

# The Persecution of Christians Around the World

*3<sup>rd</sup> Annual National Catholic Survey*

*March 2020*

# 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 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 6th through February 13th, 2020.

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.

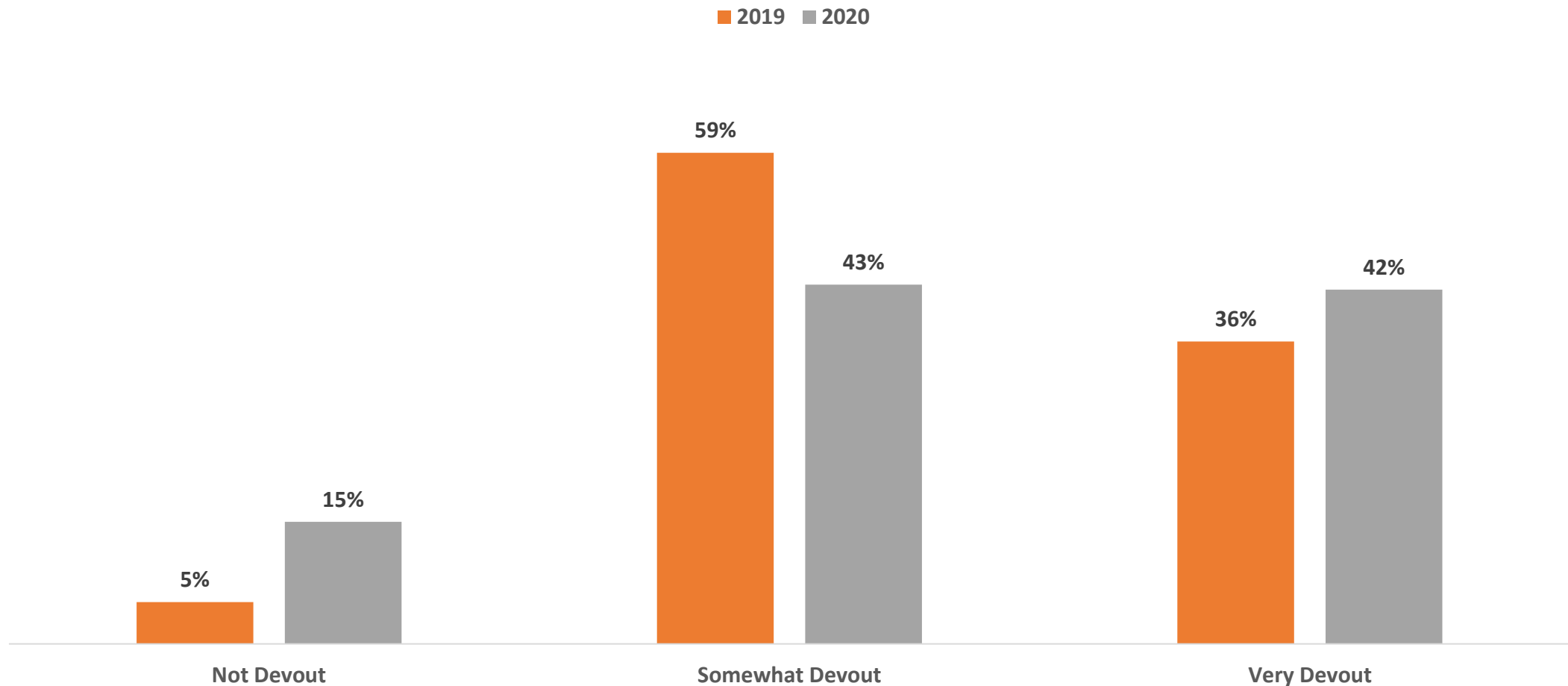
# Respondents Profile

- Male 46% and Female 54%
- Age: 18-29 (16%), 30-40 (17%), 41-55 (21%), 56-65 (21%), Over 65 (25%)
- Education: 42% has a college degree or higher level of education
- Political affiliation: 30% Republican; 46% Democrat; 24% Independent/Other
- Racial background: White/Caucasian (57%), Hispanic (35%), African-American/Black (4%), Asian/Asian-American (3%), Other 1%.

