

BISHOPS CONVENE AMIDST GOOD NEWS

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) will meet November 10-13 in Washington, D.C. for their annual meeting. They will do so amidst good news from two surveys of Roman Catholics.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented on this today:

“The latest Gallup survey, reported today in the *New York Times*, shows that forty-nine percent of Catholics say they feel the bishops are doing a good job; this is up from 35 percent a year ago. In a related story in today’s *Washington Post*, we learn from a study done by researchers at Georgetown University that Catholics were more generous in their donations in 2002 than they were the previous year. The 5 percent increase was substantial—it was twice the rate of inflation. And considering that 2002 was the year that news of the scandal broke, and the market went south, the results are startling. With the Church on the mend, and the market picking up, it looks like 2003 will be an even better year for the Church.

“The good news comes at a time when the bishops need to take a serious look at who their real friends are. Meeting today for three days in Milwaukee is the radical reform group Call to Action. This is the same group that holds funds in escrow for members in parishes unhappy with church operations. The same group has taken out ads in secular newspapers calling for a boycott of dioceses it doesn’t like.

“Then there is Voice of the Faithful. On November 10, it will hold a press conference across the street from where the bishops will be meeting to list its demands for financial

accountability. This is the same group that holds hundreds of thousands of dollars in escrow from parishioners who are unhappy with diocesan operations. It is the same group that collects money from Catholics to be given to the local diocese on the condition that the local Ordinary spend the money according to its dictates. And they are lecturing the bishops on financial accountability!

“In essence, the surveys indicate that lay Catholics are coming back to the fold, save for those who seek to control the Church.”