



V ENCUENTRO

DISCÍPULOS MISIONEROS: TESTIGOS DEL AMOR DE DIOS
MISSIONARY DISCIPLES: WITNESSES OF GOD'S LOVE

REPORT



REGION 5 CATHOLIC POPULATION BY RACE / ETHNICITY

SUMMARY OF REGIONAL AND DIOCESAN ESTIMATES

Based on 2021 Survey Data and Census Estimates



V Encuentro Catholic Population Update for 2021

With the arrival of data from the 2020 U.S. Decennial Census, there has been widespread interest within the Church for an update on the V Encuentro Catholic population estimates that were published for 2016. Because the U.S. Census Bureau does not track religious affiliation, Catholic population estimates must rely on either sacramental records or large social surveys. With the increasing phenomena of religious switching and disaffiliation among the baptized, social surveys are seen by most sociologists today as the preferred way to develop estimates. The 2016 work for the V Encuentro was pioneering¹ in its development of a statistical model for the Catholic population at the diocesan level, based on several large social surveys that were conducted between 2013 and 2016, and taking into account variations in the demographics of religious affiliation by age, race/ethnicity, and geographic location.

The 2020 Census provides an important update on the underlying population in each diocese. However, it is clear from recent data on attendance at church services that the experience of the Covid-19 pandemic has had a far-reaching impact on the way Catholics live their faith. This begs the question whether it has also impacted their sense of religious identity and their faith commitment to a religious institution. In order to update the statistical model, it would be ideal to rely on a very large survey that employs best practices in establishing a representative sample of the U.S. population, such as the 2014 Religious Landscape Survey (RLS), which included over 35,000 responses. Unfortunately, no such survey data are currently available. However, the Pew Research Center and the Public Religion Research Institute both produced research from less robust 2021 surveys that showed a significant increase in the Catholic adult population, reversing the long-standing trend of decline.²

Did the Self-Identifying Catholic Population Grow in 2020-2021?

Both studies showed that this growth among Catholics took place in sharp contrast to a continuing decline in the Mainline and Evangelical Protestant populations. Although the size and quality of these two studies are not ideal, their close agreement on these data points lend credence that there may be something more than random fluctuations and sampling error here. A closer look at the Pew survey data, which were kindly made available to the V Encuentro research team, reveals:

- The population of older white Catholics experienced a large increase, especially among the 65+ population, which more than offset significant declines among younger white Catholics.

¹ See the full methodological explanation at: <https://vencuentro.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/VE-Statistical-Reports-Methodology-EN.pdf>.

² See <https://www.prrri.org/spotlight/prri-2021-american-values-atlas-religious-affiliation-updates-and-trends-white-christian-decline-slows-unaffiliated-growth-levels-off/> and <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/12/14/about-three-in-ten-u-s-adults-are-now-religiously-unaffiliated/>.

- In contrast, the Hispanic/Latino Catholic population saw roughly proportional losses across all age groups, continuing the trend of gradual disaffiliation over the last 30 years, offset by even faster growth in the overall Hispanic/Latino population, resulting in continued numeric growth.
- Declines in the Black, Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American, and other Catholic populations did appear, but the differences from the 2014 RLS survey were within the statistical margin of error.

A Tentative Update to the V Encuentro Statistical Model

While it is not ideal to make broad changes to a national statistical model based on a survey with less than 4,000 responses, the shifts in the white and Hispanic/Latino Catholic populations did meet the standard of statistical significance. However, there were not sufficient data to attempt a full revision of the statistical model accounting for racial/ethnic, geographic, and age-related factors. Instead, the following was done:

- The statistical model from the 2016 V Encuentro analysis was incorporated as the starting point.
- The diocesan coefficients for Hispanic/Latino catholicity were multiplied by 0.95 (a 5% reduction).
- The dioceses were ranked according to the age profile of the underlying white, non-Hispanic population from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS 2021) by taking the geometric mean of their rankings in each of the four main age categories (18 to 29, 30 to 49, 50 to 64, and 65+). Coefficients were then applied to the original statistical model, ranging from 0.91 to 1.15, resulting in an overall 3.5% increase in white catholicity, in keeping with the 2021 Pew data.
- No changes were made in the model for the Black, Asian, and other Catholic populations.