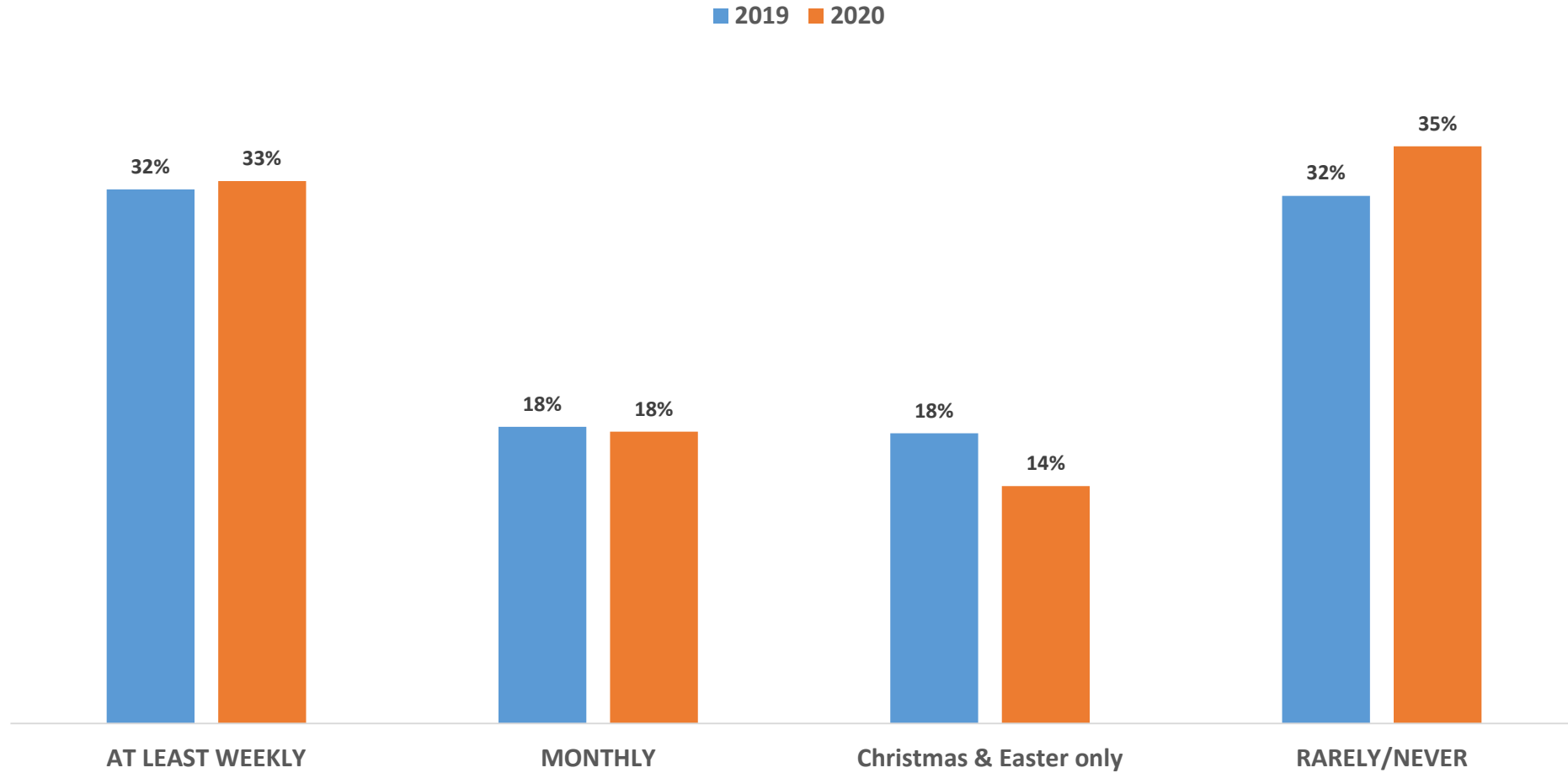
# The religious profile of US Catholics

- 42% of US Catholics identify themselves as very devout; 43% think of themselves as somewhat devout, while 15% describe themselves as not devout.
- 33% of US Catholics say they attend Mass at least weekly; 18% attend Mass on a monthly basis; 14% attend Mass only on Christmas and Easter, while 35% rarely or never go to Mass.
- In terms of their religious beliefs, 29% identify themselves as liberal, 32% as moderate and 39% as conservative.

