



## Religious Responsibility in Catholicism

### Katoliklikte Dini Sorumluluk

Aybike Çağlar<sup>1\*</sup>

\* Sorumlu yazar

Corresponding author

<sup>1</sup> Yüksek Lisans Öğrencisi, Marmara Üniversitesi, Türkiye  
Master's Degree Student, Marmara University, Türkiye

[Aybikecaglar14@gmail.com](mailto:Aybikecaglar14@gmail.com)

ORCID ID <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8951-6115>

Makale geliş tarihi / First received : 18.12.2022

Makale kabul tarihi / Accepted : 01.08.2023

### Bilgilendirme / Acknowledgement:

Yazar aşağıdaki bilgilendirmeleri yapmaktadır:

1- Makalemiz için Marmara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Araştırma Etik Kurulu tarafından 14/06/2023 tarihinde 2023-61 sayısı ile etik kurul onayı almıştır.

2- Bu makalede araştırma ve yayın etiğine uyulmuştur.

This article was checked by *Turnitin*. Similarity Index 12%

### Atıf bilgisi / Citation:

Çağlar, A. (2023). Religious responsibility in Catholicism. *IBAD Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, (15), 190-213.

**ÖZ**

İnsanların düşünceleri ve yaşam tarzları her zaman içinde yaşadıkları dönemin etkisinde kalmıştır. Çağdan çağa, nesilden nesle yaşamda birçok şey değişir ve bu değişimler yaşamdaki birçok kavramı etkiler. Birçok insanın hayatının önemli bir parçası olan din, değişimden nasibini almış kavramlardan biridir. Bu durumdan ortaya çıkan soru, insanların dine bağlılıklarının zamanın değişmesiyle değişip değişmediğidir. Bu araştırma makalesinin amacı, nesiller arası farklılıkların dini faaliyetlerin nasıl yürütüldüğü üzerinde bir etkisinin olup olmadığını görmektir. Bu makale, zamanımızda dünyada en fazla müntesibi bulunan Hıristiyanlığın ana mezhebi olan Katolikliği ele alarak, özellikle Katoliklerin her nesilde dini sorumluluklarını yerine getirmeye devam edip etmediklerini ve bu konuda nesiller arasında herhangi bir farklılık olup olmadığını ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu araştırma makalesinin ortaya koyduğu hipotez, Katolik Hıristiyanlar arasında dini pratikleri yerine getirmede her yeni nesilde bir azalma olduğudur. Bu fikri test etmek için, birkaç anketten veri toplanmış ve nesiller arasında bir karşılaştırma yapılmıştır. Bu hipotez, bazı istisnalar dışında, eski nesillerin genç nesillere kıyasla dini pratiklerin çoğuna katılma olasılığının daha yüksek olduğunu göstererek, genel olarak doğrulanmıştır. Bununla birlikte, bazı nesiller, bazı belli dini pratikleri kendinden önceki nesillere göre daha fazla katılma eğilimindedir; ancak bu belirli durumda bile en eski nesilden en genç nesle doğru bir azalma olduğu iddiası doğrulanmıştır. Dolayısıyla bu istisna akılda tutularak, özellikle genç nesiller arasında dini sorumlulukların yerine getirilmesinin zamanla azaldığı iddia edilebilir.

**Anahtar kelimeler**

Hıristiyanlık, Katoliklik, Kilise, Dini Pratikler, Sakramentler, Nesil, Çağ, Değişim

**ABSTRACT**

People's thoughts and lifestyles have always been influenced by the times they live in. Many things change in life from one age to the other, or from one generation to the next, and these changes have an impact on many concepts in life. Religion, which is an important part of many people's lives, is one concept that has gotten its share from change. As a result, the question is whether people's adherence to religion changes with the change in time. The goal of this research paper is to see if generational differences have an impact on how religious activities are carried out. With Christianity as the religion with the largest number of adherents in the world and Catholicism as its major denomination, this research paper specifically aims to reveal if Catholics continue to fulfill their religious responsibilities in every generation and if there are any differences between generations in this regard. The hypothesis put forth by this research paper is that there is a decrease in the fulfillment of the religious practices among Catholic Christians in each new generation. To test this idea, data was collected from several surveys and a comparison between generations was made. This hypothesis was confirmed correct in general, although with some exceptions, by demonstrating that the older generations are more likely to be practicing in most of the sacraments compared to the younger generations. However, some generations tend to be more practicing than the previous generations in some specific sacraments; yet, the statement claiming that the execution of this specific practice decreased from the oldest generation until the youngest generation stands rightful. Thus, keeping this exception in mind, the claim should be that the fulfillment of religious responsibilities decreases over time, especially among the youngest generations.

**Keywords**

Christianity, Catholicism, Church, Religious Practices, Sacraments, Generation, Age, Change

## INTRODUCTION

Beliefs have been a big part of life for human beings. Apart from a small number who do not actually believe in anything, people have either believed without being affiliated with a religious group or have been adhering to religions throughout the history that is known to us. This did not change even in our day, many different religions including worldwide ones as well as traditional ones are still on the rise. Findings from 2015 show the population of different world religions in percentage; Christians 31.2%, Muslims 24.1%, Hindus 15.1%, Buddhists 6.9% and 16% of those who identify as not affiliated with religions which includes both non-believers and those who believe but do not adhere to any religion.<sup>1</sup> These numbers show that religion is not seen as something belonging to the past but is still growing in number among people. However, an important question could be asked; do people adhere to a religion by applying it to their lives as a whole system with its decrees, or do they adhere to it as a mere customary belief, selectively? In this shifting age where nothing stays the same, with each new generation people's views on religion change as well; new belief systems rise, and religions change in their application to life. In fact, religions are getting intermingled, and people have begun to adhere to a religion by mere belief without doing anything that this particular religion commands.

Among these many religions, Christianity is the largest one in population, as has been noted above. The estimated percentages of some Christian denominations are; Catholics accounting for 50%, Protestants and Anglicans accounting for 37%, and Orthodox for a mere 12%. (Hackett et al., 2012, p. 17) Thus, the one that takes the lead as the largest is Catholicism. Considering its large population, the question above rises again: Is Catholicism still adhered to by the Catholics as a practiced system, or did it become a customary belief among the new generations?

This research paper aims to reveal these questions that have been put forth, and has taken Catholicism as the field of research on account of it being the largest denomination of the largest religion today.

Thus, it will be researched whether the religious responsibilities that have been formed by the Catholic Church are still practiced by Catholics, especially by the new generation. For this purpose, firstly some information on Catholic Christianity will be given, followed by some studies and statistics on the practices of the Catholics. The obtained data will be examined and a comparison between generations will be made to find an answer to the above-mentioned questions.

The aim of this research paper is to reveal how practicing Catholic Christians are, and to see whether the fulfillment of religious practices changes from generation to generation. The objective behind this is to see if the changes in the world with the passage of time, in the human life and mind specifically, have any effect on religious life especially on the practical life of the people.

This research paper gives answers to the following questions: How does Catholicism differ from other Christian denominations? What are the main practices in Catholicism and how are

---

<sup>1</sup> For further information, please see: <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2017/04/05/the-changing-global-religious-landscape/>.

they executed? How does the execution of these practices change between the older generations and the younger generations? Is there a difference between generations in the fulfillment of different religious practices? How is the correlation between believing in Catholicism in the present day and fulfilling the practices of Catholicism? The hypothesis of this research paper is that there is a decrease in the fulfillment of the religious responsibilities among Catholic Christians in each new generation.

This research paper is mainly focused on the religious practices of Catholicism, thus the first aim of this work is to communicate about the practices put forth by the Catholic Church. For this purpose, both primary and secondary sources will be used to examine the case firsthand and to make use of already collected data. The literature written about Christianity in general as well as written particularly on Catholicism will be reviewed and the data acquired by these will be presented. These particular sources will be found either through online books, articles, and encyclopedias from sources like Academia, Z Library or *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* website or will be found as hardcopy books and for this Library of Marmara University Faculty of Theology and the Library of Center for Islamic Studies will be searched. Later, the statistics of the studies and reports regarding the execution of practices by Catholics will be examined. The studies and reports that will be included in this research paper are collected by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, Pew Research Center, NCLS Research, ACBC National Centre for Pastoral Research, Benedict XVI Centre for Religion and Society, Gallup, and Latin Mass Society and Brierley Consultancy through Faith Survey U.K.

