

in a

# Word™

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# STOP ASIAN HATE

Photo by Rev. James Pawlicki, SVD

# Study: Black Catholics less religious than their Protestant counterparts

By Mark Pattison Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- A new study released Feb. 16 by the Pew Research Center on Black religiosity in the United States shows that Black Catholics are less religiously oriented than their Protestant counterparts.

But by the same token, Black Americans are more religious than the American public as a whole.

Higher percentages of Blacks believe in God or a higher power, say evil spirits can do harm, hold that religion is very important to them, pray to their ancestors to protect them from harm, say that opposing racism is essential to their faith, and believe that Black Muslim organizations have contributed to help Blacks move toward racial equality.

"What's interesting here is Black Catholics, compared to Black Protestants, by a whole host of measures, they're less religious," said Besheer Mohamed, a Pew senior researcher who helped guide the study from start to finish over nearly three years. "They're less likely to say religion is important to them, less likely to attend religious services, for a whole host of (reasons) -- with a couple of exceptions -- Black Catholics look less religious than Black Protestants."

Only 27% of Black Catholics said they go to church weekly or more often -- less than half of Black Protestants who say they go to a Black church -- while another 27% also said they go just a few times a year. Thirteen percent said they go one or twice a month, and 32% said they go seldom or never.

Among Blacks who identify with a religion, "Protestants (73%) are more likely than Catholics (49%) to say religion is very important to them," said the study, titled "Faith Among Black Americans."

About half again as many U.S. Blacks in general read Scripture regularly compared to Black Catholics, although the numbers narrow significantly when compared to churchgoing Black Catholics, defined as those going to church at least a few times a year. Pew said 26% of Black Catholics said they read Scripture at least weekly, while 18% said they do so a few times a month, with the remainder doing Scripture reading seldom or never.

The same is true about Scripture study and religious education. Twelve percent of Black Catholics say they participate at least weekly, compared to 22% of all Black adults, with another 14% saying they do so at least a few times a year.

Another area where Black Catholics participate less in comparison to their Protestant counterparts is watching worship services on television or online, or listening to religious services on radio -- 24% of Black Catholics compared to 31% of Black congregants overall.

Most of the survey was conducted before the coronavirus pandemic took hold of the United States last March, forcing many religious services into an online-only mode.

Fifty-four percent of Black adults who were raised Catholic still identify as such today; the remainder are mostly Protestant, 24%, or religiously unaffiliated, 19%. By contrast, 81% of Black Protestants still identify as such; only 1% of them now identify as Catholic.

Among Black Christians, Catholics are only half as likely as Protestants, 28% to 56%, to say they take the Bible literally, word for word. "Among Black Catholics, 57% say the Bible is the word of God but that it should not be taken literally," the Pew report said.

"Black Americans from the Caribbean are more likely than U.S.-born Black adults to be Catholic, though they are about equally likely to be religiously unaffiliated," it added.

The Pew survey showed that 6% of U.S. Blacks identify as Catholic. However, determining precisely where that fits among all denominations proved frustrating for Pew.

Pew interviewed 8,660 Black adults, most online, but some were mailed surveys. The margin of error, according to Mohamed, for the entire survey cohort is plus or minus 1.5 percentage points; for Black Catholics, six percentage points; and for churchgoing Black Catholics, 7 percentage points.



# STOP ASIAN HATE

CNS photo/Lindsey Wasson, Reuters



CNS photo/Brittany Hosea-Small, Reuters

White Supremacists just can't stop hating people who are different. Why people attack and mistreat African Americans, Latinos, Chinese, and people of Asian descent is troubling. With recent violent attacks on people of Asian descent it seems the hate must be confronted by Americans. For a Christian nation this xenophobia is an outright sin.

