

The Persecution of Christians Around the World

2nd Annual National Catholic Survey

March 2019

The survey aims to measure US Catholic perceptions of the persecution of Christians around the world

- **The extent to which American Catholics are aware of the persecution of Christians around the world;**
- **The countries and regions where they think Christians are most severely persecuted;**
- **Specific measures and policies they want the US and other Western governments to pursue;**
- **The extent to which US Catholics feel that the Pope, their bishops and their parishes are making the issue of the persecution of Christians a priority;**
- **Actions they believe they can and should take themselves.**

Methodology

This nationwide poll of 1,000 Catholic adults was conducted from February 4th through February 12th, 2019.

All interviews were conducted online; survey invitations were distributed randomly within predetermined geographic units.

This nationwide poll of 1,000 Catholic adults has an accuracy of +/- 3.1% at a 95% confidence interval.

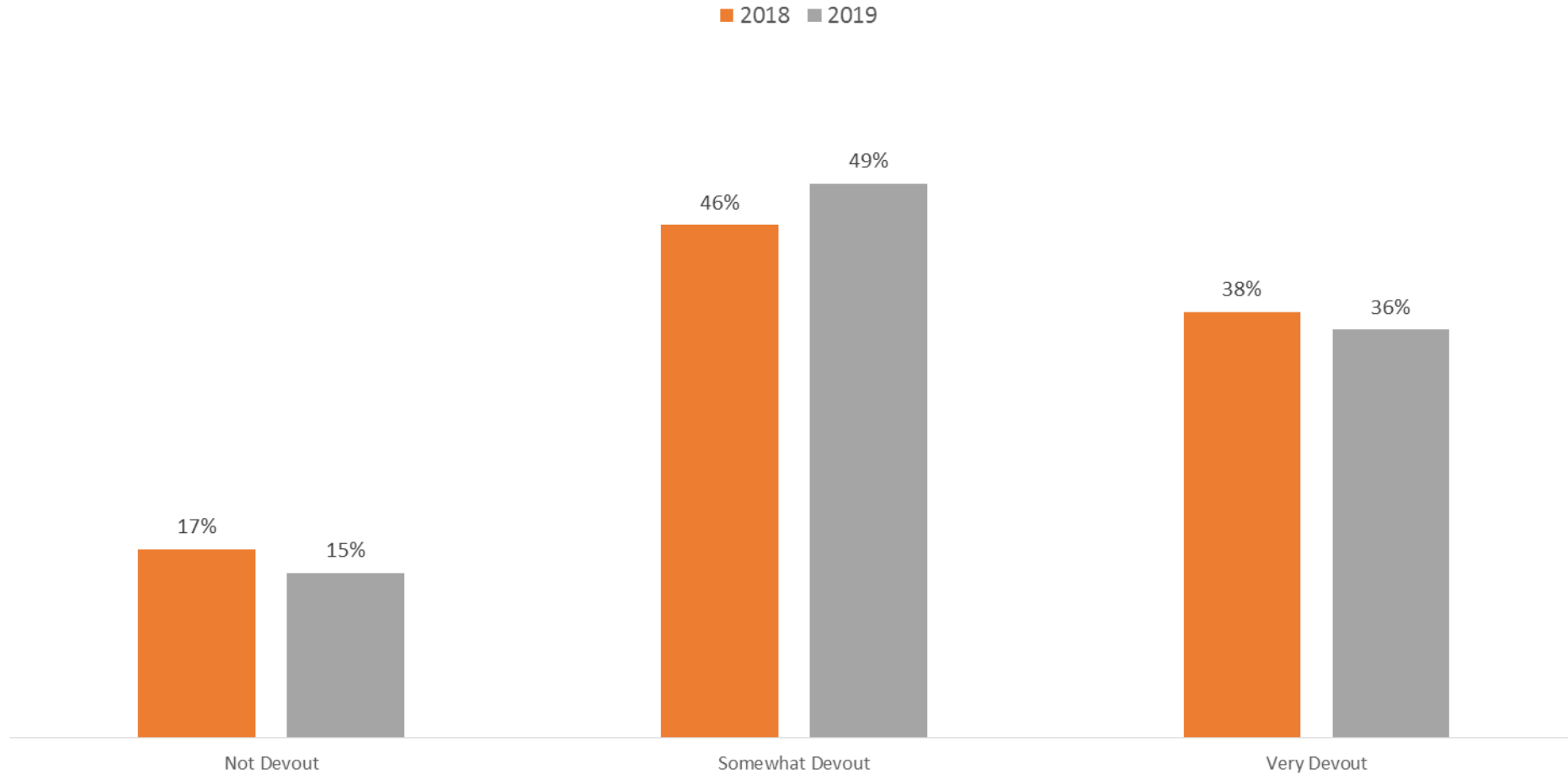
Respondents Profile

- Male 46% and Female 54%
- Age: 18-29 (19%), 30-40 (20%), 41-55 (22%), 56-65 (19%), Over 65 (19%)
- Education: 46% had a college degree or higher education
- Political affiliation: 30% Republican; 42% Democrat; 28% Independent/Other
- Racial background: White/Caucasian (58%), Hispanic (36%), African-American/Black (2%), Asian/Asian-American (3%), Other 1%.