# How devout a Catholic are you?



# Mass Attendance

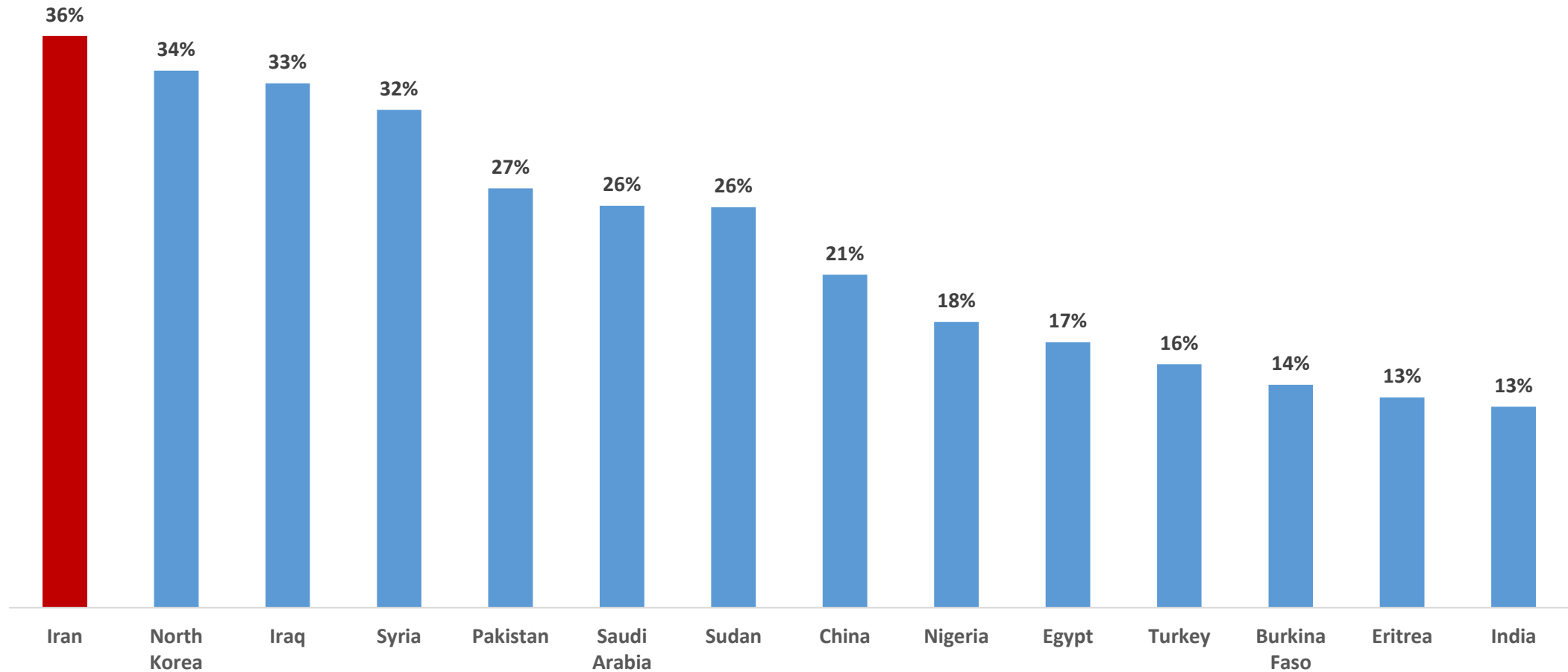


## US Catholics' perceptions of the persecution of Christians around the world

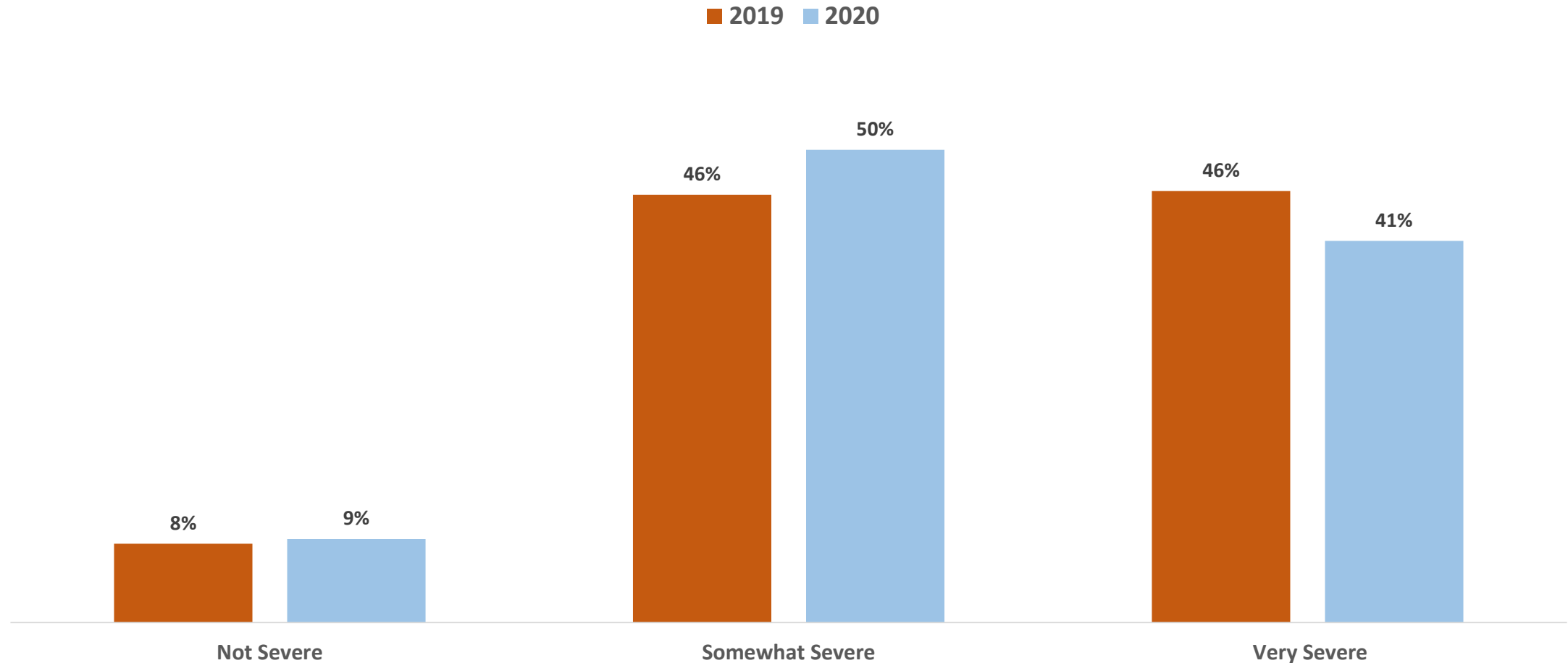
- 41% of Catholics believe that the persecution of Christians around the world is “severe,” while 50% consider it to be “somewhat severe;” 42% of Catholics say that half or more of religiously-based attacks around the world are directed at Christians.
- When ranking the severity of the persecution of Christians around the world, US Catholics rank Iran as the country where Christians are most severely persecuted.
- **However, when asked to rank their concerns about global issues, US Catholics rank the persecution of Christians as less important than four other global issues. The percentage of US Catholics very concerned about global issues is: human trafficking 79%, poverty 70%, climate change 57%, refugee crisis 55%, and the persecution of Christians 52%.**



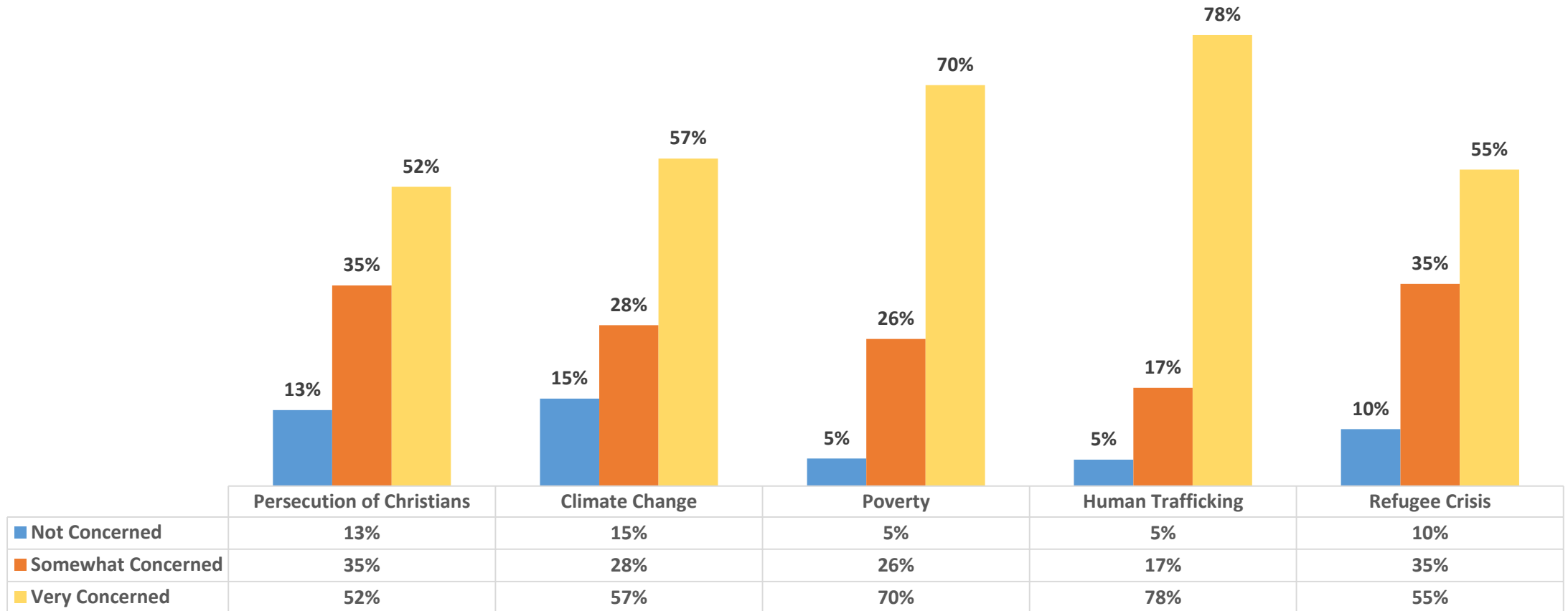
# Countries where US Catholics believe the persecution of Christians is most severe



