

POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH OF AMERICA

STATISTICS

Summary for the United States, with urban-rural classification.—A general summary of the statistics for the Polish National Catholic Church of America 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 those persons who have joined the church, assenting to the doctrine as contained in its "Profession of Faith."

TABLE 1.—SUMMARY OF STATISTICS FOR CHURCHES IN URBAN AND RURAL TERRITORY, 1926: POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH OF AMERICA

ITEM	Total	In urban territory ¹	In rural territory ¹	PER CENT OF TOTAL ²	
				Urban	Rura
Churches (local organizations)	91	77	14		
Members	61,574	57,925	3,649	94.1	5.9
Average per church.....	677	752	261		
Membership by sex:					
Male.....	27,985	26,294	1,691	94.0	6.0
Female.....	28,589	26,631	1,958	93.2	6.8
Sex not reported.....	5,000	5,000		100.0	
Males per 100 females.....	97.9	98.7	86.4		
Membership by age:					
Under 13 years.....	16,151	15,233	918	94.3	5.7
13 years and over.....	35,950	33,219	2,731	92.4	7.6
Age not reported.....	9,473	9,473		100.0	
Per cent under 13 years ³	31.0	31.4	25.2		
Church edifices:					
Number.....	107	93	14	86.9	13.1
Value—Churches reporting.....	84	71	13		
Amount reported.....	\$3,365,600	\$3,272,500	\$93,100	97.2	2.8
Average per church.....	\$40,067	\$46,092	\$7,162		
Debt—Churches reporting.....	72	62	10		
Amount reported.....	\$1,047,733	\$1,013,983	\$33,750	96.8	3.2
Churches reporting "no debt" on church edifice.....	12	9	3		
Parsonages:					
Value—Churches reporting.....	61	57	4		
Amount reported.....	\$510,750	\$495,250	\$15,500	97.0	3.0
Debt—Churches reporting.....	30	28	2		
Amount reported.....	\$91,683	\$90,183	\$1,500	98.4	1.6
Churches reporting "no debt" on parsonage.....	30	28	2		
Expenditures during year:					
Churches reporting.....	87	74	13		
Amount reported.....	\$485,698	\$458,313	\$27,385	94.4	5.6
Current expenses and improvements.....	\$440,107	\$414,717	\$25,390	94.2	5.8
Benevolences, missions, etc.....	\$45,591	\$43,596	\$1,995	95.6	4.4
Average expenditure per church.....	\$5,583	\$6,193	\$2,107		
Sunday schools:					
Churches reporting.....	74	64	10		
Officers and teachers.....	116	105	11	90.5	9.5
Scholars.....	6,401	5,905	496	92.3	7.7

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.

³ Based on membership with age classification reported.

The data given for 1926 represent 91 active organizations of the Polish National Catholic Church of America, with 61,574 members. The classification of membership by sex was reported by 90 churches and the classification by age was reported by 88 churches, all but one of which reported members under 13 years of age.

Comparative data, 1906-1926.—Table 2 presents, in convenient form for comparison, a summary of the available statistics of this church for the censuses of 1926, 1916, and 1906.

TABLE 2.—COMPARATIVE SUMMARY, 1906 TO 1926: POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH OF AMERICA

ITEM	1926	1916	1906
Churches (local organizations)	91	34	24
Increase over preceding census:			
Number.....	57	10	-----
Per cent ¹	-----	-----	-----
Members	61,574	28,245	15,473
Increase over preceding census:			
Number.....	33,329	12,772	-----
Per cent.....	118.0	82.5	-----
Average membership per church.....	677	831	645
Church edifices:			
Number.....	107	37	27
Value—Churches reporting.....	84	33	24
Amount reported.....	\$3,365,600	\$929,636	\$494,700
Average per church.....	\$40,067	\$28,171	\$20,613
Debt—Churches reporting.....	72	32	28
Amount reported.....	\$1,047,733	\$315,105	\$216,960
Parsonages:			
Value—Churches reporting.....	61	21	14
Amount reported.....	\$510,750	\$178,164	\$74,000
Debt—Churches reporting.....	30	-----	-----
Amount reported.....	\$91,683	-----	-----
Expenditures during year:			
Churches reporting.....	87	32	-----
Amount reported.....	\$485,698	\$149,839	-----
Current expenses and improvements.....	\$440,107	\$114,150	-----
Benevolences, missions, etc.....	\$45,591	\$28,689	-----
Not classified.....	-----	\$7,000	-----
Average expenditure per church.....	\$5,583	\$4,682	-----
Sunday schools:			
Churches reporting.....	74	27	20
Officers and teachers.....	116	40	26
Scholars.....	6,401	2,927	1,289

