

The Persecution of Christians Around the World

4th Annual National Catholic Survey

March 2021

This survey measures 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 February 19-26, 2021.

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 $\pm 3.1\%$ at a 95% confidence interval.

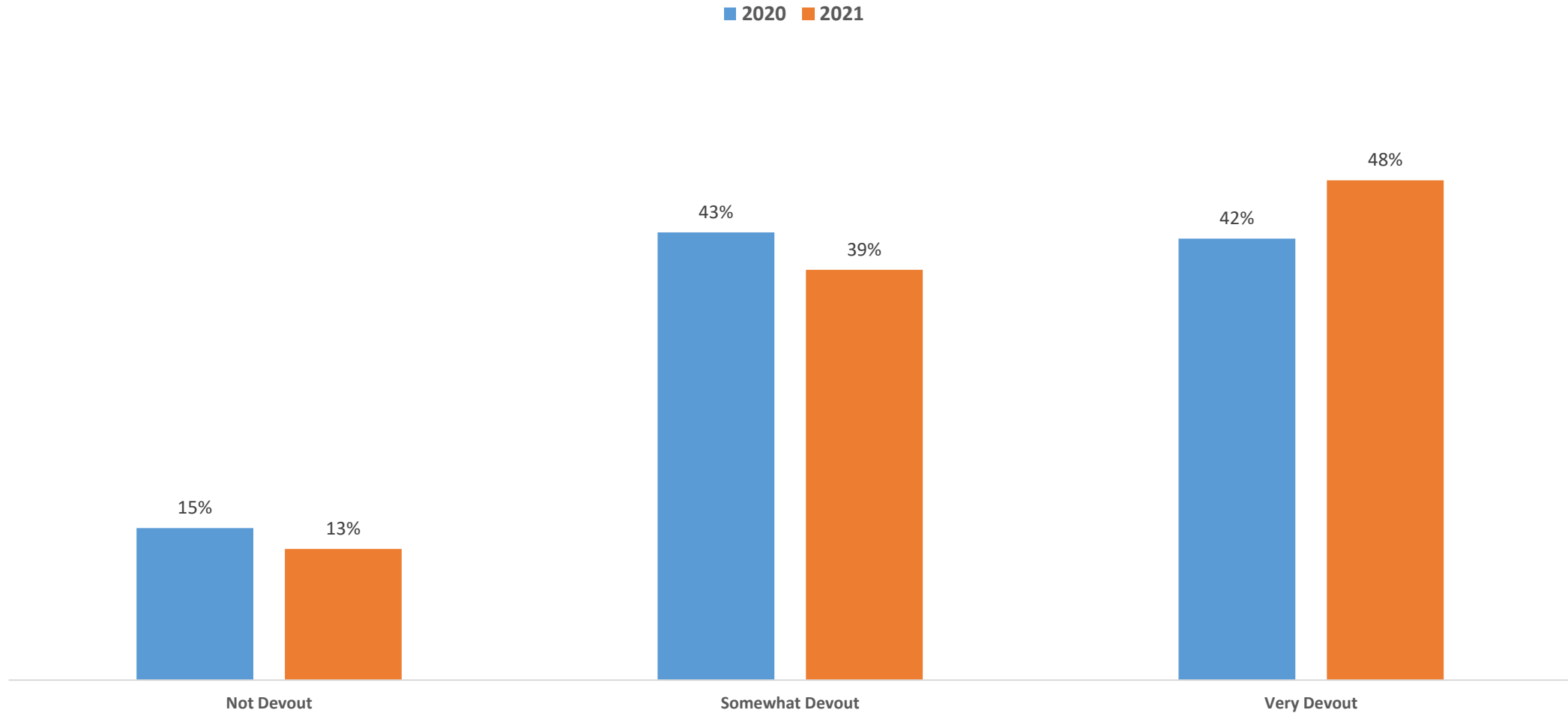
Respondents Profile

- Male 46% and Female 54%
- Age: 18-29 (16%), 30-40 (17%), 41-55 (21%), 56-65 (21%), Over 65 (25%)
- Education: 56% have a college degree or higher level of education
- Political affiliation: 28% Republican; 47% Democrat; 25% Independent/Other
- Racial background: White/Caucasian (58%), Hispanic (34%), African-American/Black (4%), Asian/Asian-American (3%), Other 1%.

