



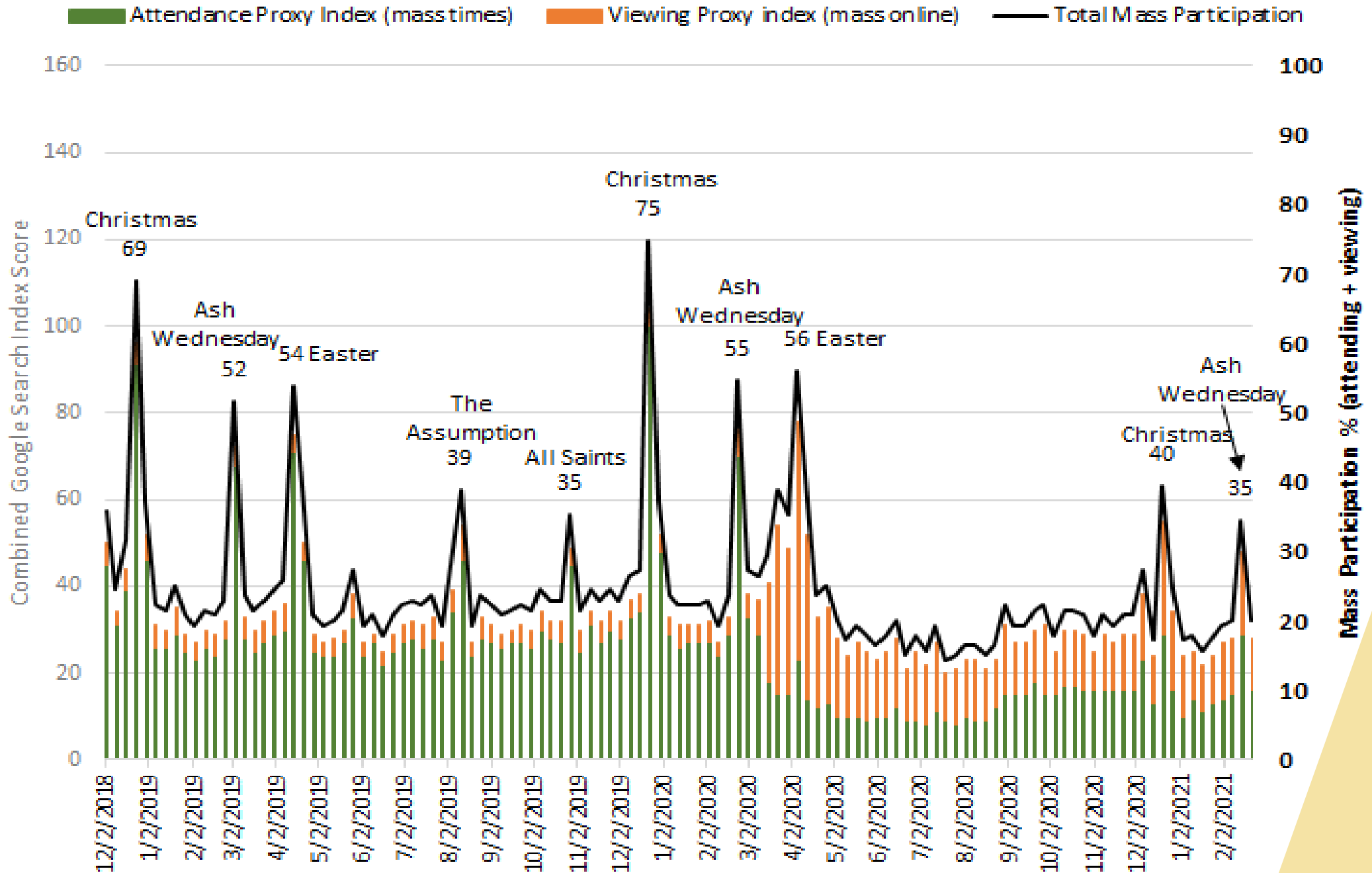
MAKING
THE MOST OF THE
MOMENTS

*Accompaniment and Evangelization
through Moments of Return*

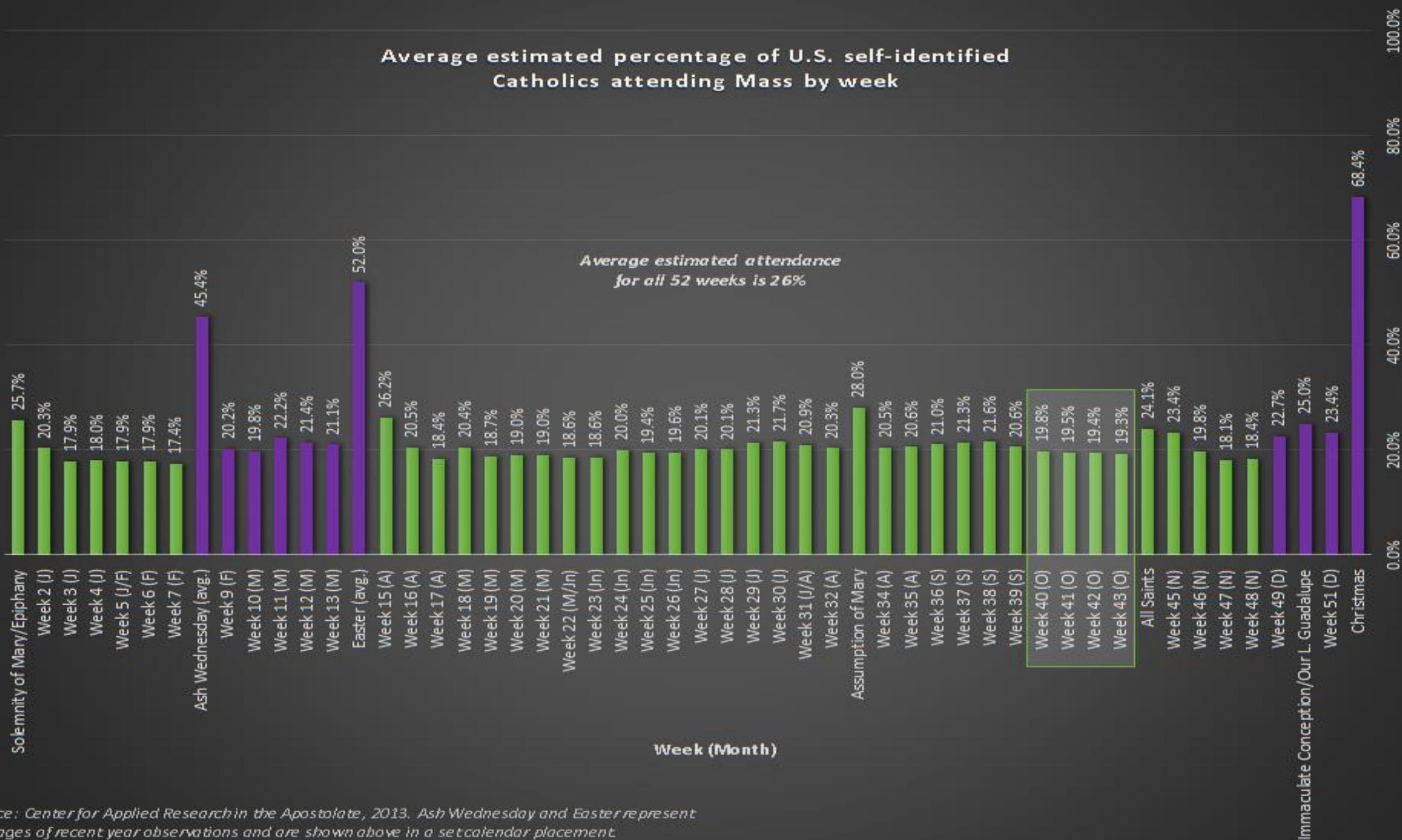


**What exactly is a
moment of return?**

Estimating U.S. Mass Attendance and Viewership, Dec. 2018-Feb. 2021



Average estimated percentage of U.S. self-identified Catholics attending Mass by week