Although a large number of useful studies could be found, there can be a limitation in this work because the studies that will be made use of usually cover certain areas. Thus this can make it hard to talk about the general situation of the Catholic world. Nevertheless, this fact of the study, which will use different centers, makes this limitation a little less of a problem. However, the fact that these studies differ in the years they were carried out could be considered an advantage for the aims of this research paper. When it comes to the primary sources; qualitative and quantitative methods will be used which include a self-made online questionnaire as well as an interview with an authority in one of the Catholic Churches in Istanbul to have a general view on the situation in Istanbul. However, the questionnaire will be a lot narrower in scope compared to the found institutional surveys because of the limited interaction with Catholics. Even though these investigations will not be as comprehensive to obtain a general idea, they will be used as a supporting factor to the studies of a wider scope.

The book *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is written by The Catholic Church. To collect this book, the mission of preparing a draft on the catechism of the Catholics was given by Pope John Paul II in 1986. In this research paper the English translation which was printed in the United Kingdom in 1994 has been used. The importance of this book for this research paper work is that this book includes important things regarding Catholicism, such as the creed, the sacraments the celebrations, and the like in a detailed manner. In this research paper, it will be used mostly for the explanations of the sacraments of Catholicism.

The book *Hıristiyanlık* is written by Şinasi Gündüz and was published by *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı* for the first time in 2006. The book includes the history, the sources, the principles of faith, the denominations, the religious practices, and the church institution of Christianity in a manner that is not very detailed but efficient to obtain a general idea on every aspect of Christianity;

and this is the reason behind choosing this particular book as one of the main sources of this research paper.

The study report *Sacraments Today: Belief and Practice Among U.S Catholics* is written by Mark M. Gray and Paul M. Perl and has been conducted by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate in 2008 in the United States. Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate is a research center that was founded in 1964 which studies Catholicism and Catholic Church. The survey was conducted in 2008 with the participation of 1007 adult Catholic respondents. The survey is about the participation of the individuals in the religious practices and their beliefs about the sacraments. This study includes different sacraments in the survey as well as different demographic characteristics of the respondents. The main concern of this research paper, which is the approaches of different generations to the religious practices, is also a big part of this report; thus, this work can be cited as the fundamental source of this research paper. However, this specific study is supported by different studies of the next years in this research paper.

This research paper will consist of four main chapters. The first chapter will be the Introduction and will include the context of the research paper. In this part, the aims and objectives will be presented and the reason behind the chosen subject will be expressed. It will also be mentioned in which aspects the subject is going to be handled by asking some questions. Later, the methodology of this research paper will be pointed out which includes primary and secondary sources; and some of the main secondary sources to be used in this research paper will be briefly introduced.

The second chapter of this research paper, *What is Catholicism?*, will focus on Catholicism as a denomination. Firstly, Christianity will be briefly introduced, and a short history of how Catholicism differed from other denominations will be presented. Later, the religious practices that are accepted by Catholicism will be mentioned with brief information on how they are carried out. Also, some other worships of Catholics which occur daily, weekly and yearly will be mentioned to give a general idea to the readers, yet the focus will be on the Sacraments, which are the main religious practices in Catholicism.

The third chapter, *Catholic Church Data on the Observance of the Sacraments*, will focus on the studies which provide statistics on various religious practices among Catholics. This chapter will be the main concern of this research paper because of the information it provides. The studies that will be handled here mostly include respondents from various parts of the United States and Australia; yet some limited information on Europe, particularly the United Kingdom, will be presented as well. The demographic characteristics these studies contain generally include gender, race, marital status, education, and generation. In accordance with the aims of this research paper, the focus will only be on the generation differences; here the data on the fulfillment of religious practices by the older generations and the younger will be shown and compared, then inferences will be drawn by each data.

The fourth chapter, *Questionnaire & Interview*, will focus on the prepared questionnaire and the interview with an authority from one of the Catholic Churches in Istanbul. The questionnaire will include questions about different sacraments and will be held out online, and according to the obtained data, the answers of the respondents from different ages/generations will be compared. For the interview, the authority will be asked about the

parish of that specific church and the situation of the religious practices held in the church. Then an inference will be drawn from the answers to the questions.

In the conclusion section, the chapters will be summarized and the findings that have been obtained throughout the research paper will be assembled. According to the obtained findings, the questions that have been referred to in the aims and objectives will be answered. The hypothesis that has been mentioned will be examined in this part and it will be either proved or disproved by this research paper. In the end, personal opinions regarding the subject and the findings will be given.

Due to the fact that this article contains a questionnaire and an interview, it was subject to an ethics committee review. It received ethics committee approval from the Marmara University Institute of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee on 14/06/2023 with the number 2023-61.

### WHAT IS CATHOLICISM?

Christianity is a religion which has the largest number of adherents in the world with a population of over 2 billion people. It is the religion that originated in Jewish culture and expanded around the world approximately two thousand years ago. The central figure is Jesus the son of Mary, who was born in the borders of present-day Palestine, more than two thousand years ago. The Christian faith is founded on Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God as well as the savior of the believers. According to this religion, Jesus was crucified to rescue humans from sin (called the original sin) and has arisen from the dead, ascended, and taken his place with God the Father. (Demirci, 1998, p. 328) Although Jesus had some followers at the time, his teachings became more widely known after his crucifixion, as people began accepting him after his resurrection and appearance to his disciples, as well as other miracles, one of which was the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus' followers. (Katar, 2013, p. 172) The Christian Bible is the holy book of Christianity, and it is made up of two parts: the Old Testament, which is based on Jewish culture, and the New Testament, which was written after Jesus. The importance of religious literature and many religious councils impacted the principles of the Christian faith in the first several centuries of the religion. (Gündüz, 2021, p. 65)

The central principle of faith is called the Trinity; according to this, God has three appearances as God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit, through his essence that is one. Another principle is the above-mentioned belief in Original Sin, Crucifixion, and Salvation; according to this, when the first man Adam was created he committed an original sin, which caused him to be sent to earth from heaven. People have been saved from this sin through the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and his resurrection, which is known as the salvation. Another is the faith in Jesus Christ as Messiah, this means that Jesus will return to the earth a second time, judge both the dead and living and will establish the Kingdom of God in which good people will dwell in peace with him. The belief in Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory is the final premise to be discussed here; according to this, believers will go to Heaven, while nonbelievers will go to Hell, and sinful individuals will stay in Purgatory until they atone for their sins in order to enter Heaven. (Gündüz, 2021, p. 102)

Christianity, a religion which has the largest number of adherents in the world, consists of a number of denominations. Among these, the largest one in number of its adherents is Catholic Christianity by 50%, the second is Protestant Christianity by 30%, the third is Orthodox

Christianity by 17%, and the remaining 3% consists of several other denominations with smaller numbers of adherents. (Aydın, 1998, p. 354) The first serious division among Christianity occurred between the Catholics and Orthodox Christians, which was in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, which is based on both political and theological disputes. Yet, the division goes way back to the 4<sup>th</sup> century when the capital of the Roman Empire had been moved to Constantinople (East) from Rome (West). After becoming the new capital, a new church had been formed in Constantinople, independent from the Roman Church. (Gündüz, 2021, p. 127) This independence caused the problem of authority in religion and then caused some differences in the creedal understandings as well. The final division occurred in 1054, which was called the Great Schism which happened through the mutual excommunications by the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church in Rome and the Patriarch of the Eastern Orthodox Church in Constantinople.<sup>2</sup>