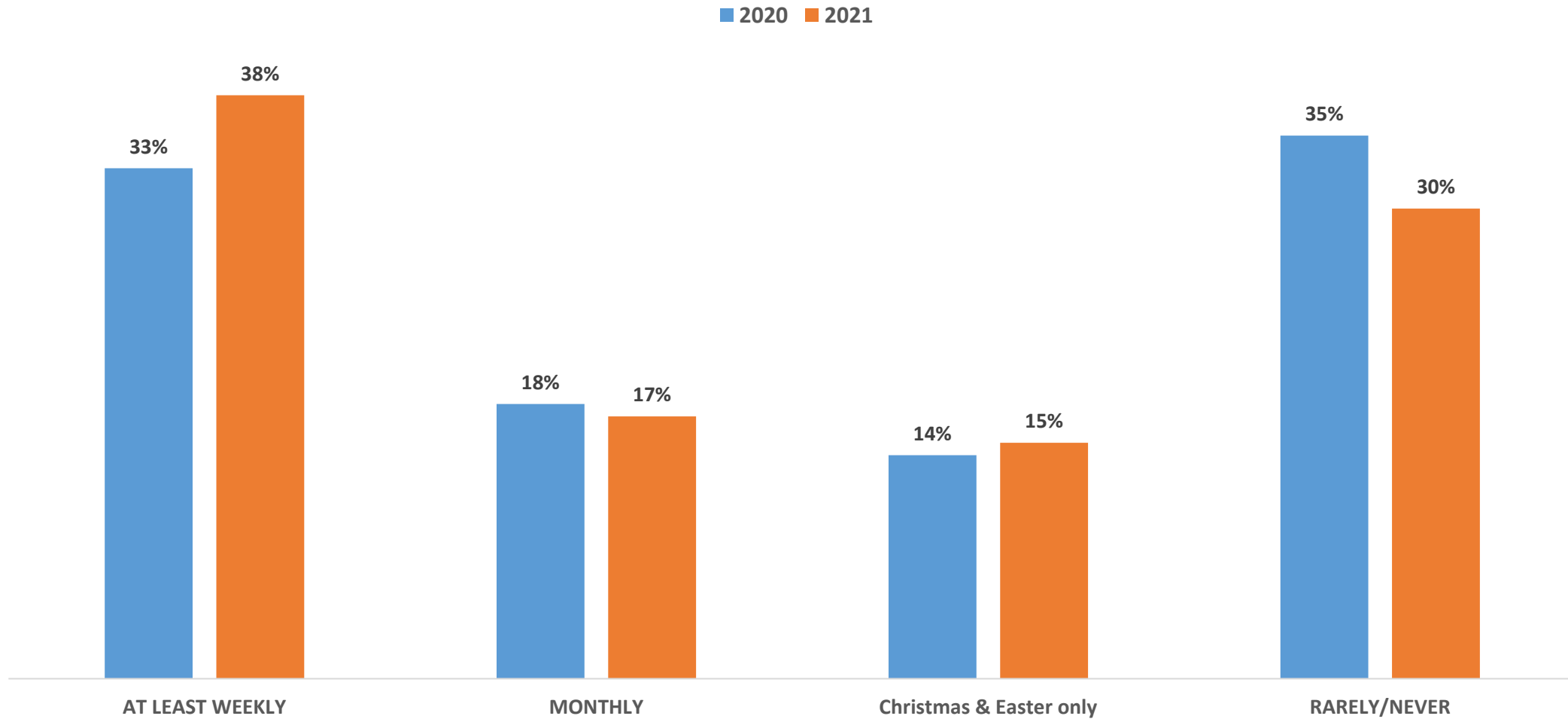
The religious profile of US Catholics

- 48% of US Catholics identify themselves as very devout; 39% think of themselves as somewhat devout, while 13% describe themselves as not devout.
- 38% of US Catholics say they attend Mass at least weekly; 17% attend Mass on a monthly basis; 15% attend Mass only on Christmas and Easter, while 30% rarely or never go to Mass.
- In terms of their religious beliefs, 31% identify themselves as liberal, 35% as moderate and 34% as conservative.

How devout a Catholic are you?



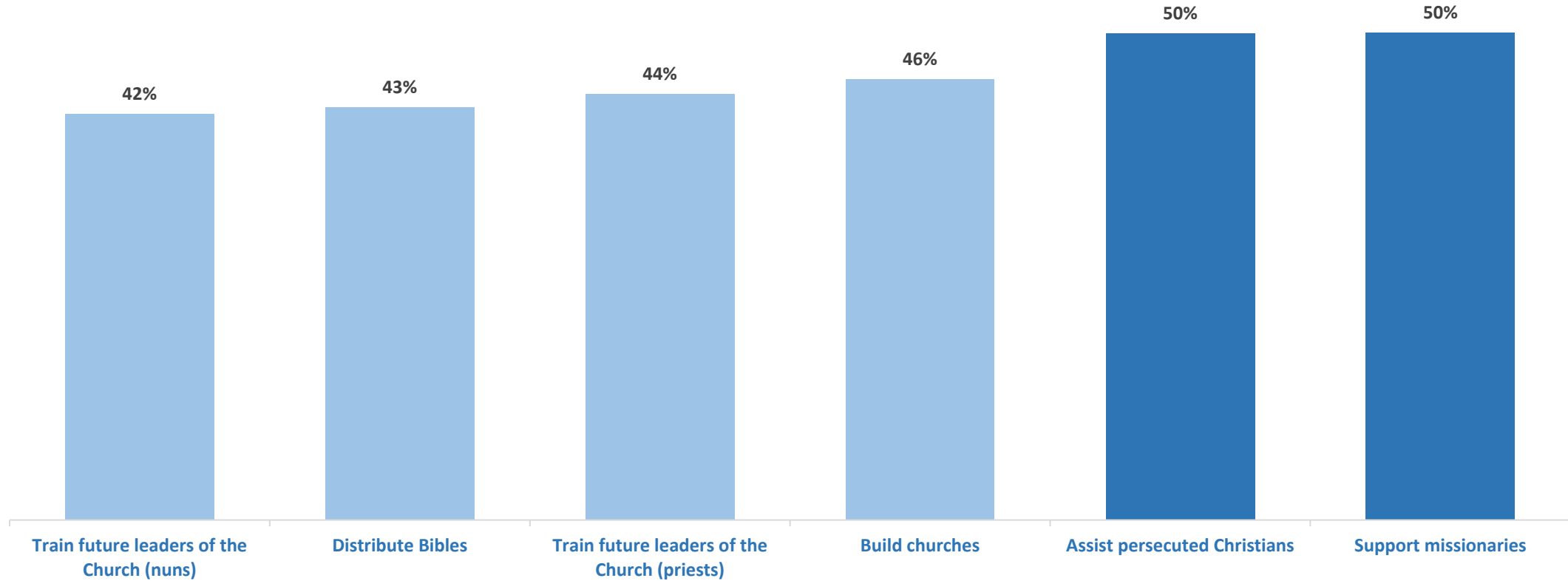
Mass Attendance



Funding of Church programs

- Fifty percent of US Catholics—up from just 35 percent a year ago—say they “very likely” would help fund Church programs that support persecuted Christians; this level of interest matches likely support for Church programs that help missionaries.
- US Catholics are “very likely” to fund other Church programs at lower levels: the building of churches (46 percent), the training of priests (44 percent), the distribution of Bibles (43 percent), and the training of nuns (42 percent).

