V *Encuentro* Key Demographic, Social, and Religious Statistics by Diocese and Region
Methodology

Executive Summary

The V *Encuentro* National Research Team has prepared summaries of the key demographic, social, and religious statistics for every Latin Rite Catholic diocese and episcopal region in the United States. These reports have three main parts, each with their respective sources, as follows:

1. **Distribution of the Catholic population in the diocese or region, by age group and race/ethnicity.** The first chart and table in every report is drawn from an original analysis carried out by the V *Encuentro* National Research Team, based on: a) two large surveys conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2013 and 2014; b) annual surveys conducted by the Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI) from 2013 to 2016; c) a report prepared for the USCCB by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) in 2014; and d) U.S. Census Bureau data from Census 2000, the 2016 American Community Survey (ACS), and the March 2017 Current Population Survey (CPS).

2. **Pastoral outreach in Catholic Hispanic Ministry, and Hispanics / Latinos in ecclesial ministry.** Starting in December of 2017, the V *Encuentro* National Research Team conducted a survey of diocesan offices, achieving a 100% response rate. Although some dioceses were not able to provide complete data or gave only estimates for certain questions, the results offer the most comprehensive analysis to date with respect to Catholic parishes, schools, and ministers.

3. **Social data from the American Community Survey.** Several social variables tracked by the U.S. Census Bureau can provide insight for the pastoral leaders who accompany Hispanics and their families in ministry. The V *Encuentro* National Research Team coded the public data from the 2016 one-year summary file and the 2011-2015 five-year summary file, so that they could be analyzed by diocese. Fourteen variables were then selected for analysis and reported in charts, often comparing Hispanic and non-Hispanic white responses. Keep in mind that these results reflect the entire population of each group, not just the Catholics.

The diocesan and regional reports are available on the V *Encuentro* website at:

https://vencuentro.org/v-encuentro-diocesan-participation-and-information/

The Catholic Population by Age Group and Race / Ethnicity

In the table immediately below the first chart on page one of the diocesan and regional statistical reports, the population in 2000 was taken from Census 2000 population totals by county, and the 2016 population comes from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) estimates for 2016. Hispanics of any race were not included in the numbers for their racial group, and multiracial non-Hispanics were included among the black population if they listed black as one of their racial categories; otherwise they were included among the Asian / other group. See the section below regarding the charts based on the ACS for an explanation of how the weighted population sample was utilized to obtain the total population counts by diocese in 2016, since these are not directly available from the Census Bureau.

The estimated number of Catholics in the year 2016 in each racial / ethnic group is drawn from a combination of three main survey sources: the American Values Atlas (AVA—about 50,000 respondents each year from 2013 to 2016) from PRRI[1], the Pew Research Center's 2014 Religious Landscape Survey (RLS—about 35,000 respondents)[2], and the Pew Hispanic Center's 2013 National Survey of Latinos and Religion (NSLR—about 5,000 Hispanic / Latino respondents)[3].

Based on these surveys, the V *Encuentro* National Research Team created a mathematical model of the population in each state to generate an estimate of the Catholic population in each ethnic/racial group.[4] This is what sociologists call a "survey of surveys" approach, so the numbers found here are not from the Kenedy Directory, CARA, or any other individual source—they are proprietary estimates of the V *Encuentro* Research Team, prepared for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, utilizing the largest and most recent surveys of religious affiliation currently available for public use in the United States.

For states with more than one diocese, the diocese-by-diocese analysis conducted by CARA in 2014 for the USCCB[5] was utilized as a reference point. While the total Catholic population numbers by state and race/ethnicity obtained by the V *Encuentro* did not match theirs since they developed their model from a different set of surveys, the relative proportions of the Catholic population by race/ethnicity and diocese in each state were retained, which made it possible to compensate for regional variations in catholicity within a given state without modifying the total number of Catholics of each racial/ethnic background in each state as determined by the V *Encuentro* model.

For the chart at the top of page 1, only the Pew surveys provided data by age group—and for Hispanics by generation in the NSLR survey—and there are no surveys anywhere that ask children (ages 0 to 18) about their religious affiliation. Nevertheless, when estimating the size of the Catholic population in the U.S., it is vital to include children since they account for over 20% of all Catholics, and over 30% among Hispanic Catholics. Therefore, a second mathematical model was developed at the national level to account for age-based variations in catholicity for each racial group, and by generation for Hispanics.

Imputed Catholic affiliation ratios for the children were developed by examining the age distributions of the parents of children of particular ages, taking into account parental generation since arrival in the U.S. for Hispanic families, and assuming that children under age 13 usually share the religious affiliation of their parents, with an adjustment incorporated in the teenage years to account for a more-or-less smooth decline in catholicity between the children and the young adults of the same race, ethnicity, and generation. The age and generational contours of that national model, adjusted for the overall proportion of Catholics in the diocese by race / ethnicity as determined in the prior step of the process, were then

---

[1] Reported by state on the PRRI web at: http://ava.prri.org/.

