

HERE'S A NEW ONE

Think you've heard it all? Here's a new one.

On December 8, the *Wall Street Journal* ran a front-page story on how few women in Mexico use tampons. Two percent, to be exact. In Italy, the figure isn't much better, registering a measly four-percent. Now what do Mexico and Italy have in common? You guessed it—Catholicism.

“The Roman Catholic Church says it has no official position on tampons,” is how the story developed. “Nonetheless, some priests have spoken out against the product, associating it with birth control and sexual activities that are forbidden by the Church. Indeed, Tampax faced objections from priests in the U.S. when it introduced tampons in 1936.”

We were curious and so we decided to ask some basic questions. Patrick Scully reached one of the authors, Emily Nelson, asking her for the names of the priests who had objected to tampons. As expected, she couldn't produce one name. She rests her case exclusively on tales told to her by local women as she was traveling in Mexico. Swell. Our guess is the authors can't tell the difference between folklore and theology. In any event, it's a good thing for the Church that Emily didn't venture into bars while traveling—God only knows what she'd be telling the *Journal*.

We're also lucky that Nelson didn't investigate the Church's position on mouthwash, for upon discovering there isn't one, we'd no doubt be blamed for tolerating bad breath as well.