Another important division happened in the 16<sup>th</sup> century with the departure of the Protestant Church, which mainly consists of different churches and sects such as Lutheranism, Calvinism, the Anglican Church, and the Anabaptists. (Gündüz, 2021, p. 131-142) Protestantism occurred as a reaction against the Catholics with the Reform Movement. Catholic Church has been in the power of the religious, political, and economic life for a long time and this situation started getting negative reactions, people started questioning the precise authority of the Catholic Church in many parts of life and these reactions finally led to the religious reform movement with the impact of Martin Luther, a German theologian who is the first and main figure in religious reform movement and Protestantism, and Lutheranism in particular. This way the Protestant Church departed from the Catholic Church, which then became a common name for some different groups that are opposed to the teachings of the Catholic Church. (Katar, 2013, p. 181)

The Catholic Church has more of a centralistic, dogmatic, and tradition-oriented structure; the Orthodox Church is quite similar to Catholicism in terms of theological issues but differs in its interpretation of tradition and is not as centralistic as Catholicism. On the other hand, Protestantism differs from Catholicism in many aspects including theological issues; ideas such as facilitating the worships, rejecting the central authority, the emphasis on individual responsibility are some of the important characteristics of the Protestant Churches. (Aydın, 1998, p. 354)

Throughout the history of Christianity, many councils were held to discuss different matters such as the doctrinal issues or the organization of the church life. The Catholic Church considers twenty-one councils as ecumenical, starting from the first ecumenical council "The Council of Nicaea" (325) until the last one "The Second Council of Vatican" (1962-1965). (Aydın, 1991, pp. 10) Although these twenty-one councils are ecumenical according to the Catholic Church, only the first seven of them are considered ecumenical by The Orthodox Church, and for Protestantism, different churches have different opinions about the number of the ecumenical councils. The councils met within a historical framework to answer the problems or questions of its day. (Kelly, 2009, pp. 22) With these councils, the doctrines of the Catholic Church have been carefully formulated, and the Church has taken the form it has today. Three of these councils, namely the Council of Trent (1545-1563) and the Vatican

<sup>2</sup> Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "East-West Schism", *Britannica*, last modified December 2, 2019, accessed at 09/01/2022, <https://www.britannica.com/event/East-West-Schism-1054>

Councils (1<sup>st</sup> between 1869-1870 and 2<sup>nd</sup> between 1962-1965) can be specifically mentioned. In the Council of Trent, the Roman Catholic doctrines were defined such as the matters regarding the Original Sin and Justification or the sacraments, like the reality of the Presence in the Eucharist and the Sacrifice in the Mass. In the First Council of Vatican, the doctrine of the Supremacy and the Infallibility of the Pope was defined. And in the Second Council of Vatican, not only the matters regarding the Catholic Church were discussed but also the dialogue between the Catholic Church and other Christian denominations as well as other religions was the matter of discussion. (Walsh, 1967, pp. 330)

The concept of worship in Christianity is generally based on some practices called Sacraments, along with smaller practices called Sacramental and some daily, weekly, and yearly worships, which are usually in the form of festivals or prayers. Regarding the concept of worship, Catholicism is the strictest sect in Christianity, though Orthodox Church is quite similar to Catholicism in this sense.

According to Catholicism sacrament is defined as “a sacred sign instituted by Christ to give grace” (Kreeft, 2001, p. 296), meaning that sacraments are the practices or regulations for human life that signify deeper concepts, which were brought to humans by Christ himself and are the real manifestation of the grace of God. (Gündüz, 2021, p. 160) Christ has not only instituted these sacraments but also is and has been present in these sacraments. Although the main concept of sacraments is the same in all Christian sects, the number of sacraments change; according to the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, there are seven sacraments while there is only two according to the Protestants. The main sacraments, which are accepted by all denominations, are Baptism and Eucharist, and the rest of the seven sacraments that are accepted by Catholics are Confirmation, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony. These sacraments cover different stages of human life.

The first sacrament is Baptism which is the condition of all other sacraments because Baptism is the way of becoming a Christian and also the way of being freed from sin, which can be done only once in one’s life. Christians assume that with baptism they participate in the dying and rising of Christ. (O’Collins & Farrugia, 2015, p. 249) Baptism is done either by immersing one in baptismal water thrice or by pouring some water on the head thrice. Through this celebration the Holy Words are proclaimed, the conversion is accepted, faith is professed, the person is baptized, anointed with chrism and the ceremony ends with receiving the Eucharist then getting the blessings. (Catholic Church, 1994, p. 280) The Catholic parents usually get their children baptized when they are infants; thus, the real First Communion and Confirmation which are separate from the practices in Baptism take place when the children become older, which will be explained later on.

The other sacrament is Eucharist, which means “thanksgiving” in Greek, it is one of the fundamental worships of Christianity and is accepted by all sects, it is also called the Communion and the Mass. This sacrament was directly instituted by Christ himself before he died; in his last meal with his disciples which is called the Last Supper, he took the bread and said “this is my body” then he took the wine and said “my blood of the covenant” (O’Collins & Farrugia, 2015, p. 260); so in the sacrament of Eucharist, Christians use bread and wine as a memorial of Jesus Christ and as giving thanks to God the Father. The celebration of this sacrament takes place in the Church with the gathering of the believers together; firstly, the readings from the Holy Book and sermon take place then the bread and wine are presented by

the priest in the name of Christ. (Catholic Church, 1994, p. 304) It is believed that Christ is present in the Eucharist not only metaphysically but also physically; the Catholics especially believe that the bread and wine turn into Christ's body and blood with this celebration. (Katar, 2013, p. 208) In Catholicism Mass is celebrated every day. (Aydın, 1998, p. 349)

Another sacrament is Confirmation. It is the anointing of the Christian with the sacred chrism/oil, which is for the strengthening of one's faith, which is also done once in a lifetime. In Catholicism there are two anointing with chrism; the first one is when the infant is anointed as a part of the baptismal rite and the other one is the anointing in the Confirmation, which is held when one reaches the age of reason; that would be adolescence. The consecration and the anointing are both made by the bishop; for the Confirmation rite, the bishop extends his hand over the Catholics to be confirmed while praying then anoints the foreheads with sacred chrism and says, "Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit." (Catholic Church, 1994, p. 293)

The next sacrament is Confession/Penance; it is for being free of a sin that has been committed and to turn back to the state of Grace after Baptism. According to Christianity, only God forgives sins, and also the Son of God has this authority to forgive sins on earth, Christ then gave this authority to his disciples who later on gave this power to the Church and this is practiced through the authorized priests. This sacrament is carried out mainly by two steps, the confession to the priest and the reception of penance; the celebration of the sacrament starts with the blessings of the priest and reading the Word of God, then the person makes a confession of his/her sins to the priest and the priest imposes a penance, then the celebration ends with prayer and blessings of the priest. (Catholic Church, 1994, p. 333) In the first periods of Christianity, confession was made publicly in front of the congregation, later on, it became a private confession in which the person confesses his sin to the priest in a special compartment in the church. (Katar, 2013, p. 208) In some councils, it was mentioned that the sacrament of penance was compulsory for the forgiveness of sins committed after Baptism and it must be done at least once a year. (Aydın, 1998, p. 350)

The next sacrament is the Anointing of the Sick. This is the anointing of the sick or very old Christians with the sacred oil; the actual purpose of this sacrament is the healing of the sick, however, over time it began to be performed for those who are on the deathbed to die upon Christian faith, yet after Vatican II the effect of healing was highlighted again. (Katar, 2013, p. 208) This sacrament can be received several times in one's life and in any case of illness or serious conditions. This sacrament can be received at home, in hospital, or church, for one or more persons at a time. For the celebration of this, the priest puts his hand on the sick person and prays then anoints them with the oil, especially on the forehead and the hands in the Catholic Church. (Catholic Church, 1994, p. 342)

The last sacrament is the Matrimony; according to Christians, marriage symbolizes God's love for humanity and Christ's love for the Church and his apostles, thus it is a sacred act. It is also important in the sense of forming a Christian family and raising Christian offspring, which would contribute to the continuation of Christ's existence on earth. Marriage takes place during the Eucharist; also it is appropriate for bride and groom to receive Penance before the marriage. (Catholic Church, 1994, p. 364) The marriage ceremony is performed in the church under the supervision of the priest; this ceremony takes place by readings from the Holy Book, the acceptance of each other as spouses, and the priest's declaration that he accepts this marriage and the giving of blessings. (Aydın, 1998, p. 350) Marriage is considered a lifelong

commitment, thus the Catholics do not accept divorce because it is accepted as an act against the plan of God, yet some Catholic churches accept adultery as justifying divorce, but not remarriage. (O'Collins & Farrugia, 2015, p. 307)

