

Data Protection and the Church and Secularism

The Church should be liable and defined as breaking the law if it keeps information on a person that indicates that they are a member when they are not. Anyone who does not want to be labelled or listed as a member of the Church, and who does not believe in its truth claims, is not a member. The person who wants to be a member while denying the truth claims is confused. For him membership is not about being a part of a faith community. He has a faith of his own. It is not the faith community's faith he has. So he should want to leave and is only letting himself down.

The Church does not respect the person who wants to go. It does not respect that person's freedom of belief. It refuses that person the rights it demands for itself.

Some cults will record that person as a member no matter what he or she does or believes. To keep misleading information on that person is a violation of that person's rights under Data Protection law. Every religion should be compelled by law to have a formal defection process established. It is because the census statistics show a huge percentage of the nation claiming to be say Catholics that the Church is given such a voice in the country and the state may formulate laws in accordance with the teaching of the Church or at least consider it. Had it not been for the census figures, the Roman Catholic Church would not have got its high place in the Irish Constitution and the law even banned contraceptives to fit in with Catholic doctrine.

It is the principle. Suppose a country is not secularist. If most people in the country claim to be Catholic, then as they are not the teachers of the church or the shepherds but they are the sheep, then the government should take their claim to be Catholic as consenting to the bishops being consulted in state matters. We all consent and give tacit consent to things that we may not like.