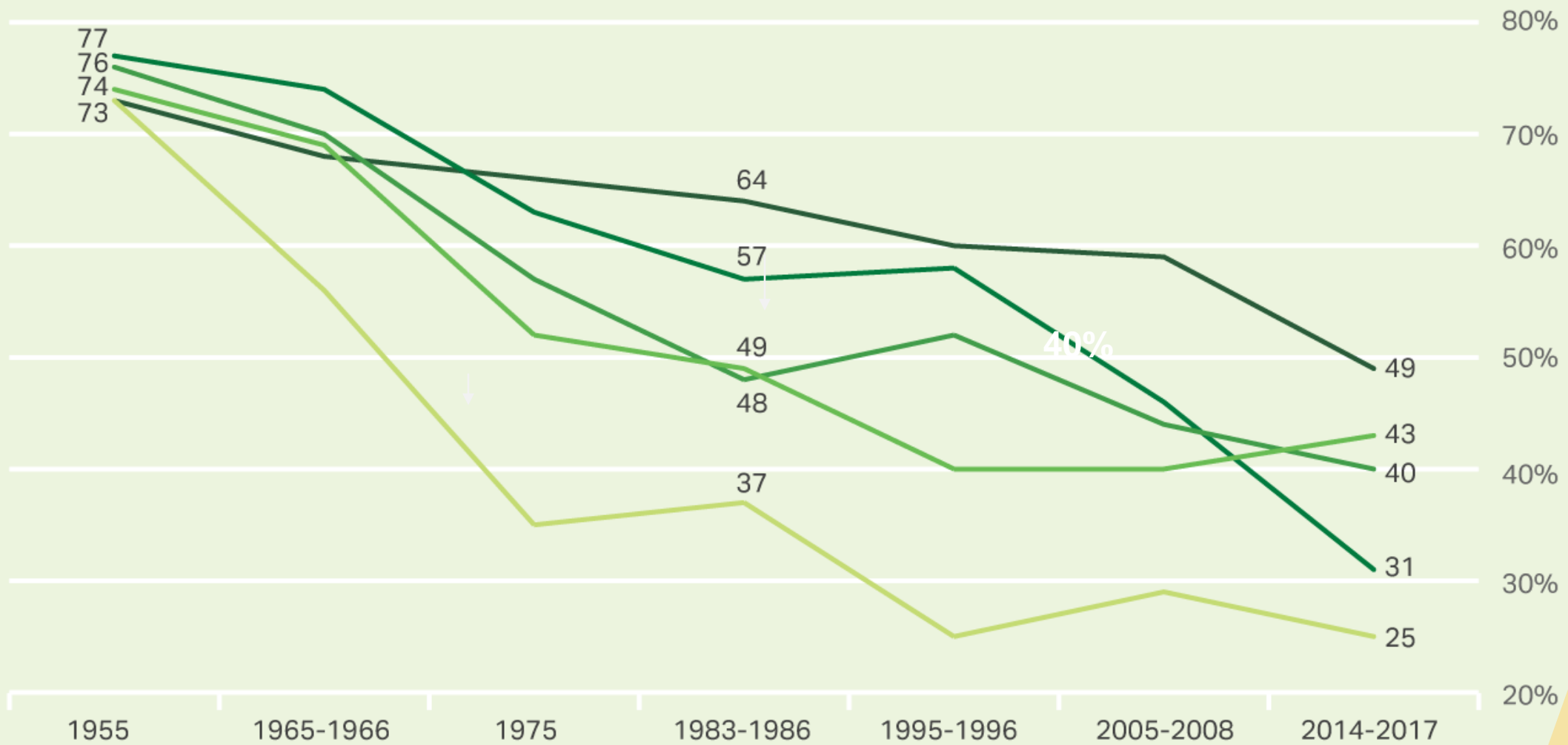


Source: Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, 2013. Ash Wednesday and Easter represent averages of recent year observations and are shown above in a set calendar placement.