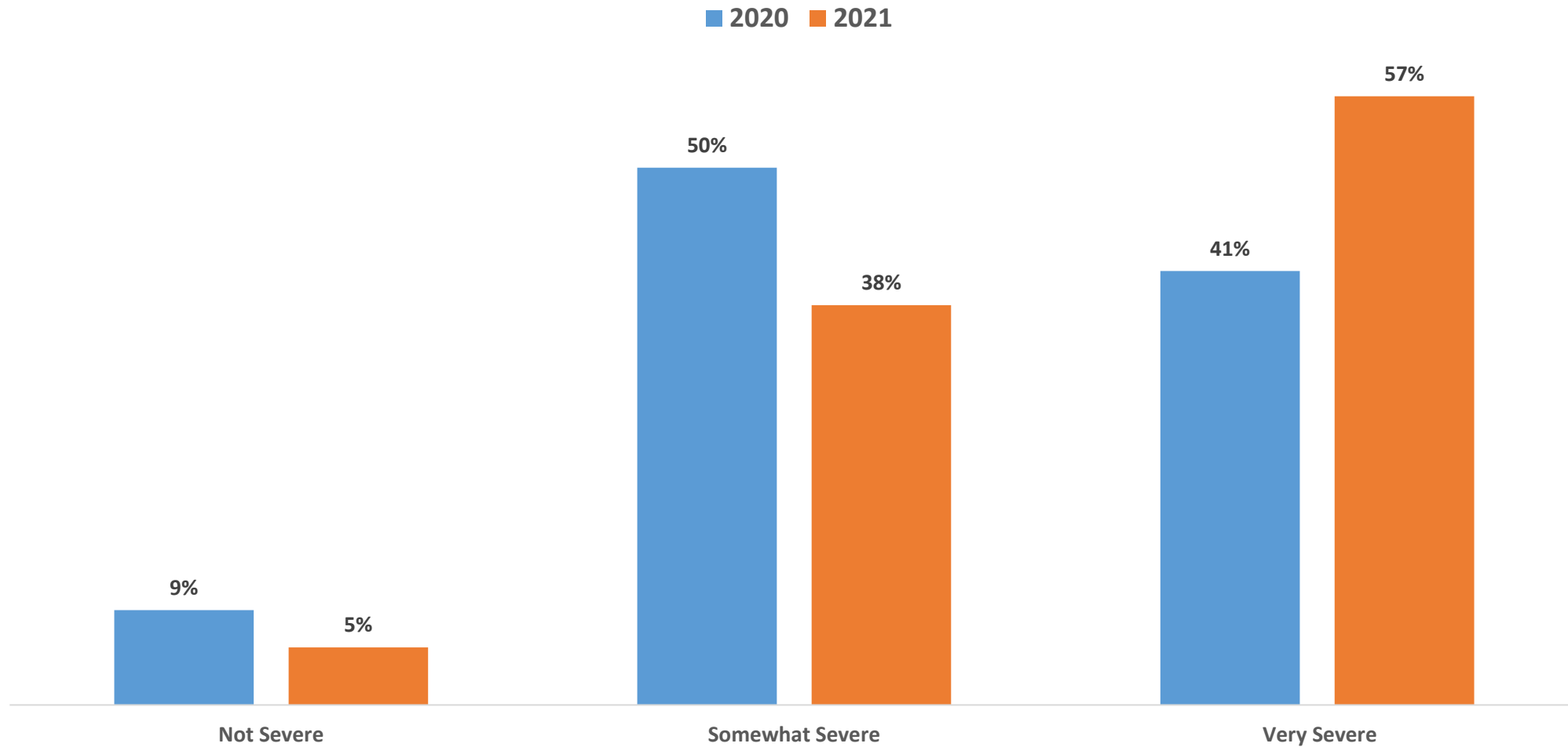
How likely is it that you would help fund the following Church programs?



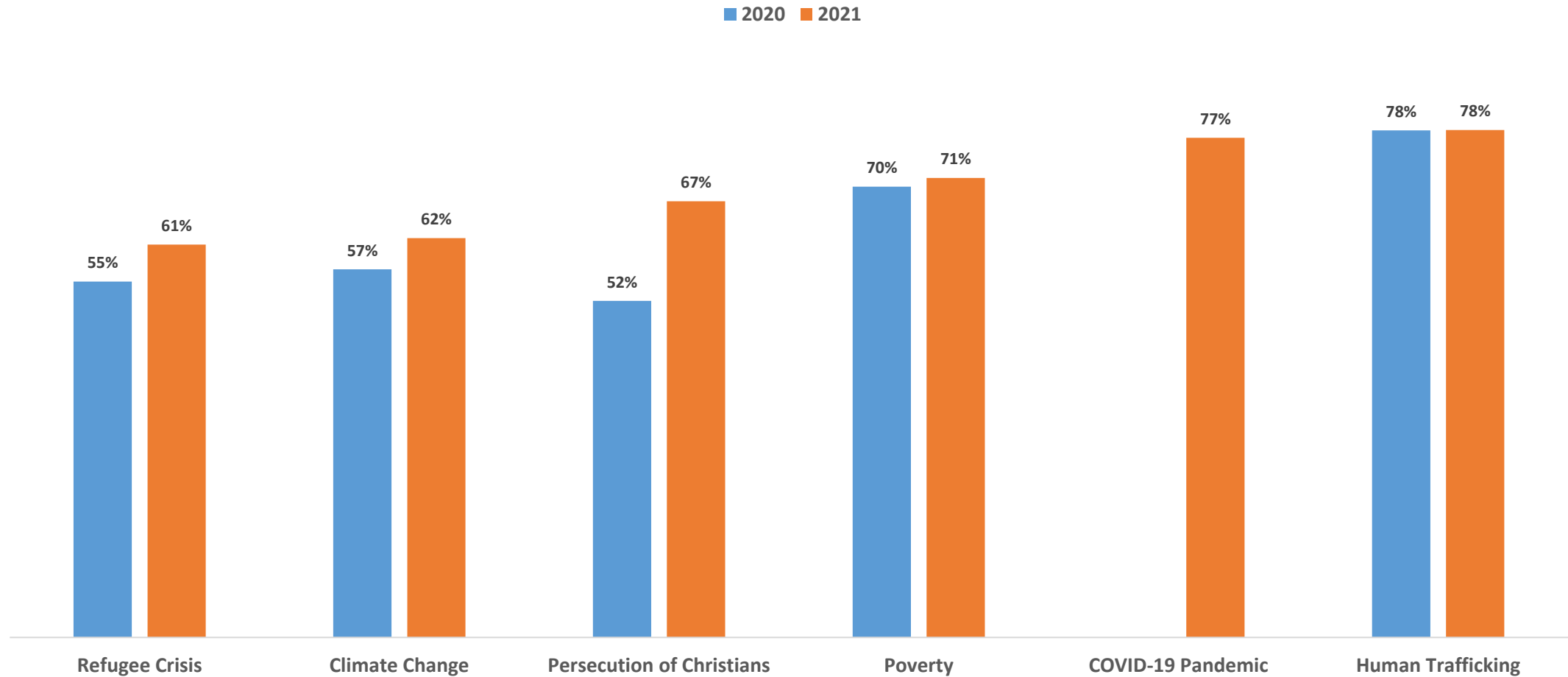
US Catholics' perceptions of the persecution of Christians around the world

