

8. Religion

Change in religion

No religion

Non-Catholics

Change in religion

While Ireland remains a predominantly Catholic country, as clearly illustrated in Figure 8.1, the percentage of the population who identified as Catholic on the census has fallen sharply from 84.2 per cent in 2011 to 78.3 per cent in 2016.

There has been a corresponding rise in the number with no religion which grew by 73.6 per cent from 269,800 to 468,400, an increase of 198,600.

Those with no religion now account for just under 10 per cent of the population (9.8%).

Figure 8.1 Population classified by broad religion, 1991 to 2016

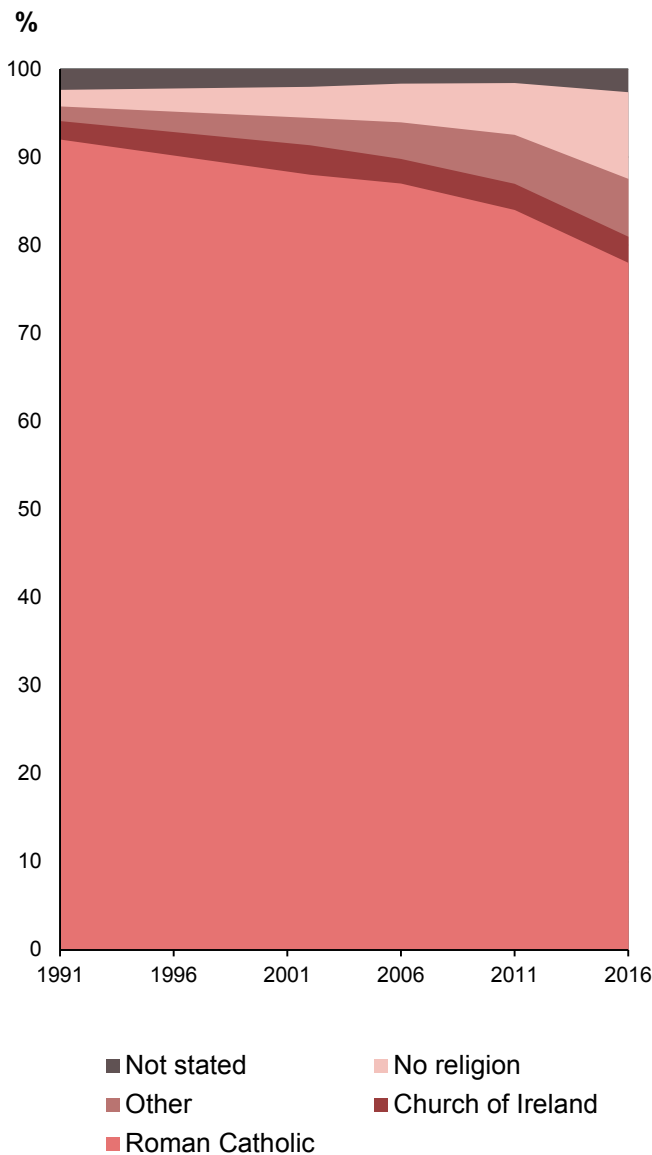


Table 8.1 Population by religion, 2011 and 2016

Religion	2011	2016	Percentage change
<i>000s</i>			
Roman Catholic	3,861.3	3,729.1	-3.4
Church of Ireland	129.0	126.4	-2.0
Muslim (Islamic)	49.2	63.4	28.9
Orthodox	45.2	62.2	37.5
Christian	41.2	37.4	-9.1
Presbyterian	24.6	24.2	-1.6
Hindu	10.7	14.3	34.1
Apostolic or Pentecostal	14.0	13.4	-4.9
Other	70.2	97.7	39.1
No religion	269.8	468.4	73.6
Not stated	72.9	125.3	71.8
Total	4,588.3	4,761.9	3.8

The total number of Catholics has fallen by 132,200 from 3,861,300 to 3,729,100.

The number of Muslims increased by 14,200 over the five years and the number of Orthodox increased by 17,000, or 37.5 per cent.

Table 8.2 presents the data on Catholics, broken down by broad nationality (usual residents only). The results show that the number of Irish Catholics fell by 105,800 while non-Irish Catholics fell by 26,500.

Table 8.2 Catholic population by broad nationality, 2011 and 2016

Broad nationality	2011	2016	Actual change
<i>000s</i>			
Irish	3,525.6	3,419.8	-105.8
Non-Irish	282.8	256.3	-26.5
No nationality*	22.8	20.6	-2.2
Total	3,831.2	3,696.6	-134.5

*including not stated

No religion

The total number of people with no religion on a usual residence basis in April 2016 stood at 451,941. Of this, 347,034 were Irish nationals and 104,907 were non-Irish nationals (including 'not stated').

