

## **PROBLEMS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

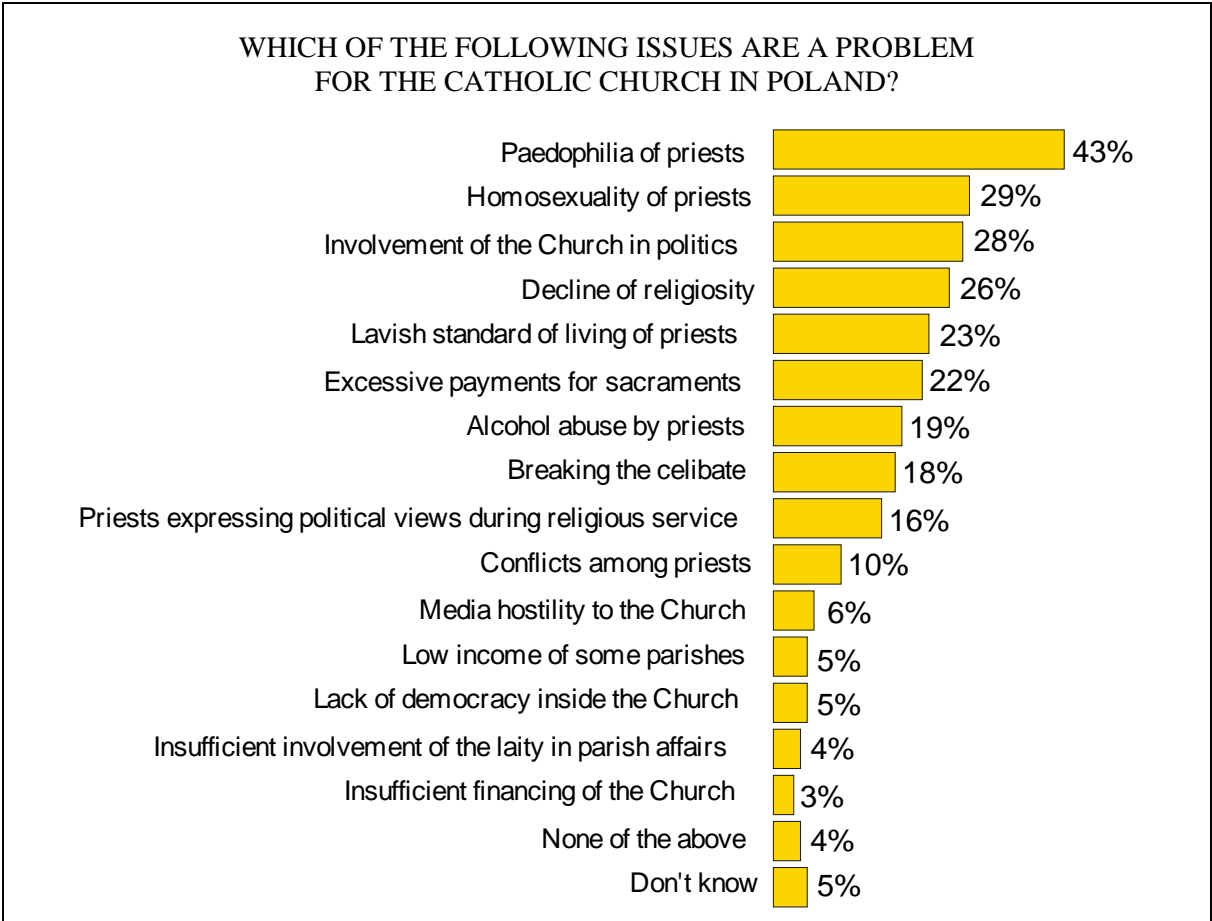
The problems of the Catholic Church most commonly mentioned by respondents are related to misbehaviour of priests and issues related to their sexuality. Over two-fifths of respondents (43%) consider cases of paedophilia among priests to be the biggest problem facing the Church. More than a quarter (29%) consider homosexuality of priests to be such an issue. In this context, the failure to live up to the vow of celibacy seems to be a less glaring problem (18%).

Another controversial issue is excessive political activity of the institutional Church (28%). When the activities of individual Church representatives is added to this, e.g. expressing political views during religious service (16%), the problem of political involvement in political life appears to be a significant weakness of the Catholic Church.

