

### **Q3 If you are not a member of a parish, what stops you from joining?**

There were 15,997 surveys returned from laity, ordained priests/deacons and religious communities. Of those, 3,150 surveys included comments for short answer question #3. This short answer question was primarily answered by lay respondents who self-identified as members of a parish. Many answers reflect either firsthand experience before joining a parish or family members/friends who have fallen away from the church or choose not to join, although they still attend Mass.

There were 20 surveys in which the respondent indicated they did not belong to a parish.

#### **Significant Findings in No Particular Order**

1. The majority of respondents stated they or those they know who are not registered parishioners want to be personally invited by a priest, deacon or someone they know to join.
2. Respondents from all demographics state there is a fear of commitment in general or of not understanding what they are committing to by joining a parish.
3. Respondents indicated that feeling welcomed, beyond a greeting by a hospitality minister, is important to wanting to join a parish.
4. Lay respondents from all demographic areas shared stories of specific issues and concerns that prevent themselves or people they personally know of joining a parish. Those include:
  - a. Not understanding how to participate in the Mass
  - b. Being denied the Eucharist as a non-Catholic
  - c. Church rules
  - d. Negative interactions with a priest, deacon or parish staff
  - e. Poor liturgical or sacramental experience
  - f. Judgmental parishioners
  - g. Cliques in the parish that are not welcoming to new people
  - h. Their previous parish closed and, while they go to Mass, they refuse to participate in another parish and/or they were not made welcome in any subsequent parish
5. Lay and religious community respondents stated that some people do not join since they feel ostracized due to his/her own personal situation related to LGBTQ, divorced, marriage, immigration status.
6. Priest respondents felt some do not join a parish because no real advantage is seen being enrolled in a parish.
7. Lay respondents feel it is possible to be active and not be a member.
8. Respondents from all groups rarely mentioned the connection of the mission of Christ with parish involvement or stewardship activities.