[2] Available for download at: http://www.thearda.com/Archive/Files/Descriptions/RELLAND14.asp.

[3] Available for download at: http://www.pewforum.org/dataset/2013-survey-of-u-s-latinos/.

[4] The four AVA results for each state were averaged, then that result was averaged with the RLS survey results, which provided a higher degree of accuracy due to the availability of the entire dataset and the inclusion of a minimum of 300 responses from every state. The NSLR—which utilized the best methodology of any of the surveys for reaching the Hispanic / Latino population—only provided data at the level of census division (there are 9 regional divisions in the United States), so the state-by-state estimates of Hispanic Catholics were adjusted manually based on these divisional variations, taking into account that the NSLR data is the oldest of the sources.

[5] Mark Gray, Mary Gautier, and Thomas Gaunt, SJ, "Cultural Diversity in the Catholic Church in the United States: June 2014" (Washington, DC: The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, 2014), 27-31.

applied to the raw age, ethnicity, and generational estimates from the 2016 ACS in each diocese to create the chart at the top of page 1.

This approach does not account for regional variations in the transmission of Catholic identity from one generation to the next among Hispanic, white, black, Asian, and other Catholic families. However, such regional variations tend to apply in a similar way across racial and ethnic groups in any given region. As a result, the raw population data plays a dominant role in determining the **proportions** within each age group. Consequently, even a large margin of error in age-group Catholic population counts would have little effect on the overall proportions of the Catholic population within each age group. In the end, the inability to account for such variations led the V *Encuentro* Research Team to opt not to provide detailed Catholic population numbers by age, focusing only on the within-age-group proportions of the Catholic population by race/ethnicity as shown in the first chart.

In summary, the Catholic population numbers and percentages found on page 1 of the diocesan and regional statistical summaries are the fruit of an original analysis conducted by the V *Encuentro* National Research Team, based on the best survey data currently available to the public. The numbers generated and reported at the diocesan, regional, and national levels by the V *Encuentro* Research Team provide a reliable and up-to-date snapshot of the self-identifying Catholic population in each diocese in 2016, with a solid grounding in the results of large social surveys. However, keep in mind that the Pew Research Center data, which plays a prominent role in the V *Encuentro* Catholic population model, is now nearly 5 years old. If the trend of diminishing religious affiliation has continued, the self-identifying Catholic population today is likely smaller than this model predicts. Furthermore, parish registration and sacramental data would give a different set of numbers, and Kenedy, CARA, and Glenmary each provide their own approach, with differing results according to their respective methodologies.

Parishes and schools providing Hispanic ministry, and Hispanics / Latinos in ecclesial ministry

The summary data regarding Hispanic ministry and Hispanics / Latinos in ecclesial ministry can be found at the bottom of page 1 of the diocesan statistical reports, and in tables on pages 2-3 of the regional statistical reports. These numbers were obtained by surveying the dioceses, with a 100% response rate. The first point of contact was the diocesan chair for the V *Encuentro*, each of whom received a detailed explanation of what information was needed and suggestions for assistance from other diocesan offices that might already be collecting such information. If that person was not able to obtain the requested information, various diocesan offices were contacted for assistance, including the chancellor, the vicar for religious, the vicar for clergy, the office of Catholic schools, the office of deacon formation, etc.

In cases where precise numbers were not available, the contact person was encouraged to provide their best estimate, and the National Research Team often worked with them to narrow the range and improve the quality of their estimates, based on verifiable data and trends in neighboring dioceses. Estimates in the statistical reports are highlighted in yellow.

Regarding Hispanic / Latino priests and religious, not all dioceses had precise counts available. Although they were asked to include religious priests in the count who may not be assigned to any diocesan ministries, it is possible that some were missed, probably totaling less than 100. Some priests in consecrated life may also have been counted twice—as both religious and priests—and it appears that in

some dioceses no consideration may have been given to the number of Hispanic / Latino male religious. The National Research Team will be conducting a follow-up census of Hispanics / Latinos in ecclesial ministry in 2019, so hopefully any such omissions or duplications will be discovered and corrected.

The number of Hispanic / Latino lay ecclesial ministers in each diocese was especially difficult to ascertain, because in some dioceses this term is used very narrowly while in others it is used very broadly. The contact person received the following explanation for who should be counted:

> Hispanic lay ecclesial ministers include **pastoral staff** in diocesan offices and parish ministries, such as: liturgists, pastoral associates, youth ministers, parish life coordinators, directors of faith formation, and paid pastoral musicians; as well as campus ministers and religion/theology teachers in Catholic high schools and colleges. Most often these individuals are paid staff in the parish or diocese, but we also want to include volunteer lay ministers, as long as they have responsibility for their ministry and dedicate 20+ hours a week to it. Lay pastoral leaders listed in the parish bulletin or website are probably lay ecclesial ministers. A volunteer who serves in multiple ministries totaling 20+ hours per week should not be counted. Neither should parish secretaries, pastoral council members, administrators, bookkeepers, or grounds keepers.

