

# Pastoral Research Online

Issue 59

December 2022



## Welcome to Katherine Jelavic

In October 2022 we were pleased to welcome Katherine Jelavic to the NCPR. Katherine is based at our Melbourne Office and will help Stephen Reid primarily with the National Catholic Census project. Katherine joins us after gaining experience in accounting in industry and education, full time parenthood, a brief stint in parish pastoral work and various volunteer roles in the Catholic Church. She has degrees in commerce and theology, is currently a member of the Diocese of Sale *Gaudium et spes* team and has recently completed a term as the student representative on the ACU Theology and Philosophy Faculty Board.

*Left: Katherine Jelavic*

Dear Readers,

*As we come to the end of another busy year, it is time to sit back and reflect on our activities in 2022 and recharge ourselves for the year ahead. We are blessed with a wonderful team, whose significant efforts ensured that we were productive in a number of interesting project this year, despite many challenges.*

*In this newsletter we bring you highlights of the year and present findings from the 2021 Census figures as we focus on ethnicity and language. Our work on the Synod of Bishops continues as we provide you with an update of this project. We are immensely thankful to bishops, diocesan contacts, agency heads, group coordinators and participants who have supported the process and engaged with it over the course of this year. We also report on the 2021 Canadian Census figures of religious identification and compare these to Australia, and take a look at recent research findings on Catholic parishes in the US.*

*As we bid farewell to 2022, we thank you for your continued support of our office and look forward to bringing you the best in pastoral research in 2023.*

*Have a blessed Christmas and a happy New Year!*

### ***Inside this issue:***

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# Census 2021 - Ethnicity

The NCPR is in the process of accessing and analysing data from the 2021 Census, and anticipate releasing the National Social Profile in the early part of 2023. Following this, we will be commencing work on the Diocesan and Parish Social Profiles.



## More Australian Catholics born overseas

In 2021, 27 per cent of Australian Catholics were born overseas, which was slightly lower than that of the broader Australian population, where 27.6 per cent of the population were born overseas. As shown in Table 1 below, compared to the 2011 Census, an increasing number of Australian Catholics were born in the Philippines, India, Iraq, Vietnam and Ireland (including Northern Ireland), whereas fewer Australian Catholics were born in Italy, the United Kingdom (except Northern Ireland), New Zealand, Croatia & other Former Yugoslavian countries and Malta. Poland dropped out of the Top 10 countries of birth of Catholics (other than Australia) and in 2021, was the 12th largest group of Catholics born overseas. Iraq was the first Middle Eastern country to appear in the Top 10 list, the result of a 113 per cent increase between 2011 and 2021.

**Table 1. Top 10 birthplaces (other than Australia) of Catholics in 2021 & change since 2011**

Birthplace	Number of Catholics			Change
	2011	2016	2021	2011-2021
Philippines	134,660	174,619	216,653	81,993
Italy	168,809	149,900	134,278	-34,531
United Kingdom (except Northern Ireland)	137,206	126,595	117,445	-19,761
India	48,202	59,702	71,138	22,936
New Zealand	73,146	68,837	61,391	-11,755
Ireland (including Northern Ireland)	56,315	59,425	60,123	3,808
Vietnam	39,890	44,225	51,162	11,272
Croatia & other Former Yugoslavia	49,201	39,209	42,460	-6,741
Iraq	17,176	23,775	36,573	19,397
Malta	37,815	33,474	31,124	-6,691

Table 2 shows the number of Australian Catholics born overseas who arrived in the three years prior to each Census in 2011, 2016 and 2021. The number of recent arrivals from the Philippines and India continue to be significant but slowed slightly in 2021. However, the lower numbers in the 2021 Census may partly be attributed to the reduction in immigration during 2020-2021, as a result of the COVID-19 international border restrictions. Despite the pandemic, the number of recent arrivals from Columbia and Brazil continued to grow, as did the recent arrivals from Iraq.