CNS photo/Shannon Stapleton, Reuters



"No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background or his religion. People learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite."  
-Nelson Mandela

"Race and racism is a reality that so many of us grow up learning to just deal with. But if we ever hope to move past it, it can't just be on people of color to deal with it. It's up to all of us — Black, white, everyone — no matter how well-meaning we think we might be, to do the honest, uncomfortable work of rooting it out."  
-Michelle Obama



CNS photo/Rachel Wisniewski, Reuters



CNS photo/Rachel Wisniewski, Reuters

"Racism arises when—either consciously or unconsciously—a person holds that his or her own race or ethnicity is superior, and therefore judges persons of other races or ethnicities as inferior and unworthy of equal regard. When this conviction or attitude leads individuals or groups to exclude, ridicule, mistreat, or unjustly discriminate against persons on the basis of their race or ethnicity, it is sinful. Racist acts are sinful because they violate justice. They reveal a failure to acknowledge the human dignity of the persons offended, to recognize them as the neighbors Christ calls us to love "(Mt 22:39).  
-Open Wide Our Hearts

# in a word or two



CNS photo/courtesy University of Notre Dame

**SOUTH BEND, Ind. (CNS) -- Carla Harris, a top executive at the investment bank Morgan Stanley, and a celebrated gospel singer, speaker and author, will be awarded the University of Notre**

**Dame's 2021 Laetare Medal. The medal, the oldest and most prestigious honor given to American Catholics, will be awarded at the university's May 23 graduation ceremony.** "Harris has exemplified the highest ideals of American enterprise, championed the principle that opportunity should never be denied on the basis of gender or race and generously mentored countless rising leaders," said Holy Cross Father John Jenkins, Notre Dame's president, in a March 14 announcement of this year's award recipient. "Enriched by her gifts as a singer and public speaker, her work in the competitive world of banking is firmly rooted in her commitment to service, developing the next generation of leaders and her Catholic faith," he said. The Laetare Medal is announced each year on Laetare Sunday, the fourth Sunday in Lent. Harris, vice chairman of wealth management and senior client adviser at Morgan Stanley, began her career at a time when very few of her colleagues were Black or women. She was chair of the Morgan Stanley Foundation from 2005 to 2014 and is a member of the boards for Harvard University and Walmart.

**WASHINGTON (CNS) --** When Catholic educators met virtually this year at their annual conference, they took a close look at racism and how teachers should talk about its existence and work to promote an anti-racist environment in their schools. "The challenges are already there; talking about them doesn't make them appear," said a presenter in an April 7 workshop on schools' anti-racism efforts. Other workshops highlighted culturally responsive classrooms or diversity and inclusion. But an April 6 presentation by Shannen Dee Williams, an assistant professor of history at Villanova University, set the tone for talks that followed with its upfront challenge to Catholic educators. Williams urged teachers to share Black Catholic history that not only highlights Black Catholics but also tells difficult truths about the Catholic Church's involvement in slavery and segregation. "We have to grapple with that," said Williams, who pointed out that even St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, who founded the Sisters of Charity and is described as the patron saint of Catholic schools, was a slave owner.

**Williams, who specializes in African American, women's, religious and civil rights history, spoke frankly about the church's involvement in the slave trade from religious orders owning slaves to building churches in New Orleans with slave labor. "Every Catholic should know how the church is deeply implicated," she said, after debunking myths the church was "at the forefront of desegregation."**



Shannen Dee Williams

CNS photo/John Shetron, Villanova University



On Easter Sunday morning a devastating cyclone ravaged islands in Indonesia. Floods, rain, mud slides wiped out homes, roads, electricity and at this time over 160 people have lost their lives.

The cyclone forced residents, most of them women, children, and elders, to stay in dire condition in 19 evacuation camps, half of them located in churches. Pictures seen here show the work of the Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters bringing food and relief to the thousands of misplaced people.



**For Divine Word Missionaries ministering here in the United States it was alarming news because their families were in the direct path of the Cyclone. The picture of two men carrying a woman from her flooded home is the mother of Fr. Agustinus Seran, SVD. Father Seran is presently pastor of St. Rose de Lima in Bay Saint Louis. Other SVD priests also received news of friends and families who are homeless and some have perished.**

If you know of an Indonesian Divine Word Missionary keep them and their families in your prayers and thoughts. There has been no mention to date of this catastrophe in USA media. Here is a link to an article in the Guardian about the sufferings of the people in Indonesia:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/apr/10/cyclone-seroja-aftermath-i-prayed-and-prayed-in-the-dark>

Divine Word Missionaries is an international missionary community of over 7,000 brothers and priests. In 1905 the SVDs began working among African Americans in the Southern United States. Today, Divine Word Missionaries work in over 35 parishes in Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, Florida and Arkansas.

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