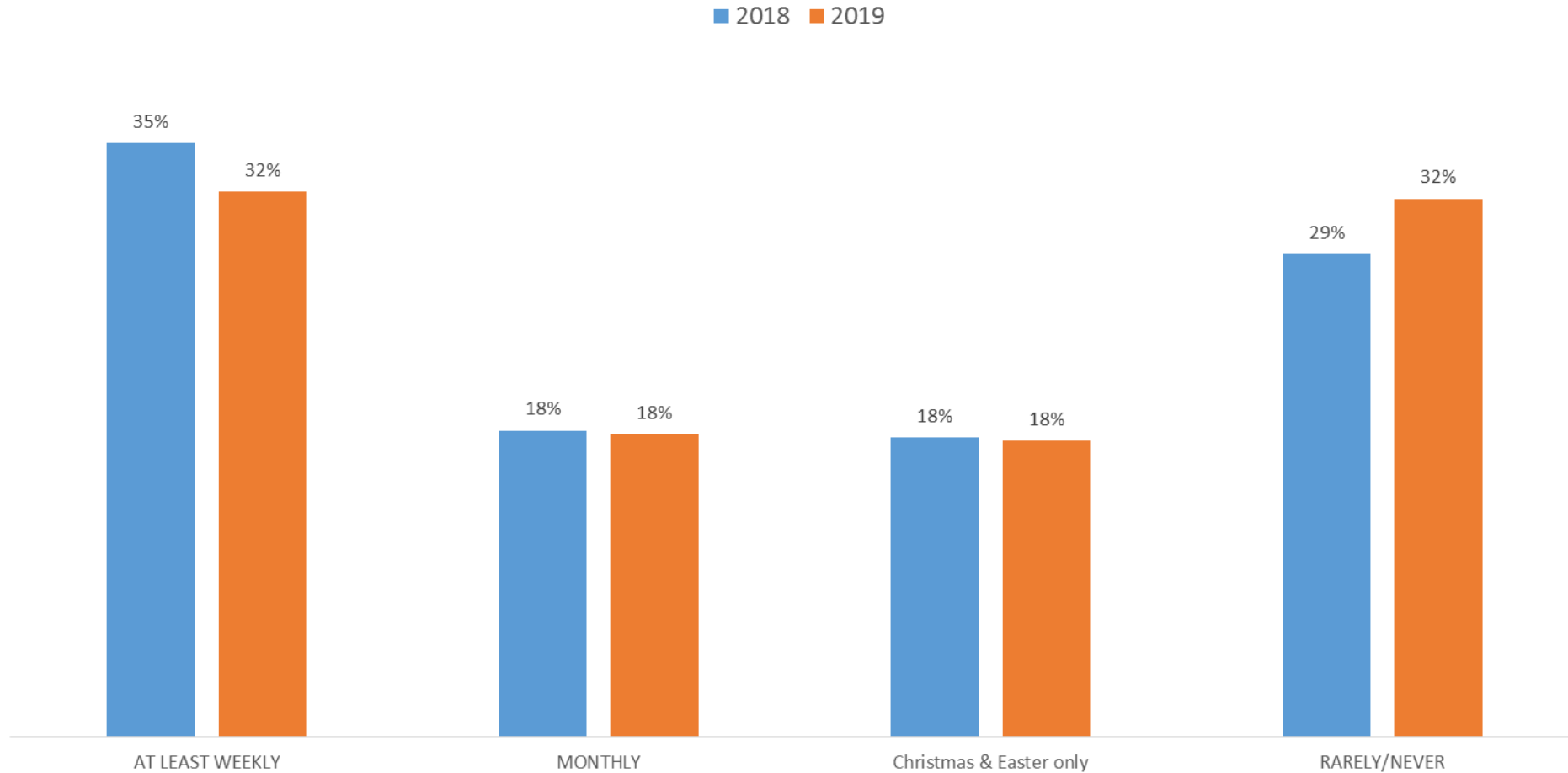
The religious profile of US Catholics

- 36% of US Catholics identify themselves as very devout; almost half (49%) think of themselves as somewhat devout, while 15% describe themselves as not devout.
- 32% of US Catholics say they attend Mass at least weekly; 18% attend Mass on a monthly basis; 18% attend Mass only on Christmas and Easter, while 32% rarely or never go to Mass.
- In terms of their religious beliefs, 30% identified themselves as liberal, 35% as moderate and 34% as conservative.

How devout a Catholic are you?



