

OLD CATHOLIC CHURCHES IN AMERICA

GENERAL STATEMENT

The church bodies grouped under this head, in this consolidated report, represent, in the main, scattered families or small communities which, for one reason or another, have rejected the church authority of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy; while retaining the chief doctrines and customs of the Roman Catholic Church, they are now ministered to by clergy who derive their Orders (since they insist upon Apostolic Succession as the basis of a valid Christian ministry) directly or indirectly from sources whose origins are acknowledgedly Apostolic, though not legal or authorized in the Roman Catholic Church. In this, and in the principal points of doctrine and usage, these people agree with the Old Catholics of Holland, Switzerland, and other parts of Europe. All of them have been connected at one time or another, directly or indirectly, through their leaders, with the authentic Old Catholics of Switzerland or Holland. At the present time, however, none of these American bodies or leaders are connected with or recognized by the Old Catholic Churches of any part of continental Europe, nor are their Orders or Apostolic Successions derived directly, if at all, from European Old Catholic Churches. With this explanation and caution against misinterpretation, the general use of the term "Old Catholic Churches" is justifiable for "The American Catholic Church" and its numerous derivatives, for "The Old Catholic Church in America," and for "The North American Old Roman Catholic Church" and the numerous separated personal leaders derived from its establishment.

The first of these, the American Catholic Church, while identical in doctrine with the Old Catholic Churches of Europe and originally founded upon the work of Old Catholic missionary priests from Europe, derives its Apostolic Succession, upon which it bases the validity of its ministry, from the Syro-Jacobite Church of Malabar. The latter church is under the patriarchal authority of the so-called Monophysite Patriarch of Antioch, one of the Lesser Eastern Churches which broke away from the Eastern Orthodox Catholic Church centuries ago. The other two, the Old Catholic Church in America and the North American Old Roman Catholic Church, are the result of the visit to America of Prince Bishop de Landas Berghes, of Scotland, and the quarrel between the two men, Carmel Henry Carfora and William Henry Francis Brothers, whom he consecrated bishops for the Old Catholics in America. Bishop de Landas Berghes himself had been consecrated Bishop of Scotland by Arnold Harris Mathew, who was consecrated archbishop for Old Catholics in England by the Old Catholics of Holland. The Old Catholic Churches of Holland and continental Europe later repudiated all responsibility for or connection with the bishops in England and America who derived their consecrations from the consecration of Archbishop Mathew. Likewise, the Syro-Jacobite Church and its Patriarchate of Antioch have no relation or connection with those clergy in America who depend upon consecrations performed by Archbishop Vilatte, the original founder of the American Catholic Church, although he was consecrated by Syro-Jacobite bishops at the order of their Patriarch of Antioch.

The Old Catholics of Holland and Switzerland came into prominence shortly after the Roman Catholic Vatican Council of 1870 which declared papal infalli-

bility a doctrine of the Roman Catholic faith. The Swiss and Dutch communities, led by theologians who refused to subscribe to the decree of papal infallibility, organized the Old Catholic Church. From the same division of opinion numerous scattered families in America, especially in Belgian communities in Wisconsin, fell away from the Roman Catholic Hierarchy and clergy. Left leaderless, the tendency of these people was to reject all church doctrine and life and drift to atheism. Through the influence of Father Hyacinthe Loyson, a Parisian priest closely associated with the Old Catholic movement of Europe, an attempt was made to organize these drifting people into Old Catholic congregations, with Father Joseph René Vilatte, a French priest ordained by the Swiss Old Catholics, as their missionary priest.

As the work of Father Vilatte developed and widened, he sought for a bishop under whom he could place his missions and from whom he could get assistant missionary priests. Such relations with the Protestant Episcopal Church and its bishops were suggested, but were emphatically forbidden by the Old Catholic bishops of Europe, who were careful to preserve their people under bishops who had valid sacramental Orders and Apostolic Succession. The Russian Bishop Vladimir, also, of the Orthodox Catholic Church, found himself unable to accept these communities and permit the continued use of the Roman Catholic rites and customs. Finally, Father Vilatte was consecrated a bishop by the bishops of the Syro-Jacobite Church of Malabar by order of the Syro-Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch, Archbishop Francis Xavier Alvarez, assisted by two other bishops, performing the consecration. On returning to this country Archbishop Vilatte organized the Old Catholic Church, with himself as its archbishop and primate. Later he consecrated several bishops without authority for such additional consecrations from the Patriarch of the Syro-Jacobite succession, who therefore does not recognize such consecrations or their derivative consecrations and ordinations.

