

Ireland sees 73% increase in number of non-believers

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[Census figures released](#) by the Irish Central Statistics Office show a huge increase in the number of non-believers, as the number of self-identified Catholics continued to drop.

451,941 people in Ireland said they had no religion, and that included 347,034 Irish nationals.

The census found that "Those with no religion now account for just under 10 per cent of the population (9.8%)."

The group stating that they had no religion saw the largest percentage increase by far.

20 to 39-year-olds made up 45% of the non-religious group.

The number of Catholics in Ireland has fallen by 132,200 since the last census in 2011 (or 3.4%), and the Church of Ireland also declined by 2% in the five years between censuses.

The census report said that while "Ireland remains a predominantly Catholic country" the "percentage of the population who identified as Catholic on the census has fallen sharply."

Back in 2011, 84.2% of Ireland's population said they were Catholic. But in the 2016 census just 78.3% identified with the Church.

The Muslim population saw rapid growth of 28.9%, as did the comparable Orthodox (37.5%) and smaller Hindu (34.1%) groups. These three were the "fastest growing religions" in percentage terms.

The Presbyterian and Apostolic churches both showed declines.

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