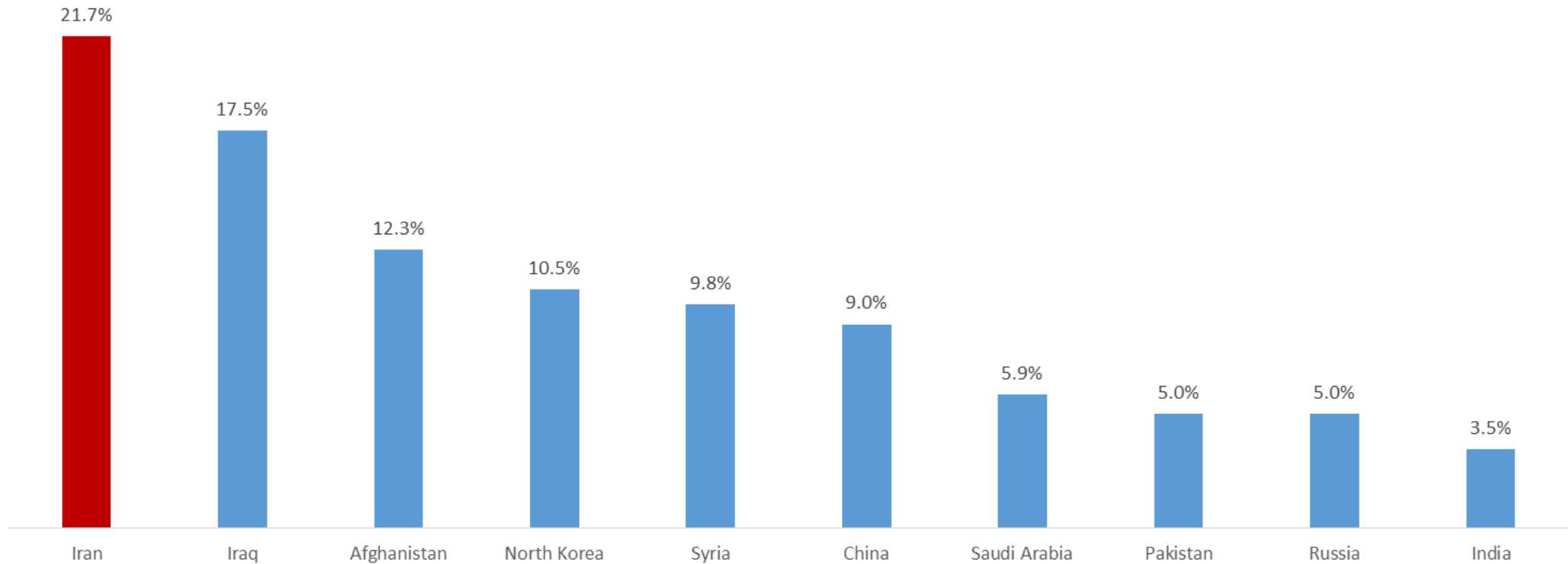
Mass Attendance



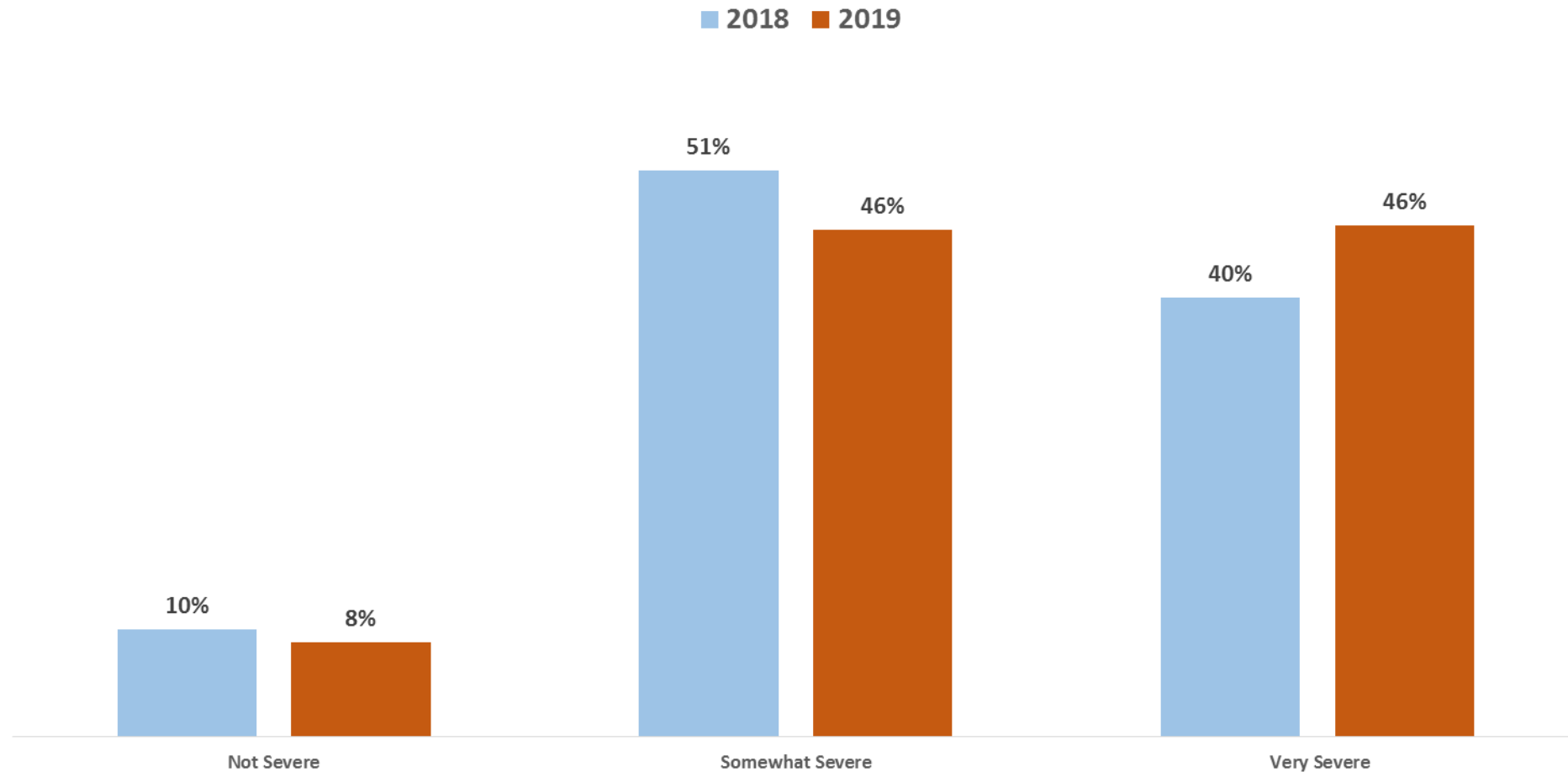
US Catholics' perceptions of the persecution of Christians around the world

- 46% of Catholics believe that the persecution of Christians around the world is “severe,” while 46% consider it to be “somewhat severe;” 39% of Catholics say that half or more of religiously-based attacks around the world are directed at Christians.
- When ranking the severity of the persecution of Christians around the world, US Catholics ranked Iran as the country where Christians are most severely persecuted.
- **However, when asked to rank their concerns about global issues, US Catholics ranked the persecution of Christians as less important than three other global issues. The percentage of US Catholics very concerned about global issues was: human trafficking 82%, poverty 74%, refugee crisis 60%, persecution of Christians 58%, and climate change 57%.**

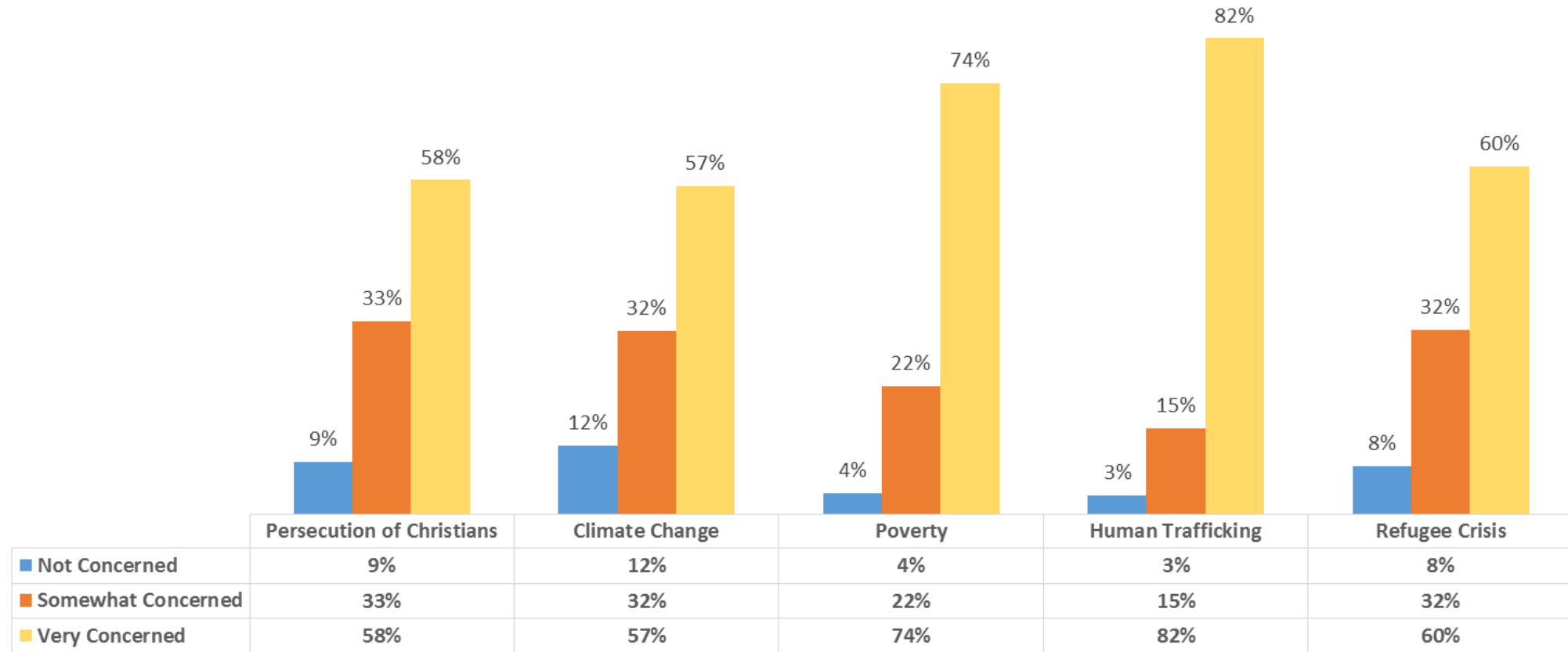
Countries where US Catholics believe the persecution of Christians is most severe