On the return of Archbishop Vilatte to the Roman Catholic Church, one of his bishops, Right Rev. Frederic E. J. Lloyd, assumed the primacy and title of archbishop in the churches which had been reorganized as the American Catholic Church. Of the many bishops that have been consecrated in this group, or by Archbishop Vilatte and his followers, most have assumed other names and titles and founded separate churches for themselves by civil incorporation. For most of these no statistics are published, for the reason that the Census Bureau collects its statistics directly from congregations rather than from the officers of corporations.

One church body which derived its original consecration of bishops from Archbishop Vilatte, and which now has a thriving organization of congregations, is not included in this report under Old Catholic Churches, for the reason that it has never used that title in any form and does not desire any association with Old Catholic Churches, but rather aspires to ultimate association with Eastern Orthodox Churches as a racial or national unit. This is the African Orthodox Church, given in a separate section under its own name.

Of the church organizations in America deriving their Apostolic Succession from the consecration of Arnold Harris Mathew by the Dutch Old Catholics and his consecration of Bishop de Landas Berghes, only the two here included have supplied any congregational statistics. These two are the creations of the two men who now head them and who were consecrated by Bishop de Landas Berghes on successive days. Dissension followed and Bishop Francis (Brothers) was deposed and started the separate body which he now constitutes, while Bishop Carfora organized his group as the Old Roman Catholic Church, to which title the words "North American" have since been added. As archbishop of this latter organization Bishop Carfora is recognized, by the few

remaining Old Catholics in England, as the proper head of the Old Catholics in America.

One of the bishops whom Archbishop Carfora consecrated, Samuel D. Benedict, now of New York City, has announced himself as the sole true head of the Old Catholic Churches in America under the title, "Archbishop and Primate of the Evangelical Catholic Church," but his organization is not included in this report for the reason that no congregations could be located nor any membership statistics secured. Bishop Benedict was deposed by Archbishop Carfora, but nevertheless he consecrated another bishop, named Newmark, who is now independent and has in turn consecrated W. H. Hammond, who is also independent and uses the word "Orthodox" in his title. For neither of these last two men or their incorporated organizations could any congregations be found or membership statistics secured.

Not to be confused with the bodies grouped in this consolidated report, with which it has no ecclesiastical relation, though similar in doctrine, is the Polish National Catholic Church of America, headed by Bishop Hodur and in direct union with the Swiss, Dutch, and Polish Old Catholic Churches of Europe. Similarly separated is the Lithuanian National Catholic Church.

In doctrine all of the churches mentioned above are in substantial accord with the Old Catholic churches of Europe. They accept the Seven Ecumenical Councils of the historic universal and undivided Church, as accepted prior to the Great Schism between East and West in 1054, rejecting the "Filioque" addition to the Nicene Creed, papal supremacy and infallibility, and all union of church and state. They all use a more or less modified form of the Roman Catholic ritual, either in translations or in Latin, and permit the clergy to marry. None of them has any relations or connection with Eastern Orthodox Catholic Churches, for the reason that the Eastern Orthodox can not accept their Orders nor permit their peculiarities of ritual.

The bodies grouped under the name "Old Catholic Churches" in 1926 and 1916 are listed in the table below, with the principal statistics as reported at each period. Direct comparisons between the bodies as reported at the two censuses are impossible, however, because of numerous organic changes.