Figure 8.3 presents the age distribution of this group. As clearly illustrated, those with no religion were under-represented in the age groups 0-19 compared with the general population, and among those aged 50 and over. The age group 20-39 accounts for 28 per cent of the general population but 45 per cent of those with no religion fall into this age bracket.

It's a fact!

29%

The percentage increase of Muslims in Ireland

468,421

The number of people with no religion

Figure 8.2 No religion by broad nationality, 2011 and 2016

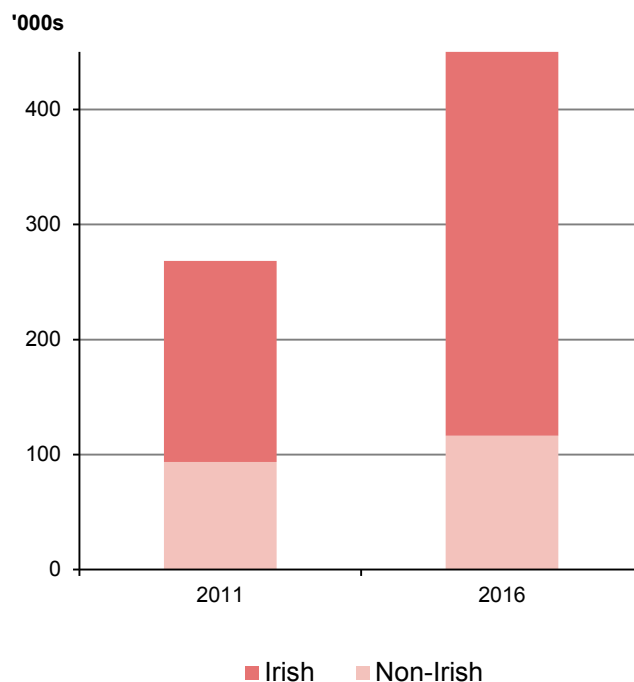
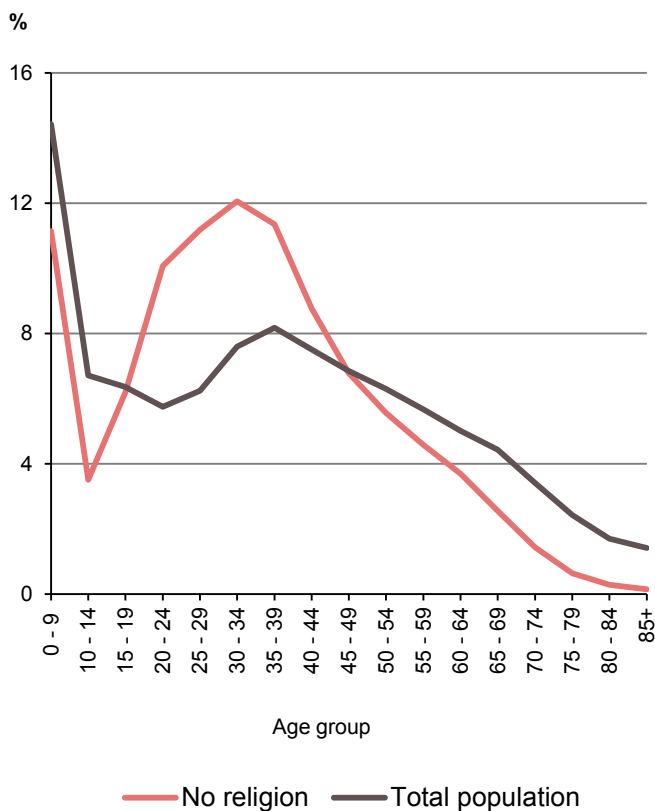


Figure 8.3 Age distribution of total population and those with no religion, 2016



Minority religions

As can be seen in Table 8.1 the fastest growing religions between 2011 and 2016 in percentage terms were Orthodox, Hindu and Muslim.

Church of Ireland, Presbyterian and Apostolic or Pentecostal all showed declines, but the category Other Christians showed the largest decline compared with 2011 (a fall of 9.1% from 41,161 in 2011 to 37,427 in 2016).

Non-Catholics

Given the dominance of the Catholic religion it is interesting to examine all other groups together. Map 8.1 shows the percentage of non-Catholics by county.

The eastern sea board counties around Dublin had the highest percentage of non-Catholics, with the percentages declining as you move west.

Three counties had more than 1 in 3 of the population as non-Catholic, namely Dublin City, Dún Laoghaire and Galway City. Tipperary has the lowest percentage at 12.9 per cent.

Map 8.1 Non-Catholics as a percentage of total population, by county, 2016

