

NEW YORK TIMES POLL PROVES REVEALING

According to a recent *New York Times* poll, the pope's favorability rating among Catholics at the end of March was 27 percent. After hearing the non-stop negative media reports over the past month, his favorability rating jumped to 43 percent. How can this be? It was due to the backlash. When asked whether the media have been harder on the Catholic Church, 64 percent of said yes, and almost half said the abuse stories were blown out of proportion.

Three in four Catholics believe the Vatican today is more interested in preventing abuse than trying to cover it up; this represents a 180 degree turnaround when asked how it handled the problem in the past. Yet about the same number think that abuse is still going on. This is likely due to two factors: the realization that sexual misconduct will never be wholly stamped out; and the dearth of media coverage on the success the Church has had. Regarding the latter, the latest annual report on this subject shows that between 2008-2009, there were only six credible allegations made against over 40,000 priests. But the *Times* story on this subject (which totaled 92 words) merely said that the number of accusations had declined, never citing the figure of six.

The news story on the survey said that "most Catholics are unconvinced" that there is an underlying problem in the priesthood with homosexuality. Yet the data show that only 37 percent say homosexuality is not a factor: 30 percent say it is a major factor and 23 percent say it is minor. This is striking given the media propaganda—led by the *Times*—that the scandal involves pedophilia. In fact, most of the cases involve homosexuality.

Those of us who have been defending the pope, criticizing the

media and telling the truth about the link between homosexuality and sexual abuse have reason to be pleased with the survey results.