Church Attendance Among Catholics, by Age

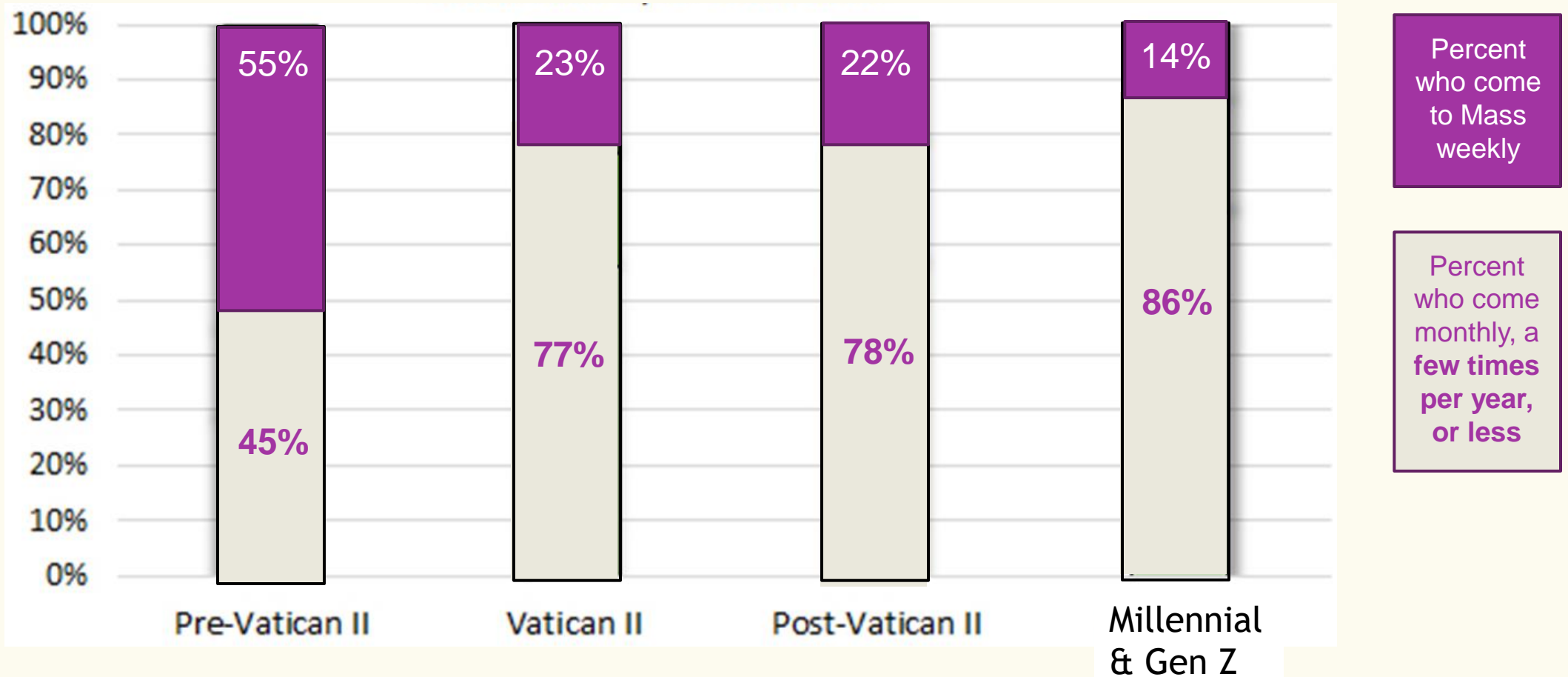
% Attended church in past seven days

21-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60+



How often do you come to church?

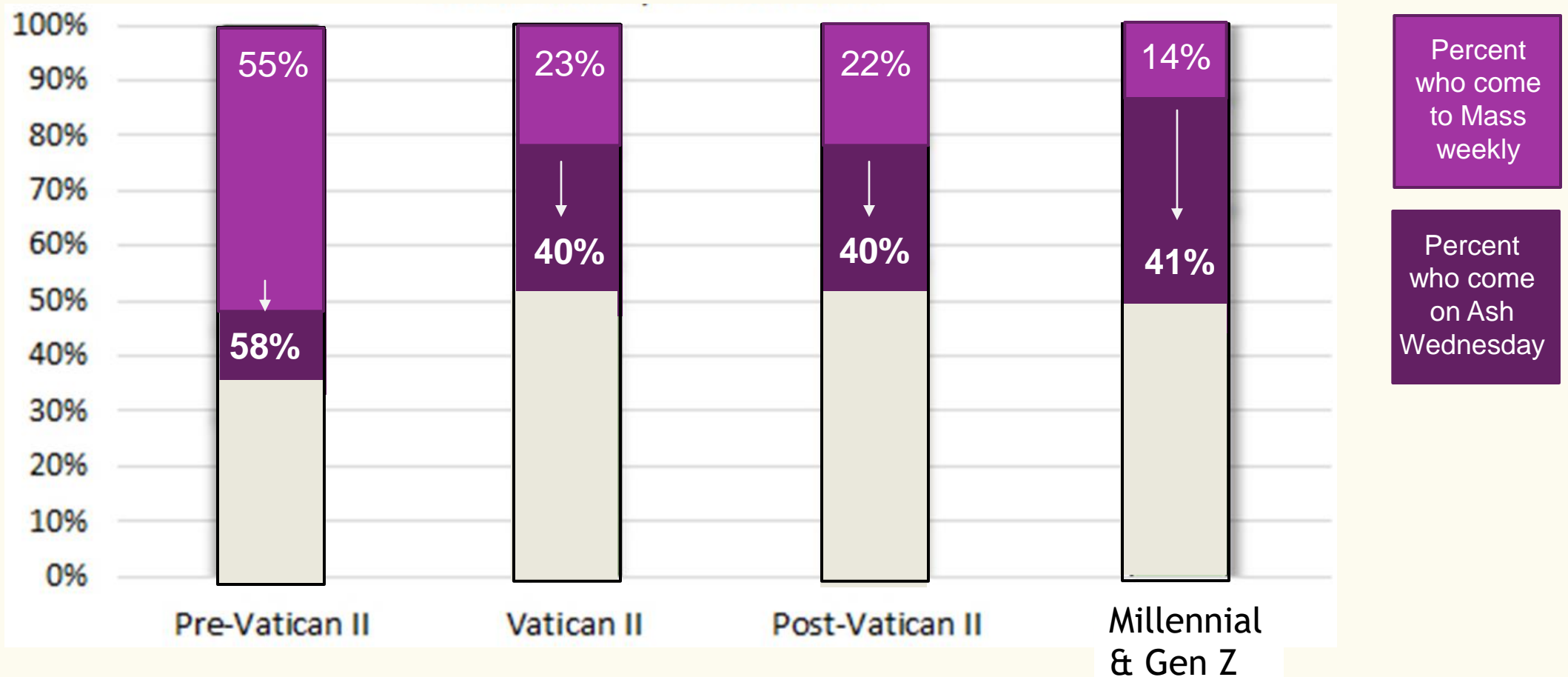
Percentage responding “weekly” to each of the questions.
Asked by generation.