¹ Per cent not shown where base is less than 100.

State tables.—Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6 present the statistics for the Polish National Catholic Church of America by States. Table 3 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 4 gives for selected States the number and membership of the churches for the three censuses from 1906 to 1926, together with the membership for 1926 classified as under 13 years of age and 13 years of age and over. Table 5 shows the value of church property and the debt on such property, for 1926 alone. Table 6 presents, for 1926, the church expenditures, 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 5 and 6 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 3.

TABLE 3.—NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF CHURCHES IN URBAN AND RURAL TERRITORY, AND TOTAL MEMBERSHIP BY SEX, BY STATES, 1926: POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH OF AMERICA

GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION AND STATE	NUMBER OF CHURCHES			NUMBER OF MEMBERS			TOTAL MEMBERSHIP BY SEX			
	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Male	Female	Sex not reported	Males per 100 females ⁽¹⁾
United States.....	91	77	14	61,574	57,925	3,649	27,985	28,589	5,000	97.9
New England:										
Massachusetts.....	9	9	-----	6,581	6,581	-----	3,381	3,200	-----	105.7
Rhode Island.....	3	3	-----	1,968	1,968	-----	853	1,115	-----	76.5
Connecticut.....	6	5	1	2,753	2,488	265	1,370	1,383	-----	99.1
Middle Atlantic:										
New York.....	10	9	1	9,706	8,956	750	2,245	2,461	5,000	91.2
New Jersey.....	5	4	1	2,583	2,283	300	1,271	1,312	-----	96.9
Pennsylvania.....	29	26	3	20,329	19,733	596	10,107	10,222	-----	98.9
East North Central:										
Ohio.....	2	2	-----	2,082	2,082	-----	1,074	1,008	-----	106.5
Indiana.....	2	2	-----	1,516	1,516	-----	707	809	-----	87.4
Illinois.....	6	6	-----	5,293	5,293	-----	2,513	2,780	-----	90.4
Michigan.....	5	3	2	4,500	3,950	550	2,488	2,012	-----	123.7
Wisconsin.....	7	4	3	2,379	1,564	815	1,124	1,255	-----	89.6
West North Central:										
Minnesota.....	4	2	2	1,147	847	300	496	651	-----	76.2
Missouri.....	1	1	-----	99	99	-----	48	51	-----	-----
South Atlantic:										
Maryland.....	1	1	-----	565	565	-----	255	310	-----	82.3
West South Central:										
Texas.....	1	-----	1	73	-----	73	53	20	-----	-----

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

TABLE 4.—NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF CHURCHES, 1906 TO 1926, AND MEMBERSHIP BY AGE, 1926, BY STATES: POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH OF AMERICA

[Separate presentation is limited to States having 3 or more churches in either 1926, 1916, or 1906]