A little more than a quarter of respondents (26%) perceive the process of secularization of the society (decrease in religiosity and in the number of believers) as a serious challenge for the Church. A slightly smaller group is appalled by the excessive, in their opinion, standard of living of the priests (23%), and too high financial expectations from the faithful, connected, for instance, with administering sacraments (22%). About a fifth (19%) consider alcohol abuse by the priests to be a serious challenge.

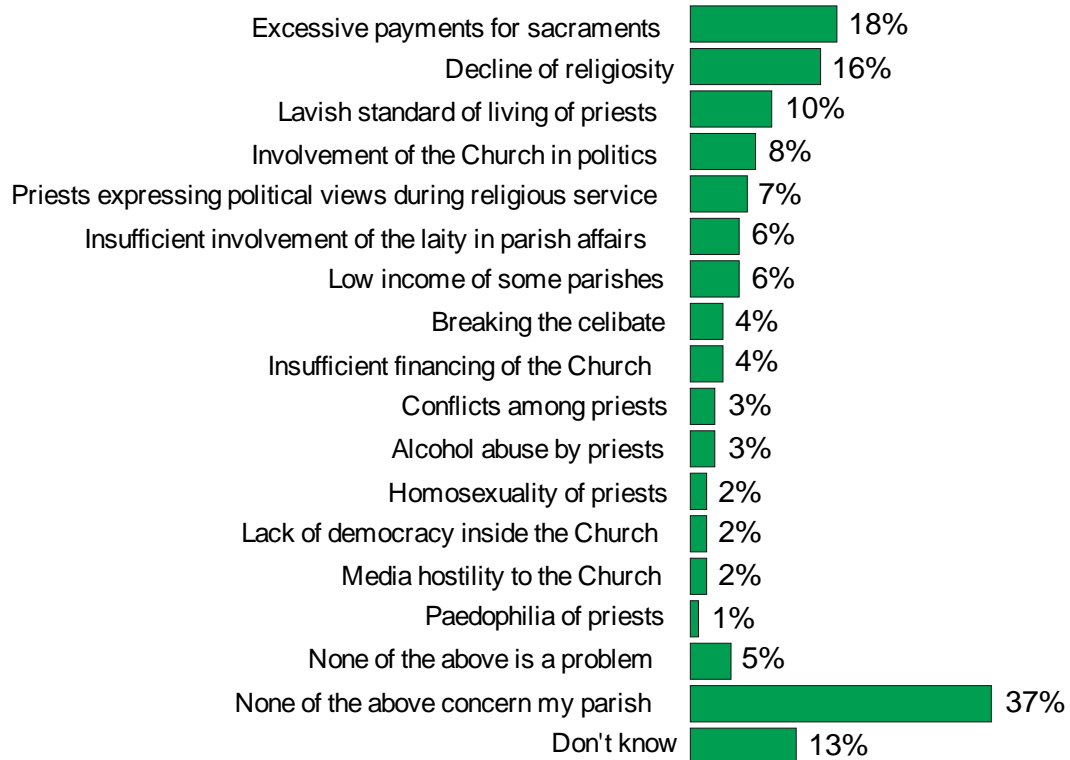
It appears that the hierarchy of problems facing the Catholic Church in Poland is related, on the one hand, to the weight of the issues and their prominence in the media and, on the other hand, to inability of the Church to credibly handle such cases. Although cases of paedophilia

are incidental, they appear to the public opinion as particularly significant and appalling, as they concern the people entrusted with educating the younger generation. Inaction or inappropriate reaction of senior priests to such cases aggravate the problem. Homosexuality of the priests is increasingly in the focus of interest of journalists and artists and becomes an issue for the public opinion.



The problems of the Church look different from the perspective of the parish. The most important problems on the national level appear insignificant or low in hierarchy when seen locally. The most important problems of the Church from the perspective of a member of a local parish are, on the one hand, financial: excessive required donation for administering the sacraments (18%) and opulent living standard of the priests (10%). On the other hand, respondents mention the decline in religiosity and falling numbers of the faithful (16%). Next in importance are political involvement of the Church (8%) and politicization of the religious service (7%).

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ISSUES ARE A PROBLEM IN YOUR PARISH?



More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in Polish: "Problems of the Catholic Church", October 2013. Fieldwork for national sample: August 2013, N=904. The random address sample is representative for adult population of Poland.