



V ENCUENTRO

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

REPORT

U.S. CATHOLIC POPULATION BY RACE / ETHNICITY

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL, 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.prii.org/spotlight/prii-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!

NATIONAL

Overall Population and Catholic Population Estimates for the United States in 2016 and 2021 by Race / Ethnicity

Racial/Ethnic Groups in the United States	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	197,486,695	192,729,997	-2.4%	39,103,000	39,481,000	1.0%	20.5%	51.3%
Hispanic/Latino	57,389,751	62,530,533	9.0%	30,058,000	30,976,000	3.1%	49.5%	40.2%
Black/African American	43,160,385	44,451,046	3.0%	2,240,000	2,296,000	2.5%	5.2%	3.0%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	25,090,684	32,182,169	28.3%	3,433,000	4,283,000	24.8%	13.3%	5.6%
Total***	323,127,515	331,893,745	2.7%	74,834,000	77,036,000	2.9%	23.2%	

* 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.

REGIONAL
U.S. Catholic Population Estimates in 2021
by Race / Ethnicity and Episcopal Region

Episcopal Region	Estimated White, non-Hispanic Catholics	Estimated Hispanic/Latino Catholics	Estimated Black/African Am. Catholics	Estimated Asian/Native Am./Other Cath.*	Estimated Total Catholics**
Region I	4,056,000	849,000	81,000	180,000	5,166,000
Region II	3,921,000	2,019,000	392,000	366,000	6,698,000
Region III	5,175,000	1,402,000	139,000	197,000	6,912,000
Region IV	1,678,000	784,000	176,000	168,000	2,806,000
Region V	1,923,000	581,000	235,000	100,000	2,839,000
Region VI	3,600,000	475,000	102,000	137,000	4,314,000
Region VII	4,473,000	1,672,000	145,000	221,000	6,511,000
Region VIII	1,396,000	203,000	19,000	104,000	1,722,000
Region IX	1,994,000	585,000	71,000	113,000	2,762,000
Region X	1,771,000	6,315,000	235,000	291,000	8,611,000
Region XI	2,897,000	8,894,000	154,000	1,556,000	13,501,000
Region XII	1,273,000	859,000	26,000	285,000	2,443,000
Region XIII	1,357,000	2,628,000	27,000	272,000	4,285,000
Region XIV	3,969,000	3,709,000	494,000	294,000	8,466,000
Total**	39,481,000	30,976,000	2,296,000	4,283,000	77,036,000

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DIOCESAN
U.S. Catholic Population Estimates in 2021
by Race / Ethnicity and (Arch) Diocese

Listed by region and then diocese in alphabetical order

(Arch) Diocese	Episcopal Region	Estimated White, non-Hisp. Catholics	Estimated Hispanic/Latino Catholics	Estimated Black/African Am. Catholics	Estimated Asian/Native Am./Other Cath.*	Estimated Total Catholics**
Boston	1	1,051,000	262,000	29,000	87,000	1,430,000
Bridgeport	1	240,000	91,000	9,000	11,000	352,000
Burlington	1	147,000	6,000	600	3,500	157,000
Fall River	1	295,000	31,000	2,500	5,500	334,000
Hartford	1	526,000	166,000	21,000	20,000	732,000
Manchester	1	379,000	27,000	1,500	9,500	417,000
Norwich	1	244,000	30,000	2,600	7,500	284,000
Portland, ME	1	297,000	13,000	1,500	8,500	320,000
Providence	1	372,000	97,000	5,500	9,000	484,000
Springfield, MA	1	250,000	71,000	4,500	6,500	332,000
Worcester	1	256,000	55,000	3,500	12,000	326,000
Albany	2	415,000	35,000	11,000	11,000	472,000
Brooklyn	2	495,000	634,000	161,000	177,000	1,467,000
Buffalo	2	467,000	39,000	20,000	12,000	538,000
New York	2	867,000	949,000	135,000	97,000	2,047,000
Ogdensburg	2	157,000	8,000	2,200	3,000	170,000
Rochester	2	445,000	47,000	17,000	12,000	522,000