STATE	NUMBER OF CHURCHES			NUMBER OF MEMBERS			MEMBERSHIP BY AGE, 1926			
	1926	1916	1906	1926	1916	1906	Under 13 years	13 years and over	Age not reported	Per cent under 13 ¹
United States.....	91	34	24	61,574	28,245	15,473	16,151	35,950	9,473	31.0
Massachusetts.....	9	4	5	6,581	1,334	2,141	1,840	4,741	-----	28.0
Rhode Island.....	3	-----	-----	1,968	-----	-----	756	1,034	178	42.2
Connecticut.....	6	2	1	2,753	1,020	300	953	1,800	-----	34.6
New York.....	10	3	1	9,706	8,360	3,500	1,964	2,742	5,000	41.7
New Jersey.....	5	4	3	2,583	1,680	800	635	1,948	-----	24.6
Pennsylvania.....	29	8	7	20,329	7,046	3,505	6,032	10,002	4,295	37.6
Indiana.....	2	4	1	1,516	1,904	450	359	1,157	-----	23.7
Illinois.....	6	2	3	5,293	3,377	2,545	1,094	4,199	-----	20.7
Michigan.....	5	1	-----	4,500	150	-----	934	3,566	-----	20.8
Wisconsin.....	7	2	1	2,379	1,498	100	653	1,726	-----	27.4
Minnesota.....	4	2	1	1,147	1,170	1,000	297	850	-----	25.9
Other States.....	5	2	1	2,819	706	1,132	634	2,185	-----	22.5

¹ Based on membership with age classification reported.

TABLE 5.—VALUE OF CHURCH PROPERTY, AND CHURCH DEBT, BY STATES, 1926:
POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH OF AMERICA

[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.....	91	107	84	\$3,365,600	72	\$1,047,733	61	\$510,750	30	\$91,683
Massachusetts.....	9	9	7	229,000	6	54,600	8	52,000	2	1,500
Connecticut.....	6	5	5	103,000	5	18,467	5	30,000	3	5,933
New York.....	10	12	10	686,000	9	193,480	7	83,500	5	18,500
New Jersey.....	5	7	5	135,500	5	53,568	3	13,000	1	1,500
Pennsylvania.....	29	35	28	1,078,000	25	452,050	20	174,500	9	24,500
Illinois.....	6	5	5	230,000	2	16,268	(1)			
Michigan.....	5	7	5	176,000	4	61,500	(1)			(1)
Wisconsin.....	7	9	7	175,600	7	49,800	4	25,500	3	7,200
Minnesota.....	4	4	4	123,500	1	27,000	3	17,500	1	4,300
Other States ²	10	14	8	429,000	8	121,000	11	114,750	6	28,250

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 3 churches in Illinois and Michigan.

TABLE 6.—CHURCH EXPENDITURES AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS, BY STATES, 1926:
POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH OF AMERICA

[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.....	91	87	\$485,698	\$440,107	\$45,591	74	116	6,401
Massachusetts.....	9	7	36,059	34,033	2,026	7	14	969
Rhode Island.....	3	3	13,302	10,065	3,237	3	3	250
Connecticut.....	6	6	27,712	24,510	3,202	5	5	422
New York.....	10	10	51,634	47,777	3,857	10	15	975
New Jersey.....	5	5	23,982	22,372	1,610	5	5	266
Pennsylvania.....	29	27	183,028	166,032	16,996	22	32	1,668
Illinois.....	6	6	41,772	37,272	4,500	6	7	544
Michigan.....	5	5	20,195	17,350	2,845	5	22	540
Wisconsin.....	7	7	31,465	28,227	3,178	4	6	339
Minnesota.....	4	4	12,427	11,819	608	3	3	235
Other States.....	7	7	44,182	40,650	3,532	4	4	203

HISTORY, DOCTRINE, AND ORGANIZATION¹

HISTORY

With the increasing immigration from Poland and the establishment of large Polish Roman Catholic churches in a number of American cities, misunderstandings and disputes developed between the ecclesiastical authorities and the lay members of the Polish parishes. These were occasioned chiefly by dissatisfaction on the part of the laymen with the "absolute religious, political, and social

¹ This statement was furnished by the Right Rev. Francis Hodur, administrative bishop, Polish National Catholic Church, Scranton, Pa., and approved by him in its present form.

power over the parishioners," given by the Council of Baltimore in 1883 to the Roman Catholic priesthood; and by the rather free exercise of that power on the part of certain Polish Roman Catholic priests. The situation was aggravated, in some cases, by the placing of other than Polish priests in charge of Polish churches. The result was that disturbances arose, which developed, at times, into riots. In Buffalo, N. Y., a popular Polish priest was removed, and a protest made against the installation of his successor resulted in a general decree of excommunication. The congregation laid claim to the church property, but the claim was disallowed by the courts. The congregation then purchased ground, put up a new edifice of its own, and declared itself absolutely independent of the former ecclesiastical leaders.