Making Sense of the New Data

An important question for the V Encuentro research team in this analysis is: does the change in the white Catholic population make sense? The clear external factor that could have played into the trend reversal was the Covid-19 pandemic. Since the white Catholic population has a much older profile than other Catholic racial/ethnic groups and most other Christian denominations, it does make sense that those who may have been most at risk of Covid-19 would do some religious introspection and perhaps return to identifying with the faith of their younger years. This begs the question: will that change last? That is unknown. It is certainly possible that the proportion of white Catholics will soon revert to the historical trendline, reversing the apparent gains seen in 2021. In any case, the trend among younger white Catholics continues to be one of significant disaffiliation. If the overall trends continue, the future Catholic Church in the United States will be smaller and more diverse.

The new diocesan-level Catholic population tables should therefore be taken with a degree of caution. The underlying Census data and the comparative data from 2016 are both shown in

order to help in that process. Keep in mind that the Catholic numbers do not represent people who attend Mass regularly—it is just those who would have identified themselves as Catholic if asked in 2021. They may or may not continue to do so today or next year. Some dioceses may show a large increase in their white Catholic population; that is due to the fact that they have a substantial elderly population that at least at the national level was more likely to identify as Catholic in 2021. That may or may not have been true locally.

Similarly, given the rapid increase in the Asian population throughout the country, some dioceses may see significantly larger numbers in their table for “Asian/Native Am./Other” Catholics. However, if the reality was that a sizeable Chinese or Japanese population arrived, it would have a far smaller impact in the shape of the local Catholic community than if those who arrived had been of Filipino origin.

The bottom line is that the new data provide an essential reference point for pastoral leaders as they develop programs and activities to serve the Church in their area. It is important to take stock of the changes revealed in the Census 2020 data. However, such leaders should understand that these numbers represent a snapshot in time, and the community they are called to serve will continue to change in its demographic composition and numerical size as the years pass. May God bless their efforts!

EPISOCPAL REGION 5

Episcopal Region V Overall Population and Catholic Population Estimates for 2016 and 2021 by Race / Ethnicity

Racial/Ethnic Group	Census Estimated Population in 2016**	Census Estimated Population in 2021	% Change	Estimated Catholics in 2016	Estimated Catholics in 2021	% Change	% Catholic	% of Catholics
White, non-Hispanic	16,348,060	16,253,042	-0.6%	1,916,000	1,923,000	0.4%	11.8%	67.7%
Hispanic/Latino	1,014,741	1,186,473	16.9%	523,000	581,000	11.1%	49.0%	20.5%
Black/African American	5,629,656	5,576,127	-1.0%	239,000	235,000	-1.7%	4.2%	8.3%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	629,403	1,082,859	72.0%	58,000	100,000	72.4%	9.2%	3.5%
Total***	23,621,860	24,098,501	2.0%	2,737,000	2,839,000	3.7%	11.8%	

* The surveys on which the Catholic population are based were not large enough to generate reliable estimates of the Asian, Native American, Pacific Islander, and "Other" Catholic populations separately, so they are grouped together here.

** Overall population estimates are taken from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Surveys (ACS) for each corresponding year.

*** The Catholic Totals may not add up exactly due to rounding errors. Round numbers are used because these are statistical estimates, not actual population counts.

Diocese of Alexandria
Overall Population and Catholic Population Estimates
for 2016 and 2021 by Race / Ethnicity

Racial/Ethnic Group	Census Estimated Population in 2016**	Census Estimated Population in 2021	% Change	Estimated Catholics in 2016	Estimated Catholics in 2021	% Change	% Catholic	% of Catholics
White, non-Hispanic	247,604	238,568	-3.6%	85,000	81,000	-4.7%	34.0%	80.2%
Hispanic/Latino	14,365	14,375	0.1%	7,000	6,500	-7.1%	45.2%	6.4%
Black/African American	115,808	112,089	-3.2%	12,500	12,000	-4.0%	10.7%	11.9%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	10,826	17,910	65.4%	850	1,400	64.7%	7.8%	1.4%
Total***	388,603	382,942	-1.5%	105,000	101,000	-3.8%	26.4%	