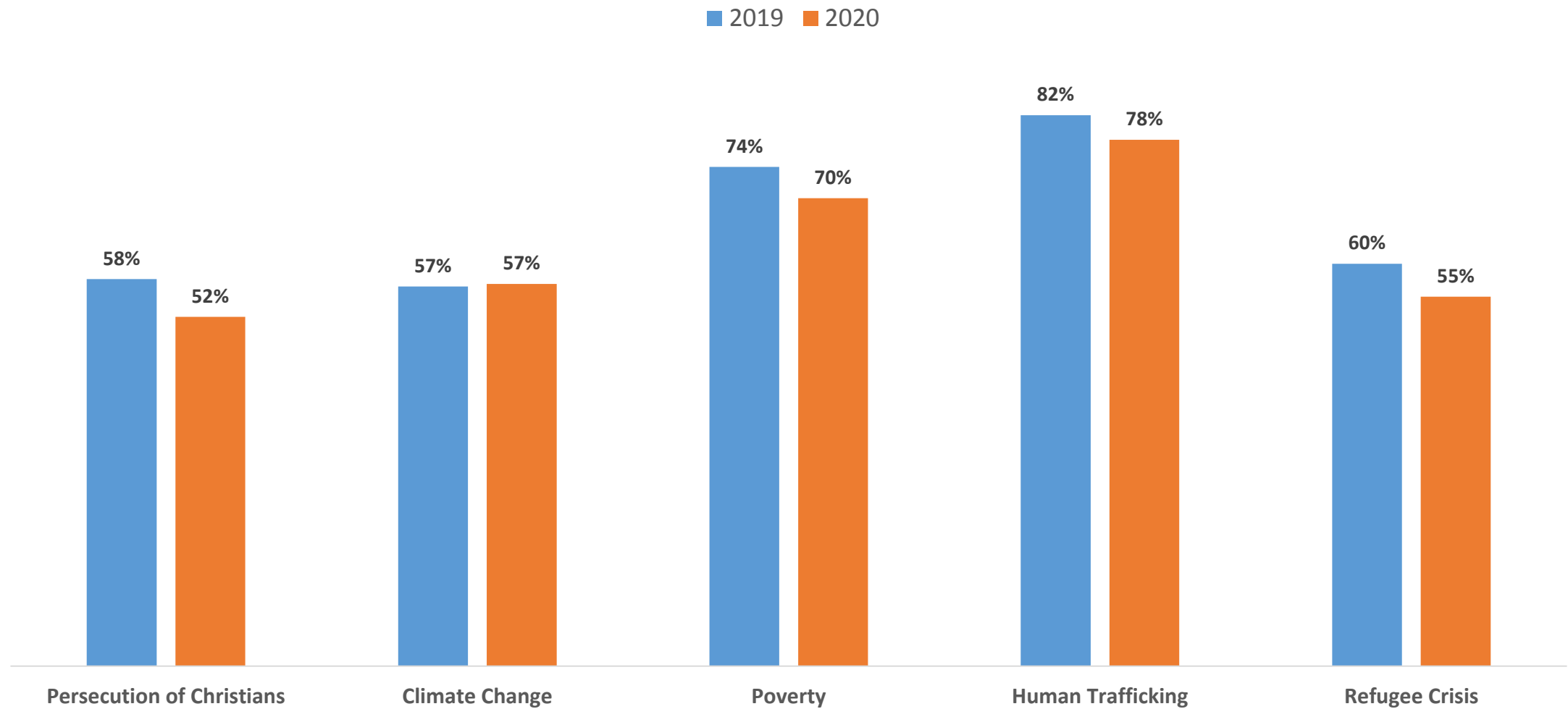
# Perception of the severity of the persecution of Christians around the world



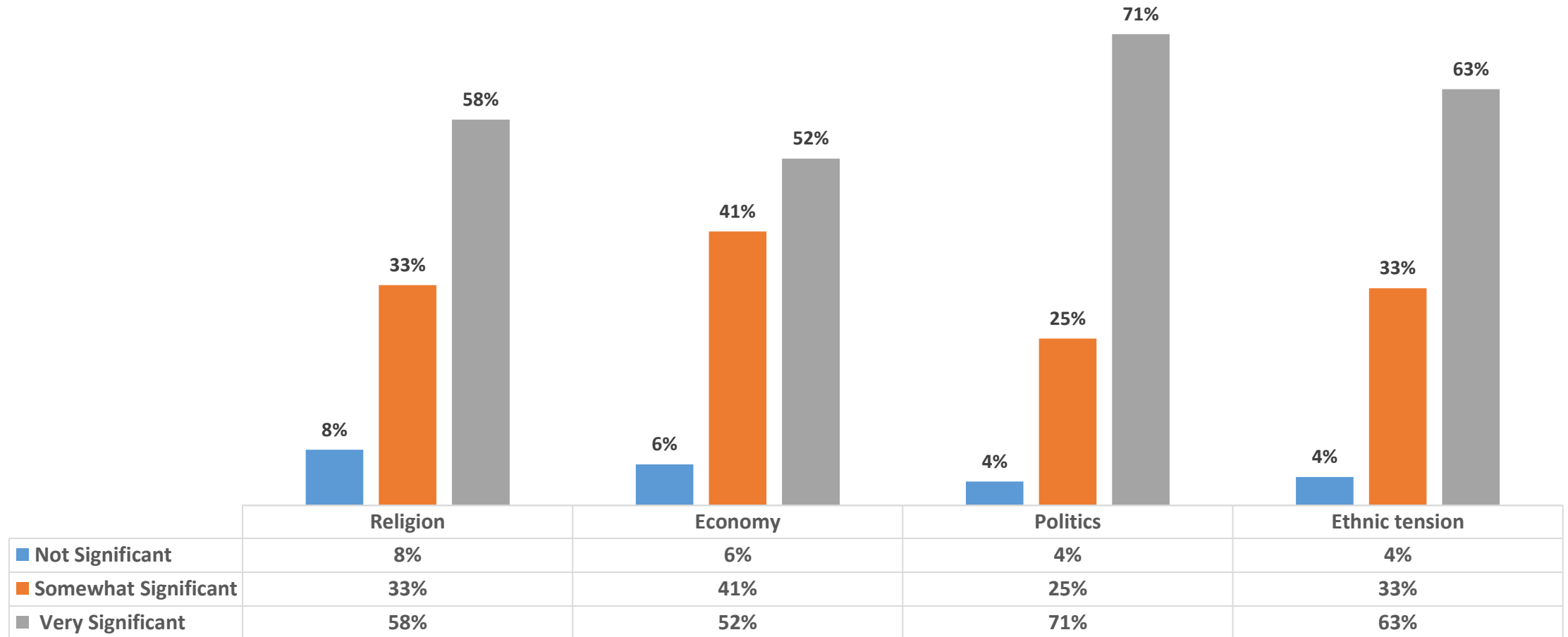
# Ranking of concern about global issues - 2020



