

Catholic Trends: Winter-2026

New Study on Catholic Life in the U.S.

A Pew Research Center report that takes what is described as “[a] closer look at Catholic life in the United States,” begins with the observation that “Catholicism’s roots in the United States run deep. Nearly half of U.S. adults (47%) claim some kind of connection to the Catholic faith.” The survey found that:

- 20% of U.S. adults are Catholic.
- 9% are “cultural Catholics”: they don’t identify with Catholicism religiously, but they say “yes” when asked, “aside from religion” they consider themselves Catholic in any way (e.g., ethically, culturally, or family background).
- 9% are former Catholics. They were raised Catholic but neither identify religiously or culturally.
- 9% are connected to Catholicism in other ways: while not Catholic in any way, they have a Catholic parent, spouse, or partner, or they say “yes” when asked whether they ever attend Catholic Mass.

Essentials for Catholic Identity.

The survey asked American Catholics what “being Catholic” meant to them. The following are the most frequently mentioned items: having a personal relationship with Jesus (69%); devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary (50%); working to help the poor and the needy (47%); receiving the Eucharist (47%); getting married within the Church (40%); being in communion with the Pope (33%); being part of an unbroken tradition going all the way back to the apostles (32%); opposing abortion (32%); taking care of the environment (31%); caring for immigrants (30%); celebrating feast days that are part of their cultural heritage (26%); opposing the death penalty (22%), and going on pilgrimages (9%).

Praying the Rosary is Good for You!

Well, yeah, duh! But a study in the *Journal of Religion and Health* confirms that the ancient Catholic practice of praying the rosary offers a moderate correlation with reducing depression, increasing empathy, and lowering religious struggles. The research also suggests that praying the rosary “can contribute to social integration and is often associated with community and communion.”

Researchers also found that 62% of participants held graduate or master’s degrees, challenging the assumption that traditional Catholic devotions appeal mainly to the less educated.

More Info on the FBI Catholic Spy Scam: the Scope was Wide.

While the Democratic Party would just like the issue to go away, last summer, the Interim Staff Report on President Biden's FBI spy ring was released by the House Judiciary Committee Chairman, Jim Jordan. Some of the information is distressing, especially coming from a President who professes himself to be a Catholic.

The FBI began its Catholic spy ring by focusing on "radical-traditionalist Catholics," but it didn't end there. Amazingly, "investigators found that many FBI employees could not even define the meaning of 'radical-traditionalist Catholic' when preparing, editing, or reviewing" the Richmond Field Office memo that okayed the probe.

FBI operatives went beyond these "rad-trads" by categorizing "certain Catholic Americans as potential domestic terrorists." They came to this weird conclusion based on articles their employees read: "How Extremist Gun Culture Is Trying to Co-opt the Rosary." So, if you participate in a Vigil for Life at an abortion clinic and you say the rosary, that would be evidence of the nefarious Catholic agenda.

As the FBI investigated Catholics for wrong-doing, they looked at Catholics who evinced "hostility towards abortion-rights activists." In other words, if Catholic activists exercised fidelity to Church teaching on abortion – they are labeled as pro-life Catholics – they were considered a domestic threat by the FBI under the Biden Administration. Similarly, those who espoused "Conservative family values/roles" were labeled "radical."

It's not just the profile of Catholics whom the FBI was examining that was a problem – it was scope of the investigation. It started in Richmond, Virginia, then spread to Louisville, Milwaukee, and Portland. Its reach even extended overseas – the FBI's London Office was involved.

Under Biden, a professed Catholic, the FBI engaged in one of the most despicable violations of civil liberties of targeting innocent Americans on account of their religious beliefs.

American Catholic Views on Controversial Issues at the Start of the New Papacy.

A report by the Public Religion Research Institute ("PRRI"), issued shortly after the election of Pope Leo XIV, observes that "[h]is predecessor's papacy marked an ideological shift for the Roman Catholic Church, challenging conservative views over such issues as same-sex marriage, abortion, and

immigration.” The PRRI polled the 55% of American Catholics who are white, 37% who are Hispanic, and 8% who are Asian, Black, or multiracial. Some of their finds are the following:

- Catholic support for same-sex marriage has increased steadily since 2014, when 60% were in favor, to 70% in 2025. In addition, 76% support nondiscrimination laws that protect LGBTQ people, including 73% of white Catholics, 74% of other Catholics of color, and 80% of Hispanic Catholics.

- 57% of Catholics say abortion should be legal in all or most cases, including 56% of white Catholics, 61% of Hispanic Catholics, and 63% of other Catholics of color.

According to the PRRI *American Values Survey*, 55% of Catholics say that immigrants living in the U.S. illegally should be given a way to become citizens, provided they meet certain requirements.

Stats for the Church in the United States.

	1965	2024
Diocesan priests	35,925	23,510
Religious	27,707	10,064
TOTAL PRIESTS	58,632	33,574
Priestly Ordinations	994	432
Grad. level seminarians	8,325	2,256
Permanent deacons	0	18,341
Religious brothers	12,271	3,598
Religious sisters	179,954	34,776
TOTAL PARISHES	17,637	16,267
W/O a resident priest	549	3,471
Entrusted to someone	0	0
Other than a priest	0	264
Catholic population	45.6m	67.3m
% of U.S. population	24%	20%

(Above information gleaned from the *CARA Report* (Fall 2025) and the *Catalyst* (October 2025)).