SUMMARY OF STATISTICS FOR THE OLD CATHOLIC CHURCHES IN AMERICA, 1926 AND 1916

DENOMINATION AND CENSUS YEAR	Total number of churches	Number of members	VALUE OF CHURCH EDIFICES		EXPENDITURES DURING YEAR		SUNDAY SCHOOLS	
			Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Number of scholars
1926								
Total for the group	47	18,048	30	\$394,865	46	\$132,831	38	4,664
American Catholic Church.....	11	1,367	2	9,430	11	11,046	5	221
Old Catholic Church in America.....	9	1,888	4	37,500	8	19,347	9	997
North American Old Roman Catholic Church.....	27	14,793	24	347,435	27	102,438	24	3,446
1916								
Total for the group	21	14,200	17	145,800	19	33,850	15	2,096
American Catholic Church.....	8	475	1	3,000	2	1,700	2	75
Old Roman Catholic Church.....	12	4,700	11	89,300	11	12,150	11	1,271
Catholic Church of North America.....	6	9,025	5	63,500	6	20,000	2	750

NORTH AMERICAN OLD ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

STATISTICS

Summary for the United States, with urban-rural classification.—A general summary of the statistics for the North American Old Roman Catholic Church for the year 1926 is presented in Table 1, which shows also the distribution of these figures between urban and rural territory.

The membership consists of all persons who are admitted to the church through the sacrament of baptism.

TABLE 1.—SUMMARY OF STATISTICS FOR CHURCHES IN URBAN AND RURAL TERRITORY, 1926: NORTH AMERICAN OLD ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

ITEM	Total	In urban territory ¹	In rural territory ¹	PER CENT OF TOTAL ²	
				Urban	Rural
Churches (local organizations)	27	26	1		
Members	14,793	14,403	390	97.4	2.6
Average per church.....	548	554	390		
Membership by sex:					
Male.....	7,479	7,272	207	97.2	2.8
Female.....	7,314	7,131	183	97.5	2.5
Males per 100 females.....	102.3	102.0	113.1		
Membership by age:					
Under 13 years.....	3,684	3,569	115	96.9	3.1
13 years and over.....	11,109	10,834	275	97.5	2.5
Per cent under 13 years.....	24.9	24.8	29.5		
Church edifices:					
Number.....	31	30	1		
Value—Churches reporting.....	24	23	1		
Amount reported.....	\$347,435	\$340,685	\$6,750	98.1	1.9
Average per church.....	\$14,476	\$14,812	\$6,750		
Debt—Churches reporting.....	23	22	1		
Amount reported.....	\$121,657	\$116,907	\$4,750	96.1	3.9
Churches reporting "no debt" on church edifice.....	1	1			
Parsonages:					
Value—Churches reporting.....	15	14	1		
Amount reported.....	\$71,986	\$68,986	\$3,000	95.8	4.2
Debt—Churches reporting.....	5	4	1		
Amount reported.....	\$7,211	\$5,711	\$1,500	79.2	20.8
Churches reporting "no debt" on parsonage.....	10	10			
Expenditures during year:					
Churches reporting.....	27	26	1		
Amount reported.....	\$102,438	\$97,580	\$4,858	95.3	4.7
Current expenses and improvements.....	\$95,439	\$90,686	\$4,753	95.0	5.0
Benevolences, missions, etc.....	\$6,999	\$6,894	\$105	98.5	1.5
Average expenditure per church.....	\$3,794	\$3,753	\$4,858		
Sunday schools:					
Churches reporting.....	24	23	1		
Officers and teachers.....	44	43	1		
Scholars.....	3,446	3,373	73	97.9	2.1

¹ Urban territory includes all cities and other incorporated places which had 2,500 inhabitants or more in 1920, the date of the last Federal census; rural territory comprises the remainder of the country.

² Per cent not shown where base is less than 100.

The data given for 1926 represent 27 active North American Old Roman Catholic churches, with 14,793 members. The classification of membership by sex and age was reported by all of the 27 churches, 25 of which reported members under 13 years of age.

NORTH AMERICAN OLD ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH 1079

This denomination has been organized since the census of 1916, and comparable data are, therefore, not available.

State tables.—Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5 present the statistics for the North American Old Roman Catholic Church by States. Table 2 gives for each State the number and membership of the churches classified according to their location in urban or rural territory and the total membership classified by sex. Table 3 gives for selected States the number and membership of the churches, together with the membership classified as under 13 years of age and 13 years of age and over. Table 4 shows the value of church property and the debt on such property. Table 5 presents the church expenditures for 1926, showing separately the amounts expended for current expenses and improvements, and for benevolences, etc., and also gives the data for Sunday schools. Separate presentation in Tables 4 and 5 is limited to those States in which three or more churches reported the principal items shown (values or expenditures), in order to avoid disclosing the financial statistics of any individual church. The States omitted from these tables can be determined by referring to the complete list which appears in Table 2.

