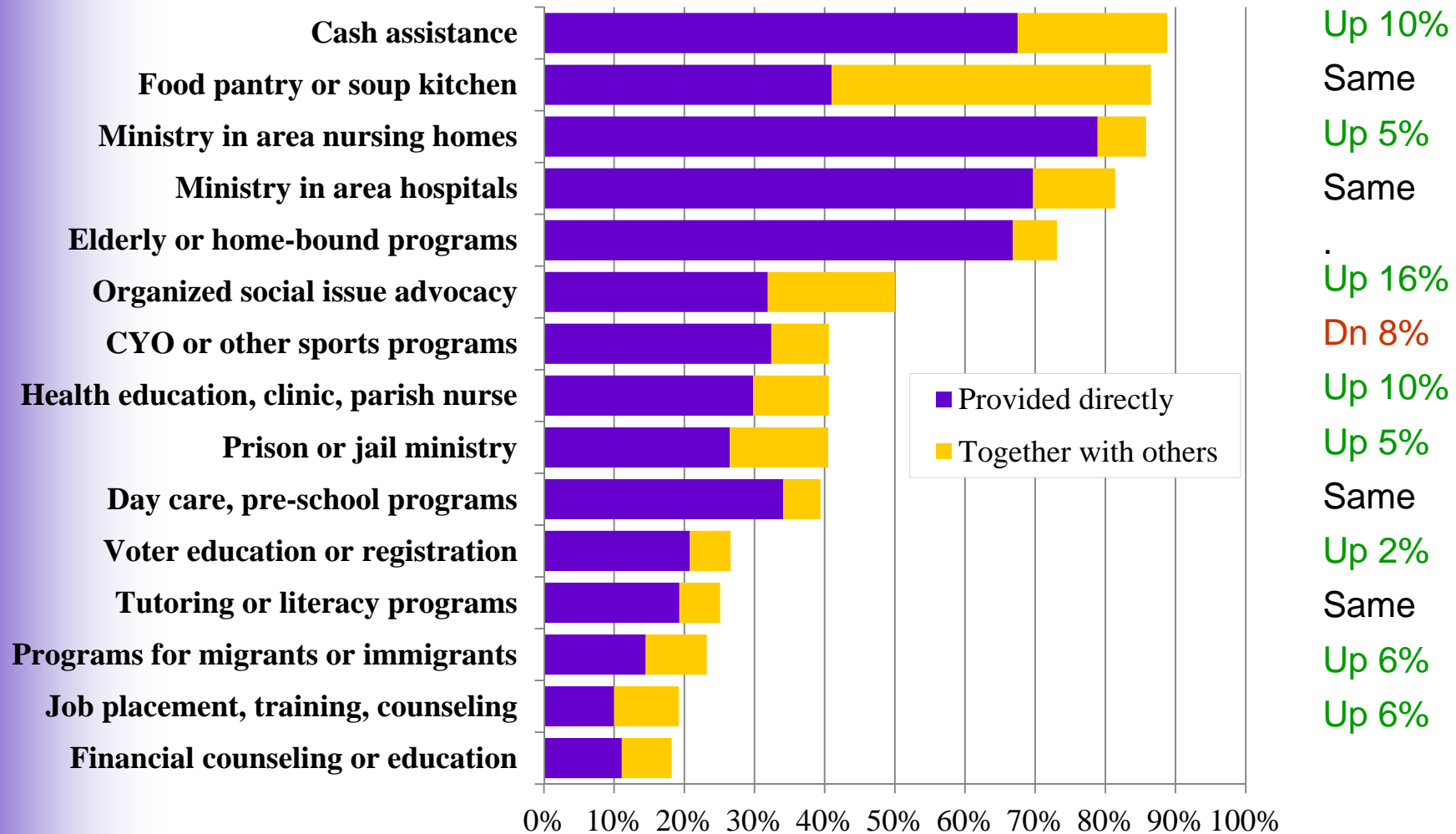
**Change
from %
In 2000**





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Parish services to the community





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Thank You!