

WE ARE CHURCH IRELAND Survey: Should laypeople have a role in choosing their bishops? For many centuries bishops were elected by their own diocese. Only relatively recently has the selection of bishops been centralised in the Vatican.

1. I think if bishops were chosen with more input from laypeople, they would be more responsive to the concerns of laypeople in their diocese.

Answer Options	Response Percent
Agree	98.0%
Disagree	0.0%
Don't know	2.0%

2. The pope and other church leaders are in a position to know more about the pros and cons of potential candidates for bishop than the average layperson.

Answer Options	Response Percent
Agree	10.6%
Disagree	75.5%
Don't know	13.9%

3. A bishop should never be named to head a diocese that s/he hasn't spent at least some time ministering in.

Answer Options	Response Percent
Agree	68.0%
Disagree	24.0%
Don't know	8.0%

4. Because a bishop must sometimes take unpopular or countercultural stances in favor of church teachings or positions, anything like an "election" would tend to weed out the most prophetic.

Answer Options	Response Percent
Agree	20.1%
Disagree	53.0%
Don't know	26.8%

5. Having laypeople choose church leaders will only result in the best politicians becoming bishops.

Answer Options	Response Percent
Agree	10.1%
Disagree	69.1%
Don't know	20.8%

6. If we had bishops chosen by the laity, the sex abuse cover up would not have been as bad as it was.

Answer Options	Response Percent
Agree	71.3%
Disagree	6.0%
Don't know	22.7%

7. Reasons that should disqualify a candidate from bishop consideration are: (check all that apply)

Answer Options	Response Percent
Opposition to any church teaching	7.3%
Inability to relate to and work well with laypeople	94.7%
Lack of pastoral sensibility	92.7%
Careerism	90.0%
Unfamiliarity with the diocese	55.3%
Aged under 30	41.3%
Aged over 65	22.7%
Lay Man	12.0%
Lay Woman	11.3%
Other (please specify)	22.7%

8. The best way to choose bishops would be:

Answer Options	Response Percent
Exactly the way we are doing it now.	0.0%
With the nuncio getting input from laypeople, religious and priests.	14.4%
For a committee of 2 lay men, 2 lay women and 2 religious/priests to choose the three names that are submitted to the Vatican	15.1%
To have a group of local priests and laypeople in the diocese who would choose their own bishop by whatever process they deem appropriate.	49.3%
To have bishops elected by a popular vote among people in the diocese.	21.2%

9. Experiences that I would consider essential for candidates for bishop include: (check all that apply)

Answer Options	Response Percent
Serving as a full-time parish priest and/or curate	79.1%
Being an administrator at the diocesan level	14.9%
Having served on committees or councils at the local, state,	42.6%
Direct service to the poor	85.1%
Involvement in pro-life activities	7.4%
Involvement in church reform groups	59.5%
Having spent at least 1 year working or studying in Rome	4.7%
Demonstrated good leadership skills managing organisations	81.8%
Good public speaker	49.3%

10. Information about yourself (your name will not be published)

Answer Options	Response Percent
My age is 18 or under	0.7%
My age is 19 to 30	0.0%
My age is 31 to 40	2.1%
My age is 41 to 50	7.6%
My age is 51 to 60	11.8%

My age is 61 to 70	34.7%
My age is 71 or older	38.9%

Survey conducted Jan - Apr 2014. 152 replies received.