Another sacrament is called the Holy Orders, this is the sacrament of the holy priesthood for the assignment and function of the clergy; this was the mission of Christ entrusted to his disciples who also entrusted this to the Church, thus to the clergy. There are three degrees, from the highest, as Bishop (episcopate), Priest or Presbyter (presbyterate) and Deacon (diaconate). Bishopry has different gradations among which the title "Pope" has the highest grade, who is the religious and political leader of the Catholic Church worldwide; the authority to determine the doctrine that constitutes the principles of belief is in the hands of the Pope as the leader. The importance of the Pope lies in the belief that the Pope is the successor of Peter –who is accepted as the first bishop-, the disciple of Jesus entrusted with this mission. This grade is followed by the Cardinals who help the Pope in his mission; while the Pope chooses the Cardinals, the Cardinals chose the Pope. (Aydın & Eroğlu, 2007, p. 160-161)

In Catholicism, the clergy cannot get married because they are supposed to dedicate themselves to the Church. This sacrament is performed preferably on Sunday in a cathedral. The deacon is appointed only by the bishop; the priest is appointed either by the bishop or appointed priests, and the bishop is appointed by the Pope along with the confirmation of three specially elected bishops. The essential rite for this sacrament consists of the bishop extending his hand on the head of the ordinand and reading the Holy Book and praying. (Aydın, 1998, p. 350)

As it has been mentioned, the major denominations of Christianity are the Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church and the Protestant Churches. The division of the Catholic and the Orthodox Churches was in 1054 and the separation of the Protestant churches from the Catholic Church first happened with the Lutheran Church in 1517, later the term Protestant became a name for all the churches which are not affiliated with either Catholic or Orthodox Churches. (Rhodes, 2015, pp. 20-21). Between these churches there are differences regarding both the doctrines and the organization of the church life. The difference of the Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church mostly lies in some certain doctrines; the Orthodox Church rejects the doctrine of "Filioque" which means the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son, so they believe Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father alone. They also do not accept the pope as the sole vicar of Christ, papal infallibility and indulgences. The Orthodox Church has seven sacraments which are also called mysteries. In Eucharist it is believed that the bread and wine change into real body and blood but how this happens is a mystery; the difference of the Catholic Church is that they believe how this change happens is "Transubstantiation" which means that the substance changes but appearance does not. (Rhodes, 2015, pp.284-286) Since the Protestant Church is an umbrella term for many churches, there are different opinions under Protestantism, but their general differences from the Catholic Church are that they consider the Bible as the only infallible rule and leave out the tradition unlike Catholics. They believe the salvation is by grace alone through faith alone and unlike the Catholics they do not believe that the priest is an intermediary between people and God. (Rhodes, 2015, pp.22) They reject the papal infallibility and purgatory. When it comes to sacraments they generally accept two of the sacraments which are Baptism and Eucharist; they believe marriage is not unbreakable unlike in Catholicism; and for some of the Protestant Churches, the bread and

wine do not change in substance in Eucharist, though some Protestants accept the Catholic doctrine.

There are also sacred practices called sacramental, which are of a lower degree than the sacraments. (Kreeft, 2001, p. 304) The sacramentals, which are especially important in the Catholic Church, are the ceremonies of exorcism, funerals, and blessings. There are also some daily, weekly, and yearly worships in Christianity. The daily worships are held by reading from the Holy Book and praying, the time for these daily worships were three times which are the “third, sixth, and ninth hours” of the day but then has been increased to seven times which is still accepted by the Catholics. (Aydın, 1998, p. 350) The weekly worships are held on Sunday in church, on which reading of the Holy Book and the Eucharist takes place. The yearly worships are usually in the form of festivals and the most important two are Christmas and Easter. Christmas refers to the birth celebrations of Jesus. On this day, in the celebrations held collectively in the church, the Eucharist is received and some chapters from the Holy Book are read. Catholics celebrate Christmas on 25 December. Easter is a sacred day established to commemorate the resurrection of Jesus after his death, it is also called Passover. This day is fixed as the first Sunday after the first full moon following the spring equinox. (Aydın, 1998, p. 351)

In conclusion, it can be said that in Catholicism there are seven important worships which are called sacraments, which cover many stages of a Christian’s life, and it is important to carry out these sacraments for the welfare of one’s spiritual and physical life. The Catholic community is expected to perform these sacraments and lead a life on the path of Christ through these that were all established by him. It is considered quite important by the Church that the teachings and the doctrines of Christ exist in each Catholic generation, regardless of the age they are living in. Thus, the question arises whether the Catholic community actually leads their life strictly following this path of Christ, even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; and whether there is any difference between generations regarding this lifestyle. In the following chapter, we will be examining studies concerning how the practices are executed among the different generations of Catholics and will be trying to answer the question above.

## CATHOLIC CHURCH DATA ON THE OBSERVANCE OF THE SACRAMENTS

Religion has always been a part of human life, and a world without any religion has never been a reality and probably it will never be so. Although religion stays an important concept in each age, it is known that people's view of religion has been changing in every generation with the change of the human mind through time. As has been seen in the previous chapter, Christianity –and Catholicism particularly- has a certain understanding of religious life which is fixed. Since the perspectives of people change through time, a question should be asked: “Do the perspectives of Catholics change by the generation regarding the adherence to the religious practices?” In this chapter, to find an answer to this question we will be handling studies that provide statistics on the approaches of Catholics about the sacrament practices.

An article written by Jeffrey M. Jones for Gallup, “U.S. Church Membership Falls Below Majority for the First Time” shows that the Church membership has fallen from 73% in the 1940s to 47% in 2020, he also mentions the difference among generations:

*Church membership is strongly correlated with age, as 66% of traditionalists -- U.S. adults born before 1946 -- belong to a church, compared with 58% of baby boomers, 50% of those*

*in Generation X, and 36% of millennials. The limited data Gallup has on church membership among the portion of Generation Z that has reached adulthood are so far showing church membership rates similar to those for millennials. (Jones, 2021)*

This article might give us an idea about the perspective of different generations on religion even though it does not provide specific data on Catholicism and religious practices.

Another study by the name *The Age Gap in Religion Around the World* that has been carried out by Pew Research Center in 2018 argues that young adults are less religious than the elders and are less likely to exercise religious practices; and that this situation is more or less similar around the world. According to the survey of Pew Research Center that has been carried out in 106 countries; in 46 of them, the younger adults aged 18-39 are less likely to be religious compared to the adults aged 40 and above. In 58 countries there is no significant change between ages and in 2 countries the younger adults are more likely to be religious. (Hackett et al., 2018, p. 5) The data also show similar outcomes for Christians as the younger Christians are less religious than the older Christians with 37 countries with younger Christians being less religious and one country with older Christians being less religious out of 78 countries with a Christian population. (Hackett et al., 2018, p. 7) Additionally, Christian adults who say that they attend religious services at least weekly are 41% from ages 40 and above, and 31% from ages 18-39. (Hackett et al., 2018, p. 44) Although these are not data about Catholicism, these can give us a general idea of whether the adherence to religious practices changes by generation.

*Sacraments Today: Belief and Practice Among U.S. Catholics*, a study which was held out by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate and was carried out in 2008 with more than 1000 participants show data on the perspectives of adult U.S. Catholics and how often they attend to certain sacraments. In the study, it has been mentioned that there are important generation differences among Catholics and that older Catholics are more involved in Church life than the younger generations. (Gray & Perl, 2008, p. 2) Here we will take a look at the data. The generations in this study are divided as "Pre-Vatican II" (born in or before 1942), "Vatican II" (born between 1943-1960), "Post-Vatican II" (born between 1961-1981), and Millennials (born in 1982 and later).

