

# Religion in Poland

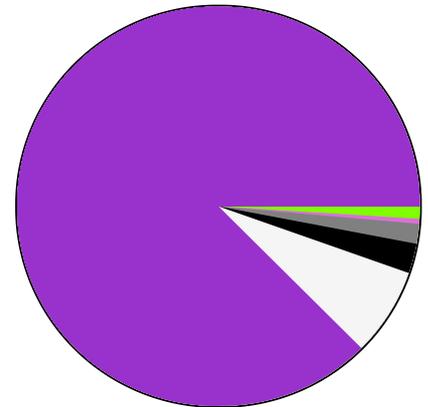
While a number of religious communities operate in Poland, the majority of the country's population adheres to Christianity. Within this, the largest grouping is the Roman Catholic Church, with 87.5% of Poles in 2011 identifying as Roman Catholic (census conducted by the Central Statistical Office (GUS)).<sup>[1]</sup> According to the Institute for Catholic Church Statistics, 36.7% of Polish Catholic believers attended Sunday church services in 2016.<sup>[2]</sup>

Catholicism continues to play an important role in the lives of many Poles and the Roman Catholic Church in Poland enjoys social prestige and political influence, despite repression experienced under Communist rule.<sup>[3]</sup> Its members regard it as a repository of Polish heritage and culture.<sup>[4]</sup> Poland lays claim to having the highest proportion of Catholic citizens of any country in Europe except for Malta (including more than in Italy, Spain, and Ireland).<sup>[5]</sup>

This numerical dominance results from the Nazi-era German Holocaust of Jews living in Poland and the World War II casualties among Polish religious minorities,<sup>[6][7][8][9]</sup> as well as the flight and expulsion of Germans, many of whom were not Catholics, at the end of World War II.

The rest of the population consists mainly of Eastern Orthodox (Polish Orthodox Church) (504,400 believers, Polish and Belarusian),<sup>[10]</sup> various Protestant churches (the largest being the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland with 61,270 members)<sup>[10]</sup> and Jehovah's Witnesses (118,774).<sup>[10]</sup> There are about 55,000 Greek Catholics in Poland.<sup>[10]</sup> Other religions practiced in Poland, by less than 1% of the population, include Islam and Judaism and to a lesser extent Hinduism and Buddhism.<sup>[11]</sup>

According to 2015 statistics by Statistics Poland, 94.2% of the population is affiliated to a religion, while 3.1% doesn't belong to any religion. The most practiced religion was Roman Catholicism, whose followers comprised the 92.8% of the population, followed by the Eastern Orthodox with 0.7% (in rise from 0.4% in 2011, also due to the recent Ukrainian immigrants), Jehovah's Witnesses with 0.3% and the various Protestant denominations comprising the 0.2%.<sup>[12]</sup> According to the same survey, 61.1% of the population gave religion high to very high importance whilst 13.8% regarded religion with little or no importance at all; while believers are more predominant in Eastern Poland.



Religion in Poland according to the 2011 census, conducted by the Central Statistical Office (GUS)<sup>[1]</sup>

- Roman Catholicism (87.5%)
- Opting out of answer (7.1%)
- Non believer (2.4%)
- Not stated (1.6%)
- Orthodox Christianity (0.4%)
- Other religions (1%)

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