

DO CATHOLICS OPPOSE THE OBAMA MANDATE?



Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments as follows:

Survey research was pioneered by Columbia University sociologists during World War II. By the time I was studying for my doctorate in sociology at New York University in the 1970s, the scientific nature of survey research had made great strides. But much depends on the methodology, as well as the questions asked.

The *New York Times* is reporting today that a majority of Catholics (it does not cite the percentage, either in the article or on the *New York Times*/CBS Poll website) “are at odds with the [Catholic] church’s official stance.”

A survey by the Pew Research Center’s Forum on Religion and Public Life reports that 55 percent of all Catholics, and 63 percent of those who attend church weekly, are opposed to the Obama mandate.

A Rasmussen survey found that 77 percent of Catholics oppose the Obama mandate.

What’s going on? The *Times* asked respondents, “Do you support or oppose a recent federal requirement that private health insurance plans cover the full cost of birth control for their female patients?” Notice there was no mention of the religious liberty implications, nor of the issue of exemptions. It’s just about free services for women.

Pew asked whether there should be an exemption for religiously affiliated institutions that object. Similarly, Rasmussen asked whether “individuals should have the right to choose between different types of health insurance plans.”

In short, how the question is framed affects the answer. I will leave it to the reader to decide whether the *Times* asked about the real issue.