In Chicago, Ill., there was a revolt against the Polish Order of Resurrectionists, and especially against a certain Polish priest; and in Cleveland, Ohio, in Scranton and Shamokin, Pa., and elsewhere, similar troubles occurred.

A convention of independent congregations was held at Scranton in September, 1904, and was attended by 147 clerical and lay delegates, who represented about 20,000 adherents in five States. As a result, these churches in north-eastern Pennsylvania, together with others in Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, and Maryland, combined to form the Polish National Church, the Rev. Francis Hodur being elected as its head, with the title of bishop. He was subsequently consecrated by the National Catholic bishops of the Netherlands. A constitution was adopted, and the Latin books of Holy Church Rites were ordered to be translated into the Polish language. Resolutions were adopted expressing a desire for fraternal and sympathetic cooperation with other Christian churches, and repudiating the claim of the Roman Catholic Church to be the sole exponent of the true doctrines of Christ.

At this meeting, also, the following fundamental principles were adopted:

The administrative power is centralized in the bishop and in the grand council, the latter being composed of 3 clerical and 3 lay members, who are elected at each regular session of the synod.

The church properties are to be owned and controlled by the people under jurisdiction of the bishop and clergy.

A theological seminary shall be founded, under the bishop's administration.

The official publication of the church shall be *Straz*, edited weekly in Scranton, Pa.

Every member of the church shall pay yearly \$1.50 for the seminary, church publications, and administration expenses.

This convention, or synod, was the first gathering of its kind held by Polish people since the Reformation movement in Poland was crushed in the seventeenth century. At a special session of the synod, held in Scranton two years later, the various church charters were unified, the church constitution was amended, and two new feasts were instituted, the Feast of Brotherly Love and Union of the Polish People in America, to be observed on the second Sunday in September of each year, and the Feast of the Poor Shepherds, to be observed on the first Sunday after Christmas. At the following synod three more feasts were added: The Feast of the Institution of the Polish National Church, to be observed on the second Sunday in March; the Feast of the Memory of the Martyrs of the Polish Nation, to be observed on the second Sunday in May; and the Feast of the Christian Family, to be observed on the second Sunday in October, of each year. There were also instituted, at the last provincial synod, held at Scranton, Pa., so-called memorial days for Peter Waldo, John Huss, Hieronim Savanarola, Adam Mickiewicz, Julius Slowacki, and A. Towianski.

At the second plenary synod, held in Scranton, in 1906, the hearing of the Word of God as preached by the church was declared to be a sacrament. At the convention of the third plenary synod, held in Chicago, Ill., in 1914, the question

of the celibacy of the clergy was discussed, but action in the matter was postponed until 1921, at the meeting of the synod in Scranton, Pa., when, after long debate, the rule of celibacy was abrogated and marriage of the clergy was allowed, but only with the knowledge and permission of the bishop and lay members of the respective congregations. At this convention other important affairs were discussed, as follows: The financial affairs of the church in the United States and in Poland; the mission in Poland; the division of the church into three dioceses, that is, Central, Eastern, and Western, with their respective sees in Scranton, Pa., Chicopee, Mass., and Chicago, Ill.; the election of two bishops, one for Poland and one for the Lithuanian people in the United States. General and plenary synods were ordered to be held every 10 years, and in case of urgency, a provincial synod of the diocese.

The church grew rapidly; the constitution was amended and generally adopted by the provincial synod in convention at Scranton, April 25, 1928, and its provisions, together with the creed, ceremonies, and symbols of the Polish National Catholic Church of America, were accepted by the church in Poland, at its first plenary synod in Warsaw, in June of the same year. The Right Rev. Leo Grochowski, bishop of Chicago, was elected as bishop of Poland, where at present 38 congregations have been founded, and a theological seminary built accommodating a number of students, ordained for the priesthood by Bishop Hodur. Meanwhile, the Rev. L. Faron was established as the general administrator of the church.