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Diocese of Baton Rouge
Overall Population and Catholic Population Estimates
for 2016 and 2021 by Race / Ethnicity

Racial/Ethnic Group	Census Estimated Population in 2016**	Census Estimated Population in 2021	% Change	Estimated Catholics in 2016	Estimated Catholics in 2021	% Change	% Catholic	% of Catholics
White, non-Hispanic	571,398	555,556	-2.8%	189,000	173,000	-8.5%	31.1%	73.0%
Hispanic/Latino	37,560	47,956	27.7%	21,000	25,000	19.0%	52.1%	10.5%
Black/African American	342,164	347,253	1.5%	35,000	36,000	2.9%	10.4%	15.2%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	30,949	45,084	45.7%	2,200	3,500	59.1%	7.8%	1.5%
Total***	982,071	995,849	1.4%	248,000	237,000	-4.4%	23.8%	

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Diocese of Biloxi
Overall Population and Catholic Population Estimates
for 2016 and 2021 by Race / Ethnicity

Racial/Ethnic Group	Census Estimated Population in 2016**	Census Estimated Population in 2021	% Change	Estimated Catholics in 2016	Estimated Catholics in 2021	% Change	% Catholic	% of Catholics
White, non-Hispanic	553,826	547,946	-1.1%	43,000	43,000	0.0%	7.8%	62.3%
Hispanic/Latino	33,109	36,897	11.4%	16,000	17,000	6.3%	46.1%	24.6%
Black/African American	211,731	207,313	-2.1%	4,000	4,500	12.5%	2.2%	6.5%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	19,065	45,226	137.2%	2,000	4,500	125.0%	10.0%	6.5%
Total***	817,731	837,382	2.4%	65,000	69,000	6.2%	8.2%	

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Diocese of Birmingham
Overall Population and Catholic Population Estimates
for 2016 and 2021 by Race / Ethnicity

Racial/Ethnic Group	Census Estimated Population in 2016**	Census Estimated Population in 2021	% Change	Estimated Catholics in 2016	Estimated Catholics in 2021	% Change	% Catholic	% of Catholics
White, non-Hispanic	2,118,091	2,145,691	1.3%	119,000	126,000	5.9%	5.9%	51.4%
Hispanic/Latino	142,677	168,568	18.1%	79,000	89,000	12.7%	52.8%	36.3%
Black/African American	719,203	742,753	3.3%	17,500	18,000	2.9%	2.4%	7.3%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	80,453	132,059	64.1%	7,000	11,000	57.1%	8.3%	4.5%
Total***	3,060,424	3,189,071	4.2%	222,000	245,000	10.4%	7.7%	

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Diocese of Covington
Overall Population and Catholic Population Estimates
for 2016 and 2021 by Race / Ethnicity

Racial/Ethnic Group	Census Estimated Population in 2016**	Census Estimated Population in 2021	% Change	Estimated Catholics in 2016	Estimated Catholics in 2021	% Change	% Catholic	% of Catholics
White, non-Hispanic	488,111	489,128	0.2%	51,000	55,000	7.8%	11.2%	82.1%
Hispanic/Latino	16,005	18,981	18.6%	7,500	8,500	13.3%	44.8%	12.7%
Black/African American	24,099	17,834	-26.0%	600	450	-25.0%	2.5%	0.7%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	12,876	29,718	130.8%	1,200	2,800	133.3%	9.4%	4.2%
Total***	541,091	555,661	2.7%	60,000	67,000	11.7%	12.1%	

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Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux
Overall Population and Catholic Population Estimates
for 2016 and 2021 by Race / Ethnicity

