

The questions that the Catholic Church wishes it had never asked

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On the anniversary of the Pope's visit to Britain, the Catholic Church has been trying to spin it as having been a grand success that brought Catholics flocking back to church and had a profound effect on the religious attitudes of the population at large. In short, we're a better and more moral country because of the pope's little outing.

As many as 20,000 secularists marched through the streets of London to protest against the state visit of Pope Benedict in 2010.

Except that, according to an opinion poll commissioned by the Catholic Church itself, hardly anyone remembers that it actually happened. And 91% said it made no difference to their moral outlook at all. Strangely, the Church doesn't seem anxious to draw attention to the results of this poll, which was carried out by Opinion Research Business among 2,049 adults.

In fact, 29% of those who were questioned said they couldn't remember hearing or seeing anything about the visit. 6% of those who say they did recall that the visit happened say they can't remember a thing about it.

Of the individual events — meeting the Queen, speaking in Parliament, meeting the Prime Minister — typically only 1% — or less — of those who had any memory of the visit recalled them. (A few were up to 5%.)

The biggest proportion of those who recalled anything about the visit (albeit only 11%) remembered the NSS's campaign about the enormous cost of the jamboree to the taxpayer.

And as for the impact it had — 91% of respondents said the pope's visit made no difference whatsoever to their personal or spiritual values.

Asked for their opinion of the pope, 41% said that it was "unfavourable" or "very unfavourable"; only 25% said it was "favourable" or "very favourable".

Other questions asked:

"How favourable is your opinion of the Catholic Church?"

Favourable/very favourable 21%

Unfavourable/very unfavourable 59%

I am satisfied with the Pope's apology for the child abuse scandal

Strongly Agree/Agree: 24%

Strongly Disagree/Disagree: 58%

The right steps are being taken to avoid a repeat of the child abuse scandal

Strongly Agree/Agree: 21%

Strongly Disagree/Disagree: 45%

Catholic Church is out of touch with today's society

Strongly Agree/Agree: 70%

Strongly Disagree/Disagree: 15%

The Catholic Church is, on balance, a force for good

Strongly Agree/Agree: 32%

Strongly Disagree/Disagree: 43%

The pope's visit was good for Britain

Strongly Agree/Agree: 32%

Strongly Disagree/Disagree: 37%

Religion is on balance a force for good

Strongly Agree/Agree: 51%

Strongly Disagree/Disagree: 30%

To which religious group do you belong?

Christian 53%; None 36%; Muslim 2%; Hindu 1%; Jew 1%; Sikh 1%; Buddhist 1%

The UK should guard against aggressive forms of secularism

Strongly Agree/Agree: 62%

Strongly Disagree/Disagree: 16%

[NSS comment: no definition of 'aggressive secularism' was given]

"There is a place for God, religion and virtue in public life"

Strongly Agree/Agree 58%

Strongly Disagree/Disagree 25%

[NSS comment: by throwing "virtue" into the mix, they got the answer they wanted. Who would say that there was no room for virtue in public life?]

Religious people should not have to keep their religious views to themselves because of political correctness

Strongly Agree/Agree: 67%

Strongly Disagree/Disagree: 18%

[NSS comment: throwing the ill-defined bogeyman of 'political correctness' into the question renders the answer meaningless]

[See the full results here](#)

See also: [Thousands protest against the pope in Berlin](#)