- 57% of Catholics believe that the persecution of Christians around the world is “very severe,” up from 41% a year ago; 46% of Catholics believe that half or more of religiously-based attacks around the world are directed at Christians.
- US Catholics rank China as the country where Christians are most severely persecuted, followed by North Korea and Pakistan.
- **When asked to rank their concerns about global issues, 67% of US Catholics indicate they are “very concerned” about the persecution of Christians—up from 52% a year ago. The percentages of US Catholics very concerned about other global issues: human trafficking 78%, the COVID-19 pandemic 77%, poverty 71%, climate change 62%, and the refugee crisis 61%.**

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



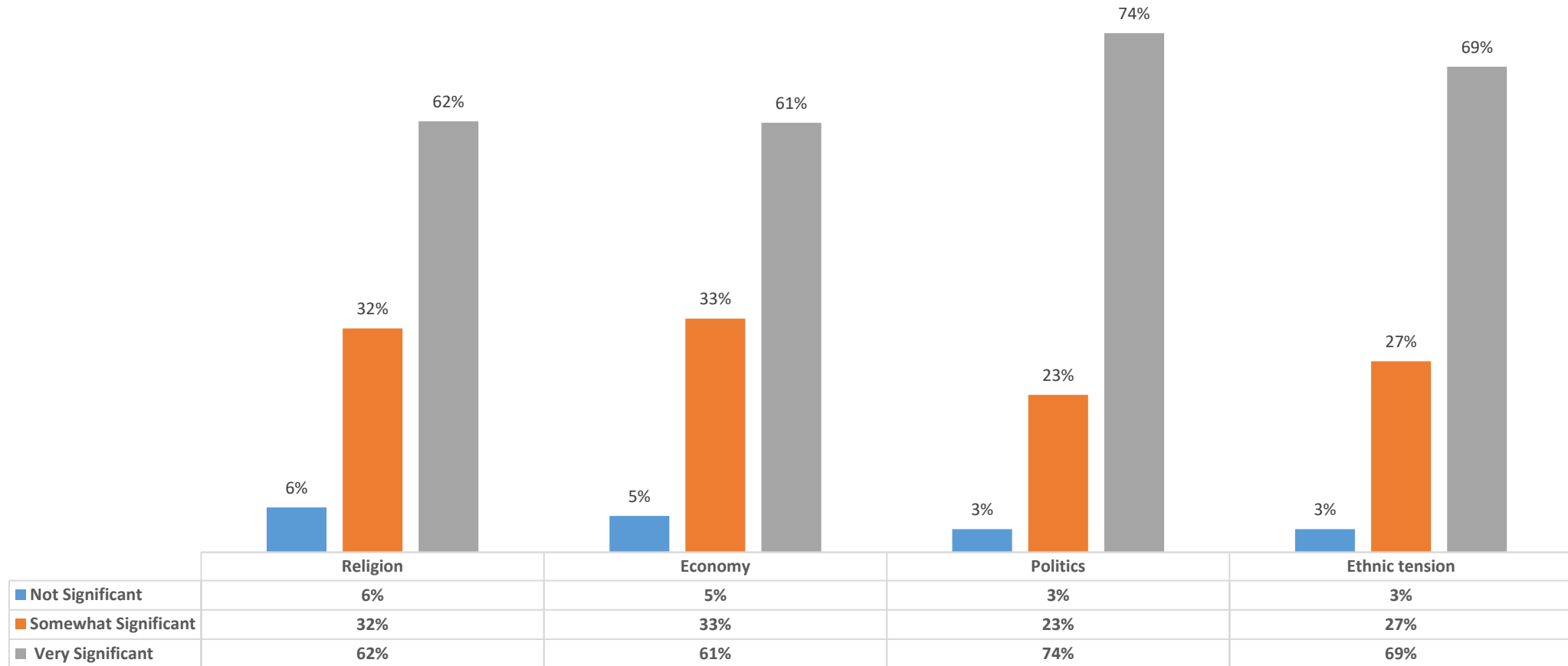
Ranking concern about global issues compared to prior year



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

- **Despite their growing awareness of the severity of Christian persecution around the world and their increasing willingness to do something about it, US Catholics show a gap in awareness when it comes to specific grave instances of persecution:**
- **37% knew that in Pakistan, in 2020, 1,000 primarily Christian under-age girls were abducted, forcibly converted to Islam and subject to a life of slavery;**
- **35% knew that in China Mass-goers are subject to digital surveillance;**
- **36% knew that in 2020 nearly 3,500 Christians were killed for their faith in Nigeria;**
- **41% knew that in North Korea being a Christian can carry the death penalty;**
- **28% knew that in India there were 293 incidents of Christian persecution in the first half of 2020 alone.**