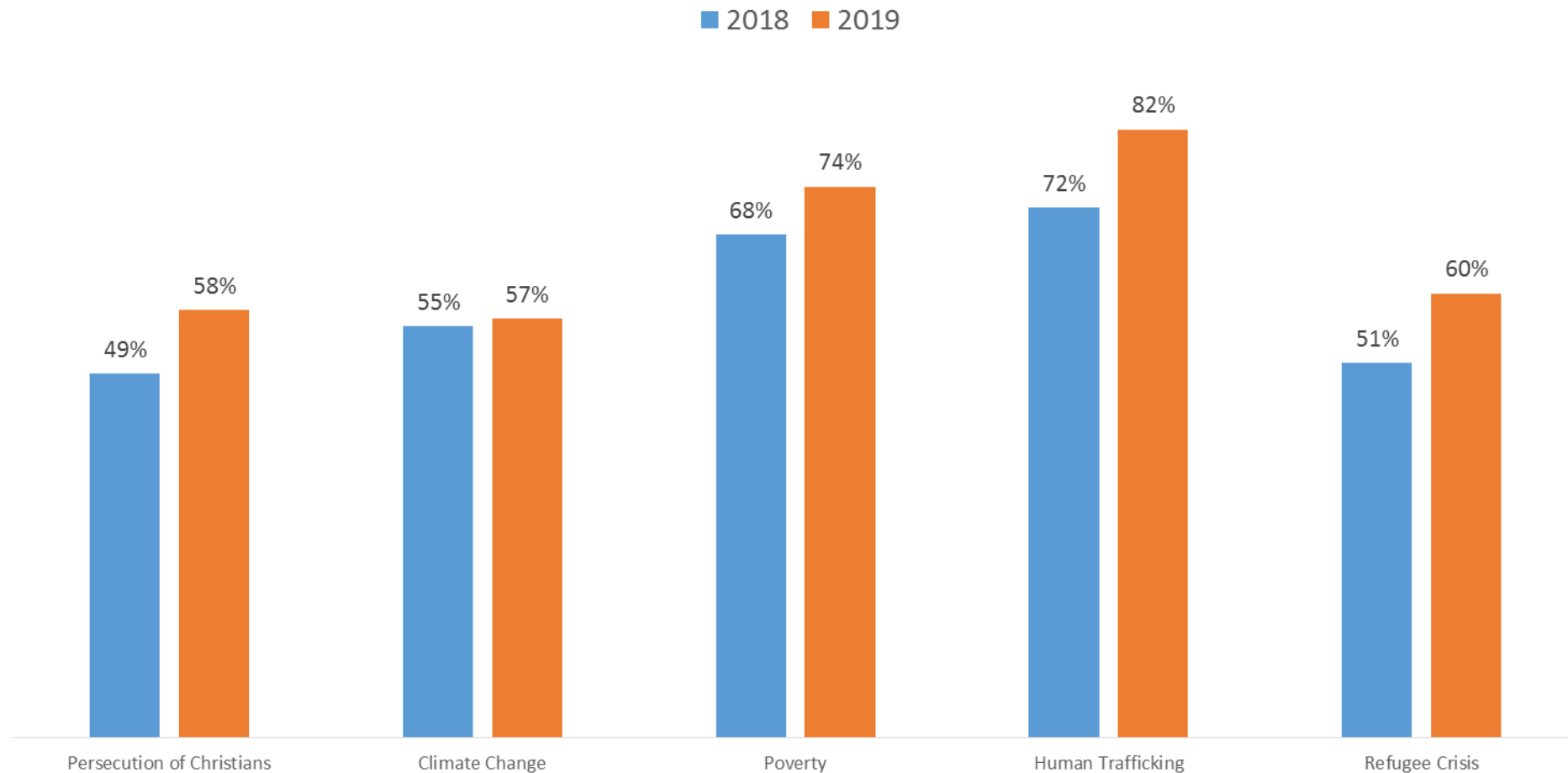
Perception of the severity of the persecution of Christians around the world