Since the sacrament of Baptism means becoming a Christian, it is a practice every Catholic has to do; thus, there is no generational difference among Catholics regarding practicing Baptism since they cannot be Christian without it. Yet what we can say here is the difference among generations in their approaches to Baptism: the respondents who consider Baptism as "very meaningful" are as follows; Pre-Vatican II is 88%, Vatican II is 75%, Post-Vatican II is 66% and Millennial is 61%. (Gray & Perl, 2008, p. 33) For the Mass attendance at least once a week it is shown in the study that Pre-Vatican II attendance is 45%; Vatican II is 24%; Post-Vatican II is 15% and Millennial is 18%; also the attendance at least once a month is 64% for Pre-Vatican II; 42% for Vatican II; 39% for Post-Vatican II and 36% for Millennials. (Gray & Perl, 2008, p. 21) For the celebration of First Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation the data is as follows: for the Pre-Vatican II the First Reconciliation is 98%, First Communion is 99% and Confirmation is 95%; for the Vatican II the First Reconciliation is 93%, First Communion is 94% and Confirmation is 91%; for the Post-Vatican II the First Reconciliation is 89% First Communion is 91% and Confirmation is 79%; for the Millennials the First Reconciliation is 84%, First Communion is 85% and Confirmation is 69%. (Gray & Perl, 2008, p. 29) For the participation in Reconciliation/Confession at least once a year, the study shows that the data

for Pre-Vatican II Generation is 42%, Vatican II Generation is 27%, Post-Vatican II is 22% and for the Millennial generation, it is 27%. (Gray & Perl, 2008, p. 59)

When it comes to the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, the data shows the reception of this sacrament for oneself or a family member as; Pre-Vatican II is 53%, Vatican II is 59%, Post-Vatican II is 46% and Millennial is 43%. (Gray & Perl, 2008, p. 65) When it comes to the sacrament of Holy Orders; men who have considered priesthood are 17% in Pre-Vatican II Generation, 25% in Vatican II Generation, 12% in Post-Vatican II, and 9% in Millennial Generations. (Gray & Perl, 2008, p. 70) The women who have considered becoming a nun are 15% in Pre-Vatican II, 26% in Vatican II, 13% in Post-Vatican II, and 8% in Millennial Generations. (Gray & Perl, 2008, p. 75) Herewith, we see in general that the participants of younger generations in this study tend to participate less in the considered sacraments compared to the older generations as is shown by the given numbers. Although there are still some slight fluctuations in certain sacraments as seen in the Holy Orders and Anointing of the Sick where a generation's participation is higher than a previous generation; the data still shows that with each generation there is a decline in the participation.

Another study made by CARA about the Holy Orders, which has been carried out in 2012, *Consideration of Priesthood and Religious Life Among Never Married U.S. Catholics* shows that only 13% of male and 10% of female Catholics have ever considered religious life. Among these the generational differences on the respondents who said they have considered a religious vocation are as follows: male respondents are 27% from Pre-Vatican II, 15% from Vatican II Generation, 7% from Post-Vatican II, and 13% from the Millennials; female respondents are 22% from Pre-Vatican II, 23% from Vatican II Generation, 7% from Post-Vatican II, and 8% from the Millennials. Here we see some rise in the data of the Millennials especially in male respondents compared to the Post-Vatican II Generation, but when we compare it to the Pre-Vatican II Generation we still see that the data decreases by the generation. There is a fluctuation here as well similar to the previous study especially among the female respondents in Vatican II Generation. These show us that although the idea of decrease is still valid in general, the situation might differ in different generations.

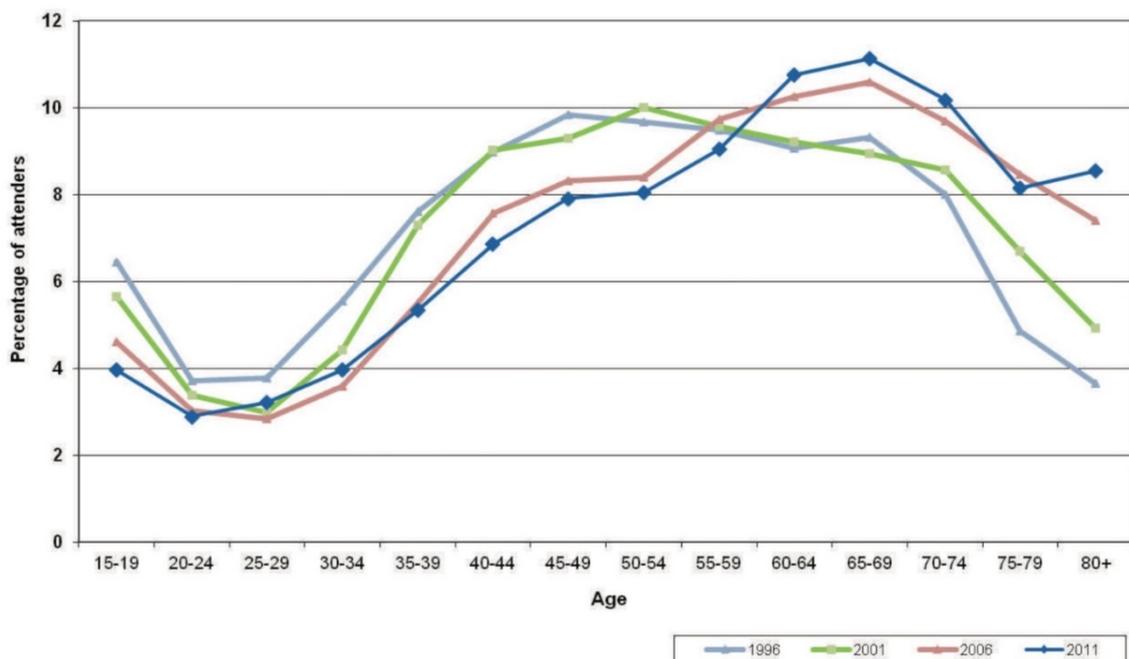
A study about the Sacrament of Marriage made by CARA in 2007, *Marriage in the Catholic Church: A Survey of U.S. Catholics*, says that the older generations especially the generations before Vatican II generation are more involved in church life compared to the younger generations so in general, they tend to score higher on their answers regarding commitment to Catholic practices. (Gray et al., 2007, p. 1) In this study, there has been given data on many aspects regarding marriage but we will focus on marriage in the Church, and the acceptance of divorce. Except for the 29% who haven't married, 65% of the respondents have married in the Church, 5% did not marry in the Church but had their marriage convalidated and 30% did neither. 84% of the Pre-Vatican II were married in the Church while it is 58% for Vatican II and 60% for Post-Vatican II and Millennials together. (Gray et al., 2007, p. 69) Here we see that the marriage in the Church has been decreasing; this might show that the sacrament of Marriage decreases with each generation. For the acceptability of divorce, 76% say it is acceptable in some cases, 17% say it is acceptable in all cases, and 7% say it is not acceptable at all. Accepting divorce in all cases by generations is as follows: Pre-Vatican II as 9%, Vatican II as 22%, Post-Vatican II as 19%, and Millennial as 11%. (Gray et al., 2007, p. 55) We would expect to see the acceptance of divorce in all cases -which is a practice that is not much supported by the

Catholic Church- to increase by the generation in line with the general idea that the commitment to practices decreases by generation; although we still see an increase compared to the Pre-Vatican II Generation, we see that Vatican II and Post-Vatican II generations score higher rather than Millennials.

Another research covering the U.S. community which is made by the Pew Research Center in 2015, *U.S. Public Becoming Less Religious*, shows that there is a decrease in the attendance to religious services by Americans at least once a week with the rate of 36% which was 39% in 2007; among the Christian groups the rate of attendance at least every week is 39%. (Cooperman et al., 2015, p. 69) The study also presents that the older generations of believers are more likely to attend religious services compared to the younger generations. The rates for participants who say they attend the religious services at least once a week are as follows: for age 65 and above it is 58%, for 50-64 it is 37%, for 49-30 it is 37% and for 18-29 it is 28%. (Cooperman et al., 2015, 69) In general, through this data, we can say that the attendance to religious services decreases by the generations.

The previous studies covered the U.S. community, here we will take a look at some studies carried out in Australia. The paper *What Do Mass Attenders Believe?* that has been prepared by Robert Dixon through ACBC Pastoral Research Office in 2014 puts forth some data regarding the attendance of Catholics to the Mass.

