



V ENCUENTRO

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

REPORT



REGION 9 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 9

Episcopal Region IX 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	11,300,216	11,033,841	-2.4%	1,976,000	1,994,000	0.9%	18.1%	72.2%
Hispanic/Latino	962,362	1,100,756	14.4%	539,000	585,000	8.5%	53.1%	21.2%
Black/African American	1,217,444	1,232,559	1.2%	70,000	71,000	1.4%	5.8%	2.6%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	562,076	892,384	58.8%	72,000	113,000	56.9%	12.7%	4.1%
Total***	14,042,098	14,259,540	1.5%	2,656,000	2,762,000	4.0%	19.4%	

* 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 Davenport
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	679,575	656,283	-3.4%	122,000	125,000	2.5%	19.0%	80.6%
Hispanic/Latino	45,986	49,662	8.0%	22,000	23,000	4.5%	46.3%	14.8%
Black/African American	37,876	41,946	10.7%	1,800	1,900	5.6%	4.5%	1.2%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	29,960	49,929	66.7%	3,500	6,000	71.4%	12.0%	3.9%
Total***	793,397	797,820	0.6%	149,000	155,000	4.0%	19.4%	

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Diocese of Des Moines
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	740,008	748,505	1.1%	129,000	128,000	-0.8%	17.1%	74.9%
Hispanic/Latino	54,168	67,168	24.0%	30,000	35,000	16.7%	52.1%	20.5%
Black/African American	43,378	54,501	25.6%	2,000	2,500	25.0%	4.6%	1.5%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	39,083	53,479	36.8%	4,500	6,000	33.3%	11.2%	3.5%
Total***	876,637	923,653	5.4%	165,000	171,000	3.6%	18.5%	

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Diocese of Dodge City
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	135,186	123,161	-8.9%	22,000	20,000	-9.1%	16.2%	30.8%
Hispanic/Latino	70,703	72,028	1.9%	44,000	43,000	-2.3%	59.7%	66.2%
Black/African American	5,304	6,376	20.2%	250	300	20.0%	4.7%	0.5%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	6,134	8,531	39.1%	950	1,300	36.8%	15.2%	2.0%
Total***	217,327	210,096	-3.3%	67,000	65,000	-3.0%	30.9%	

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Archdiocese of Dubuque
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	894,941	862,675	-3.6%	163,000	169,000	3.7%	19.6%	84.1%
Hispanic/Latino	38,328	46,508	21.3%	21,000	24,000	14.3%	51.6%	11.9%
Black/African American	41,839	47,718	14.1%	1,900	2,200	15.8%	4.6%	1.1%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	28,466	45,876	61.2%	3,900	6,500	66.7%	14.2%	3.2%
Total***	1,003,574	1,002,777	-0.1%	189,000	201,000	6.3%	20.0%	

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**Diocese of Grand Island
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	258,323	242,965	-5.9%	57,000	61,000	7.0%	25.1%	66.3%
Hispanic/Latino	40,084	44,390	10.7%	28,000	30,000	7.1%	67.6%	32.6%
Black/African American	4,671	5,102	9.2%	200	200	0.0%	3.9%	0.2%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	9,095	10,697	17.6%	1,300	1,600	23.1%	15.0%	1.7%
Total***	312,173	303,154	-2.9%	86,000	92,000	7.0%	30.3%	

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Diocese of Jefferson City
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	818,114	802,018	-2.0%	134,000	138,000	3.0%	17.2%	83.6%
Hispanic/Latino	29,261	34,602	18.3%	16,000	18,000	12.5%	52.0%	10.9%
Black/African American	57,228	56,109	-2.0%	3,100	3,000	-3.2%	5.3%	1.8%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	30,920	49,910	61.4%	3,500	5,500	57.1%	11.0%	3.3%
Total***	935,523	942,639	0.8%	157,000	165,000	5.1%	17.5%	

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**Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas
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	1,042,065	1,022,047	-1.9%	162,000	155,000	-4.3%	15.2%	59.4%
Hispanic/Latino	135,404	151,786	12.1%	80,000	85,000	6.3%	56.0%	32.6%
Black/African American	111,824	116,752	4.4%	6,500	6,500	0.0%	5.6%	2.5%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	77,853	108,158	38.9%	10,000	14,000	40.0%	12.9%	5.4%
Total***	1,367,146	1,398,743	2.3%	259,000	261,000	0.8%	18.7%	