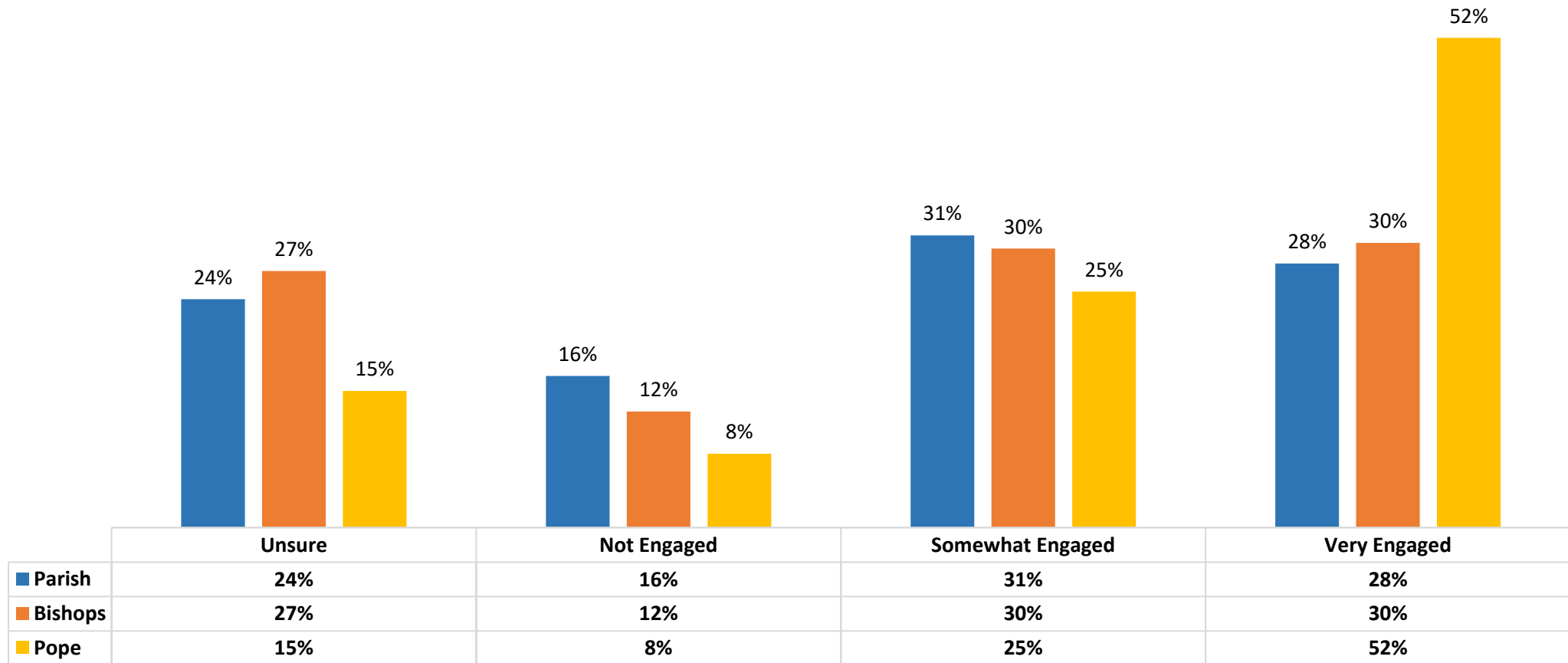
Ranking the main causes of conflict around the world



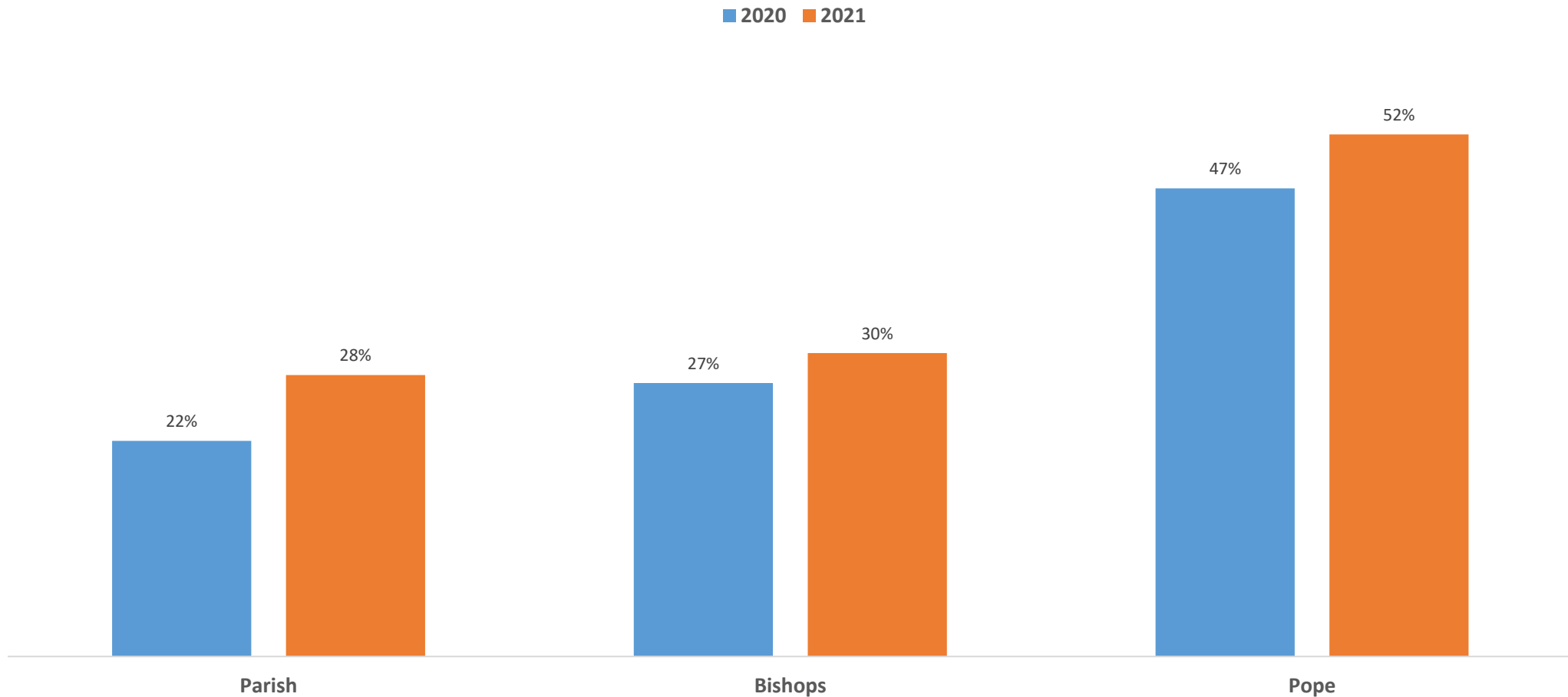
The US Catholic Church and the persecution of Christians