Although the instructions were quite clear, there is evidence that not all diocesan contacts followed the instructions. When the results differed greatly from what might be expected given the size of the Hispanic / Latino Catholic population in the diocese, a phone call was made to double check the result or improve the estimate. Nevertheless, the number of lay ecclesial ministers in any diocese or region cannot be assumed to be a precise measure based on the provided definition, but perhaps a "ballpark" estimate. Furthermore, 16 dioceses containing 9% of the Hispanic Catholic population in the U.S. simply stated that they had no way to measure or even estimate their number of lay ecclesial ministers.

Charts Based on the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey

The charts starting on page 2 of the diocesan reports and page 3 or 4 of the regional reports are all taken from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS)—either the 1-year data set for 2016 (3+ million responses in the nationwide survey) or the 5-year data set for 2011 to 2015 (12+ million responses for years 2012-2015), depending on the level of precision that was required for each crosstab of the data. Whenever possible, priority was given to using the more current data.

Before the ACS data could be analyzed at the diocesan level, each response had to be coded for the diocese it came from. Although diocesan boundaries generally follow county lines in each state, the ACS data is not provided at the county level, due to the fact that some counties in the U.S. have such a small population that the individuals responding there might be identifiable. Instead, the Census Bureau defines non-overlapping geographic units within each state which they call Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs). These units contain at least 100,000 people, and they often cross county lines in sparsely populated areas. The PUMA geographic definitions are updated after every decennial census, so the definitions utilized in this analysis correspond to the ACS data starting in 2012.

Out of the 51 states and District of Columbia, 17 presented no instances of PUMAs that crossed diocesan territorial boundaries. In the remaining states, ACS respondents in PUMAs representing two or more dioceses were randomly assigned to one diocese or another in proportion to the relative size of the population in each of the corresponding counties at the last census. In the few instances where a single

county included two or more PUMAs, only one of which crossed diocesan boundaries, the proportion of the divided county's population in a given diocese was estimated by adding together the populations of the townships and incorporated communities located within the county that is assigned to each diocese.

Since the 1-year and 5-year ACS data sets downloaded from the U.S. Census Bureau are independent, the random assignment of individual responses to a particular diocese when required was done separately in each data set, and these assignments became a permanent part of the data file kept by the V *Encuentro* Research Team. Data from 2011 in the 5-year data set was not coded, nor was it included in any of the charts and graphs. Coding the responses to diocesan boundaries was a very time-consuming and costly process, and it would have had to be repeated using the 2000-era PUMA definitions in order to include the 2011 data, with only a minimal gain in usability of the data, so the V *Encuentro* National Research Team opted not to do this.

The 176 geographically-defined Latin Rite dioceses in the United States were divided into 6 classes, depending on the size of the Hispanic and white, non-Hispanic populations they contained, as follows:

- **Class 1:** dioceses with at least 200,000 Hispanic and 200,000 white, non-Hispanic people living within their boundaries. For these 46 dioceses, all data came from the 2016 ACS data set, with the exception of the household type and marital/parental status at the bottom of page 3, since those numbers were only available in the 5-year sample.
- **Class 2:** dioceses with between 80,000 and 200,000 Hispanic residents and at least 80,000 white, non-Hispanic residents. For these 59 dioceses, all data reported by age group came from the 5-year data set, with the exceptions of the health insurance coverage and the charts comparing children and adults, since their age groupings were large enough to contain a statistically significant number of responses.
- **Class 3:** dioceses with between 50,000 and 80,000 Hispanic residents and at least 50,000 white, non-Hispanic residents. For these 18 dioceses, all data reported came from the 5-year data set.
- **Class 4:** dioceses with between 20,000 and 50,000 Hispanic residents, irrespective of the number of white, non-Hispanic residents. For these 25 dioceses, all data reported came from the 5-year sample, and the age groupings for data reported by age were modified to ensure that the groups were large enough to provide a statistically significant sample size.
- **Class 5:** dioceses with between 8,000 and 20,000 Hispanic residents, irrespective of the number of white, non-Hispanic residents. For these 19 dioceses, all data reported came from the 5-year sample, and all charts comparing responses by age group—with the exception of those comparing children and adults—were omitted.
- **Class 6:** dioceses with less than 8,000 Hispanic residents, irrespective of the number of white, non-Hispanic residents. For these 9 dioceses plus the Archdiocese for the Military Services which is not geographically-based, no ACS data was reported.

In each report, the title of each chart correctly identifies the ACS year or years on which the chart is based.