TABLE 2.—NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF CHURCHES IN URBAN AND RURAL TERRITORY, AND TOTAL MEMBERSHIP BY SEX, BY STATES, 1926: NORTH AMERICAN OLD ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION AND STATE	NUMBER OF CHURCHES			NUMBER OF MEMBERS			TOTAL MEMBERSHIP BY SEX		
	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Male	Female	Males per 100 females ¹
United States	27	26	1	14,793	14,403	390	7,479	7,314	102.3
New England:									
New Hampshire.....	1	1		1,140	1,140		573	567	101.1
Massachusetts.....	3	3		5,194	5,194		2,558	2,636	97.0
Middle Atlantic:									
New York.....	4	4		1,014	1,014		474	540	87.8
East North Central:									
Ohio.....	2	1	1	1,144	754	390	588	556	105.8
Illinois.....	8	8		2,631	2,631		1,383	1,248	110.8
Michigan.....	3	3		1,965	1,965		1,021	944	108.2
Wisconsin.....	1	1		417	417		210	207	101.4
West North Central:									
Iowa.....	1	1		488	488		278	210	132.4
South Atlantic:									
Maryland.....	1	1		161	161		89	72	
West Virginia.....	1	1		422	422		205	217	94.5
Florida.....	2	2		217	217		100	117	85.5

¹ Ratio not shown where number of females is less than 100.

TABLE 3.—NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF CHURCHES, AND MEMBERSHIP BY AGE, BY STATES, 1926: NORTH AMERICAN OLD ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

[Separate presentation is limited to States having 3 or more churches]

STATE	Number of churches	Number of members	MEMBERSHIP BY AGE		
			Under 13 years	13 years and over	Per cent under 13
United States	27	14,793	3,684	11,109	24.9
Massachusetts.....	3	5,194	1,018	4,176	19.6
New York.....	4	1,014	226	788	22.3
Illinois.....	8	2,631	597	2,034	22.7
Michigan.....	3	1,965	730	1,235	37.2
Other States	9	3,989	1,113	2,876	27.9

TABLE 4.—VALUE OF CHURCH PROPERTY, AND CHURCH DEBT, BY STATES, 1926: NORTH AMERICAN OLD ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

[Separate presentation is limited to States having 3 or more churches reporting value of edifices]

STATE	Total number of churches	Number of church edifices	VALUE OF CHURCH EDIFICES		DEBT ON CHURCH EDIFICES		VALUE OF PARSONAGES		DEBT ON PARSONAGES	
			Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Amount
United States	27	31	24	\$347,435	23	\$121,657	15	\$71,986	5	\$7,211
Massachusetts.....	3	4	3	105,525	2	19,950	—	(¹)	—	—
New York.....	4	3	3	15,325	3	4,325	—	(¹)	—	—
Illinois.....	8	8	7	48,845	7	29,167	5	14,375	1	575
Michigan.....	3	5	3	34,155	3	18,055	—	(¹)	—	—
Other States ²	9	11	8	143,585	8	50,160	10	57,611	4	6,636

¹ Amount included in figures shown for "Other States," to avoid disclosing the statistics of individual churches.

² The figures for parsonages (value and debt) include data for 5 churches in Massachusetts, New York, and Michigan.

TABLE 5.—CHURCH EXPENDITURES AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS, BY STATES, 1926: NORTH AMERICAN OLD ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

[Separate presentation is limited to States having 3 or more churches reporting expenditures]

STATE	Total number of churches	EXPENDITURES DURING YEAR				SUNDAY SCHOOLS		
		Churches reporting	Total amount	For current expenses and improvements	For benevolences, missions, etc.	Churches reporting	Officers and teachers	Scholars
United States	27	27	\$102,438	\$95,439	\$6,999	24	44	3,446
Massachusetts.....	3	3	13,192	12,099	1,093	3	6	684
New York.....	4	4	9,968	9,110	858	3	7	319
Illinois.....	8	8	28,869	27,752	1,117	7	10	645
Michigan.....	3	3	14,847	13,601	1,246	3	8	730
Other States.....	9	9	35,562	32,877	2,685	8	13	1,068

HISTORY, DOCTRINE, AND ORGANIZATION¹**DENOMINATIONAL HISTORY**

The North American Old Roman Catholic Church, while tracing its origin back to Apostolic times, was organized in the United States and Canada under the name of National Catholic Church in North America, and incorporated under this name in Columbus, Ohio, June 14, 1912.

