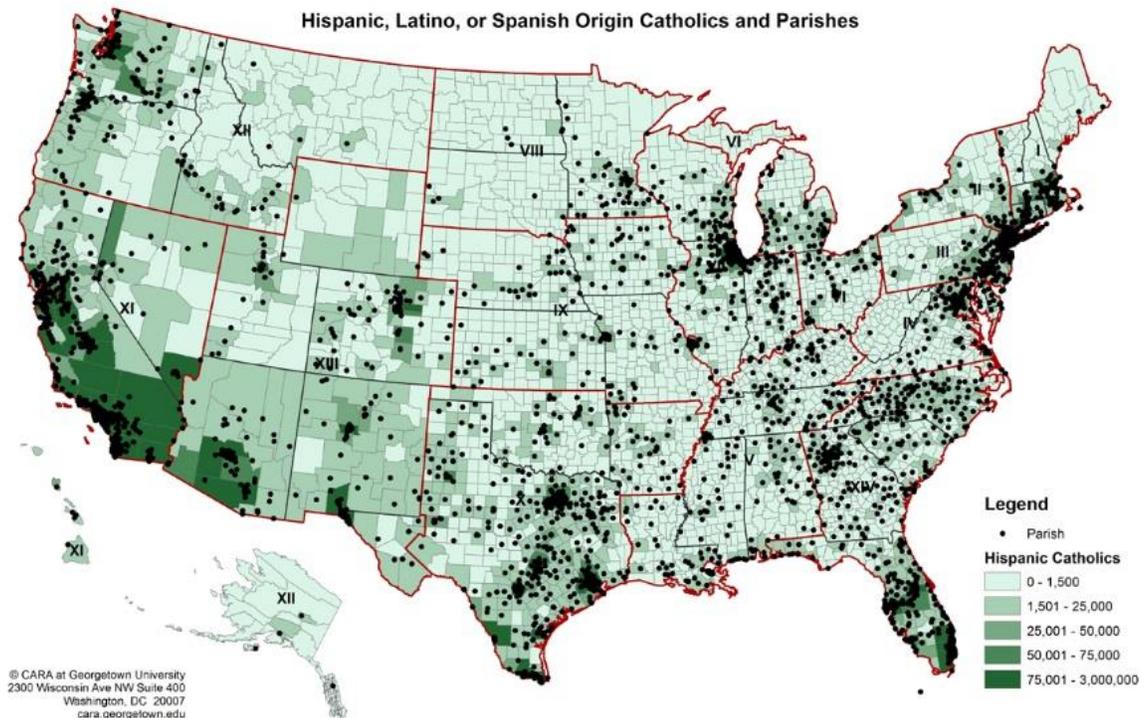




# FACT SHEET: HISPANIC CATHOLICS IN THE U.S.



## 1. IN THE POPULATION

- ☒ There are approximately 30.4 million people in the United States who self-identify their religion as Catholic and their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino/a. Some 16.4 million are native-born (54%) and 14.0 million are foreign-born (46%).
- ☒ Fifty-seven percent of adult Hispanics self-identify as Catholic. This percentage has fallen from about seven in ten self-identifying as such in 2006 (70%). In CARA surveys, 38% percent of adult Catholics self-identify their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino/a. This has increased from about a third in 2000 (34%).
- ☒ The “retention rate” for Hispanic or Latino/a youth is 71%. Thus, seven in ten of those raised in the faith remain Catholic as adults. By comparison only 61% of non-Hispanics raised Catholic remain in the faith as adults. While comparatively a very high retention, this has declined from 82% in 2006. Seventy-eight percent of Hispanic or Latino/a adults say they were raised Catholic.

## 2. IN PARISHES AND AMONG PARISH LEADERS

- ☒ About 3% of U.S. Catholic priests self-identify as Hispanic or Latino. The average age of priests is 63 and their demography reflects the racial and ethnic diversity of their generation(s). Younger priests are more likely to self-identify as Hispanic or Latino. Fifteen percent of priests born since 1960 self-identify as such. Sixteen percent of permanent deacons self-identify as Hispanic or Latino.

- ☒ The average age of religious sisters and brothers is slightly higher than priests and similarly few, 3%, self-identify as Hispanic or Latino. However, 18% of women and 11% of men professing perpetual vows in 2013 self-identified as Hispanic or Latino/a.
- ☒ About one in ten Lay Ecclesial Ministers (LEMs), professional lay ministers working in parishes (e.g., music director, director of religious education), self-identifies as Hispanic or Latino/a (9%). However, 43% of students currently enrolled in U.S. lay ministry formation programs self-identify as Hispanic or Latino/a.
- ☒ A total of 4,544 parishes in the United States (26%) specifically serve Hispanic or Latino/a Catholic communities. These parishes are more numerous in the South and West as well as in urban areas of the Midwest and Northeast.
- ☒ One in four Catholic parishes (24%) celebrates Mass at least once a month in Spanish. About 6% of all Masses in the U.S. (weekday and weekend) are celebrated in Spanish.

### 3. IN AND OUT OF THE PEWS

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- ☒ Forty percent of all growth in registered parishioners in Catholic parishes between 2005 and 2010 was from Hispanic or Latino/a Catholics. Many others are active in parish life but are unregistered. Only 45% of Hispanic or Latino/a Catholics are registered with a parish compared to 62% of non-Hispanic Catholics.
- ☒ Hispanic or Latino/a Catholics are more likely than non-Hispanic Catholics to attend Mass at least once a month (55% compared to 46%) but are less likely to attend Mass every week (21% compared to 26%).
- ☒ Hispanic or Latino/a Catholics are more likely than non-Hispanic Catholics to say the following aspects of Mass are “very important” to them: prayer and reflection (79% compared to 70%), worshiping with other people (41% compared to 31%), and feeling the presence of God (84% compared to 73%). A third say that the style of music is “somewhat” or “very” important to their choice of parish where they attend Mass (34%).
- ☒ Nearly half of Hispanic or Latino/a Mass-attending Catholics drive by their territorial parish to attend Mass at a parish of their choosing (47%). Only three in ten non-Hispanic white Mass attenders say they do this (29%).
- ☒ Eighty-five percent of Hispanic or Latino/a Catholics say their faith is an important part of their daily life and 83% agree that they are proud to be Catholic.
- ☒ Hispanic or Latino/a Catholics are more likely than other Catholics to have faith-related items at home or on their person. Two-thirds have a statue or picture of Mary at home (67% compared to 56% of non-Hispanic Catholics). Four in ten wear a crucifix or cross (40% compared to 29% of non-Hispanic Catholics), and a quarter carry prayer cards or coins (25% compared to 18% of non-Hispanic Catholics).
- ☒ Forty-seven percent of Hispanic or Latino/a Catholic households give regularly to their parish offertory collection (compared to 44% of non-Hispanic Catholics). Most (70%) give \$250 or less per year.

Sources: General Social Survey (GSS, 2000-2012), CARA Catholic Polls (CCP, 2000-2013), *Cultural Diversity in the Catholic Church in the United States* (CARA, 2013), *U.S. Catholic Online Giving* (CARA, 2013), *Views from the Pews* (2013), *The Profession Class of 2013* (CARA, 2013), Catholic Ministry Formation Enrollment (CARA, 2013), *Perspectives from Parish Leaders* (CARA, 2012), *Catholic Media Use in the United States* (CARA, 2011), *The Changing Face of U.S. Catholic Parishes* (CARA, 2011), and *Sacraments Today* (CARA, 2008).