



Central Statistics Office
An Phríomh-Oifig Staidrimh

Press Statement
Preas Ráiteas

2002 Census of Population
Volume 12 – Religion

Major increase in number of Muslim and Orthodox adherents

The number of Muslim and Orthodox adherents increased significantly between the censuses of 1991 and 2002 - the former more than quadrupling to 19,000 and the latter increasing from less than 400 adherents in 1991 to over 10,000 in 2002. Immigration had a major impact on the increases observed, with non-Irish nationals making up 70 per cent of the Muslims and over 85 per cent of those of the Orthodox faith who were usually resident and present in the State on Census night.

This information is contained in Census 2002 Volume 12 – Religion, which gives further detailed results of the census conducted on 28 April 2002. This report contains the final population figures classified by religion for detailed territorial divisions in the country (see Editor's note).

Long-term decline in Church of Ireland reversed

There were sizeable increases in the numbers classified to the Church of Ireland (including Protestant), Presbyterian and Methodist faiths between 1991 and 2002 – reversing the long-term decline recorded for these denominations during the course of previous decades. The average annual increase in the number of Church of Ireland (including Protestant) adherents was 2.4 per cent between 1991 and 2002 compared with 1 per cent for the population overall. The corresponding annual increases for Presbyterians and Methodists were 4.1 per cent and 6.5 per cent, respectively. Recent immigration played a key role in this turn around with non-Irish nationals accounting for one in four adherents of the combined denominations in 2002.

Fall in share of Roman Catholics

The number of persons recorded as Roman Catholics increased by 234,300 (7.3 %), from 3,228,300 in 1991 to 3,462,600 in 2002. However, taking account of the 11.1 per cent increase in the population overall since 1991 the share of Roman Catholics in the population actually fell from 91.6 per cent to 88.4 per cent in the relevant period.

The proportion of Roman Catholics among the usually resident population varied from 93 per cent for those of Irish nationality to 43 per cent for non-Irish nationals. Just over a half of UK nationals were Roman Catholics compared with one in five Asians.

Persons without a religion more than doubled

The number of persons who indicated that they had no religion increased from 66,000 in 1991 to 138,000 in 2002. Almost half of those without a religion were aged between 20 and 39 years and of these 60 per cent were males.

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Highest proportion of Roman Catholics in Buncrana

Buncrana (94.3%) had the highest proportion of Roman Catholics according to the results of the 2002 census. Ballina (94.1%) and Carrick-on-Suir (93.8%) were next in line.

Greystones (11.3%) had the highest proportion of Church of Ireland (including Protestant) adherents followed by Wicklow (4.8%) and Bandon (4.7%).

Older age profile among Church of Ireland population

Old persons (i.e. those aged 65 years and over) accounted for 15 per cent of the Church of Ireland (including Protestant) population compared with 11 per cent for the population overall. Old persons made up just 1 per cent of the Muslim community usually resident in the State. At the other end of the age distribution Muslims (28%) also accounted for the highest proportion of young persons (i.e. those aged 0-14 years) while Presbyterians (15%) had the lowest proportion. Young persons accounted for just over one in five of the population in 2002.

Marriage breakdown highest for those with no stated religion

About one in five ever-married (excluding widowed) persons aged 15 years and over with no stated religion was either separated or divorced according to the results of the 2002 census. The corresponding rates for Muslims and Roman Catholics were 5 per cent and 8 per cent, respectively – below the national average rate of 8.4 per cent.

Editor's note

The publication *Census 2002 - Principal Demographic Results*, released on 19 June 2003, contains a summary at State level of data from Volumes 1 - 4, 8, 11 and 12 of the detailed census reports. The publication released today, Volume 12, provides figures for religion at a more detailed geographical level.

All published tables from Census 2002 are being made available on the CSO web site (www.cso.ie).

For copies of the publication contact:

Central Statistics Office, Information Section, Skehard Road, Cork

or

Government Publications Sales Office, Sun Alliance House, Molesworth Street, Dublin 2.

Price: €15.00

Copies can also be downloaded from the CSO website (see below).

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8 April 2004

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