**Figure 1.** Age profile of Mass attendees aged 15 and over in 1996-2011. Source: 1996 Catholic Church Life Survey, and 2001, 2006 and 2011 National Church Life Surveys



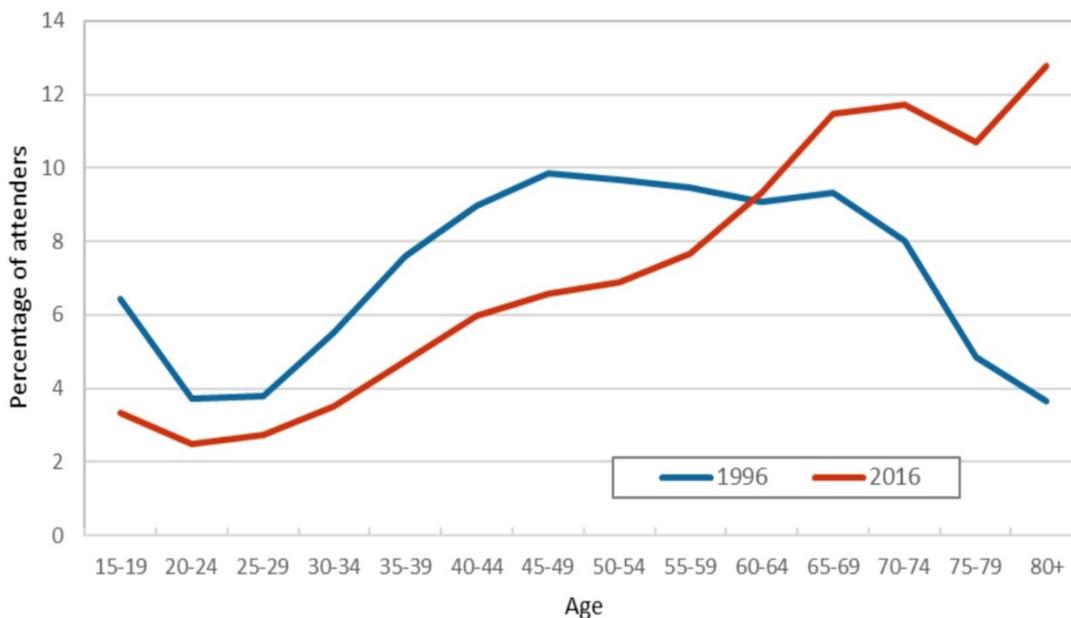
In every successive survey, older teenagers made up an even smaller proportion of Mass attendees (down to 4 percent of all attendees aged 15 and over in 2011), while the percentage of people aged 80 or more has more than doubled, from below four percent of the total in 1996 to more than eight percent in 2011. Attendees aged between 60 and 74 made up about one-third of all attendees in 2011. The changes in the age profile are a consequence of very low attendance rates among young adults, as low as five or six percent among Catholics aged 15 to

34 (Dixon, Kunciuonas & Reid 2008), and the fact that many middle-aged and older formerly regular attenders have stopped going to Mass (Dixon et al. 2007). (Dixon, 2014, p. 6)

Here the data shows us not only that the younger generations tend to be below the attendees aged 35+ in attendance which could show us that the attendance decrease by generation; but it also gives us a comparison between years. We see from the chart that the highest percentage of attendance was around the age 45 in 1996, and it has risen to age 65 and around in 2011; when we consider the fact that those who were around age 45 in 1996 would be around 60 in 2011, we could say that the same generation of people –yet might not be the same people- would be keeping their high attendance while the new generations coming after them are becoming lower in their attendance.

Another study about Mass attendance in Australia, *The Australian Catholic Mass Attendance Report 2016*, which has been carried out by National Centre for Pastoral Research mentions a decline between the years 2011 and 2016; with 39.020 fewer attendees as a 5.9% decline in the total weekly attendance in 2016. (Dantis et al., 2016, p. 1) The study provides the data on the attendance of different ages in different years: attenders of age 15-24 are 7.6% in 2006, 6.9% in 2011 and 5.8% in 2016; attenders of age 60-74 are 30.5% in 2006, 32.1% in 2011 and 32.5% in 2016; while the attenders of age 80+ are 7.4% in 2006, 8.5% in 2011 and 12.8% in 2016. (Source of Data: National Count of Attendance 2006-2016, National Church Life Survey 2006-2016, Census of Population and Housing 2016.) (Dantis et al., 2016, p. 1) We can see from this data that with each mentioned year, the older generations increase in their attendance to the Mass while the younger generations decrease in the attendance rate, this means that the attendees are an aging population in general. The report mentions "...in 2016, Mass attenders aged 15 to 59 accounted for a lower proportion of attenders (44%) than they did in 1996 (65%), while attendees aged 60 and over accounted for a much higher proportion of all attenders." (Dantis et al., 2016, p. 2).

**Figure 2.** Age profile of Mass attendees, 1996 and 2016. Source: Catholic Church Life Survey 1996 and National Church Life Survey 2016.



We see that young adult attendees tend to be less in attendance compared to most of the older generations in both years, but in 2016 there has been a general decline in the attendance rates of ages under 60 compared to 1996 while there is an increase in the attendance of those who are aged around and above 60. What has been said about the previous study and figure can also be applied here; that the generation who holds the highest attendance in 1996, who consist of ages 40-50, would be the same generation who holds the highest attendance in 2016, who consist of ages 60-70. This data shows us that while the same generation who are considered as the older generations here keep their high attendance, there is a decrease in the attendance of the younger generations after them.

Along with the information on U.S. and Australian communities, we have some data on Western Europe and the U.K. *Being Christian in Western Europe*, the study that has been carried out by Pew Research Center in 2018 states that in Western Europe few adults participate in religious activities and the median of 15 countries this study has been carried out with is 22% but in some countries with mainly Catholic population the rate goes up to 24-37% since they tend to be more religious. (Sahgal et al., 2018, p. 95) The study also states that the people aged 55 and above are higher in their levels of religious commitment compared to the younger believers. (Sahgal et al., 2018, p. 102)

According to the report *Contemporary Catholicism in England and Wales* by Stephen Bullivant, 27.5% of the Catholics say that they attend Church services at least once, the rates of attendance at least once a week by age is as follows: for ages 18-24 it is 14%, for 25-34 it is 26.7%, for 35-44 it is 26.9%, for 45-54 it is 20.3%, for 55-64 it is 20.7% and finally, for 65+ it is 43.1%. (Bullivant, 2016, p. 15) Although these percentages show us that the weekly attendance increases from the youngest generation to the oldest, we can see that the change is not steady and there is a fluctuation and among the ages 25-44, people tend to attend the church practices more than those of age 45-64.

According to a research in Poland which was carried out in 2021, religious practice declines in Poland especially among young citizens. It is stated that "In the early 1990s, almost 70% of young Poles regularly practiced religion; today, less than 25% do. Among the whole population, the proportion regularly practicing religion has also fallen significantly over that period, and now stands at 43%." (Tilles, 2021)

Another addition which might be included is a report from 2021 about the church membership in the U.S. The study shows that the church membership has been declining among Catholics since 2000. The report mentions that "Membership has declined with each successive generation. While 66% of "traditionalists" born before 1946 and 58% of baby boomers say they are members of a church, only 36% of millennials say they are a member of a church." (Report: *Church membership among Catholics*, 2021)

As a result, in light of all these data from the U.S., Australia, Western Europe, and the U.K. that have been mentioned above, in general, we could claim that with each new generation there occurs a decrease in the fulfillment of various religious practices in Catholicism. This claim is of course not definite and it may change in certain situations and may vary according to certain places; but generally speaking, older generations seem to be higher in their participation in religious practices compared to each coming generation as it has been put forward by the differences of percentages in ages and differences of generations in different

years. This claim can also be supported by these words of Jörg Stolz, a professor of sociology at the University of Lausanne: “We have already observed since the 19th century that each generation is a little less religious than the previous one. It is likely to continue.”<sup>3</sup>

Another claim that we can make regarding these data and the data on the Catholic population is that; believing in Catholicism does not necessarily mean that the individuals who identify as Catholic are practicing in their religions; this can be understood by the growing number of Catholics<sup>4</sup> but the declining number of the attendees of the religious practices and the churches as it was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. In addition to these professional studies, in the next chapter, we will take a look at a prepared questionnaire and an interview with a priest to have a closer understanding of the situation that has been discussed here and to see if there can be provided further confirmation to the result we have achieved in this chapter.

