

Introduction:

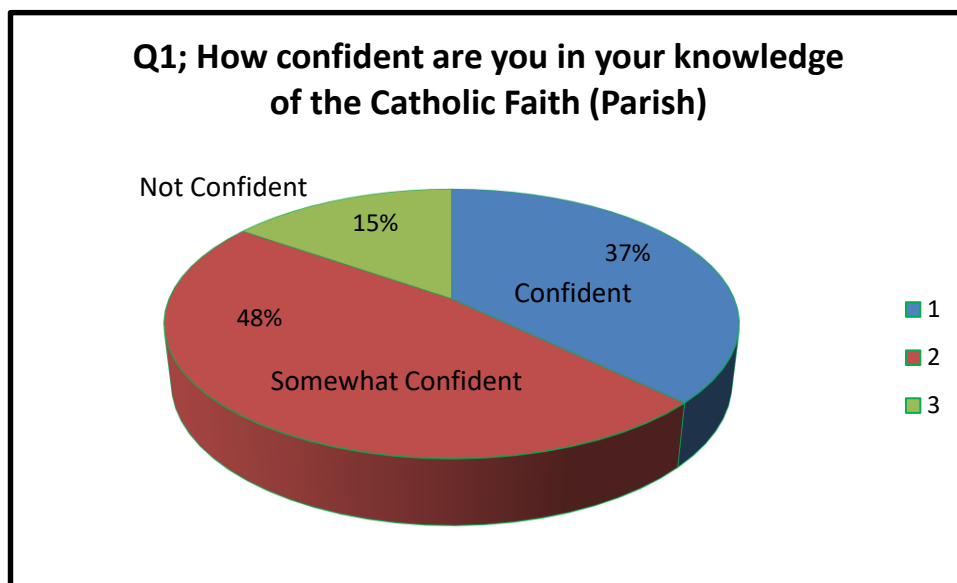
As a precursor to beginning work on the Bishop's call to build 'A Future of Hope' a small group of parishioners and clergy together with the Parish Council instigated an audit of the parish in its confidence in its faith and desire to explore this further. The results of the survey will inform any discussion and decisions on further action, the setting up support and study groups in the Parish.

Method:

- An anonymous survey was conducted during Mass in three churches on Sunday 21st January 2018 and in the 4th (Lydney) on the 28th January 2018. Results of the survey have been collated at both Parish and Mass Centre level.
- The report from Facilitators for the 21st Jan was that numbers at Mass were lower than normal due to poor weather.
- The 21st Jan saw 12 'Lydney' parishioners attend Mass in Coleford (1) and Sedbury (11). Their questionnaires are included in the Lydney response. A further 7 parishioners indicated that they considered themselves attached jointly to both Sedbury and Lydney. Their responses are included in Sedbury's data.
- On the 28th Jan, 3 Coleford responses were collected at Lydney. These responses have been incorporated into the Coleford data sets.
- Overall 115 responses were received.
- Q1 and Q2 concerning confidence of individuals in Faith and personal prayer provide numerical data. The results are displayed as pie charts (as percentage) and the raw data is included in Appendix 4 and 5. Results are at both Parish and Mass Centre level.
- Q3 and Q4 concern exploration of Catholic teaching and how best to address parishioners wishes to explore their faith.
- Q5 concerned future development of the Parish over the medium term as we face falling Mass attendance and amalgamation with Newent .
- For Q3-5 answers have been collated under specific areas and by Mass centres.
 - i) The raw data displays the majority of comments verbatim although some have been paraphrased to enable similar points to be gathered together under a suitable heading ie: faith, community etc.
 - ii) Numbers in brackets in the data sheets show the frequency of such responses.
 - iii) Wording in italics reflects explanation of a point given on the questionnaires and included for emphasis or clarification.
- Collation for Q3-5 is organised under thematic headings.
- Wherever possible there is a horizontal equivalence of points made in different Mass centres.
- The collation in Q3 – 5 is in the order of frequency wherever possible.