Source: “**Sacraments Today**,” Center for Applied Research for the Apostolate (CARA)

Do you receive ashes at Ash Wednesday services?

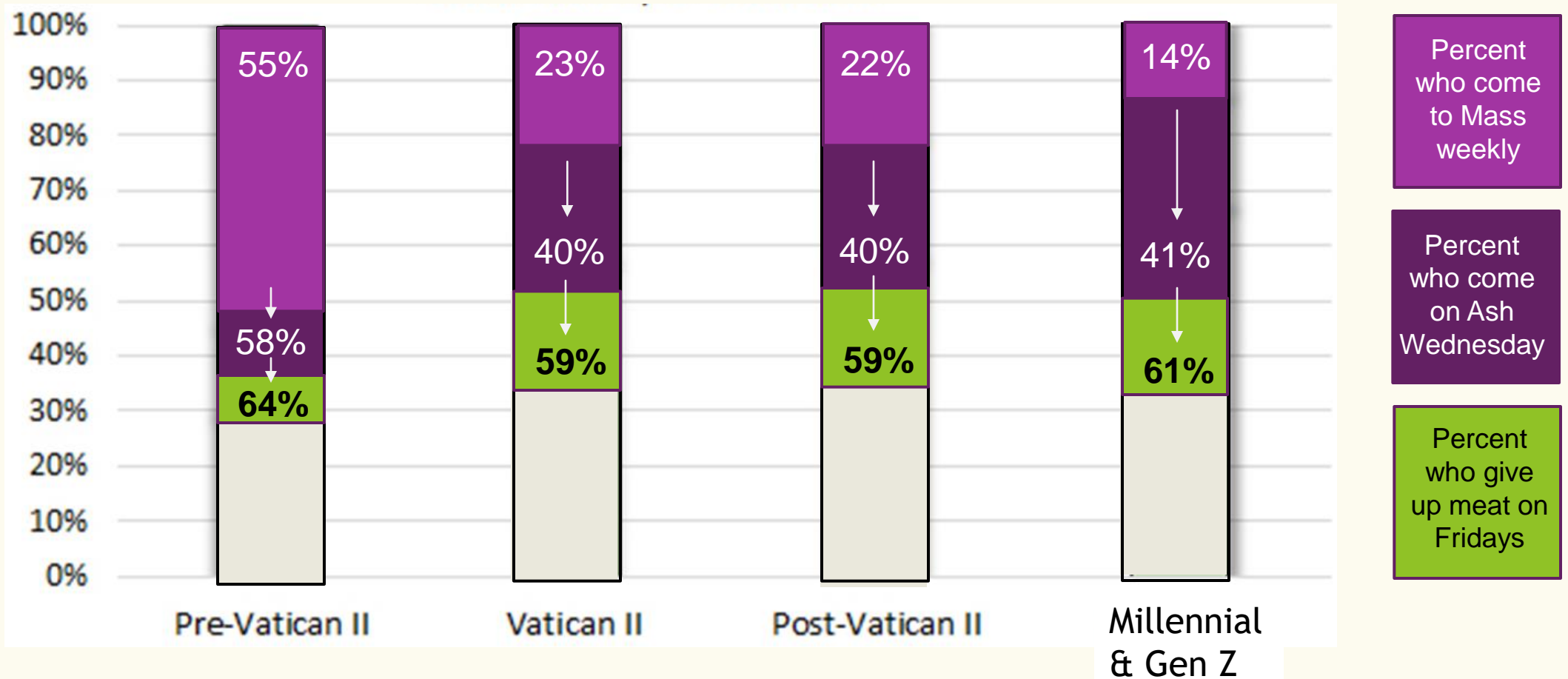
Percentage responding “yes” to each of the questions.
Asked by generation.



Source: “**Sacraments Today**,” Center for Applied Research for the Apostolate (CARA)

Do you abstain from meat on Fridays in Lent?

Percentage responding “yes” to each of the questions.
Asked by generation.



Source: “**Sacraments Today**,” Center for Applied Research for the Apostolate (CARA)

Why do people make moments of return?

