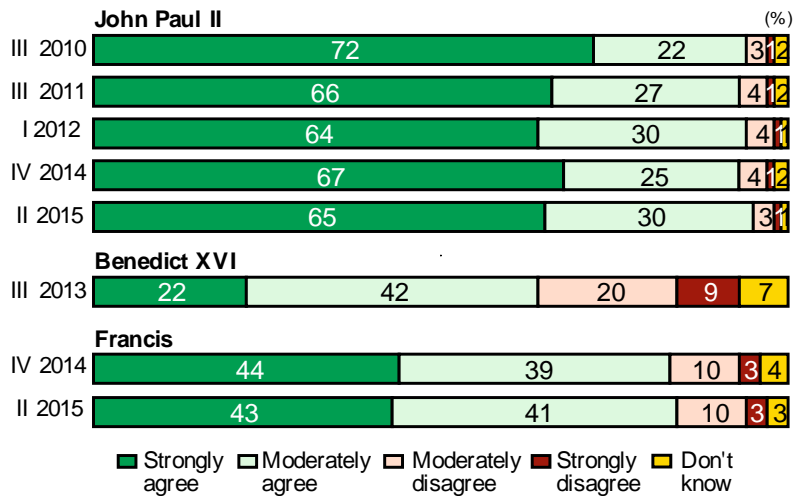


## **EXPECTED CHANGES IN TEACHING OF THE CHURCH**

Systematic CBOS surveys show that religiosity of Poles has been falling slowly but steadily since the death of pope John Paul II. Nevertheless, a vast majority of Poles are religious believers (92%) who practice their faith more or less regularly (87%). In spite of the high indicators of religiosity, there is an increasing privatisation of religion, which is reflected, for instance, in questioning Church teachings about morality and lifestyle issues. There is an increasing discrepancy between the Church doctrine and the attitude of believers. This phenomenon is observed outside of Poland, too. It indicates that the authority of the Church weakens and influencing life choices has become a challenge for this institution. Various public pronouncements of pope Francis, in particular during synod assemblies devoted to the pastoral challenges of the family (held in 2014 and planned for 2015), lead many people to believe that the present pontificate will introduce significant changes in Church teaching. Regardless of any possible modifications to the Church doctrine, the change in rhetoric introduced by the pope has brought him a great deal of popularity. A vast majority of Poles (84%) declare that pope Francis is an important moral authority for them. His standing is not as high as that enjoyed by John Paul II, but clearly higher than the authority of Benedict XVI.

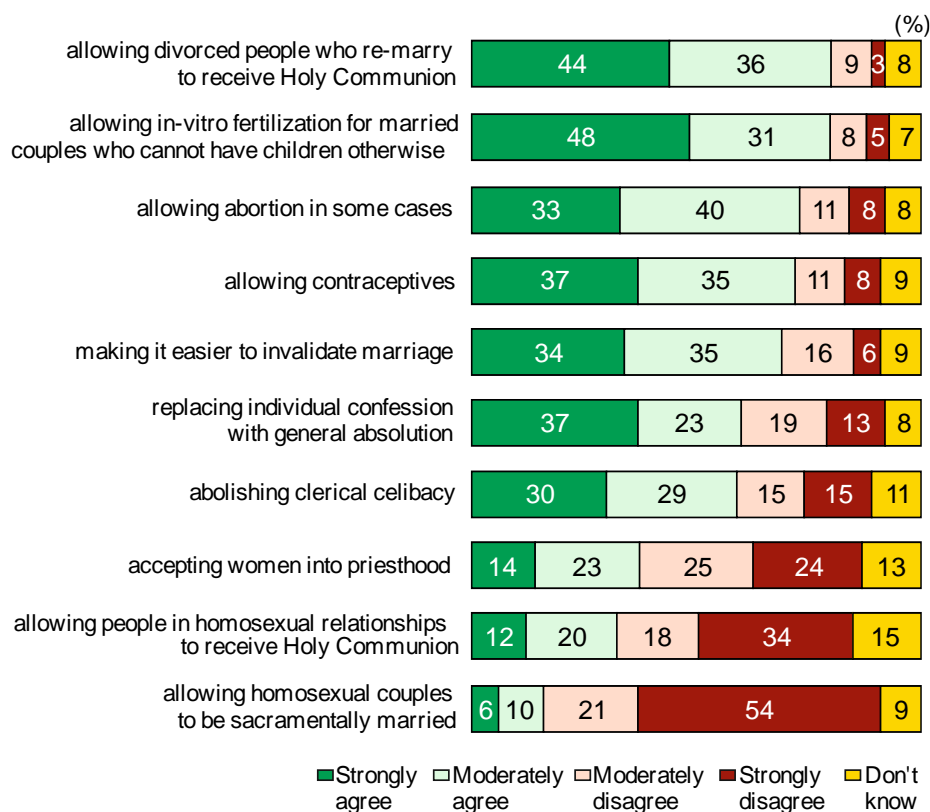
DO YOU AGREE THAT POPE JOHN PAUL II/ BENEDICT XVI / FRANCIS IS A SIGNIFICANT MORAL AUTHORITY FOR YOU?



Poles are open to changes in Church teaching. The possibility to allow re-married divorced people to receive Holy Communion is accepted almost universally (80% of respondents). Such a change is supported by divorced or separated people universally (90%) and strongly (65% of them strongly support such a measure). A vast majority of respondents (79%) support Church acceptance for the in-vitro fertilization for married couples who cannot have children otherwise. Moreover, almost three-quarters believe that the Church should allow contraception (72%) and allow abortion in some cases (73%). Over two-thirds (69%) think that the Church should make it easier to invalidate marriage.

On the other hand, there is widespread rejection of any change in the attitude to homosexual couples which would imply acceptance of their lifestyle. Three-quarters (75%) oppose granting them the right to get married. Giving people in homosexual relationships the right to receive Holy Communion is supported by one-third (32%) and rejected by half (52%) of respondents. The other proposals which are accepted by the majority are: replacing individual confession with general absolution (60%) and abolishing clerical celibacy (59%). On the other hand, accepting women into priesthood is rejected (49%) rather than accepted (37%).

## DO YOU SUPPORT THE FOLLOWING CHANGES IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH



The attitude to changes in the Church and its doctrine is differentiated by religiosity, i.e. declared faith and frequency of religious practice. The need for change is stressed primarily by the least religiously active: those who attend service rarely or never, and by non-believers.

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More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in Polish: *"Expected changes in Church teaching"*, March 2015. Fieldwork for national sample: February 2015, N=1003. The random address sample is representative for adult population of Poland.