### QUESTIONNAIRE & INTERVIEW

Based on the studies that have been examined in the previous chapter, we have claimed that the fulfillment of the religious practices decreases in each new generation. In order to add another perspective to this paper, we have carried out a small survey of 16 questions regarding the fulfillment of religious practices by Catholics, including questions about each sacrament. The survey took place in the Church of St. Anthony of Padua in Beyoğlu/Istanbul in December 21 2021. The number of participants that could be reached out is small, which is 15; among these participants, there are 5 people from Generation X (1965-1980), 2 people from Millennial Generation (1981-1996), and 8 people from Generation Z (1997-2012). The table of the survey is as the following, with the numbers showing how many people from each generation chose those certain answers:

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS	GEN. X	MILLENNIAL	GEN. Z
1. Would you consider yourself a religious Catholic?	Yes	5	1	4
	Somewhat			2
	Not sure			1
	No		1	1
2. Would you consider yourself to be committed to the religious practices of Catholicism?	Yes	5	1	1
	Somewhat			3
	Not sure			1
	No		1	3

<sup>3</sup> For further information, please see: <https://fsspx.news/en/news-events/news/catholic-church-decline-western-world-53951>.

<sup>4</sup> Carol Glatz, “Vatican Statistics Show Continued Growth in Number of Catholics Worldwide”, *National Catholic Reporter*, March 26, 2021. <https://www.ncronline.org/news/vatican/vatican-statistics-show-continued-growth-number-catholics-worldwide>.

## Religious Responsibility in Catholicism

3. When were you baptized?	As an infant (before 1)	3	2	7
	As a child (2-12)	1		
	As a teenager (13-19)	1		
	As an adult (after 19)			
4. If you have or would have a child, would you want them to be baptized?	Certainly	5	1	5
	Most likely		1	1
	Maybe			
	Not likely			2
5. How often do you attend Mass?	Every Week	5		
	Once-twice a month		1	2
	Few times a year			4
	Rarely			1
	Never		1	1
6. How often do you receive Eucharist?	Always	4		1
	Sometimes	1	1	2
	Rarely			2
	Never		1	3
7. Have you received the sacrament of Confirmation?	Yes	5	1	4
	No		1	4
8. How often do you go to Confession/Penance?	Once or more a month			
	Several times a year	1		1
	Once a year	4	1	3
	Rarely			1
	Never		1	3
9. What do you think about the	Certainly agree	5	1	3

statement "Marriage is a sacred practice and must be held in a church."?	Somewhat agree			1
	Not sure			3
	Disagree	1		1
10. What do you think about divorce?	Acceptable regardless of the circumstances	3		7
	Acceptable under certain circumstances	1	2	1
	Not acceptable	1		
11. Have you ever considered becoming a priest-nun?	Yes	1	1	
	No	4	1	8
12. Have you ever encouraged someone to become a priest-nun?	Yes		1	
	No	5	1	7
13. Have you or anyone you know ever received the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick?	Yes	4	1	6
	No	1	1	2
14. What do you think about the healing effect of Anointing of the Sick?	I strongly believe in it	3		2
	I somewhat believe in it		1	1
	Not sure	2	1	3
	I do not believe in it			2
15. Which of the sacraments do you consider to be the most important? (Multiple choices can be chosen.)	Baptism	5	2	6
	Eucharist/Communion	4	1	4
	Confirmation		1	2
	Penance/Confession		1	3
	Matrimony/Marriage		1	2
	Holy Orders/Priesthood		1	2
	Anointing of the Sick			

We can see from the table that in general, the participants from Generation X tend to be higher in their participation in religious practices compared to the other generations. Though there are some sacraments where the difference between Generation X and the other two generations are quite subtle or even there is no important difference such as the sacrament of Confirmation and Holy Orders; there are still some sacraments in which Generation X seems to be more practicing such as attending the Mass and receiving the Eucharist. The participants from Generation Z seem to be quite diverse in their answers so it is actually hard to see what to consider as the general answer, but as we can see from the table they tend to be below Generation X regarding the frequency in their attendance. When it comes to the Millennial Generation, we cannot make many comments on their participation since there are only two participants; but as far as we can say, sometimes they tend to be closer to the situation of Generation X and sometimes to Generation Z. Through this survey, we can say that the data which has been provided by the studies in the previous chapter seems close to the data this survey provide, thus the result that has been reached in the previous chapter seems to apply to this self-made survey as well.

When it comes to the interview, we have interviewed the priest Anton of the Saint Anthony Roman Catholic Church in Istanbul and asked him 10 questions about the sacraments and the parish of the Church. Here the summary of the answers will be given. According to the answers of the priest, –Reverend Anton-, the Latin Catholics living in Istanbul are around 15.000 as locals; and the approximate number of Catholics attending the church regularly is around 100-150 on the weekend but it is not steady because of the works of people and the distance to the church, but on the holy days and Sunday it is around 1100, and the average age of the people in the parish is around 30s. The Catholic parents mostly get their children baptized when they are infants. Those who receive Eucharist are not of a certain age gap but from every generation because most of the people who attend the Mass try to receive Eucharist as well. Confirmation is received by almost all those who have been baptized. For the Sacrament of Penance, there are people from every age because as Reverend Anton mentioned this sacrament is not about age but is about conscience and committing sins; but people do not often come to the Penance because the definition of “sin” has changed and some sins have been normalized so they see confession as unnecessary. For the Sacrament of Marriage, young Catholics prefer to get married in the church because it is believed that marriage is a blessing from God. When asked about young Catholics’ opinions on Priesthood, Reverend Anton mentioned that young people do not consider becoming a priest-nun because of the hardships of this sacrament. And as for the last question which is about whether people receive the Anointing of the Sick, he mentioned that most of the young people do not even know about this sacrament and some do not think of receiving it in case of illness; sometimes they call for the anointing but it is uncommon, it is usually received by older people.

These answers given by the priest in St. Anthony Church show us that in Istanbul the fulfillment of the sacraments by different generations seem not to differ much except for some certain sacraments such as Holy Orders and Anointing of the Sick, we can also add Penance to the sacraments which differ by generation since the Reverend told that the sins get normalized so in each generation the perspective on sin changes thus the attendance to the Penance also changes, which means it decreases. But when we consider the general of the sacraments there seems to be no difference of importance among different generations. Thus, this interview does neither prove nor disprove the result that has been reached in the aforementioned studies.

As a result of this study and the interview, we can state that when we compare the different generations on fulfillment of religious practices we see a difference, this difference is sometimes quite insignificant and sometimes bigger in certain practices. What we see in this difference is that the older generations appear to be more practicing in some perspectives compared to the younger generations. However, we cannot state that this situation applies to all practices of Catholicism; also, it does not always apply to all generations as a constant fact.

## CONCLUSION

This research paper looked at the largest denomination of the world's largest religion, Catholicism, to discover if religious activities are fulfilled differently from generation to generation. The purpose of this study is to see if the changes in society over time have any impact on religious adherence. For this purpose, the research paper investigated religious practices in Catholicism and how they are carried out by Catholics in different generations. This subject was approached in three steps: in the first step, Catholicism was introduced with a brief history of its differences from other denominations, as well as information on religious practices in Catholicism and how they are carried out; in the second, studies on Catholics' attendance at religious practices were analyzed with generational comparisons to see if there was any difference between generations in the execution of practices; and as the last step, a self-made questionnaire was presented with comments, as well as an interview with a priest, to bring a different perspective to the other studies for this research paper.

For the research of this research paper, both primary and secondary sources were used. A self-made questionnaire and an interview with a priest were used to gather primary materials. Secondary sources included both hardcopy and online books, encyclopedias, and articles written on Christianity, particularly on Catholicism, as well as various studies written on the execution of religious practices in Catholicism.