Racial/Ethnic Group	Census Estimated Population in 2016**	Census Estimated Population in 2021	% Change	Estimated Catholics in 2016	Estimated Catholics in 2021	% Change	% Catholic	% of Catholics
White, non-Hispanic	147,620	140,313	-4.9%	51,000	52,000	2.0%	37.1%	83.9%
Hispanic/Latino	9,975	10,154	1.8%	5,000	5,000	0.0%	49.2%	8.1%
Black/African American	40,222	37,844	-5.9%	3,500	3,500	0.0%	9.2%	5.6%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	12,043	12,427	3.2%	1,400	1,500	7.1%	12.1%	2.4%
Total***	209,860	200,738	-4.3%	61,000	62,000	1.6%	30.9%	

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Diocese of Jackson
Overall Population and Catholic Population Estimates
for 2016 and 2021 by Race / Ethnicity

Racial/Ethnic Group	Census Estimated Population in 2016**	Census Estimated Population in 2021	% Change	Estimated Catholics in 2016	Estimated Catholics in 2021	% Change	% Catholic	% of Catholics
White, non-Hispanic	1,143,691	1,086,658	-5.0%	90,000	87,000	-3.3%	8.0%	61.3%
Hispanic/Latino	54,021	57,902	7.2%	29,000	30,000	3.4%	51.8%	21.1%
Black/African American	939,884	900,038	-4.2%	19,000	18,000	-5.3%	2.0%	12.7%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	33,399	67,985	103.6%	3,900	8,000	105.1%	11.8%	5.6%
Total***	2,170,995	2,112,583	-2.7%	142,000	142,000	0.0%	6.7%	

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Diocese of Knoxville
Overall Population and Catholic Population Estimates
for 2016 and 2021 by Race / Ethnicity

Racial/Ethnic Group	Census Estimated Population in 2016**	Census Estimated Population in 2021	% Change	Estimated Catholics in 2016	Estimated Catholics in 2021	% Change	% Catholic	% of Catholics
White, non-Hispanic	2,123,694	2,135,305	0.5%	125,000	140,000	12.0%	6.6%	68.3%
Hispanic/Latino	92,713	116,980	26.2%	45,000	53,000	17.8%	45.3%	25.9%
Black/African American	168,121	154,725	-8.0%	2,500	2,300	-8.0%	1.5%	1.1%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	58,633	125,468	114.0%	4,500	9,500	111.1%	7.6%	4.6%
Total***	2,443,161	2,532,478	3.7%	177,000	205,000	15.8%	8.1%	

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**Diocese of Lafayette in Louisiana
Overall Population and Catholic Population Estimates
for 2016 and 2021 by Race / Ethnicity**

Racial/Ethnic Group	Census Estimated Population in 2016**	Census Estimated Population in 2021	% Change	Estimated Catholics in 2016	Estimated Catholics in 2021	% Change	% Catholic	% of Catholics
White, non-Hispanic	430,298	406,852	-5.4%	141,000	136,000	-3.5%	33.4%	79.5%
Hispanic/Latino	20,729	25,510	23.1%	12,500	15,000	20.0%	58.8%	8.8%
Black/African American	195,256	182,339	-6.6%	18,500	17,000	-8.1%	9.3%	9.9%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	15,374	27,795	80.8%	1,400	2,500	78.6%	9.0%	1.5%
Total***	661,657	642,496	-2.9%	173,000	171,000	-1.2%	26.6%	

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Diocese of Lake Charles
Overall Population and Catholic Population Estimates
for 2016 and 2021 by Race / Ethnicity

Racial/Ethnic Group	Census Estimated Population in 2016**	Census Estimated Population in 2021	% Change	Estimated Catholics in 2016	Estimated Catholics in 2021	% Change	% Catholic	% of Catholics
White, non-Hispanic	215,602	208,965	-3.1%	71,000	68,000	-4.2%	32.5%	84.0%
Hispanic/Latino	10,057	12,840	27.7%	4,500	5,500	22.2%	42.8%	6.8%
Black/African American	68,936	68,226	-1.0%	6,500	6,500	0.0%	9.5%	8.0%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	6,783	10,175	50.0%	600	900	50.0%	8.8%	1.1%
Total***	301,378	300,206	-0.4%	82,000	81,000	-1.2%	27.0%	