**Table 2. Top 5 countries of birth for recent arrivals of Catholics in 2021 & change since 2011**

Birthplace	Number of Catholics who arrived in 3 years prior to Census			Change
	2011	2016	2021	2011-2021
Philippines	28,149	31,588	30,298	2,149
India	10,507	9,438	9,002	-1,505
Columbia	3,221	4,401	7,938	4,717
Iraq	3,595	5,700	6,623	3,028
Brazil	2,995	5,361	5,746	2,751

# Census 2021 - Ethnicity

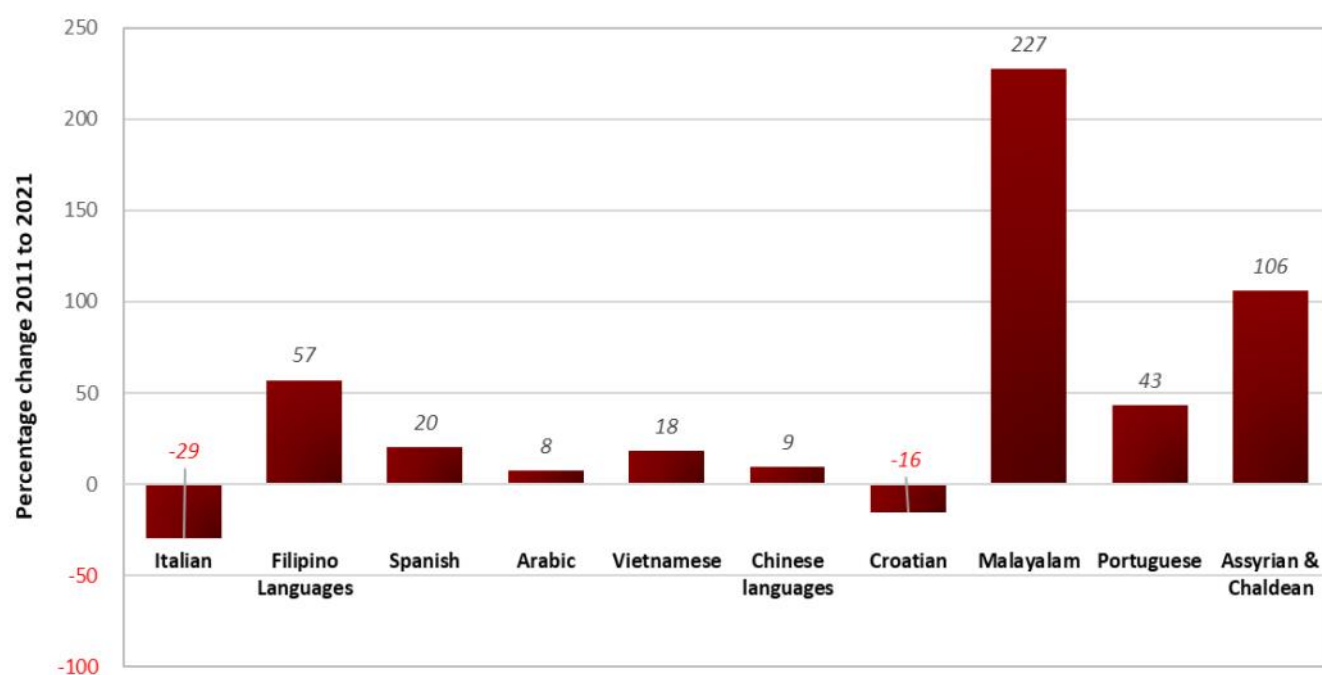
## Languages spoken at home

Other than English, Italian continues to be the most widely spoken language at home by Catholics, but the number speaking the language declined by almost 80,000 people in the ten years between 2011 and 2021—a decline of around 29 per cent (See Figure 1). Most of the decline can be attributed to an ageing profile of Italian-born Catholics. Speakers of Malayalam—the language spoken by many Syro-Malabar Catholics—increased rapidly between 2011 and 2021, growing by around 227 per cent. Numerically, however, the greatest increase was seen in the number of Catholics speaking a Filipino language, which grew by around 64,000 speakers (See Table 3).