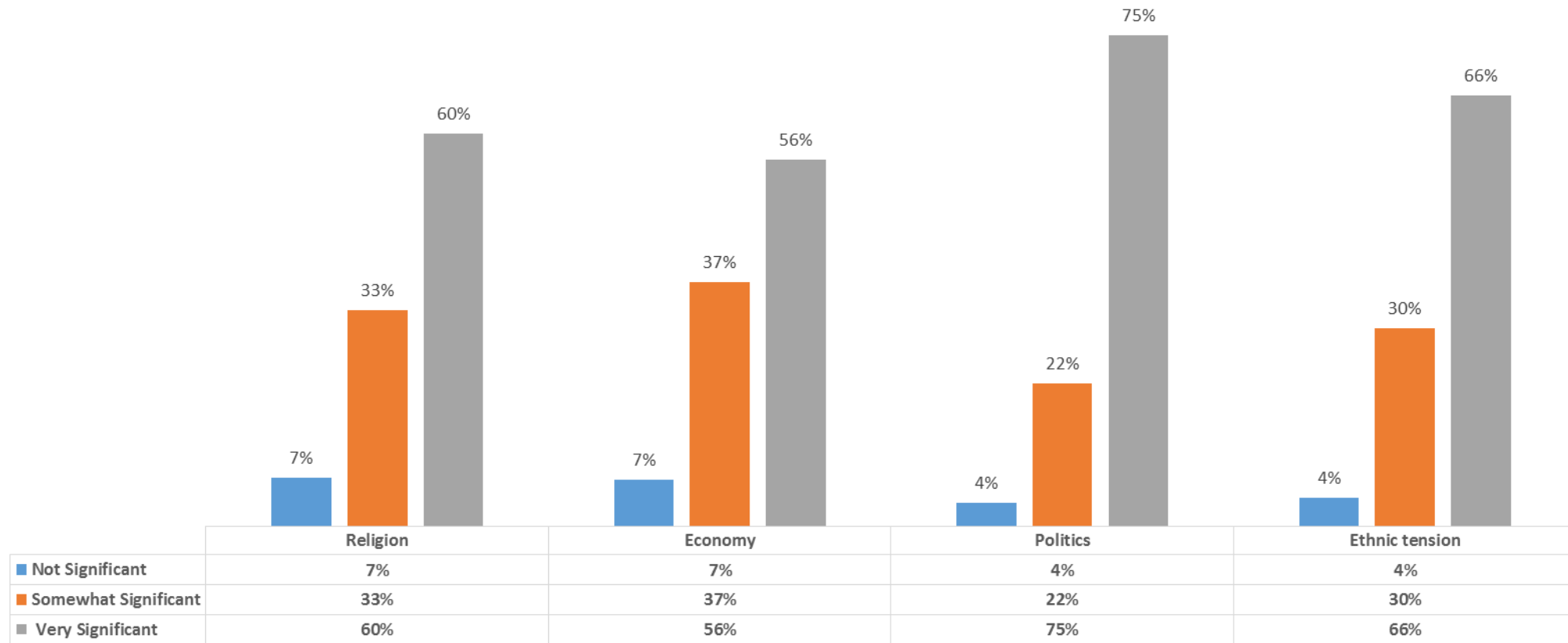
Ranking of global issues - 2019



Ranking of global issues compared to prior year



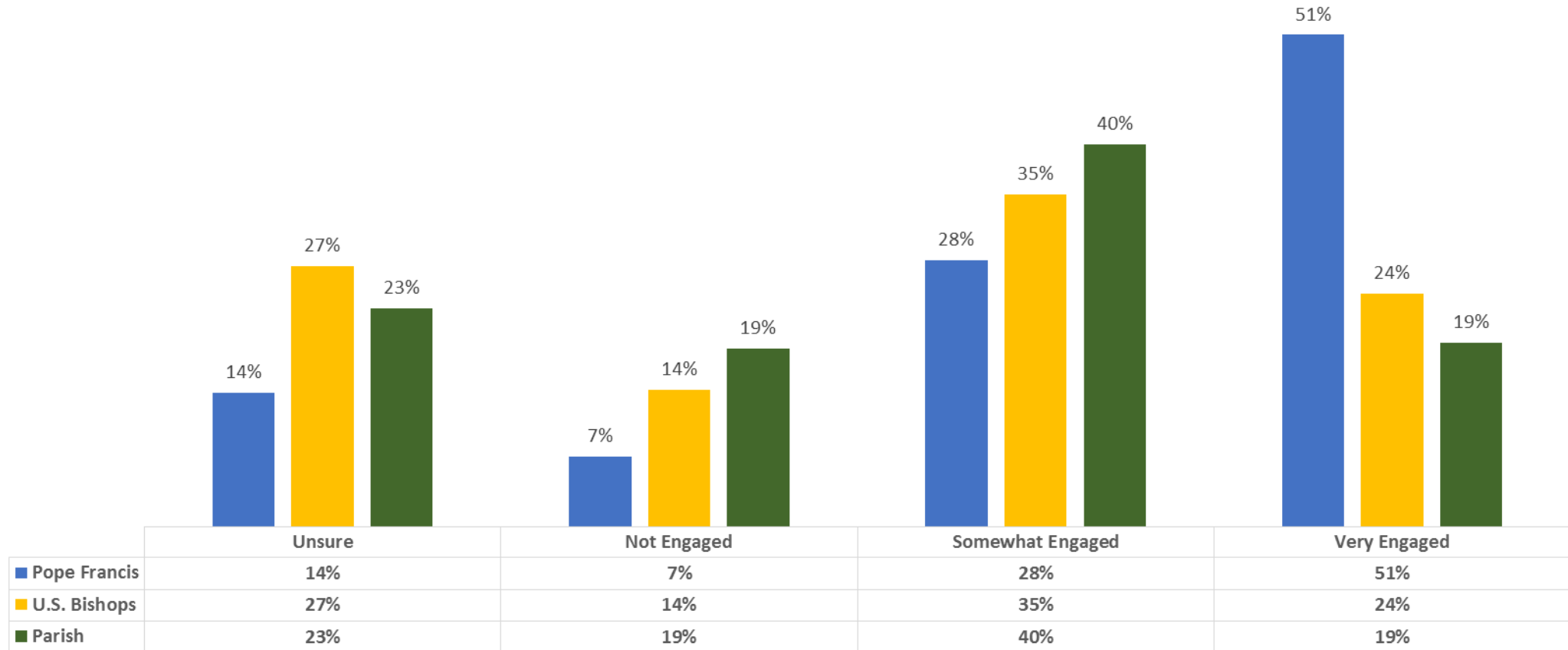
Ranking the main causes of conflict around the world



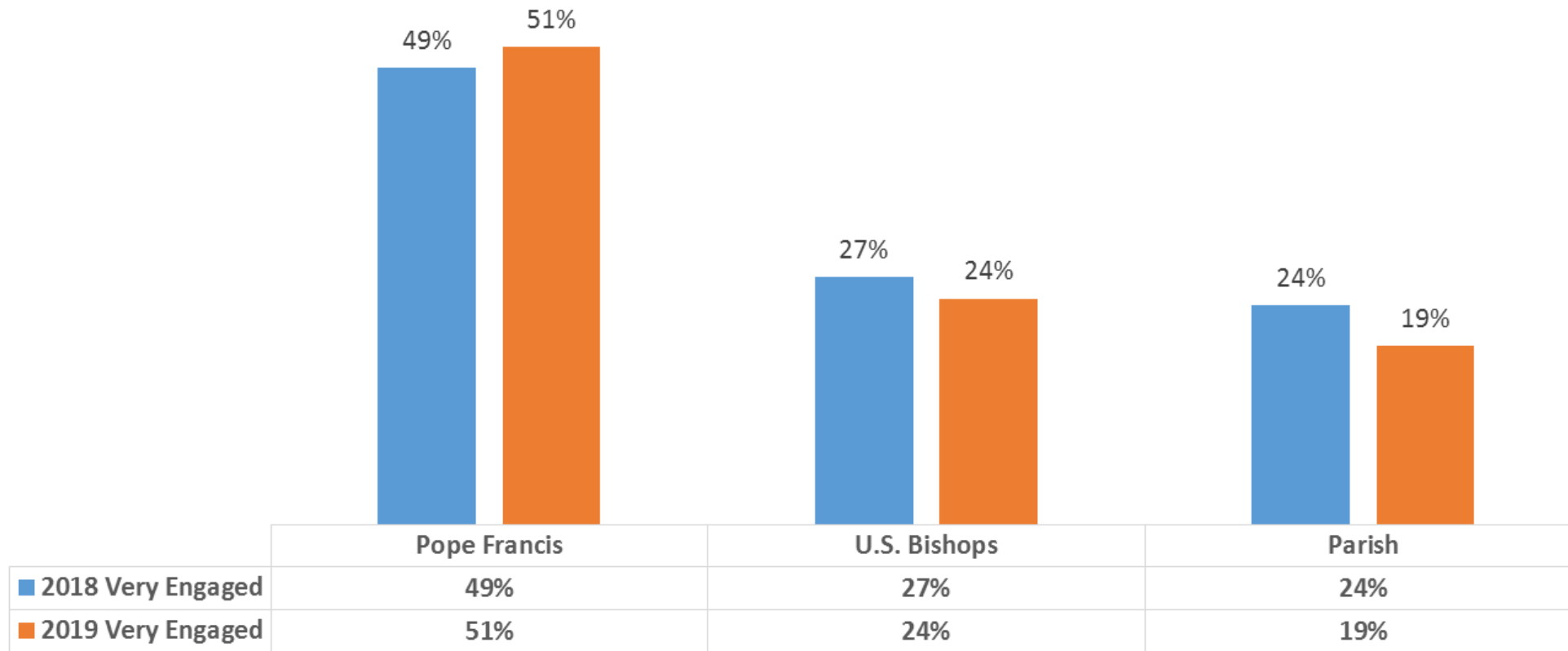
The US Catholic Church and the persecution of Christians