# Ranking concern about global issues compared to prior year



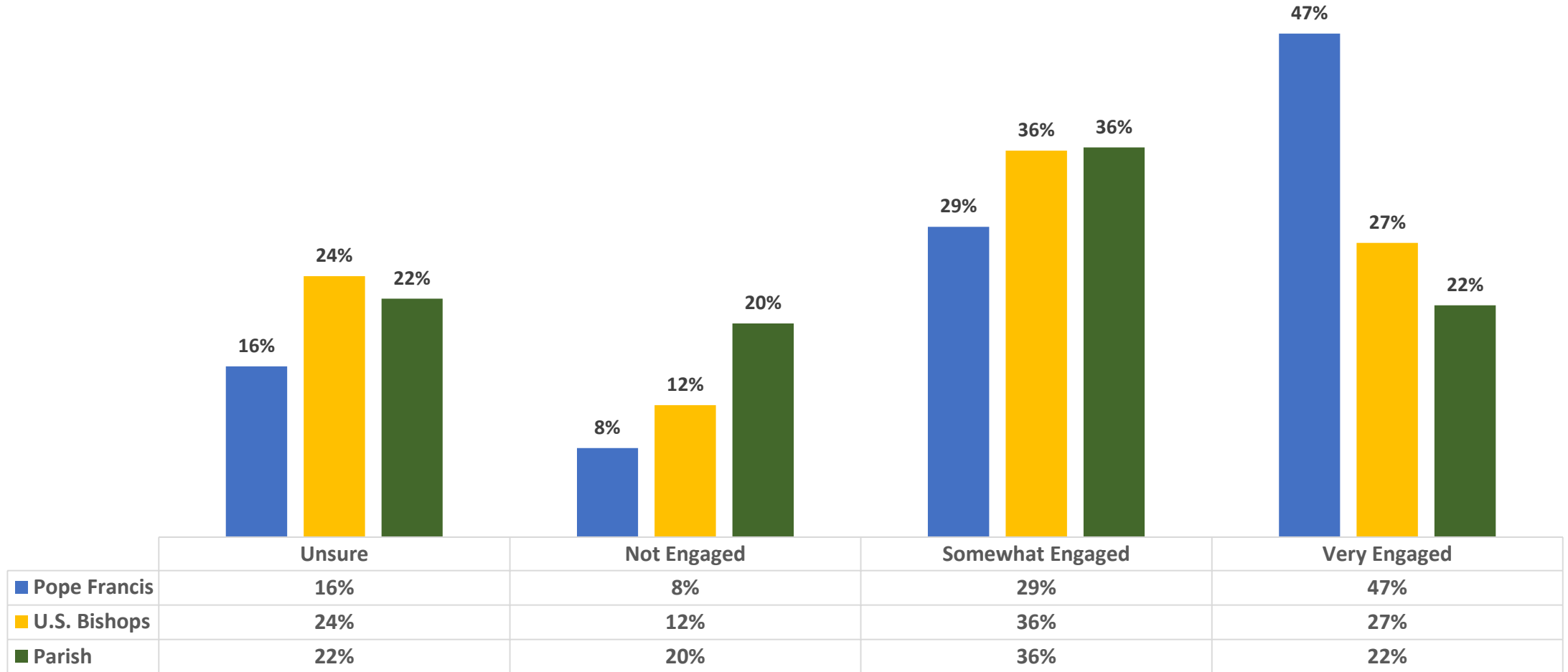
# Ranking the main causes of conflict around the world