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Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph
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	1,173,432	1,175,291	0.2%	195,000	195,000	0.0%	16.6%	70.1%
Hispanic/Latino	103,417	119,661	15.7%	54,000	60,000	11.1%	50.1%	21.6%
Black/African American	220,210	229,636	4.3%	13,000	14,000	7.7%	6.1%	5.0%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	53,846	78,754	46.3%	6,500	9,500	46.2%	12.1%	3.4%
Total***	1,550,905	1,603,342	3.4%	269,000	278,000	3.3%	17.3%	

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Diocese of Lincoln
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	525,654	521,084	-0.9%	114,000	114,000	0.0%	21.9%	80.9%
Hispanic/Latino	48,447	50,981	5.2%	21,000	21,000	0.0%	41.2%	14.9%
Black/African American	20,777	23,291	12.1%	800	900	12.5%	3.9%	0.6%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	23,395	34,793	48.7%	3,100	4,500	45.2%	12.9%	3.2%
Total***	618,273	630,149	1.9%	139,000	141,000	1.4%	22.4%	

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Archdiocese of Omaha
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	737,052	737,410	0.0%	160,000	152,000	-5.0%	20.6%	61.5%
Hispanic/Latino	113,445	138,392	22.0%	69,000	80,000	15.9%	57.8%	32.4%
Black/African American	82,451	88,482	7.3%	4,500	5,000	11.1%	5.7%	2.0%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	43,722	66,105	51.2%	6,500	9,500	46.2%	14.4%	3.8%
Total***	976,670	1,030,389	5.5%	241,000	247,000	2.5%	24.0%	

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Diocese of Salina
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	278,226	266,623	-4.2%	45,000	45,000	0.0%	16.9%	72.6%
Hispanic/Latino	25,452	28,041	10.2%	13,000	14,000	7.7%	49.9%	22.6%
Black/African American	18,612	14,412	-22.6%	950	700	-26.3%	4.9%	1.1%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	11,388	18,198	59.8%	1,700	2,700	58.8%	14.8%	4.4%
Total***	333,678	327,274	-1.9%	60,000	62,000	3.3%	18.9%	

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Diocese of Sioux City
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	395,851	384,703	-2.8%	74,000	78,000	5.4%	20.3%	75.0%
Hispanic/Latino	40,584	48,203	18.8%	20,500	23,000	12.2%	47.7%	22.1%
Black/African American	10,689	13,851	29.6%	400	500	25.0%	3.6%	0.5%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	13,961	22,072	58.1%	1,800	2,800	55.6%	12.7%	2.7%
Total***	461,085	468,829	1.7%	96,000	104,000	8.3%	22.2%	

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**Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau
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	1,221,867	1,182,163	-3.2%	203,000	211,000	3.9%	17.8%	83.7%
Hispanic/Latino	48,907	57,274	17.1%	26,000	29,000	11.5%	50.6%	11.5%
Black/African American	54,038	40,263	-25.5%	2,800	2,100	-25.0%	5.2%	0.8%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	48,817	98,251	101.3%	5,000	9,500	90.0%	9.7%	3.8%
Total***	1,373,629	1,377,951	0.3%	237,000	252,000	6.3%	18.3%	

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Archdiocese of St. Louis
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	1,638,029	1,570,387	-4.1%	274,000	279,000	1.8%	17.8%	76.4%
Hispanic/Latino	62,249	70,442	13.2%	33,000	36,000	9.1%	51.1%	9.9%
Black/African American	437,310	426,382	-2.5%	28,000	27,000	-3.6%	6.3%	7.4%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	95,355	177,044	85.7%	12,500	23,000	84.0%	13.0%	6.3%
Total***	2,232,943	2,244,255	0.5%	348,000	365,000	4.9%	16.3%	

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Diocese of Wichita
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	761,893	738,526	-3.1%	123,000	124,000	0.8%	16.8%	61.1%
Hispanic/Latino	105,927	121,618	14.8%	60,000	65,000	8.3%	53.4%	32.0%
Black/African American	71,237	67,738	-4.9%	3,800	3,500	-7.9%	5.2%	1.7%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	50,081	70,587	40.9%	7,500	11,000	46.7%	15.6%	5.4%
Total***	989,138	998,469	0.9%	194,000	203,000	4.6%	20.3%	

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