**Table 3. Top 10 languages spoken at home (other than English) of Catholics in 2021 & change since 2011**

Language	Number of Catholics speaking language			Change
	2011	2016	2021	2011-2021
Italian	267,002	231,664	188,594	-78,408
Filipino Languages	112,128	139,930	176,067	63,939
Spanish	75,871	82,208	91,364	15,493
Arabic	72,204	68,952	77,727	5,523
Vietnamese	63,887	68,569	75,655	11,768
Chinese languages	46,709	49,056	51,043	4,334
Croatian	55,148	49,546	46,561	-8,587
Malayalam	11,696	26,606	38,288	26,592
Portuguese	24,714	29,901	35,351	10,637
Assyrian & Chaldean	16,618	25,449	34,237	17,619

**Figure 1: Percentage change in Catholics speaking languages other than English at home Between 2011 and 2021 (based on the Top 10 languages in 2021)**



If you would like more information about how the NCPR can support your organisation, parish or diocese, please contact us at [ncpr@catholic.org.au](mailto:ncpr@catholic.org.au)

# Bishops Synod on Synodality

## The Continental Stage

On 27 October 2022, the *Working Document for the Continental Stage* (DCS) was released. The DCS is the fruit of listening and discernment which emerged from the diocesan and national syntheses, and was intended to enable dialogue between local Churches, and between the local Church and the universal Church. It was therefore neither a summary of the syntheses nor a mere chronicle of the experiences of listening and discernment. but rather, a working document that sought to bring out the voices of the People of God, with their insights, questions and disagreements. Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB, who attended the Frascati meeting in Rome in September 2022 where the DCS was written, commented publicly that the issues raised by the Plenary Council process in Australia, and in the Australian National Synthesis, were echoed in the syntheses of other countries right around the world.



A copy of the DCS is available at <https://www.catholic.org.au/synodalchurch>.

Bishops' conferences around the world were asked to reach out to their people and seek feedback on the document, which would then be shared with their continental conferences. In Australia, the NCPR were tasked with coordinating that process. The intention of this period of feedback was to provide a greater understanding in each continent of the issues raised in the document, or alternatively, to identify that which had been overlooked. Australia is one of the four bishops' conferences in Oceania, alongside New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, and the CEPAC Conference (the Episcopal Conference of the Pacific).

A number of people volunteered to coordinate small groups to reflect on the DCS. In particular, we were asked to seek reflection from groups that had not had the chance to have their voice heard in the earlier processes, such as people with disabilities. The groups' reflections were submitted to the NCPR via an online portal, and the NCPR team prepared a national synthesis of those reflections. When the portal closed on 9 December, there were 77 submissions from groups around Australia. The final Australian report will be provided to the specially formed Oceania Taskforce by Wednesday 21 December 2022.

## Oceania Continental Assembly

In January 2023, representatives from each of the four conferences of Oceania will begin the discernment and writing process to synthesise the responses from the region. In February 2023, the Federation of Catholic Bishops' Conferences of Oceania (FCBCO), together with other representatives from the region, will meet in Fiji to prayerfully consider the responses and prepare the final Oceania Report.

## New dates for the Synod

In mid-October, Pope Francis announced that the upcoming 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops would be held in two sessions spaced one year apart—the first from 4-29 October 2023 and the second in October 2024. The reason for this is stated as coming from a desire for prolonged discernment on the topic, due to its breadth and importance. Moreover, the Pope referred to the synodal journey as an ongoing process which goes beyond the Synod assemblies, but is a way "in which the whole People of God is called to walk together toward what the Holy Spirit helps it discern as being the Lord's will for his Church".



# Research Projects in 2022

## The Year in Review

The NCPR has continued to undertake a wide variety of projects both for the Bishops Conference as well as the wider Catholic community. Below is a snapshot of what the office has achieved in 2022.