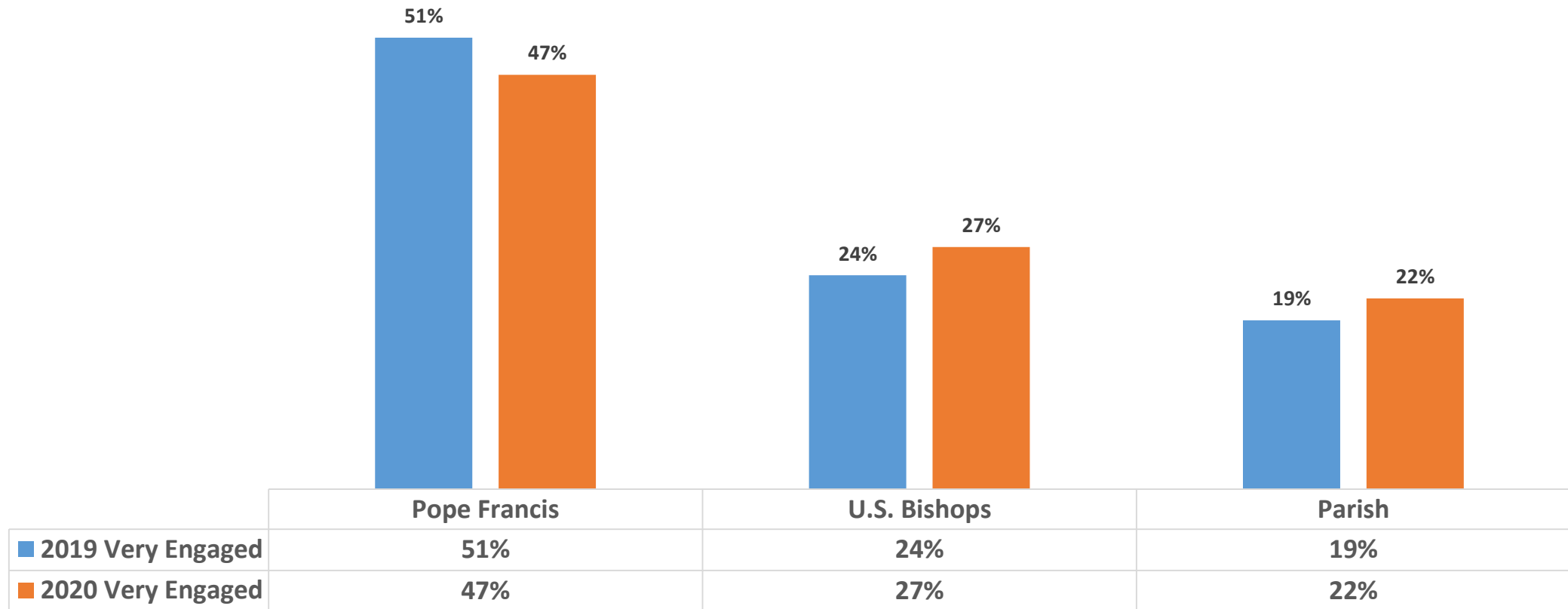
# The US Catholic Church and the persecution of Christians

- Forty-seven percent of US Catholics say that Pope Francis is “very engaged” on the issue of the persecution of Christians, while just 27% think their local bishop is “very engaged” and only 22% believe their parish is very involved with the issue.
- By contrast, 8% of US Catholics say Pope Francis is “not engaged” on the issue of persecution of Christians, while 12% indicate their local bishop is not engaged and 20% 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; 16% do not know the engagement level of the Pope, 24% are unsure about the engagement level of their bishop, while 22% do not know the engagement level of their parish.

# Engagement of the institutional Church with the issue of the persecution of Christians - 2020



# Perception of the highest engagement level of the institutional Church on the issue of the persecution of Christians – 2020 vs 2019

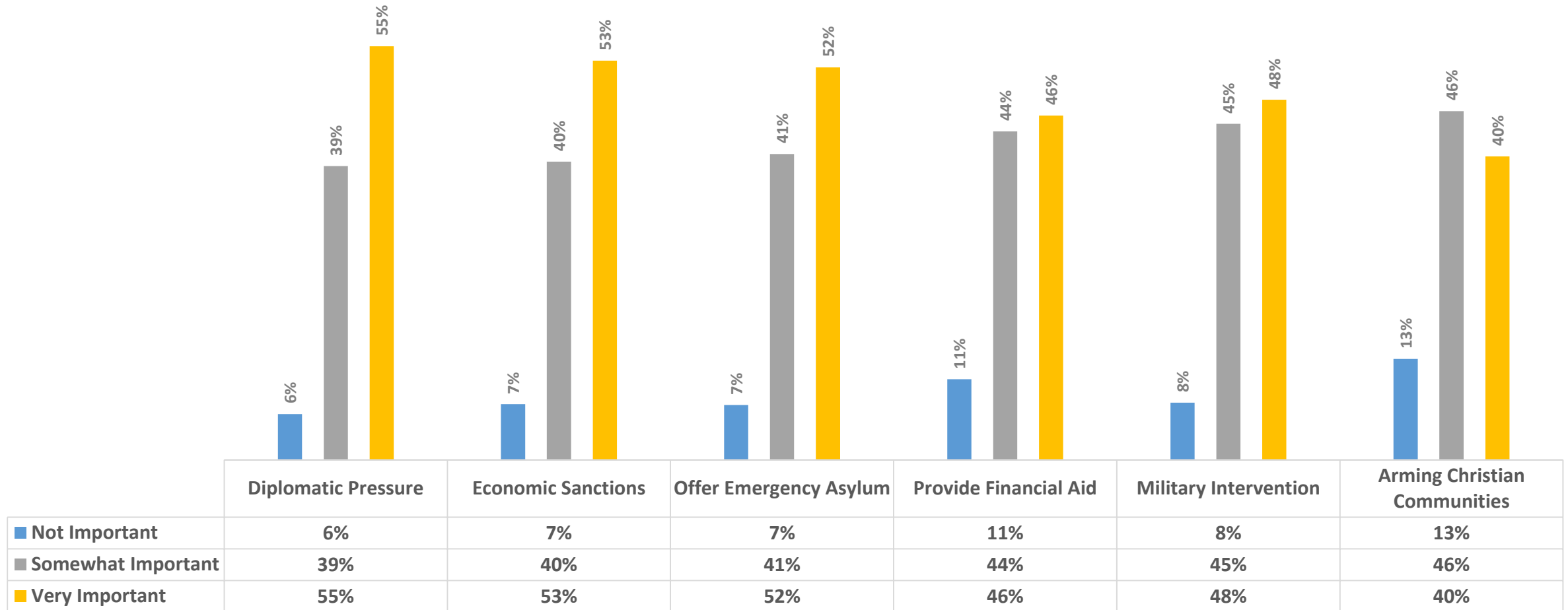




# Policies and actions to deter the persecution of Christians

- 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.
- 61% rank economic sanctions as very important; diplomatic pressure on countries is seen as “very important” by 55% of American Catholics; 52% favor emergency asylum; and 48% choose financial aid to persecuted Christian communities as very important.
- Important, but less so than other policies, are ranked military intervention to save and protect persecuted Christians (46%), and military training and arming of Christian communities facing persecution (40%).