- Fifty-two percent of US Catholics believe that Pope Francis is “very engaged” on the issue of the persecution of Christians—up from 47% a year ago; 30% think their local bishop is “very engaged,” up from 27% a year ago; and 28% believe their parish is very involved with the issue, up from 22% a year ago.
- Only 8% of US Catholics believe Pope Francis is “not engaged” on the issue of persecution of Christians, while only 12% indicate their local bishop is not engaged and 16% of US Catholics feel that their parishes are not involved—down from 20 percent a year ago.
- A significant number of US Catholics is unsure about the engagement level of the Catholic Church on the issue of the persecution of Christians; 15% do not know the engagement level of the Pope, 27% (up from 24%) are unsure about the engagement level of their bishop, while 24% do not know the engagement level of their parish.

Engagement of the institutional Church with the issue of the persecution of Christians – 2021



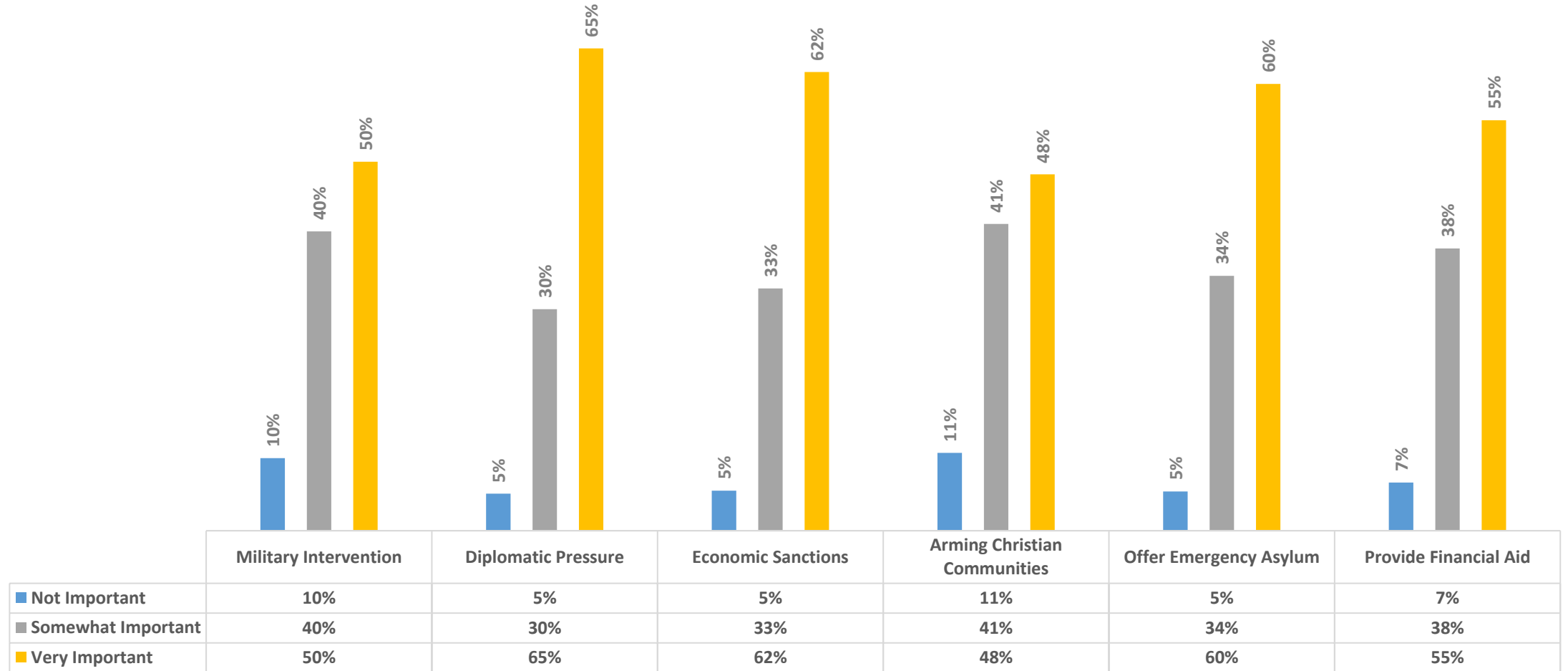
The “very engaged” level of the institutional Church on the issue of the persecution of Christians – 2020 vs 2021



Policies and actions to deter the persecution of Christians

- The majority of American Catholics believe that it is important for the US and other Western countries to pursue certain policies to deter the persecution of Christians around the world.
- 65% of US Catholics rank diplomatic pressure as very important, up from 55% a year ago; economic sanctions on countries are considered to be “very important” by 62% of American Catholics (up from 53%); 60% (up from 52%) favor emergency asylum; and 55% (up from 48%) support financial aid to persecuted Christian;
- 48% favor military training of Christian communities facing genocide (up from 40%); and 50% of US Catholics say military intervention to save and protect persecuted Christians is very important (up from 46% a year ago).