- **National Catholic Census Project:**
  - Ordered data from the 2021 Census
  - Began preparing tables from ABS data
- **National Count of Attendance:**
  - Prepared and distributed 28 preliminary reports from the 2021 count
  - Analysed Census data and its relation to Mass Count data
- **Plenary Council:**
  - Served in the Plenary Council Secretariat Team at the Second Assembly
  - Edited documents and managed Plenary Council admin tasks
- **Pedagogy Development: Building on Positive Learnings from COVID-19 (Commissioned by the NCEC)**
  - Conducted Case study research
  - Analysed qualitative data
  - Prepared final report and presented to NCEC
- **Central Coast Social Profile:**
  - Compiled research findings from the 2016 Census, NSW Catholic Schools, CatholicCare, the Diocese of Broken Bay and from a range of local government reports to provide a strategic overview of the Central Coast region
- **2022-2023 Catholic Directory statistics:**
  - Collected data for the *Official Directory of the Catholic Church in Australia*
- **Australian Catholic Mapping Online (ACMO):**
  - Checked Diocesan boundaries for 2021
- **2018-2019 Catholic Religious Australia survey:**
  - Prepared journal article from research findings
- **XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops**
  - Provided executive support to the national working committee
  - Coordinated the national diocesan contact team
  - Prepared the National Synthesis document
  - Conducted national workshops and consultations
  - Coordinated the Australian consultation for the Continental Stage
  - Built the online portal and gathered submissions
  - Prepared the Australian feedback report
- **ACBC Response to Recommendations of the Governance Review:**
  - Compiled previously gathered research findings on Diocesan Pastoral Councils (DPCs) and Parish Pastoral Councils (PPCs)
  - Reviewed national and international models of DPCs and PPCs
  - Completed report on DPCs
  - Prepared draft report on PPCs
- **Online surveys commissioned by the ACBC:**
  - Pastoral Care of Bishops Survey
  - ACBC COVID Staff Working Arrangements Survey
  - Catholic Communications and COVID-19
- **Data Requests**
  - 19 Data Requests were processed  
*Data requests can range from a simple request for Census data, to more complex requests that require collating and analysing data from a number of sources over an extended period of time.*



# Comparing religious identification in Canada and Australia in the 2021 Census

As in Australia, the Canadian Census also collects information on the religious affiliation of their citizens. The Canadian Census takes place every 5 years, with data on religious affiliation being collected once every 10 years. The most recent Census, which included questions on religious affiliation, was undertaken in 2021.



Statistics  
Canada

Statistique  
Canada

Figures from Statistics Canada indicate that more than 19.3 million people (53.3 per cent of the population) reported affiliation with a Christian denomination. This had declined from 67.3 per cent in 2011 and 77.1 per cent in 2001. By way of comparison, in Australia in 2021, 11.1 million people or 43.9 per cent of the Australian population identified with a Christian denomination.

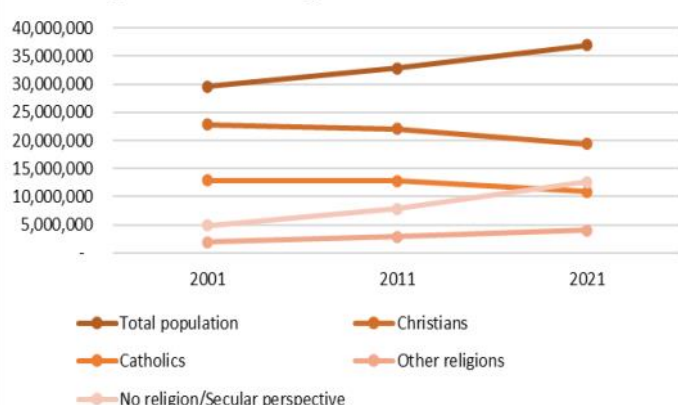
Catholics were the largest Christian denomination in Canada with 10.9 million people (29.9%) in 2021. This was higher than Australia, where Catholics made up 20 per cent of the population (5.1 million people). While the Catholic population of Canada was significantly larger, the figures for Anglicans are quite different. In Canada, 3.1 per cent of the population (1.1 million people) were Anglican in 2021, while in Australia, Anglicans made up 9.8 per cent of the population (2.5 million people). This difference is likely related to each country's colonial history, where Australia was largely settled by England in its early days, and Canada was settled by both the English and the French.