(Arch) Diocese	Episcopal Region	Estimated White, non-Hisp. Catholics	Estimated Hispanic/Latino Catholics	Estimated Black/African Am. Catholics	Estimated Asian/Native Am./Other Cath.*	Estimated Total Catholics**
Syracuse	2	363,000	29,000	10,000	11,000	414,000
Allentown	3	285,000	107,000	3,000	7,500	402,000
Altoona-Johnstown	3	178,000	5,000	600	3,500	187,000
Camden	3	411,000	118,000	14,000	8,000	551,000
Erie	3	230,000	9,000	1,500	3,000	244,000
Greensburg	3	186,000	3,000	900	1,800	191,000
Harrisburg	3	560,000	79,000	6,000	14,000	658,000
Metuchen	3	344,000	131,000	7,500	26,000	509,000
Newark	3	508,000	441,000	36,000	35,000	1,019,000
Paterson	3	318,000	155,000	5,000	10,000	488,000
Philadelphia	3	684,000	169,000	41,000	56,000	951,000
Pittsburgh	3	475,000	16,000	8,500	13,000	513,000
Scranton	3	285,000	44,000	2,300	6,000	337,000
Trenton	3	710,000	125,000	13,000	14,000	862,000
Arlington	4	223,000	231,000	12,000	57,000	524,000
Baltimore	4	415,000	115,000	46,000	27,000	604,000
Richmond	4	430,000	135,000	39,000	32,000	636,000
Washington, DC	4	240,000	222,000	61,000	37,000	561,000
Wheeling	4	121,000	14,000	2,800	5,000	142,000
Wilmington	4	249,000	66,000	15,000	9,500	339,000
Alexandria	5	81,000	6,500	12,000	1,400	101,000

(Arch) Diocese	Episcopal Region	Estimated White, non-Hisp. Catholics	Estimated Hispanic/Latino Catholics	Estimated Black/African Am. Catholics	Estimated Asian/Native Am./Other Cath.*	Estimated Total Catholics**
Baton Rouge	5	173,000	25,000	36,000	3,500	237,000
Biloxi	5	43,000	17,000	4,500	4,500	69,000
Birmingham	5	126,000	89,000	18,000	11,000	245,000
Covington	5	55,000	8,500	450	2,800	67,000
Houma-Thibodaux	5	52,000	5,000	3,500	1,500	62,000
Jackson	5	87,000	30,000	18,000	8,000	142,000
Knoxville	5	140,000	53,000	2,300	9,500	205,000
Lafayette, LA	5	136,000	15,000	17,000	2,500	171,000
Lake Charles	5	68,000	5,500	6,500	900	81,000
Lexington	5	135,000	23,000	2,600	6,500	168,000
Louisville	5	142,000	36,000	8,000	9,500	196,000
Memphis	5	50,000	42,000	11,000	6,500	109,000
Mobile	5	62,000	37,000	15,000	7,500	122,000
Nashville	5	113,000	98,000	6,000	11,000	228,000
New Orleans	5	226,000	60,000	43,000	6,500	336,000
Owensboro	5	86,000	16,000	2,100	4,500	109,000
Shreveport	5	145,000	14,000	30,000	2,400	192,000
Cincinnati	6	510,000	46,000	7,500	17,000	580,000
Cleveland	6	455,000	66,000	9,000	17,000	547,000
Columbus	6	406,000	49,000	6,000	18,000	479,000
Detroit	6	620,000	100,000	53,000	37,000	810,000

(Arch) Diocese	Episcopal Region	Estimated White, non-Hisp. Catholics	Estimated Hispanic/Latino Catholics	Estimated Black/African Am. Catholics	Estimated Asian/Native Am./Other Cath.*	Estimated Total Catholics**
Gaylord	6	111,000	5,500	200	2,400	119,000
Grand Rapids	6	224,000	59,000	5,000	8,500	296,000
Kalamazoo	6	170,000	28,000	4,000	4,500	206,000
Lansing	6	297,000	43,000	10,000	14,000	364,000
Marquette	6	63,000	1,800	300	3,500	69,000
Saginaw	6	138,000	18,000	2,500	3,000	161,000
Steubenville	6	105,000	1,900	250	1,500	109,000
Toledo	6	266,000	41,000	2,100	7,000	316,000
Youngstown	6	236,000	17,000	1,800	4,000	259,000
Belleville	7	210,000	13,000	6,500	4,000	233,000
Chicago	7	705,000	803,000	82,000	82,000	1,673,000
Evansville	7	79,000	7,000	400	1,800	88,000
Fort Wayne	7	174,000	60,000	1,600	6,500	242,000
Gary	7	91,000	66,000	2,600	4,000	164,000
Green Bay	7	275,000	28,000	800	10,000	313,000
Indianapolis	7	333,000	85,000	6,000	14,000	438,000
Joliet	7	382,000	162,000	9,500	29,000	584,000
La Crosse	7	244,000	14,000	500	6,500	265,000
Lafayette, IN	7	180,000	38,000	900	10,000	228,000
Madison	7	231,000	37,000	2,100	8,000	278,000
Milwaukee	7	460,000	137,000	15,000	17,000	629,000