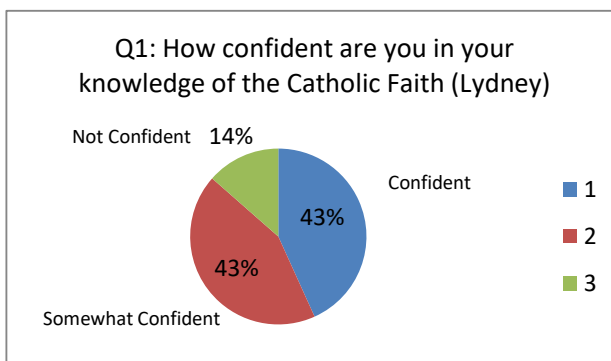
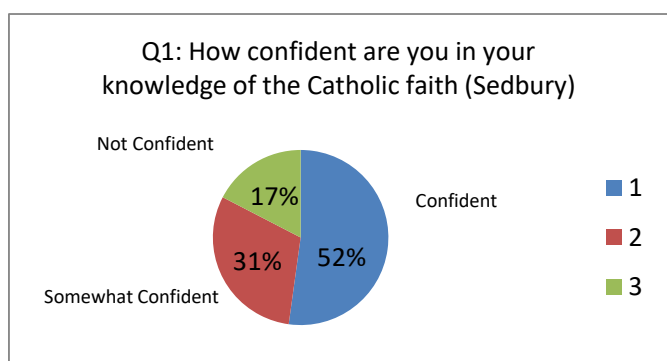
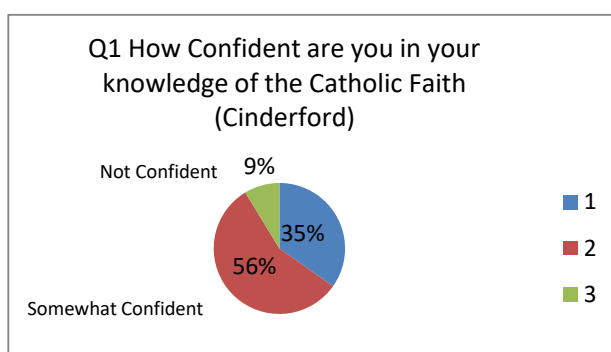
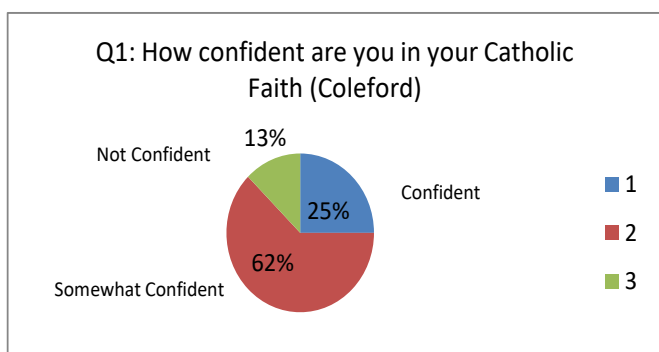
Question 1 : How confident are you in your knowledge of the Catholic Faith?

All who took part answered this question.



85% of the Parish show confidence to a greater or lesser degree in their understanding but 63% indicate some lack of confidence.

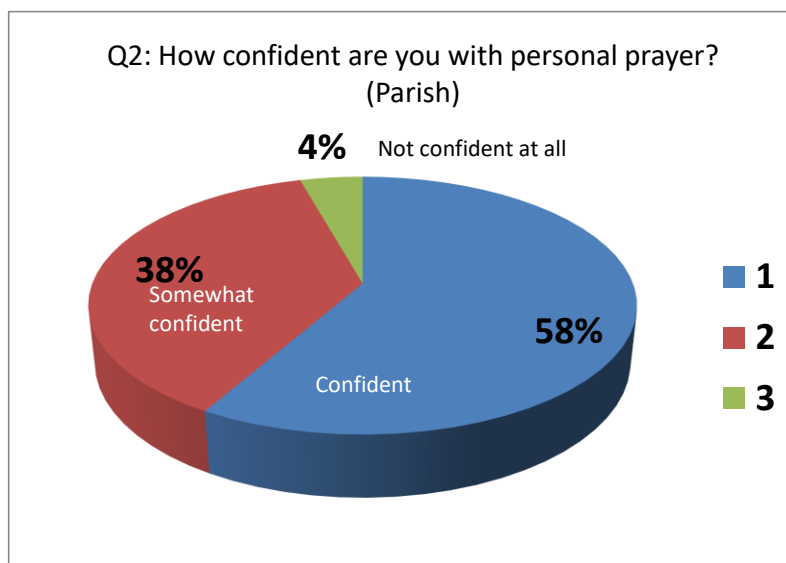
Confidence varies across the 4 Mass centres. Sedbury has the highest percentage of confident understanding at 52% whilst Coleford shows the greatest level of doubt at 75% (62%+13%).