The table and graphs below set out the comparisons between the religious affiliation data for Canada and Australia from 2001 to 2021. More information on the religious affiliation data from the 2021 Canadian Census can be found at: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/221026/dq221026b-eng.htm>

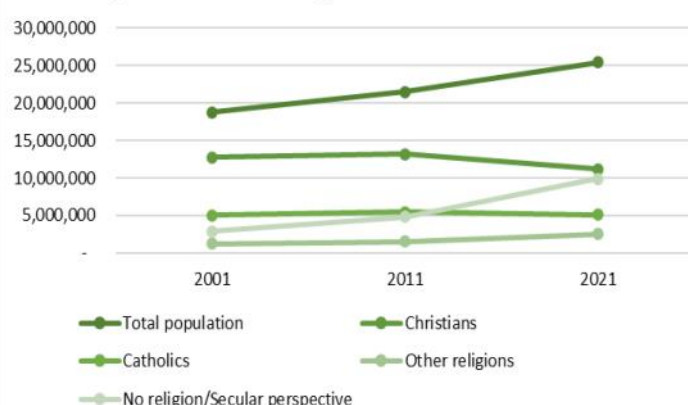
**Table 1. Comparison of Canadian and Australian Religious Affiliation data from 2001 to 2021**

	2001		2011		2021	
	Canada	Australia	Canada	Australia	Canada	Australia
Total population	29,639,030	18,767,249	32,852,320	21,507,719	36,991,981	25,422,788
Christian (N)	22,851,820	12,764,342	22,102,745	13,150,653	19,373,325	11,148,812
Christian (%)	77.1	68.0	67.3	61.1	53.3	43.9
Catholic (N)	12,936,910	5,001,624	12,810,705	5,439,267	10,880,360	5,075,907
Catholic (%)	43.6	26.6	39.0	25.3	29.9	20.0
Other religion (N)	1,887,115	911,226	2,898,975	1,546,341	4,020,695	2,538,587
Other religion (%)	6.4	4.9	8.8	7.2	12.1	10.0
No religion/Secular perspective (N)	4,900,090	2,905,993	7,850,605	4,796,797	12,577,475	9,886,965
No religion (%)	16.5	15.5	23.9	22.3	34.6	38.9

**Fig 1. Canadian Religious Affiliation 2001-2021**



**Fig 2. Australian Religious Affiliation 2001-2021**



# Overseas News



## Catholic Parish Life in the United States

While Australia and Canada have questions on religion built into the Census, other countries, such as the United States, do not have the same access to religious data about their citizens.

Consequently, the *America* magazine media team undertook an

extensive study of “How Catholic Parish Life is Changing in the United States”, which has recently been published as a documentary.

The team set out to find out the current state of Catholic parish life in the United States—whether the Catholic Church, as we know it, was dying, and what were the major shifts and trends in Catholic parish life. They reported that the search led to more questions than answers, but they saw value in learning what were these important questions, to help guide future challenging conversations about Church life.

Some questions they identified included:

- *How do we face the challenge of cultural integration as the Church in the United States becomes more Latino?*
- *How do the politics around immigration shape that conversation?*
- *How do we face the reality of declining numbers and the closing of churches without losing hope for the future?*
- *How does Catholic teaching on issues like abortion, racial justice or climate change shape the priorities of parishes in different regions?*
- *What does it mean to be a parish community when some members are thousands of miles away tuning into Mass each week on YouTube?*

Many of these questions are echoed in our own Australian situation. To read more about this study, the original article and a link to the documentary can be found at: <https://bit.ly/USCatholicParishLife>

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## Christmas Greetings From the National Centre for Pastoral Research

*And suddenly there was  
with the angel a  
multitude of the heavenly  
host, praising God and  
saying, "Glory to God in  
the highest heaven, and  
on earth peace among  
those whom he favours!"*

*Luke 2:13-14*



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*From the staff at the NCPR: Trudy, Stephen, Leith and Katherine.*

### CHRISTMAS SHUTDOWN



The NCPR office will be closed from **Thursday 22 December 2022** until **Thursday 5 January 2023**. During this time we will be unable to process any research requests.

We thank you for your cooperation.