(Arch) Diocese	Episcopal Region	Estimated White, non-Hisp. Catholics	Estimated Hispanic/Latino Catholics	Estimated Black/African Am. Catholics	Estimated Asian/Native Am./Other Cath.*	Estimated Total Catholics**
Peoria	7	353,000	46,000	7,000	10,000	416,000
Rockford	7	319,000	156,000	5,500	11,000	492,000
Springfield, IL	7	307,000	14,000	4,500	4,000	330,000
Superior	7	130,000	5,500	100	4,000	139,000
Bismarck	8	62,000	7,500	150	4,000	74,000
Crookston	8	59,000	5,500	100	5,000	69,000
Duluth	8	111,000	3,500	300	5,000	119,000
Fargo	8	83,000	6,000	450	6,000	96,000
New Ulm	8	69,000	10,000	200	1,500	81,000
Rapid City	8	42,000	5,000	75	9,500	57,000
Sioux Falls	8	113,000	12,000	600	10,000	135,000
Saint Cloud	8	138,000	10,000	600	4,000	152,000
Saint Paul & Minneapolis	8	588,000	121,000	16,000	54,000	779,000
Winona-Rochester	8	132,000	22,000	900	5,000	160,000
Davenport	9	125,000	23,000	1,900	6,000	155,000
Des Moines	9	128,000	35,000	2,500	6,000	171,000
Dodge City	9	20,000	43,000	300	1,300	65,000
Dubuque	9	169,000	24,000	2,200	6,500	201,000
Grand Island	9	61,000	30,000	200	1,600	92,000
Jefferson City	9	138,000	18,000	3,000	5,500	165,000
Kansas City, KS	9	155,000	85,000	6,500	14,000	261,000

(Arch) Diocese	Episcopal Region	Estimated White, non-Hisp. Catholics	Estimated Hispanic/Latino Catholics	Estimated Black/African Am. Catholics	Estimated Asian/Native Am./Other Cath.*	Estimated Total Catholics**
Kansas City-St. Joseph	9	195,000	60,000	14,000	9,500	278,000
Lincoln	9	114,000	21,000	900	4,500	141,000
Omaha	9	152,000	80,000	5,000	9,500	247,000
Salina	9	45,000	14,000	700	2,700	62,000
Sioux City	9	78,000	23,000	500	2,800	104,000
Springfield-Cape Girardeau	9	211,000	29,000	2,100	9,500	252,000
St. Louis	9	279,000	36,000	27,000	23,000	365,000
Wichita	9	124,000	65,000	3,500	11,000	203,000
Amarillo	10	31,000	83,000	1,300	2,100	117,000
Austin	10	207,000	515,000	19,000	27,000	768,000
Beaumont	10	41,000	47,000	6,000	3,500	98,000
Brownsville	10	12,000	682,000	700	2,500	697,000
Corpus Christi	10	23,000	198,000	1,100	2,400	224,000
Dallas	10	212,000	722,000	41,000	45,000	1,021,000
El Paso	10	14,000	421,000	5,000	2,500	443,000
Fort Worth	10	252,000	491,000	25,000	31,000	799,000
Galveston	10	290,000	1,371,000	66,000	74,000	1,802,000
Laredo	10	1,600	193,000	75	1,200	196,000
Little Rock	10	151,000	113,000	26,000	18,000	308,000
Lubbock	10	32,000	113,000	1,800	1,800	149,000
Oklahoma City	10	105,000	135,000	11,000	24,000	275,000