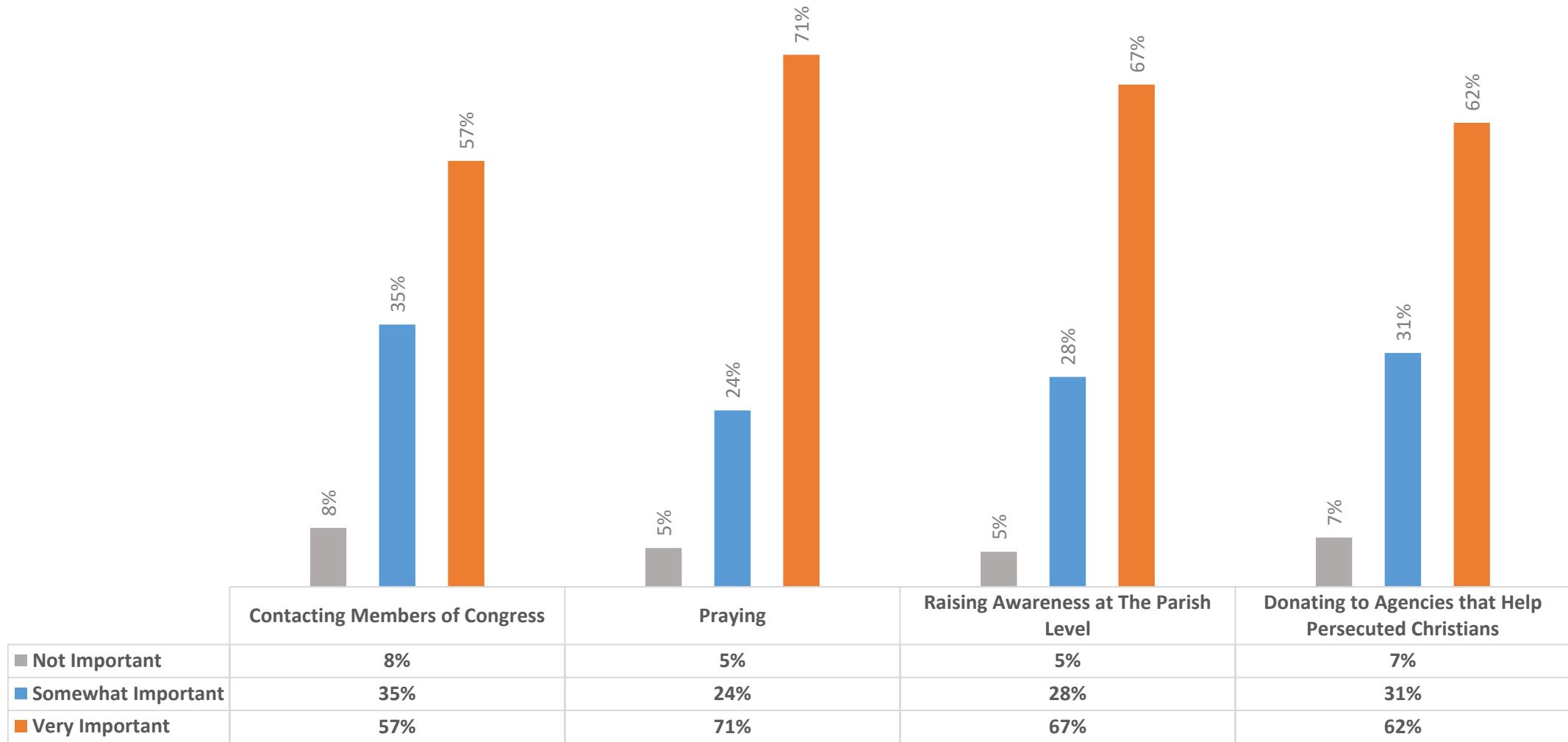
Importance of policies to save and protect persecuted Christians



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
- 71% of US Catholics rank prayer as “very important” to help persecuted Christians, followed by raising awareness at the parish level (67%, up from 59% a year ago); donating to agencies that help persecuted Christians (62%, up from 53%); and contacting Members of Congress (57% up from 52%).

Importance of personal initiatives to help persecuted Christians



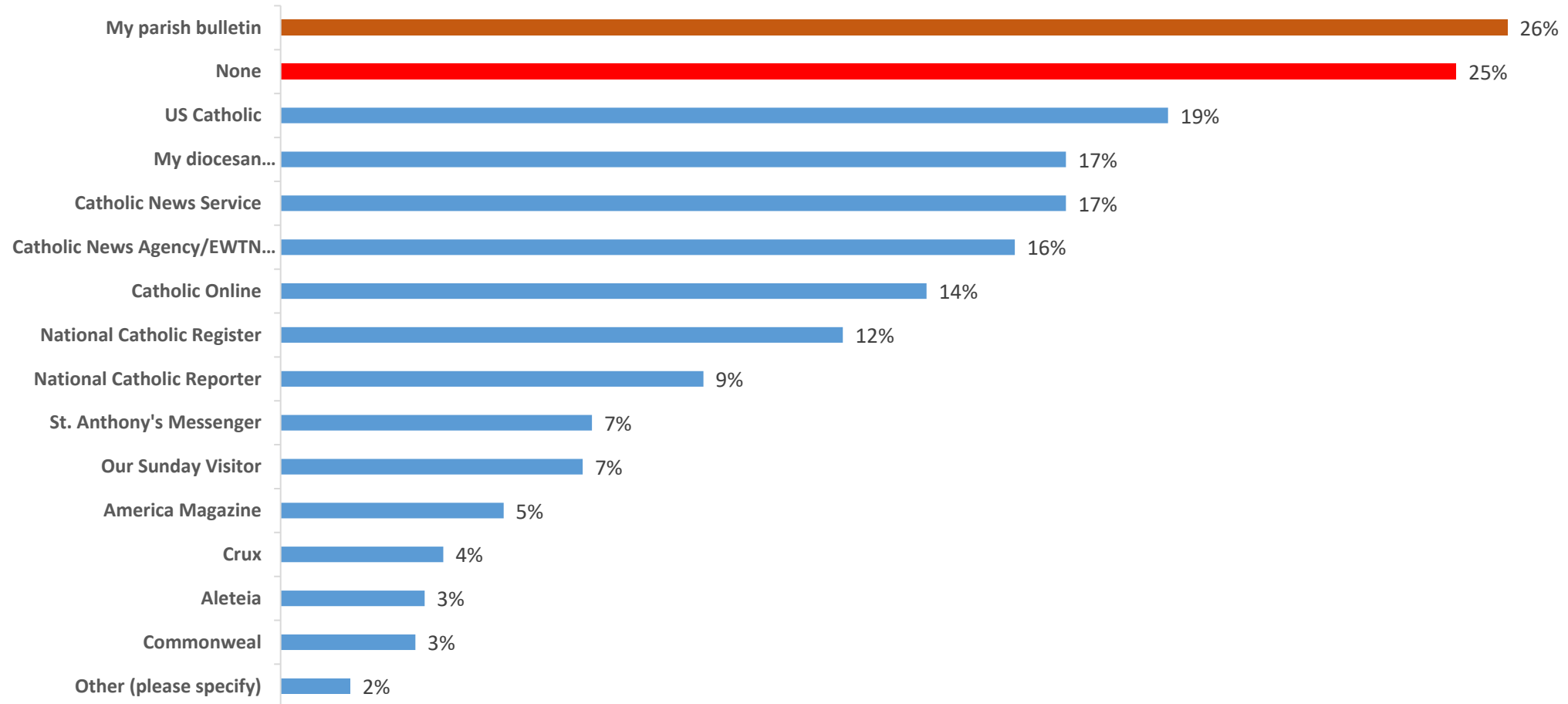
Supporting organizations that help persecuted Christians