- Fifty-one percent of US Catholics say that Pope Francis is “very engaged” on the issue of the persecution of Christians, while only 24% think their local bishop is “very engaged” and only 19% believe their parish is very involved with the issue.
- By contrast, 7% of US Catholics say Pope Francis is “not engaged” on the issue of persecution of Christians, while 14% indicate their local bishop is not engaged and 19% of US Catholics feel that their parishes are not involved.
- A significant number of US Catholics is unsure about the engagement level of the Catholic Church on the issue of the persecution of Christians; 14% do not know the engagement level of the Pope, 27% are unsure about the engagement level of their bishop, while 23% do not know the engagement level of their parish.

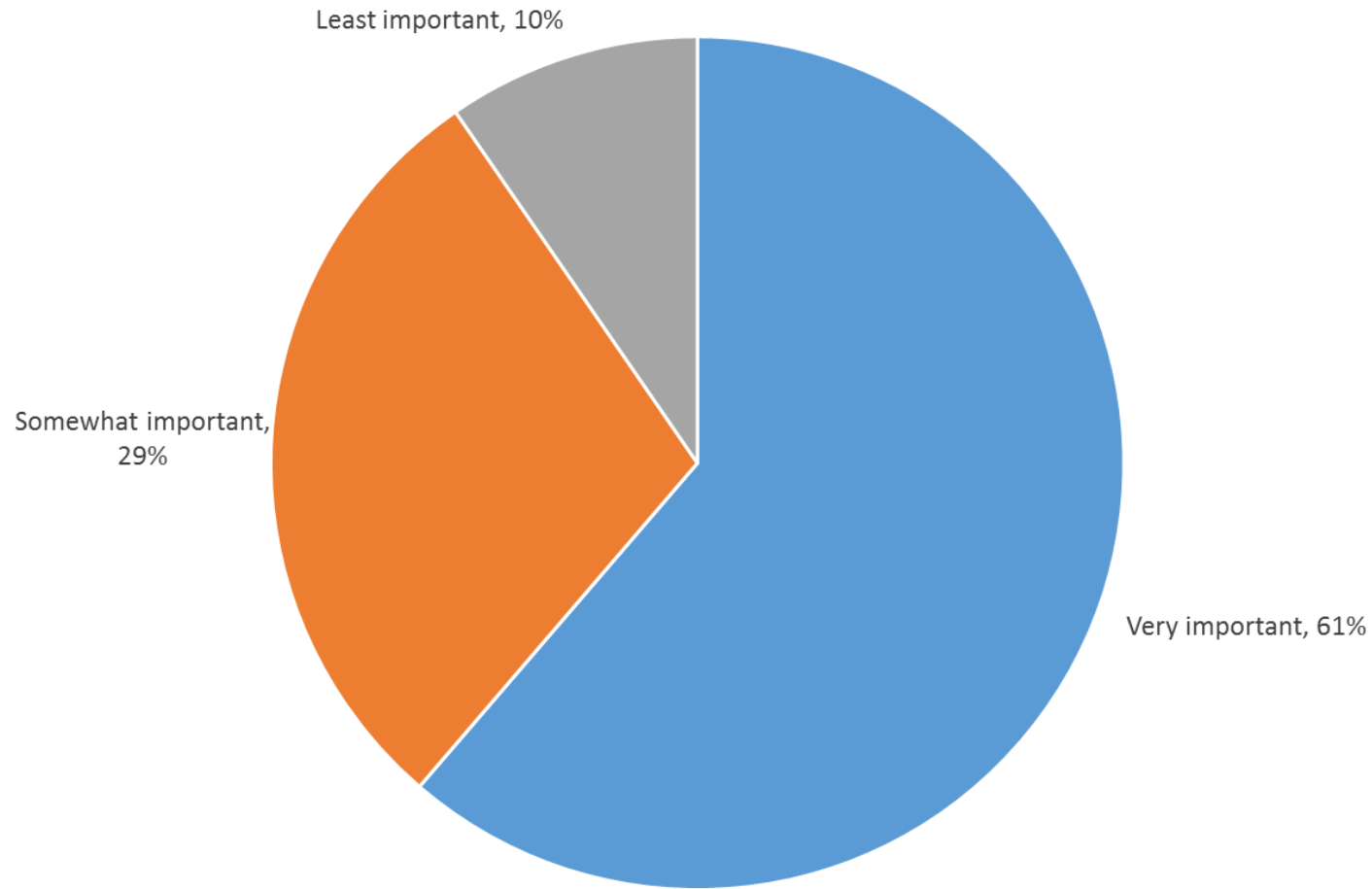
Engagement of the institutional Church with the issue of the persecution of Christians - 2019



Perception of the highest engagement level of the institutional Church on the issue of the persecution of Christians – 2019 vs 2018