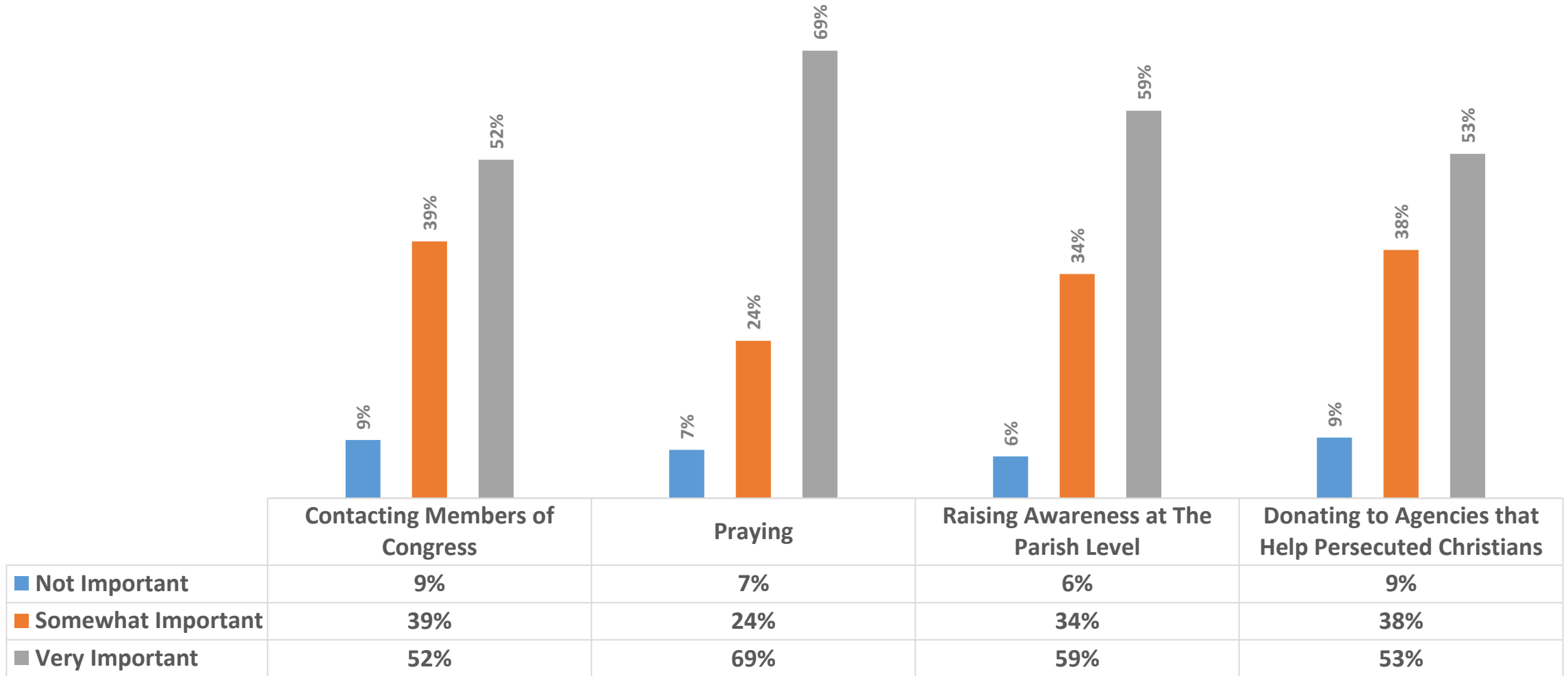
# Importance of policies to save and protect persecuted Christians



## 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
- 69% of US Catholics ranked prayer as “very important” to help persecuted Christians, followed by raising awareness at the parish level (59%), donating to agencies that help persecuted Christians (53%), and contacting Members of Congress (52%).

# Importance of personal initiatives to help persecuted Christians



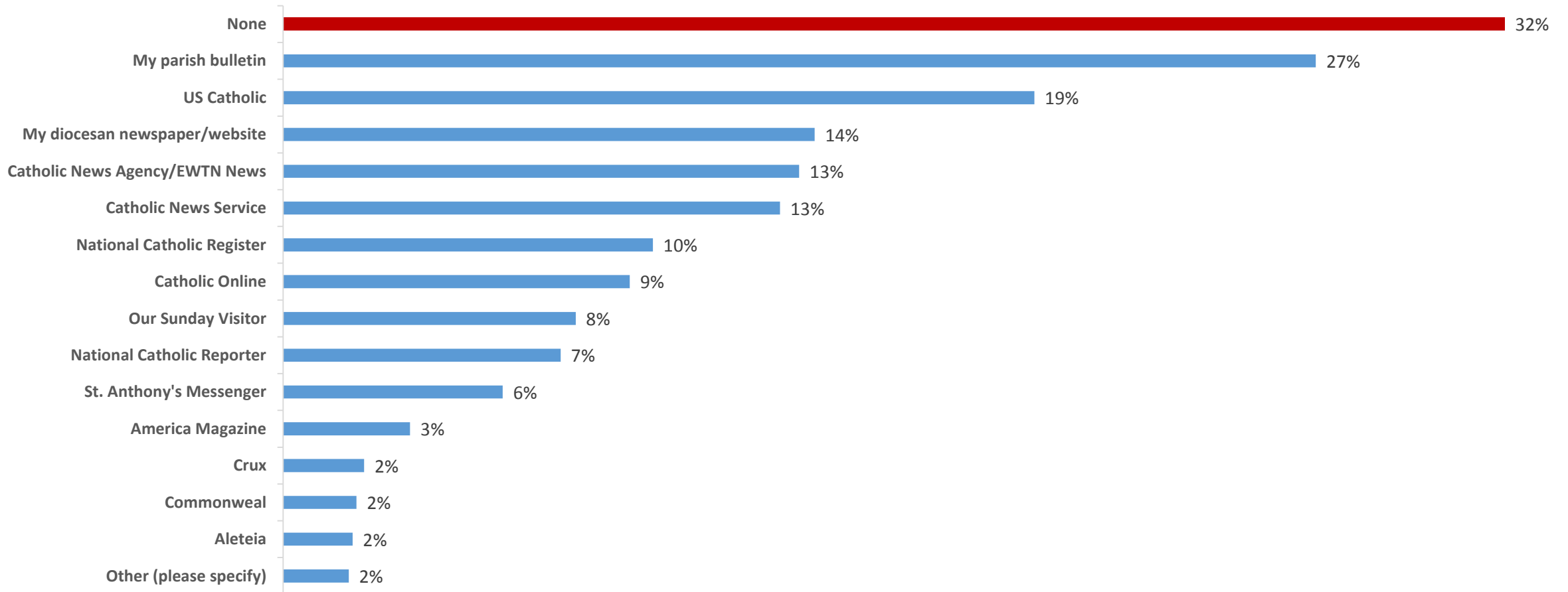
# Supporting organizations that help persecuted Christians