- 61% of US Catholics say that they have donated in the prior year to an organization that helps persecuted Christians; 39% have not made any such donation.
- Giving has increased among regular Mass-goers. The majority of those who do not regularly attend Mass do not give to any organization.

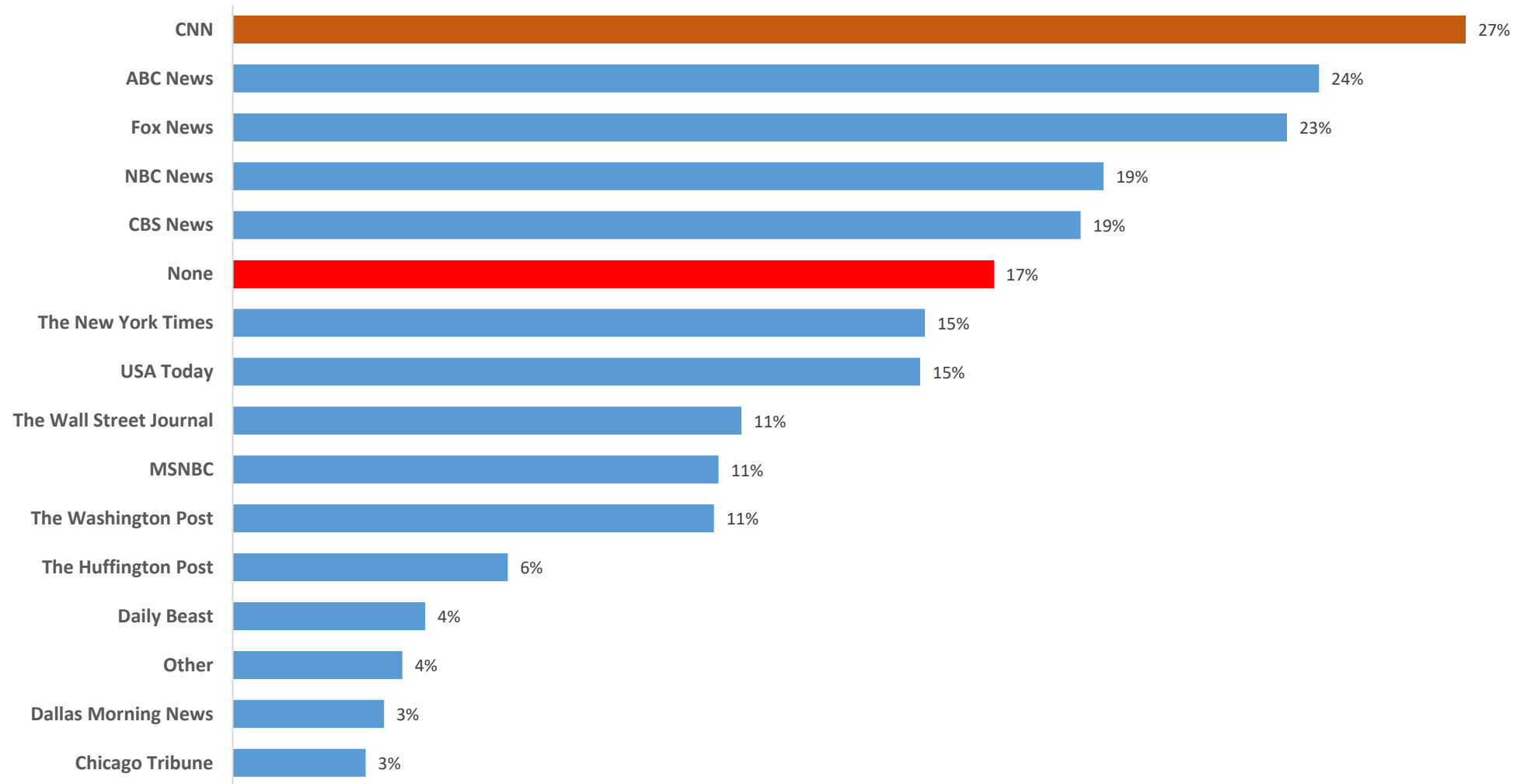
Media engagement of US Catholics

- 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 (26%), diocesan newspaper or website and Catholic News Service at 19% each, and Catholic News Agency at 16%.
- The top four sources of secular news are: CNN (27%), ABC News (24%), Fox News (23%), and NBC News at 19%.

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



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



“It is heartening that, compared to a year ago, significantly more US Catholics say that Christian persecution around the world is very grave and that the issue has become a matter of concern to more faithful. They also want both their Church and their government to step up efforts to do more to combat the issue.

“However, the poll also shows the great need to inform the public regarding specific instances of Christian persecution; the US bishops and organizations like our own must step up our educational and informational efforts.

“It is my hope that leaders around the world embrace the fundamental human right of religious freedom, and promote a society that respects ethnic, cultural and especially religious diversity.”

George J. Marlin
Chairman of Aid to the Church in Need-USA