

CHURCH-GOING CATHOLICS MATTER MOST

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a new Pew survey of Catholics:

A new survey by the Pew Research Center on Catholics and abortion found that there is a big difference between practicing Catholics (those who attend Mass weekly or more) and non-practicing Catholics (attend less often) on the subject of abortion. There is an even bigger difference between practicing Catholics and the American population.

Among all U.S. adults, 19% believe abortion should be legal in all cases, bar none. Among Catholics the figure is 13%. The figure for practicing Catholics is 4%; it is 16% for non-practicing Catholics.

About three-quarters of Catholics (76%) say abortion should be illegal in some cases but legal in others. This means the vast majority of Catholics reject the provisions of *Roe v. Wade*, which allows abortion through term.

Similarly, the idea that a fetus is a person deserving of rights represents the view of 44% of all Catholics, but among practicing Catholics the figure jumps to 70%; it is 35% for non-practicing Catholics, and 38% for all U.S. adults.

Most Americans (78%) are opposed to what *Roe* permits—abortion at 24 weeks—but the figure for Catholics is even greater (84%). Among practicing Catholics, 95% oppose abortion at 24 weeks; the figure for non-practicing Catholics is 80%.

With regard to party affiliation, about 60% of Republican Catholics believe “life begins at conception.” Among Catholic Democrats, the figure is half that. The latter is somewhat more opposed to abortion at each stage of pregnancy than

Democrats overall, but they are not nearly as opposed as Catholic Republicans are.

We know from a 2014 study by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University that Catholics who attended Catholic schools attend Mass at greater frequency than Catholics who did not go to Catholic schools, and that those who received the Sacrament of Confirmation are even more likely to attend Mass.

Both reports show that Catholic schools matter. It should also matter with regard to the distribution of diocesan funding. While care for the needy must continue, there seems to be more tolerance for closing Catholic schools than there is for cutting social programs.

There is not much the bishops can do about the difference between Catholic Democrats and Catholic Republicans. This is made especially difficult given our pro-abortion “devout Catholic” Democrat president. But some bishops have been more vocal than others. Silence in the face of death is no virtue.