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Diocese of Lexington
Overall Population and Catholic Population Estimates
for 2016 and 2021 by Race / Ethnicity

Racial/Ethnic Group	Census Estimated Population in 2016**	Census Estimated Population in 2021	% Change	Estimated Catholics in 2016	Estimated Catholics in 2021	% Change	% Catholic	% of Catholics
White, non-Hispanic	1,230,197	1,211,595	-1.5%	134,000	135,000	0.7%	11.1%	80.4%
Hispanic/Latino	39,782	43,284	8.8%	22,000	23,000	4.5%	53.1%	13.7%
Black/African American	87,654	81,787	-6.7%	2,800	2,600	-7.1%	3.2%	1.5%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	29,139	57,696	98.0%	3,400	6,500	91.2%	11.3%	3.9%
Total***	1,386,772	1,394,362	0.5%	162,000	168,000	3.7%	12.0%	

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Archdiocese of Louisville
Overall Population and Catholic Population Estimates
for 2016 and 2021 by Race / Ethnicity

Racial/Ethnic Group	Census Estimated Population in 2016**	Census Estimated Population in 2021	% Change	Estimated Catholics in 2016	Estimated Catholics in 2021	% Change	% Catholic	% of Catholics
White, non-Hispanic	1,209,427	1,192,581	-1.4%	138,000	142,000	2.9%	11.9%	72.4%
Hispanic/Latino	66,141	77,363	17.0%	33,000	36,000	9.1%	46.5%	18.4%
Black/African American	215,051	219,461	2.1%	7,500	8,000	6.7%	3.6%	4.1%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	44,187	80,638	82.5%	5,000	9,500	90.0%	11.8%	4.8%
Total***	1,534,806	1,570,043	2.3%	183,000	196,000	7.1%	12.5%	

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Diocese of Memphis
Overall Population and Catholic Population Estimates
for 2016 and 2021 by Race / Ethnicity

Racial/Ethnic Group	Census Estimated Population in 2016**	Census Estimated Population in 2021	% Change	Estimated Catholics in 2016	Estimated Catholics in 2021	% Change	% Catholic	% of Catholics
White, non-Hispanic	804,065	780,891	-2.9%	51,000	50,000	-2.0%	6.4%	45.9%
Hispanic/Latino	75,968	86,127	13.4%	39,000	42,000	7.7%	48.8%	38.5%
Black/African American	635,244	624,496	-1.7%	11,000	11,000	0.0%	1.8%	10.1%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	42,631	69,085	62.1%	4,000	6,500	62.5%	9.4%	6.0%
Total***	1,557,908	1,560,599	0.2%	105,000	109,000	3.8%	7.0%	

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Archdiocese of Mobile
Overall Population and Catholic Population Estimates
for 2016 and 2021 by Race / Ethnicity

Racial/Ethnic Group	Census Estimated Population in 2016**	Census Estimated Population in 2021	% Change	Estimated Catholics in 2016	Estimated Catholics in 2021	% Change	% Catholic	% of Catholics
White, non-Hispanic	1,077,995	1,084,340	0.6%	60,000	62,000	3.3%	5.7%	50.8%
Hispanic/Latino	56,316	69,437	23.3%	31,000	37,000	19.4%	53.3%	30.3%
Black/African American	617,831	620,910	0.5%	15,000	15,000	0.0%	2.4%	12.3%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	50,734	76,119	50.0%	5,000	7,500	50.0%	9.9%	6.1%
Total***	1,802,876	1,850,806	2.7%	111,000	122,000	9.9%	6.6%	

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Diocese of Nashville
Overall Population and Catholic Population Estimates
for 2016 and 2021 by Race / Ethnicity