(Arch) Diocese	Episcopal Region	Estimated White, non-Hisp. Catholics	Estimated Hispanic/Latino Catholics	Estimated Black/African Am. Catholics	Estimated Asian/ Native Am. /Other Cath.*	Estimated Total Catholics**
San Angelo	10	49,000	169,000	2,100	2,500	222,000
San Antonio	10	106,000	801,000	9,000	13,000	930,000
Tulsa	10	88,000	67,000	6,500	33,000	194,000
Tyler	10	133,000	125,000	12,000	6,500	276,000
Victoria	10	22,000	68,000	1,400	1,400	92,000
Fresno	11	161,000	915,000	8,500	55,000	1,140,000
Honolulu	11	85,000	62,000	1,400	135,000	283,000
Las Vegas	11	168,000	383,000	10,000	61,000	622,000
Los Angeles	11	545,000	2,969,000	52,000	362,000	3,928,000
Monterey	11	90,000	243,000	1,200	16,000	351,000
Oakland	11	182,000	356,000	17,000	152,000	707,000
Orange	11	236,000	583,000	3,500	147,000	970,000
Reno	11	95,000	98,000	700	14,000	208,000
Sacramento	11	374,000	448,000	15,000	112,000	950,000
San Bernardino	11	242,000	1,260,000	21,000	84,000	1,607,000
San Diego	11	248,000	673,000	10,000	96,000	1,027,000
San Francisco	11	151,000	191,000	4,500	116,000	463,000
San Jose	11	99,000	263,000	2,900	149,000	514,000
Santa Rosa	11	124,000	131,000	1,100	14,000	270,000
Stockton	11	97,000	320,000	4,500	42,000	463,000
Anchorage-Juneau	12	38,000	18,000	1,400	21,000	79,000

(Arch) Diocese	Episcopal Region	Estimated White, non-Hisp. Catholics	Estimated Hispanic/Latino Catholics	Estimated Black/African Am. Catholics	Estimated Asian/Native Am./Other Cath.*	Estimated Total Catholics**
Baker	12	50,000	39,000	200	5,000	94,000
Boise	12	135,000	110,000	600	16,000	261,000
Fairbanks	12	13,000	4,000	350	8,500	26,000
Great Falls	12	55,000	11,000	75	9,000	75,000
Helena	12	89,000	13,000	150	8,000	110,000
Portland, OR	12	269,000	206,000	5,000	51,000	531,000
Seattle	12	480,000	278,000	17,000	150,000	925,000
Spokane	12	88,000	58,000	900	10,000	158,000
Yakima	12	55,000	123,000	450	6,500	185,000
Cheyenne	13	52,000	30,000	200	5,000	88,000
Colorado Springs	13	104,000	85,000	2,100	14,000	205,000
Denver	13	283,000	454,000	7,000	47,000	790,000
Gallup	13	22,000	38,000	150	45,000	105,000
Las Cruces	13	33,000	188,000	600	6,500	228,000
Phoenix	13	456,000	745,000	10,000	62,000	1,273,000
Pueblo	13	70,000	96,000	400	6,000	172,000
Salt Lake City	13	75,000	202,000	1,600	34,000	313,000
Santa Fe	13	81,000	385,000	1,600	29,000	496,000
Tucson	13	182,000	405,000	3,000	24,000	614,000
Atlanta	14	363,000	381,000	63,000	64,000	870,000
Charleston	14	380,000	158,000	8,000	21,000	567,000

(Arch) Diocese	Episcopal Region	Estimated White, non-Hisp. Catholics	Estimated Hispanic/Latino Catholics	Estimated Black/African Am. Catholics	Estimated Asian/Native Am./Other Cath.*	Estimated Total Catholics**
Charlotte	14	310,000	224,000	30,000	32,000	596,000
Miami	14	248,000	1,184,000	94,000	21,000	1,548,000
Orlando	14	616,000	552,000	66,000	33,000	1,266,000
Palm Beach	14	289,000	220,000	34,000	12,000	554,000
Pensacola	14	214,000	48,000	28,000	8,500	299,000
Raleigh	14	232,000	221,000	42,000	45,000	539,000
Savannah	14	150,000	84,000	32,000	12,000	278,000
St. Augustine	14	314,000	103,000	43,000	17,000	478,000
St. Petersburg	14	479,000	309,000	37,000	20,000	845,000
Venice	14	374,000	226,000	16,000	9,000	625,000
Total**		39,481,000	30,976,000	2,296,000	4,283,000	77,036,000

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