The leader of the Old Catholic movement in England, the Most Rev. Arnold H. Mathew, consecrated the Prince and Duke de Landas Berghes, on June 29, 1912, and sent him to the United States in 1914 to reunite the scattered Old Roman Catholic churches; the National Catholic Church of America cordially received de Landas Berghes, and elected him archbishop. On October 4, 1916, the archbishop consecrated Rev. Carmel Henry Carfora as his coadjutor and regionary bishop; and on October 17, 1917, the North American Old Roman Catholic Church was incorporated under the laws of the State of Illinois. The name of the church was changed to avoid confusion and from the desire to have

¹ This statement was furnished by Right Rev. Carmel Henry Carfora, Primate and Archbishop, North American Old Roman Catholic Church.

no connection with other churches claiming to represent the Old Catholic movement in the United States. Bishop Carfora was elected archbishop of the United States and Canada in 1919, and on March 19, 1922, was made primate of all Old Roman Catholic churches. Since that time numerous independent churches of similar type, and probably not a few of the churches formed by Archbishop Vilatte, as well as individual churches of the Polish and Lithuanian Catholics, have united with this body, and its organization has thus been considerably strengthened.

DOCTRINE

This church works for the restoration of the ancient Catholic system and the practice of the rites of the Holy Catholic Church, before the separation of the Eastern and Western churches; its purpose is the elevation of the moral and religious life of its people, according to the teachings of Jesus Christ and His Apostles. The following statement of belief is generally accepted:

We adhere strictly to the Holy Catholic Faith, once and for all delivered to the Saints and set forth in Apostolic Tradition, the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, the definitions of the Ecumenical Councils, and the teachings of the Holy Scriptures and the Fathers.

We acknowledge the decrees of the Synod of Jerusalem of 1672, prescribing belief, as *de fide* in the Seven Sacraments instituted by Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and in Transubstantiation.

We practice the Veneration and Invocation of the Glorious and Immaculate Mother of God, of the Angels, and the Saints, and prayers for the faithful departed.

The North American Old Roman Catholic Church is identical with the Roman Catholic Church in worship, faith, morals, etc., but differs from it in discipline, mainly as follows:

1. It acknowledges the primacy of the successor of St. Peter, but is thoroughly American and loyal to all American institutions and ideals.
2. It has the Mass and other services in Latin, liturgical oriental, and in the language of the land where instituted, that is, English in America.
3. It advocates celibacy of the clergy, but does not expressly forbid the clergy to marry.
4. It ministers to anyone who requests its services, and any baptized Christian who lives according to its laws and regulations is welcomed to the movement.

ORGANIZATION

The organization of the church centers in the primate, whose authority is supreme in faith and in all church matters, after due consideration in the general meeting of the Synod where are assembled the archbishops, bishops, general vicars, priests, and delegates.

As at present organized there are under the care of the primate three bishops, the Right Rev. Roman W. Slocinski, of Manchester, N. H.; the Right Rev. Edwin Wallace Hunter, D. D., regionary bishop of the United States and Canada, with residence at New Orleans, La.; and the Right Rev. Charles A. Blanchette, bishop of Portland, Oreg., and the Pacific coast.

The government is, however, democratic, because every officer, from the highest to the lowest, is chosen by the individual congregation, and confirmed by the primate, and each foreign group of churches has a bishop of its own nationality. The great aim of the church is that all, of every nationality, shall compose the "one unity" in Christ.

The institutional work in America includes the St. Francis Theological Seminary, in Chicago, with 12 students; homes for various religious orders; and homes for aged priests and for destitute men.

The church papers are The Catholic and "Winnica Panska" (Lords Vineyard), both issued at Chicago, Ill., as the official organs of the primate and the archdiocese.