Q1 links directly with Q3 and the collated results show a clear desire to explore Catholic teaching in many areas. (see below)

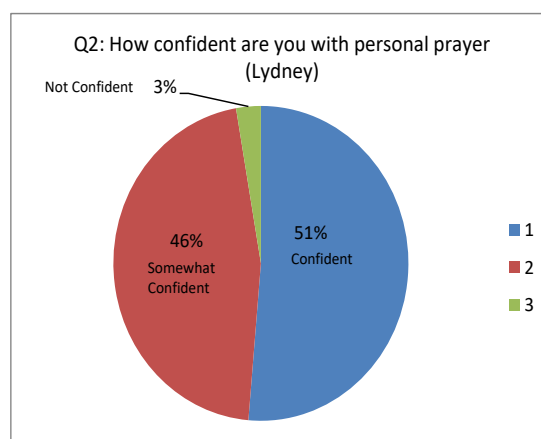
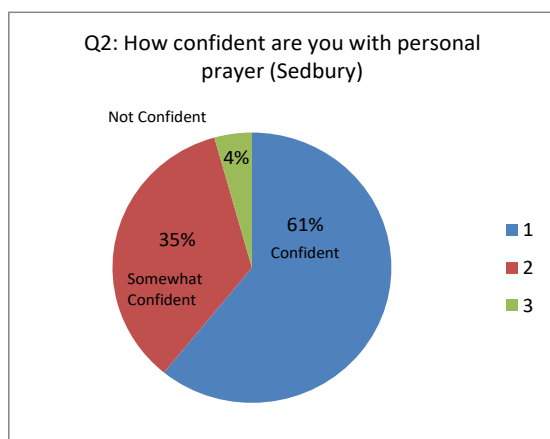
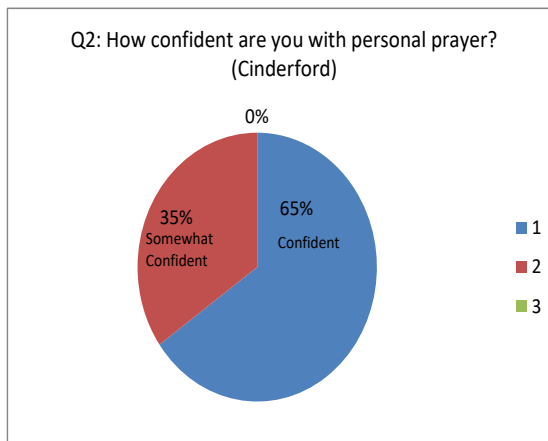
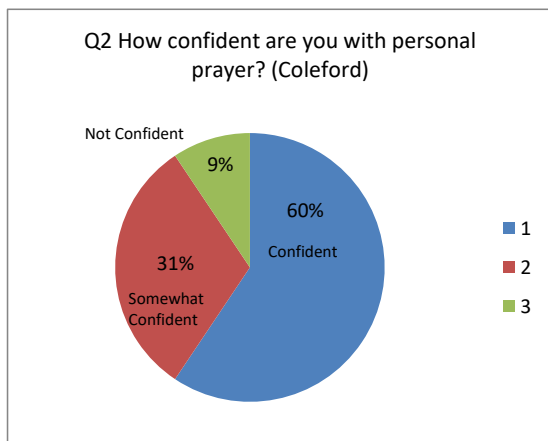
Q2: How confident are you in Personal Prayer?

All who took part answered this question.



96% of the Parish have some degree of confidence in their prayer life with 42% less confident. This however is not reflected by many specific requests for the setting up of prayer groups in responses to Q3 and Q4. (6 requests in 115 responses)

Confidence varies across the 4 Mass centres. Cinderford has the highest percentage of confidence at 65% whilst Lydney shows the greatest level of doubt at 49% (46%+3%).



From responses to Q3-5 each Mass Centre are looking for some support with personal prayer life.

Q3: What teachings of the Catholic Faith would you most like to explore?

This question had a 69% response rate across the parish. The range was 53% from Sedbury to 78% in Cinderford.

