**Spotlight On: Catholicism**

**Catholicism is one of the largest and oldest religions in the world.**

Globally, there are approximately 1.2 billion members of the Church, with almost 40% of the Catholic population located in South America and the Caribbean.

**In the US, one in five adults identifies Catholicism as their primary religious affiliation.** The US Catholic population has shifted from being concentrated in the Northeast and Midwest to having larger populations in the South and West regions of the country.

Catholicism centers around the seven sacraments - baptism, reconciliation or confession, the Eucharist or Holy Communion, confirmation into the Church, marriage, holy orders of the priesthood, and the sacrament of the sick.

In addition to the belief in God and Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary and saints play a significant role in Catholicism. The Virgin Mary is often viewed as occupying a special place between God and his people, while infants are often named after saints in the hope that they will grow to embody the saint’s qualities in life.

To learn more about these issues and how Catholicism may impact interactions with your patients, please visit the CultureVision Catholicism group page.

**RELATIONSHIP TO BIOMEDICINE**

In general, Catholics believe that biomedical treatments are used in cooperation with God’s grace for relief and healing. However, for many Catholics, spirituality may play a significant role in their health and healing.

- For those who are ill, it may be important to have a priest present for prayer and giving the sacrament of the sick, reconciliation (confession), and the Eucharist or Holy Communion.
- In addition, some Catholic patients may request to keep religious objects such as a rosary or religious medal with them during procedures.

**SANCTITY OF LIFE**

Since the sacredness of all life is a main tenet of Catholicism, there is often an intersection between health decisions and Catholic teachings.

- The belief in the sacredness of life means that most Catholics are opposed to abortion, and the importance of procreation in marriage may prevent some Catholics from utilizing many contraceptive methods.
- Additionally, some Catholics may not want to be exposed to vaccines made with stem cells, and may have specific beliefs about end of life concerns such as pain management, advance directives, and euthanasia.

**Did you know?**

- 78% of the Catholic population in the U.S. consumes alcohol, compared to 61% of the non-Catholic Christian population.
- Rates of contraceptive use among the U.S. Catholic population are similar to those of the general population in the U.S.

**Calling all Cultural Competency Superstars!**

Share your story of how CultureVision has influenced your patient care with us at culturevision@cookross.com and we may feature you in a future issue of this newsletter!
Diversity in Catholicism

The global Catholic population has experienced significant growth in the last century, both in numbers and in ethnic diversity.

- Catholics account for almost half of all Christians in the world and 16% of the world’s population.
- In 1910, almost two-thirds of the Catholic population lived in Europe, but in 2010, nearly 40% of Catholics lived in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- In the United States, compared to the general population, Catholics are more likely to be Hispanic (34% vs. 15%) and are more likely to be immigrants (27% vs. 15%).

More than half (55%) of the Latino population in the United States is Catholic. Brazil and Mexico have the two largest Catholic populations in the world, with 65% and 85% of the population identifying as Catholic, respectively. Other CultureVision ethnic groups with large Catholic populations include Argentinean, Caribbean/West Indian, Central American, Cuban, Filipino, Haitian, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, and Puerto Rican.

Although the foundation and basic teachings of Catholicism remains consistent across cultures, some aspects may be practiced differently among different ethnic groups. Mexican Americans may place special importance on the Virgin of Guadalupe and pray to her specifically. Similarly, the Matka Boska, or Black Madonna, is especially sacred to Polish Catholics, who often make annual pilgrimages to the Black Madonna in Czestochowa, Poland.

Some ethnic groups, such as Cuban, Haitian, and Filipino, may choose to combine indigenous or traditional beliefs and practices with those of Catholicism. The practice of Santería originated in Cuba as the combination of the West African slave worship of Orisha deities and the Spanish Catholic veneration of the saints. The practice of Voodoo, practiced among Haitians, also has Catholic roots. Voodoo deities known as Loa each have a particular Catholic saint that they are associated with, and are thought to protect believers.

In addition to the shift of the global Catholic population from Europe to Latin America and the Caribbean, the Catholic population in the Asia-Pacific region has increased from 5% to 12%, and from less than 1% to 16% in Sub-Saharan Africa between 1910 and 2010.

For up-to-date news on Cultural Competency, follow us on Twitter @myCultureVision!

CultureVision is brought to you by...

IVY TECH LIBRARIES

For more information, stop by your Ivy Tech Bloomington Library in Room D123 or call 812-330-6080.

Email us at: bl-library@lists.ivytech.edu