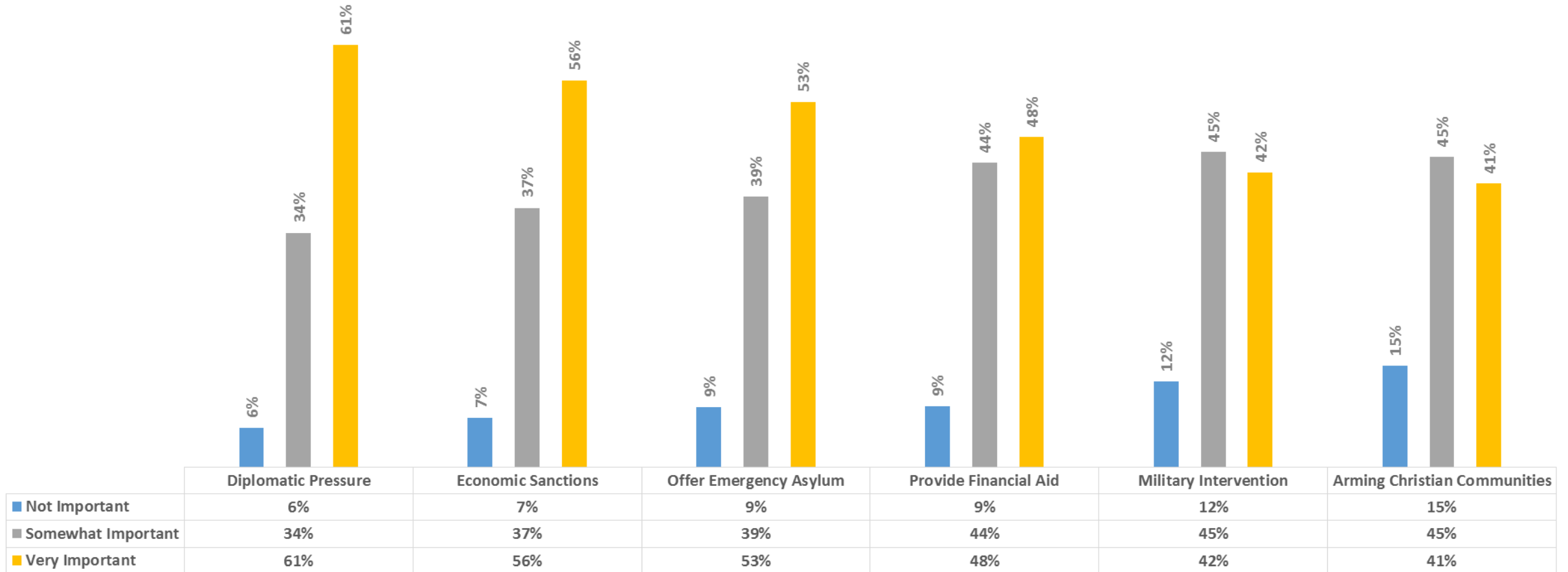
The majority of US Catholics say it is “very important” for the Church to directly provide humanitarian aid to persecuted Christians



Policies and actions to deter the persecution of Christians

- The majority of American Catholics say that it is important for the U.S. and other Western countries to pursue certain policies to deter the persecution of Christians around the world.
- Diplomatic pressure on countries is seen as “very important” by 61% of American Catholics; 56% ranked economic sanctions as very important; 53% favored emergency asylum; and 48% chose financial aid to persecuted Christian communities as very important.
- Important, but less so than other policies, were ranked military intervention to save and protect persecuted Christians (42%), and military training and arming of Christian communities facing persecution (41%).

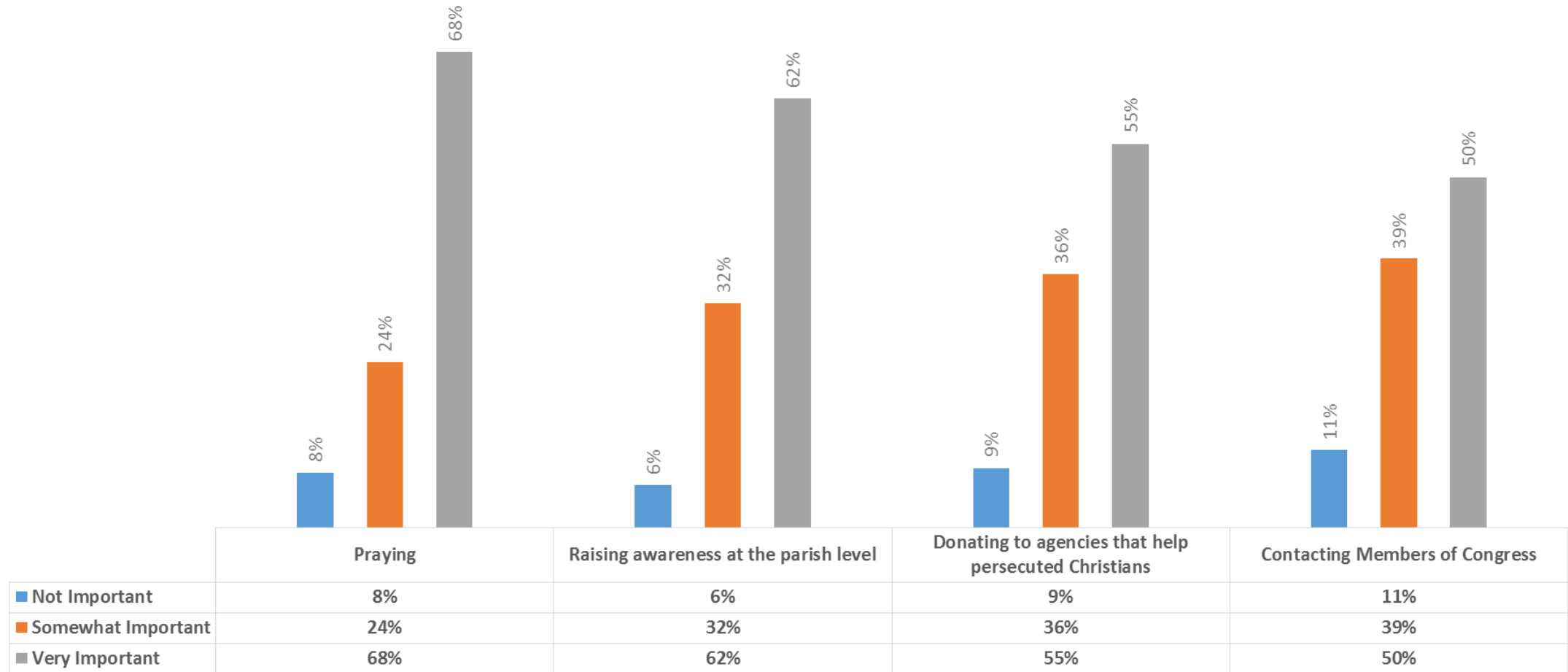
Importance of policies to save and protect persecuted Christians



Personal initiatives to help persecuted Christians around the world

- The majority of American Catholics agree that it is important to be engaged as a community with various initiatives that help persecuted Christians around the world
- 68% of US Catholics ranked prayer as “very important” to help persecuted Christians, followed by raising awareness at the parish level (62%), donating to agencies that help persecuted Christians (55%), and contacting Members of Congress (50%).