“What do you seek?”

John 1:38

- **Seasonal Experiences**
- **Momentary Commitment**
- **Renewal, Reflection, Resolution**
- **Tradition, Family, Identity**
- **Generosity and Accomplishment**
- **Accessible Spirituality/Sacredness**
- **Belonging and Community**
- **Peace, Rest, and Refuge**

1 in 4 U.S. adults (58.7 million people)
live with a mental health condition.

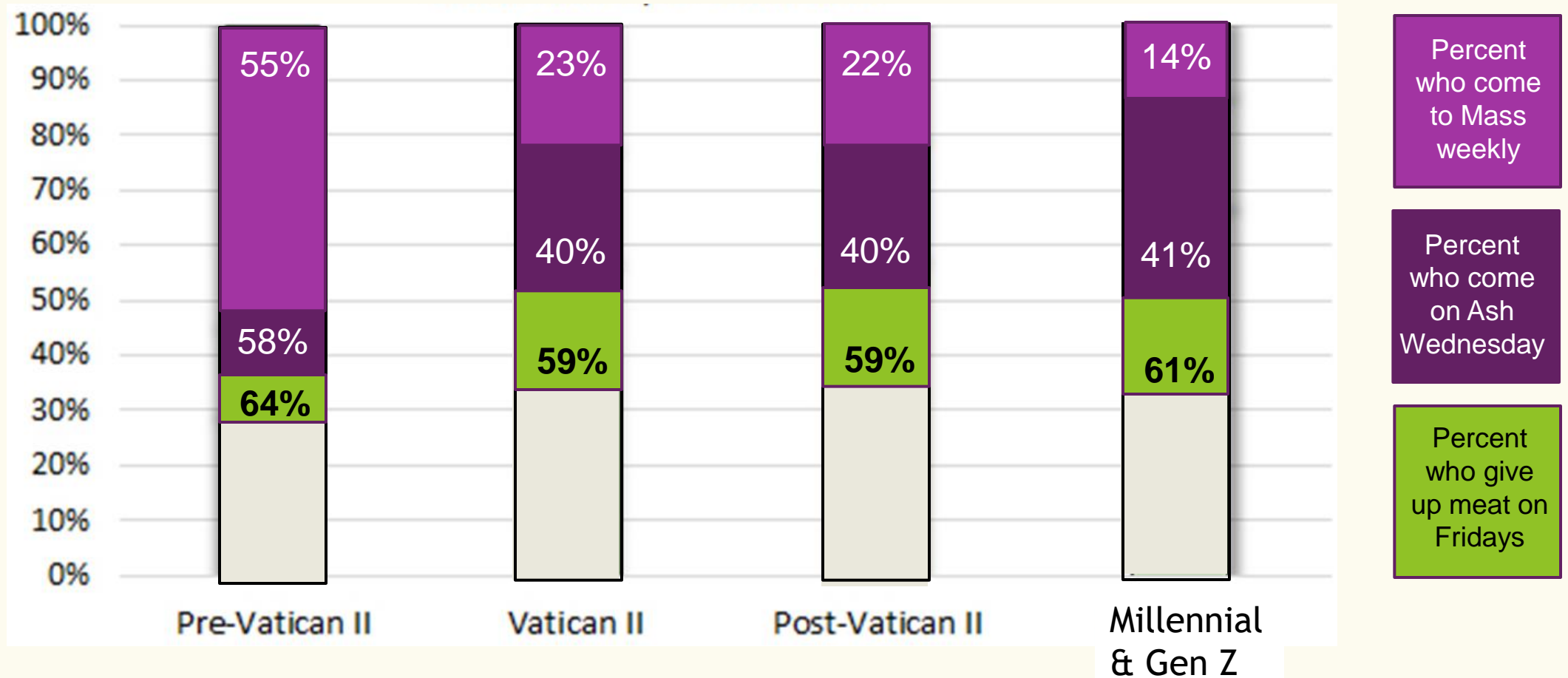
1 in 20 U.S. adults (14.6 million) live with
a serious or debilitating mental health issue
(i.e., schizophrenia, bipolar, major depression).

81% of people report increased *holiday* stress,
due to finances, expectations, grief, or family,
with **83%** reporting *holiday loneliness*.