- Almost half of US Catholics say that they have donated in the prior year to an organization that helps persecuted Christians. However, 51% have not made any such donation.
- Giving increases among regular Mass-goers. The majority of those who do not regularly attend Mass do not give to any organization.

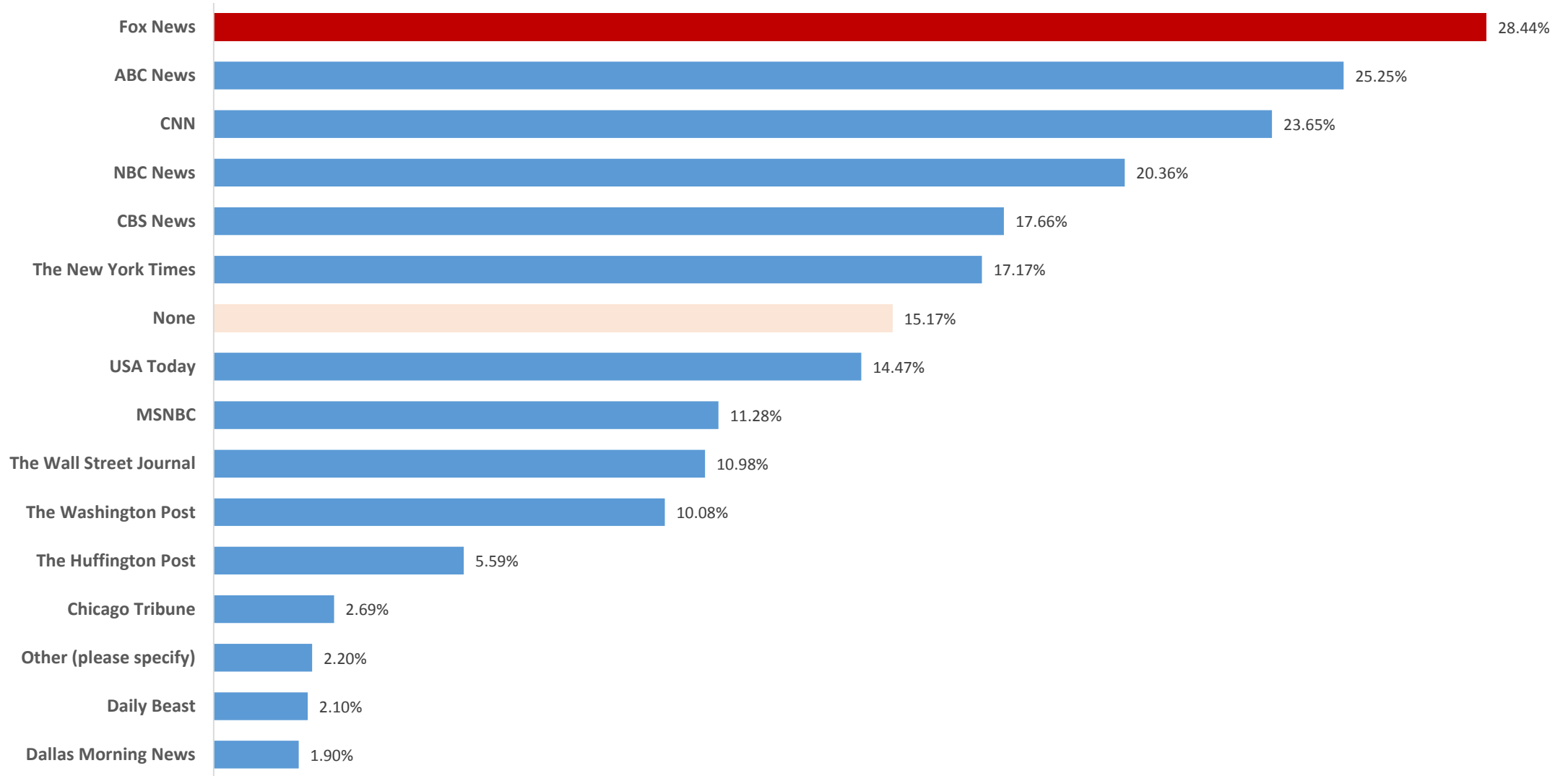
# Media engagement of US Catholics

- 27% of US Catholics trust their parish bulletin the most as a source of Catholic news, while 32% don't trust any Catholic news organization; and 15% don't trust any major secular news organization.
- The top four sources of Catholic news are: the parish bulletin (27%), US Catholic (19%), diocesan newspaper or website (14%), and Catholic News Agency and Catholic News Service, at 13% each.
- The top four sources of secular news are: Fox News (28%), ABC News (25%), CNN (24%), and CBS News (18%).

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



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





“While 52 percent of American Catholics show strong concern about the persecution of Christians, it is nevertheless disheartening to see the sharp drop in their number compared to two years ago. It’s telling that US Catholics consider human trafficking, poverty, climate change, and the refugee crisis—as important as these issues are—to be more important than the persecution of Christians.

“In light of the survey results, education at both the parish and diocesan level remains of crucial importance. It is clear that US Catholics believe that the Church in America can do much more when it comes to calling attention to the gravity of Christian persecution.

“In a world where up to 300 million Christians are confronted with various forms of harassment and outright persecution because of their faith, the US Church simply must do more to inform and galvanize the faithful.”

***George J. Marlin***

***Chairman of Aid to the Church in Need-USA***