In the United States, various Slavic and Italian congregations were organized and united with the Polish National Catholic Church. The Lithuanian congregations, formerly under the jurisdiction of Bishop Hodur, were given a bishop of their own, John Gritenas, who was consecrated with three others in Scranton, in 1924. One or two churches in Chicago, together with churches in Indiana and Wisconsin, and several in the East, organized an independent diocese known as the Polish Independent Catholic Church, but after the death of their bishop, Anton Kozlowski, all of the independent churches united with the Polish National Catholic Church.

In interdenominational relations the Polish National Catholic Church has always maintained friendly relations with other Christian churches in the United States and also in Europe; and it has always upheld the rights of women in the administrative affairs of the church.

DOCTRINE

The doctrine of the Polish National Catholic Church of America is based upon the Bible, and especially upon the New Testament, as expounded by the Apostles and the first four Ecumenical Councils, by the Niceno-Constantinople Creed, and as further interpreted by the synod of the church. A general formula of doctrine is presented in the "Profession of Faith," to which assent must be given by those who join the church. The Polish National Catholic Church recognizes three orders in the ministry, namely, bishops, priests, and deacons.

The church rejects the doctrine of the infallibility of the Pope in matters of faith and morals, and believes that all men have the right to interpret the Word of God according to their convictions and the dictates of their conscience.

It believes that "man, by following the Supreme Being, is in this life capable of attaining a certain degree of the happiness and of the perfection which is possessed of God in an infinite degree"; that "faith is helpful to man toward his salvation, though not absolutely necessary," which is especially true of "blind faith." Good deeds, however, it holds "bring us nearer to God, and to His Mediator, Jesus Christ, and make us worthy of being His followers and brothers, and of being children of the Heavenly Father." It rejects the doctrine of eternal

punishment and believes that "even sinful man, after undergoing an intrinsic metamorphosis through contrition, penance, and noble deeds, may have a chance to regain the grace of God." Sin is regarded as a "lack of perfection in the essence of man, and as mankind progresses in this knowledge of the causes of life and the nature of God, and comes nearer and nearer to Him, sin will gradually grow less and less until it vanishes entirely. Then man will become the true image and child of God, and the kingdom of God will prevail upon earth."

ORGANIZATION

The constitution vests the highest authority of the church in the synod. This convenes in regular session every 10 years, although a special session may be called at the request of one-third of the members of the church at any time when the bishop deems it necessary.

The administrative power is centralized in the bishop and the grand council, which is composed of three clerical and three lay members, who are elected at each regular session of the synod.

The presiding bishop, Francis Hodur, as the head and organizer of the Polish National Catholic Church, has general jurisdiction over the church in the United States and also in Poland.

Diocesan bishops are elected by the clergy and lay members of the synod. Rectors of parishes are appointed by the bishop of the diocese.

Each congregation is governed by a board of trustees, elected by the members and working in harmony with the priests assigned to it.

The method of the incorporation of various parishes varies with the laws of the different States, but must be within the law of the Polish National Catholic Church. The church has organized the following departments: Mission and Church Extension in the United States and Poland, Religious Education, Christian Social Service, Finance, Publicity, and Schools.

WORK

The church maintains, through its regular contributions, two theological seminaries—one, Savanarola Seminary, located in Scranton, Pa., and the other at Cracow, Poland.

The principal church organ is a weekly published at Scranton, Pa., called "Straz" (Guard), and there is also a biweekly, *Repa Boża* (God's Field). *Palska Odrodzona* (New Poland) is a biweekly published at Warsaw, Poland, which also has a circulation in this country.

Many other ecclesiastical and secular publications and reviews are published at Scranton, Pa., and free evening classes in literature, history, political economy, etc., have been organized.