**“Loneliness among young adults has increased every
year between 1976 and 2019.”** (USSG Report, 2023)

Generational Engagement with Return Practices

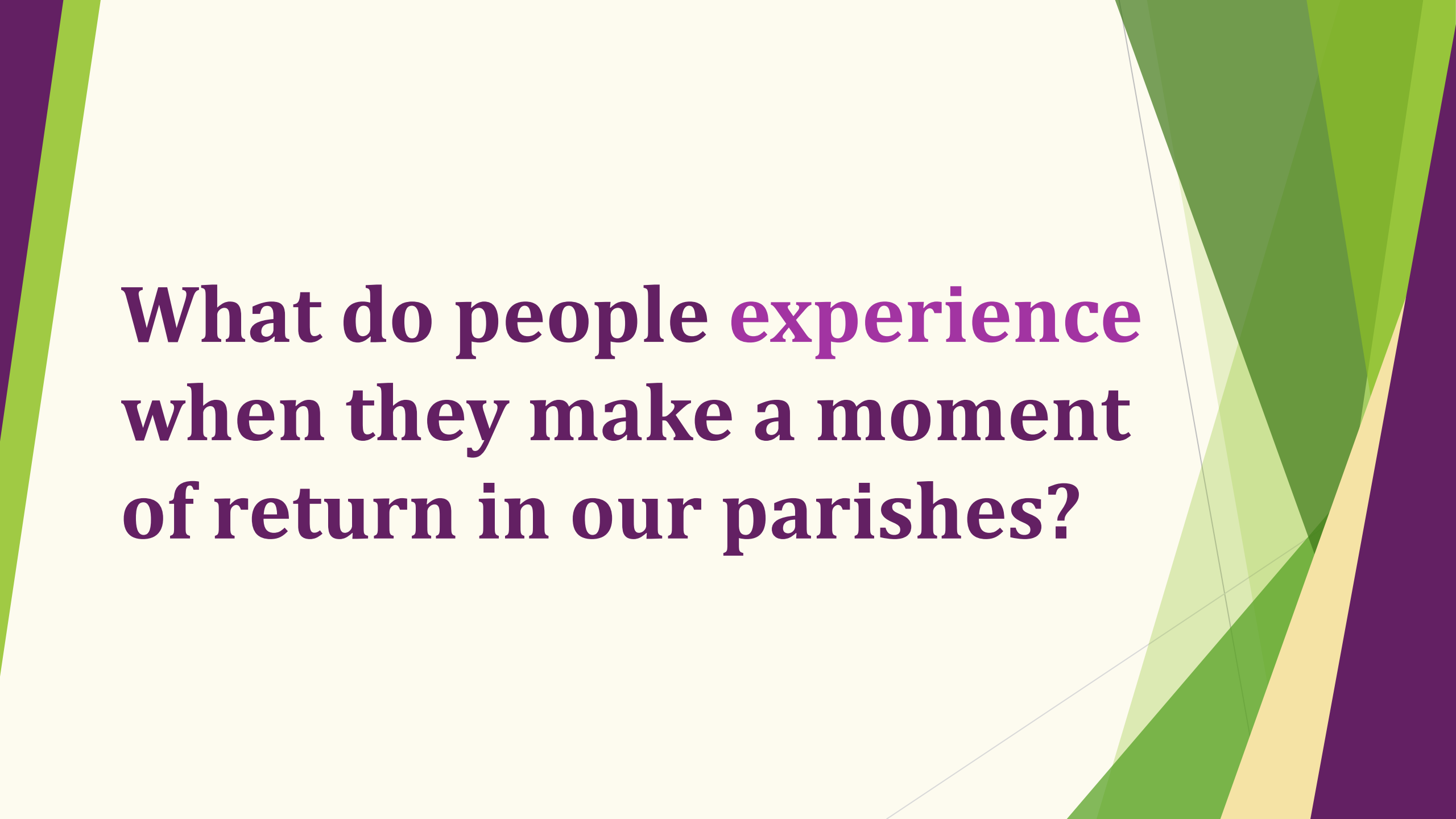
Percentage responding “yes” to each of the questions.
Asked by generation.



Source: “**Sacraments Today**,” Center for Applied Research for the Apostolate (CARA)

**What have you noticed
in your faith community
at the moments of return?**

**Which reason for
returning most impacted
or resonated with you?**

The background features abstract geometric shapes in shades of green and purple. On the left, there are vertical stripes of purple and light green. On the right, there are overlapping, semi-transparent shapes in various shades of green and purple, creating a layered effect. The central text is set against a plain white background.

**What do people experience
when they make a moment
of return in our parishes?**

John 11:1-44

Jesus' Moment of Return

What can we do to welcome Christ who is present in our returning guests' hearts?

All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ, for he himself will say: "I was a stranger, and you welcomed me." (Matt 25:35)
Proper honor must be shown to all...