In the first part of the research paper, it was demonstrated that Catholicism arose from the division of Christians into denominations over theological and political matters and that Catholics adopt seven essential religious activities known as the Sacraments, as well as several smaller acts known as Sacramentals. In the second part, research demonstrated that religious practice attendance is declining in general, and this issue also applies to Christianity and Catholicism in particular. This decrease is particularly evident among younger Catholic generations, as seen by the fact that their rates of religious observance and church attendance are significantly lower than those of older Catholics. However, it is also found that this circumstance does not always apply to each sacrament and each generation, as certain generations' rates in some activities were higher than previous generations. In the third section, the questionnaire found similar results to the aforementioned research, and the interview revealed that while some sacraments are not affected by generational differences, others are; consequently, this interview did not bring anything new to the other works listed.

The reasons behind this decrease in the fulfillment of religious practices among the younger generations might be a combination of many factors. When we consider the time the older generations lived in and the time the younger generations live in now, we can see many changes that come along with time. One of the reasons for the decrease can be people's modern lifestyles, the life has evolved since the past ages to be busier than ever; people spend most of their times busy with their schools or jobs, such busyness does not leave them enough time to

focus on their spiritual life, thus, they might not be able to find the time to fulfill their religious duties. The way that the world is turning to materialism might also affect the religious life, such a situation causes people to endeavor in material occupations their whole lives and to intentionally or unintentionally neglect their religions, so they do not or cannot perform the religious practices. We can see that technology improves day by day, but with such an improvement some negative effects come as well, especially on the generations who were born into advanced technology. As we can witness, especially in the past couple of years, the wrong use of social networks causes a lot of waste of time in people's lives, this causes people to be isolated from the real world which also might cause isolation from religious life as well. Another point we can mention is that, due to the aforementioned materialism in the world, parents tend to focus on the secular education of their children and do not give them the moral values enough, this sometimes ends up with only a lack of adherence to practices of religion, and sometimes it even ends up with a lack of belief. Such an approach of parents also causes a lack of religious knowledge, thus, the children do not even know about their religious duties, let alone fulfilling them. However, these are only assumptions regarding the decrease in the observation of the religious practices. The purpose of this research paper is to show that there is a decrease in the observation of religious practices, not to reveal the reasons behind it. The reasons behind this decrease can be revealed through future studies specifically carried out to shed light on the subject.

In conclusion, the hypothesis that was put forward in the introduction claiming that there is a decrease in the fulfillment of the religious responsibilities among Catholic Christians in each new generation was proven correct. With the exception of some sacraments, where some generations between the oldest and the youngest were higher in their fulfillment in that specific sacrament, the general situation of religious adherence that was obtained from the majority of studies provides us with the needed argument in favor of the mentioned hypothesis; and because the hypothesis was not specific but general, the exceptions do not affect the conclusion that has been reached.

## REFERENCES

- Aydın, M. (1998). Hıristiyanlık. *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Vol. 17, pp. 340–358). TDV Yayınları. <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/hiristiyanlik>.
- Aydın, M. (1991). *Hristiyan genel konsilleri ve II. Vatikan konsili*. Selçuk Üniversitesi Basımevi.
- Aydın, M., & Eroğlu, A. H. (2007). Papalık. *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Vol. 34, pp. 160–162). TDV Yayınları. <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/papalik>.
- Bullivant, S. (2016). (rep.). *Contemporary Catholicism in England and Wales: A statistical report based on recent British social attitudes survey data*. St. Mary's University Catholic Research Forum. <https://research.stmarys.ac.uk/id/eprint/2645/>.

- Catholic Church (1994). *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Geoffrey Chapman.
- Cooperman, A., Smith, G. A., & Cornibert, S. Et al. (2015). (rep.). *U.S. public becoming less religious*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewforum.org/2015/11/03/u-s-public-becoming-less-religious/>.
- Dantis, T., Reid, S., & Chee, M. (2016). (rep.). *The Australian Catholic mass attendance report 2016*. National Centre for Pastoral Research. <https://ncpr.catholic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Mass-attendance-in-Australia-2016-Final.pdf>.
- Demirci, K. (1998). Hıristiyanlık. *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Vol. 17, pp. 328–340). TDV Yayınları. <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/hiristiyanlik>.
- Dixon, R. (2014). (rep.). *What do mass attenders believe?* ACBC Pastoral Research Office. <https://ncpr.catholic.org.au/what-do-mass-attenders-believe/>.
- Gray, M. M., & Gautier, M. L. (2012). (rep.). *Consideration of priesthood and religious life among never-married U.S. catholics*. Center for Applied Research on the Apostolate. [https://www.usccb.org/resources/survey-of-youth-and-young-adults-on-vocations\\_0.pdf](https://www.usccb.org/resources/survey-of-youth-and-young-adults-on-vocations_0.pdf).
- Gray, M. M., & Perl, P. M. (2008). (rep.). *Sacraments today: belief and practice among U.S. catholics*. Center for Applied Research on the Apostolate. <https://cara.georgetown.edu/sacraments.html>.
- Gray, M. M., Perl, P. M., & Bruce, T. C. (2007). (rep.). *Marriage in the Catholic church: a survey of U.S. Catholics*. Center for Applied Research on the Apostolate. <https://cara.georgetown.edu/MarriageReport.pdf>.
- Gündüz, Ş. (2021). *Hıristiyanlık*. Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları.
- Hackett, C., & Grim, B. J. Et al. (2012). (rep.). *The global religious landscape*. Pew Research Center. <http://www.pewforum.org/global-religious-landscape.aspx>.
- Hackett, C., Kramer, S., & Schiller, A. (2018). (rep.). *The age gap in religion around the world*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewforum.org/2018/06/13/the-age-gap-in-religion-around-the-world/>.
- Jones, J. M. (2021, March 29). *U.S. Church membership falls below majority for the first time*. Gallup. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/341963/church-membership-falls-below-majority-first-time.aspx>
- Katar, M. (2013). Hıristiyanlık 2. In *Dinler tarihi*. A. İ. Yitik (Ed.), (pp. 191–211). Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi Uzaktan Eğitim Yayınları. [https://www.academia.edu/39049304/Hıristiyanlık\\_2\\_İnanç\\_İbadet\\_ve\\_Ritüeller\\_](https://www.academia.edu/39049304/Hıristiyanlık_2_İnanç_İbadet_ve_Ritüeller_).
- Katar, M. (2013). Hıristiyanlık. In *Dinler tarihi*. A. İ. Yitik (Ed.), (pp. 167–189). Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi Uzaktan Eğitim Yayınları. <https://www.academia.edu/39049290>.
- Kelly, J. F. (2009). *The ecumenical councils of the Catholic church: A history*. Liturgical Press.
- Kreeft, P. (2001). *Catholic Christianity: A Complete Catechism of Catholic beliefs*. Ignatius Press. <https://tr.tr1lib.org/book/2593457/2e2ad3>.

- O'Collins, G., & Farrugia, M. (2015). *Catholicism: The story of Catholic Christianity*. Oxford University Press. <https://tr.tr1lib.org/book/2495523/42a9ba>.
- Report: Church membership among Catholics declined nearly 20% since 2000. (2021). Catholic News Agency. <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/247102/report-church-membership-among-catholics-declined-nearly-20-since-2000>.
- Rhodes, R. (2015). *The complete guide to Christian denominations*. Harvest House Publishers.
- Sahgal, N., Cooperman, A., & Schiller, A. Et al. (2018). (rep.). *Being Christian in Western Europe*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewforum.org/2018/05/29/being-christian-in-western-europe/>.
- Tilles, D. (2021). *Religious practice declines significantly in Poland, especially among young, finds study*. Notes from Poland. <https://notesfrompoland.com/2021/11/26/religious-practice-declines-significantly-in-poland-especially-among-young-finds-study/>.
- Walsh, G. G. (1967). Roman Catholicism. In *The great religions of the modern world* E. J. Jurji (Ed.), (pp. 307–336). Princeton University Press.