Importance of personal initiatives to help persecuted Christians



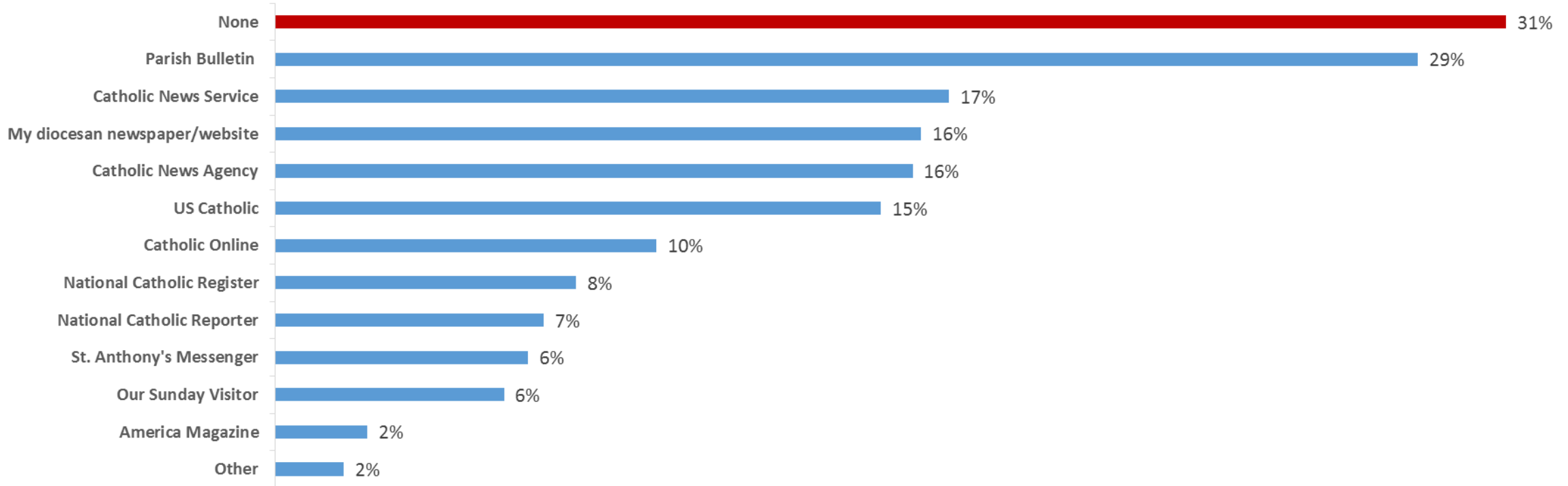
Supporting organizations that help persecuted Christians

- Just over half of US Catholics say that they have donated in the prior year to an organization that helps persecuted Christians. However, 48% have not made any donation.
- Giving increases among regular Mass-goers. The majority of those who do not regularly attend Mass do not give to any organization.

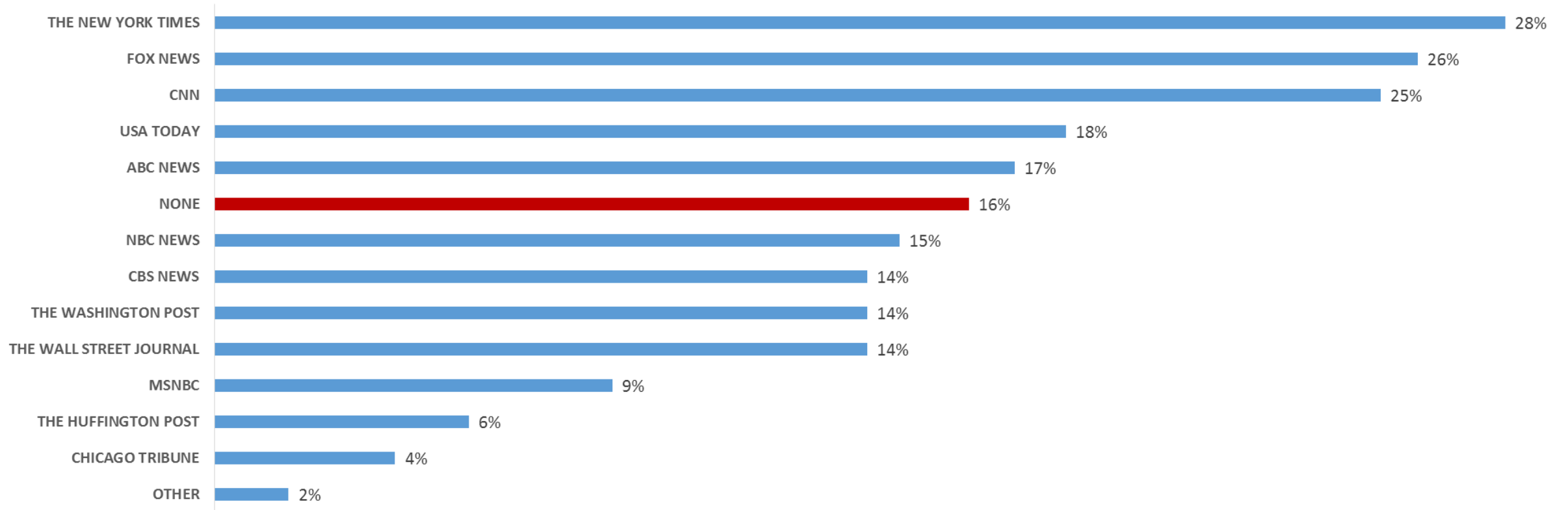
Media engagement of US Catholics

- 29% of US Catholics trust their parish bulletin the most as a source of Catholic news, while 31% don't trust any Catholic news organization; and 16% don't trust any major secular news organization.
- The top four sources of Catholic news are: the parish bulletin (29%), Catholic News Service (17%), diocesan newspaper or website (16%), and Catholic News Agency (16%).
- The top four sources of secular news are: The New York Times (28%), Fox News (26%), CNN (25%), and USA Today (18%).

Which of the following Catholic news organizations do you trust most?



Which of the following secular news organizations do you trust most?



“The rise of ISIS and other jihadist groups in Iraq and Syria ripped apart the fabric of ancient Christian communities. Yet, our survey shows that even after eight years of a brutal war and terror in the region, US Catholics are still not fully aware of the magnitude of the suffering of Christians targeted with brutal suppression and even genocide.

It is telling that human trafficking, poverty and the refugee crisis get more attention from US Catholics than the persecution of Christians. Those other issues are important of course and do need our attention; they benefit, of course, from ample major media attention. Christian persecution mostly fails to make headlines in the mainstream media.

The survey strongly suggests that the US Catholic Church, both at the parish and diocesan levels, should get more engaged with the global persecution of Christians around the world. There is a need to better inform and galvanize the faithful.

There is an obligation to keep the spotlight on the seriousness and pervasiveness of Christian communities being persecuted around the world.”

George J. Marlin

Chairman of Aid to the Church in Need-USA