The range of responses was many and varied. In order, by frequency of response, the areas people would like explored are :

1. **End of Life** including explanation of doctrine on Purgatory, judgement, resurrection and heavenly life.
2. **Sacramental Life:** interest is shown from all four Mass centres. The two sacraments mentioned most often are Reconciliation and Communion (including transubstantiation). Responses given as sacraments are taken to include all the sacraments equally.
3. **Sin and Sacraments :** Questions arise about individual areas (*is missing Mass still a sin?*) and the doctrine of forgiveness came up frequently.
4. **Scripture:** interest is shown from all four Mass centres. The doctrine of the Trinity is the most often requested but this is one of a wide ranging list of areas of bible study.
5. **Prayer and Faith:** interest is shown from all four Mass centres. Subject matter is again wide spread; from the historic (Lives of Saints) to the philosophical (What is Faith?) Within this section an interest is seen in the language of prayer and liturgy.
6. **Church in the Modern World: High degree of interest** is shown from all four Mass centres. This section generated as much response as the top two sections above. To separate sub themes it is split into two sections in the appendices.
 - 1) There is widespread interest in exploring the teaching of the Church as it responds to the modern world as it impacts on personal and married life. This is especially so with regard to being inclusive to all and acceptance of all aspects of sexuality and equality.
 - 2) The shortage of priests is a concern and reflected in the questioning of not allowing priests to marry through to the lack of leadership roles for women in the modern church at the moment.
 - 3) There is strong interest in the Pope's teaching and direction as well as how the Church deals with, explains and directs responses to the problems and challenges of the world around us.
 - 4) Also within section 2 there are several philosophical questions raised around dogma especially 'blind acceptance'
7. **Church History :** Came up as a topic in two responses from two Mass centres.
8. **Other Aspects:** engaging the young and use of symbols in worship.

This wide range of interests is strongly reflected in the desire for discussion and study groups indicated in responses to Q4...

Q4: What personal practical help do you think the church could offer you or others?

This question generated a 74% average response rate. The range was 61% Sedbury, 79% Cinderford

1. **Community Support, Inclusivity and Leadership:**
 - a. Responses to this question ranged from indications for a desire for a unified and active church community that is active and visible in the area.
 - b. There are calls for the Church to be less dogmatic and legalistic, more welcoming and inclusive coupled with...

c. a range of practical help being offered to the lonely, sick and in need. To be '*a listening community*'.

2. Faith Support :

- a. There is a wish that Mass is readily available both weekday and Sunday.
- b. Requests for prayer groups in all four Mass Centres.
- c. A programme of liturgy to supplement Mass including; Adoration, Stations and others.

3. Education, Study and Training : is strong theme across all four mass centres. This to be through: discussion groups, talks and use of modern media. (See also Q3 above and Q5 below)

Q5: How would you like to see the parish develop over the next 3 -5 years?

This question generated a 73% Parish response . The range was 61% Cinderford and Sedbury to 78% Coleford and Lydney

The range of responses fell into 6 distinct themes and reflected (and to a degree overlapped) the previous two questions, as responders reinforced themes from questions 3 and 4.

1. Community: All four Mass centres wish to see our community grow stronger. Although there were not many direct examples given the range does include social groups, activities that see (beyond educational meetings - Q3 and 4) people engaging in activity that is '*time related, not financially related*' .

2. Membership:

- a. Engagement of the young and those with young families is a very strong desire from all four Mass centres.
- b. There is strong feeling that we need to work to bring back those who have drifted away. Practical suggestions here include music groups for the teenagers to support worship and being warm and welcoming to newcomers as well as a desire for the church to be forward thinking in its approach.

3. Organisationally and Financially:

- a) As could be expected there is a range of views here from a wish to maintain the status quo seen in a single response each from two centres to a realisation that we must prepare for change brought about by falling Mass attendance and lack of clergy reflected in all four Mass Centres.
- b) There are practical suggestions to improve our visible presence through signage and advertising and publicity.

4) Educationally :

- a) For ourselves in providing talks, discussions and a range of study groups and topics (see Q3 and 4)
- b) taking Catholic teaching to a wider audience (a challenge?)

There is also a request, that occasionally Fr Barnabas / Paul open the homily to become a dialogue.

5) Ecumenically : A strong desire to be more involved with other religious groups in the area is expressed in all four Mass Centres.

6) Liturgically: The maintaining the saying of Mass is considered important but in three centres the provision and development of a range of liturgy, either clergy or laity led, is suggested / requested.