Racial/Ethnic Group	Census Estimated Population in 2016**	Census Estimated Population in 2021	% Change	Estimated Catholics in 2016	Estimated Catholics in 2021	% Change	% Catholic	% of Catholics
White, non-Hispanic	2,005,297	2,109,142	5.2%	113,000	113,000	0.0%	5.4%	49.6%
Hispanic/Latino	177,421	217,689	22.7%	84,000	98,000	16.7%	45.0%	43.0%
Black/African American	372,788	411,803	10.5%	5,500	6,000	9.1%	1.5%	2.6%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	94,619	143,507	51.7%	7,500	11,000	46.7%	7.7%	4.8%
Total***	2,650,125	2,882,141	8.8%	210,000	228,000	8.6%	7.9%	

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**Archdiocese of New Orleans
Overall Population and Catholic Population Estimates
for 2016 and 2021 by Race / Ethnicity**

Racial/Ethnic Group	Census Estimated Population in 2016**	Census Estimated Population in 2021	% Change	Estimated Catholics in 2016	Estimated Catholics in 2021	% Change	% Catholic	% of Catholics
White, non-Hispanic	691,975	663,630	-4.1%	220,000	226,000	2.7%	34.1%	67.3%
Hispanic/Latino	113,128	120,069	6.1%	60,000	60,000	0.0%	50.0%	17.9%
Black/African American	466,821	466,958	0.0%	43,000	43,000	0.0%	9.2%	12.8%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	50,803	73,430	44.5%	4,500	6,500	44.4%	8.9%	1.9%
Total***	1,322,727	1,324,087	0.1%	327,000	336,000	2.8%	25.4%	

* The surveys on which the Catholic population are based were not large enough to generate reliable estimates of the Asian, Native American, Pacific Islander, and "Other" Catholic populations separately, so they are grouped together here.

** Overall population estimates are taken from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Surveys (ACS) for each corresponding year.

*** The Catholic Totals may not add up exactly due to rounding errors. Round numbers are used because these are statistical estimates, not actual population counts.

Diocese of Owensboro
Overall Population and Catholic Population Estimates
for 2016 and 2021 by Race / Ethnicity

Racial/Ethnic Group	Census Estimated Population in 2016**	Census Estimated Population in 2021	% Change	Estimated Catholics in 2016	Estimated Catholics in 2021	% Change	% Catholic	% of Catholics
White, non-Hispanic	837,870	835,707	-0.3%	83,000	86,000	3.6%	10.3%	78.9%
Hispanic/Latino	29,963	36,580	22.1%	14,000	16,000	14.3%	43.7%	14.7%
Black/African American	87,487	74,679	-14.6%	2,500	2,100	-16.0%	2.8%	1.9%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	18,985	42,362	123.1%	1,900	4,500	136.8%	10.6%	4.1%
Total***	974,305	989,328	1.5%	102,000	109,000	6.9%	11.0%	

* The surveys on which the Catholic population are based were not large enough to generate reliable estimates of the Asian, Native American, Pacific Islander, and "Other" Catholic populations separately, so they are grouped together here.

** Overall population estimates are taken from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Surveys (ACS) for each corresponding year.

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Diocese of Shreveport
Overall Population and Catholic Population Estimates
for 2016 and 2021 by Race / Ethnicity

Racial/Ethnic Group	Census Estimated Population in 2016**	Census Estimated Population in 2021	% Change	Estimated Catholics in 2016	Estimated Catholics in 2021	% Change	% Catholic	% of Catholics
White, non-Hispanic	451,299	420,174	-6.9%	154,000	145,000	-5.8%	34.5%	75.5%
Hispanic/Latino	24,811	25,761	3.8%	14,000	14,000	0.0%	54.3%	7.3%
Black/African American	321,356	305,619	-4.9%	32,000	30,000	-6.3%	9.8%	15.6%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	17,904	26,175	46.2%	1,600	2,400	50.0%	9.2%	1.3%
Total***	815,370	777,729	-4.6%	202,000	192,000	-5.0%	24.7%	

* The surveys on which the Catholic population are based were not large enough to generate reliable estimates of the Asian, Native American, Pacific Islander, and "Other" Catholic populations separately, so they are grouped together here.

** Overall population estimates are taken from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Surveys (ACS) for each corresponding year

*** The Catholic Totals may not add up exactly due to rounding errors. Round numbers are used because these are statistical estimates, not actual population counts.