The Rule of Benedict 53:1-2

2 Cor 5:20-6:2 Brothers and sisters:

**We are ambassadors for Christ,
as if God were appealing through us.
Working together, then, we appeal to you
not to receive this grace of God in vain...**

**For he says: In an acceptable time, I heard
you and on the day of salvation, I helped you.**

**Behold, now is a very acceptable time!
Behold now is the day of salvation!**



The background features abstract geometric shapes in shades of green and purple. On the left, there are vertical stripes of purple and light green. On the right, there are overlapping, semi-transparent shapes in various shades of green and purple, creating a dynamic, layered effect.

Responding to the Moment

It is important to make the most of the great moments of the liturgical year... (such) occasions can provide a welcome break in their routine and help them experience the joy of faith... Although we have to respect different stages of growth, and at times need to wait patiently for the right moment, we cannot fail to invite people to drink from these wellsprings of new life.

Pope Francis

Christus Vivit, 224, 229

Three Stages of a Moment

- ▶ **Preparation of the community**
*...well before the moments of return;
a “Septuagesima” for active churchgoers*
- ▶ **Revitalization of the experience**
...to make it memorable and momentous
- ▶ **Accompaniment afterwards**
*...investing in reframing the follow-up;
journeying with those who reconnect*

1. Preparing the community

- ▶ **Discern and pray** about who is returning and when they engage with your local community.
- ▶ **Lead a workshop** for active parishioners on awareness, accompaniment, and outreach.
- ▶ **Include the disaffiliated** in the *Prayer of the Faithful* in the weeks prior to the moment.
- ▶ **Encourage active churchgoers** to personally invite family and friends to moments of return.

2. Revitalizing the experience

- ▶ **Accompany** every person to their pew with a team of greeters and/or available support.
- ▶ **Provide resources** like descriptive pamphlets in the pews with an invitation to keep connected.
- ▶ **Make liturgy transcendent** in a way that speaks to the reasons why people reconnect.
- ▶ **Host a reception** immediately following the liturgy or experience with warm hospitality.

3. Accompanying afterwards

- ▶ **Encourage parishioners** to text or call their family or friends with *joy and a listening spirit*.
- ▶ **Offer mental health support** like hosting a *stress relief* program or *spiritual direction*.
- ▶ **Welcome the local community** to engage in *social and interfaith* projects with your parish.
- ▶ **Invite new people** to step into *leadership* roles or tasks within the faith community.

**What would you like to see
in how your parishioners
better prepare for, respond
to, and follow up with the
people who are making
their moments of return?**

Discuss your initial steps:

- ▶ During Advent and at Christmas?
- ▶ On Ash Wednesday and during Lent?
- ▶ For Holy Week and Easter?
- ▶ At Weddings and Baptisms?
- ▶ For Sacramental Moments?
- ▶ At Funerals and Bereavement?
- ▶ When Moments of Crisis Occur?

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Making the Moment Count



Father in heaven, may the faith you have given us in your Son, Jesus Christ, our brother, and the flame of charity enkindled in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, reawaken in us the blessed hope for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel. May those seeds transform from within both humanity and the whole cosmos in the sure expectation of a new heaven and a new earth, when with the powers of Evil vanquished, your glory will shine eternally.

**May the grace of the Jubilee
reawaken in us, pilgrims of hope,
a yearning for the treasures of
heaven. May that same grace
spread the joy and peace of our
Redeemer throughout the earth.
To you our God, eternally blessed,
be glory and praise forever. Amen.**

Hope abounds... and thank you.

"This book helps us
answer the call to seize
this moment of grace!"

—Archbishop Nelson J. Pérez

Hope FROM THE Ashes

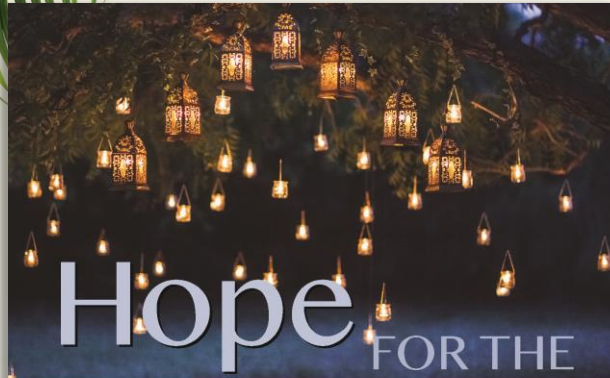


INSIGHTS AND RESOURCES FOR
WELCOMING LENTEN VISITORS

Paul E. Jarzembowski

FOREWORD BY

Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano



Hope FOR THE Holidays

FINDING LIGHT AT THE
DARKEST TIMES OF THE YEAR

Paul E. Jarzembowski

FOREWORD BY

Most Reverend Edward J. Burns

May the God of
hope fill you with
all joy and peace in
believing, so that
you may abound in
hope by the power
of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13