

POPE FRANCIS AT SIX MONTHS



Bill Donohue analyzes the way the print media reacted to Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis after their first six months as pontiff:

We looked at the editorials in 15 of the nation's largest newspapers to see what they said about the current pope, and his predecessor, after their first six months in office (Pope Francis will celebrate his first six months on September 13).

The papers we examined were: *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *Boston Globe*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Dallas Morning News*, *Denver Post*, *Kansas City Star*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Miami Herald*, *New York Times*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, *Sun-Sentinel*, *USA Today*, *Washington Post*.

There were 14 editorials on Pope Benedict XVI and 11 on Pope Francis. The difference can probably be chalked up to the familiarity of the former versus the unfamiliarity of the latter. But there were more similarities than dissimilarities.

Two segments of the population dominated the media's interest in the two popes: homosexuals and women. In the 25 editorials, homosexuals were cited 13 times, and women 15. With the exception of a few editorials that gave faint praise to Pope Francis for not judging gays of goodwill, they were uniformly critical of the teachings of the Catholic Church on both subjects. Only two newspapers, *USA Today* and the *Washington Post*, did not mention either subject explicitly.

There is no other religion that is subjected to this kind of micro-scrutiny. The elite media react to Islam and Judaism

with cautious restraint, and with voyeuristic intrusiveness to Catholicism. Yet when it comes to teachings on homosexuality and women, there is very little difference between the three monotheistic religions. Judaism is respected, Islam is feared, and Christianity—especially Catholicism—is loathed.

To read a brief analysis of each newspaper's editorials, click [here](#).