

QUINNIPIAC POLL IS FLAWED

A poll conducted by the Quinnipiac Research Institute at the beginning of October stated that there are more than 78 million Catholics in the United States and Quinnipiac interviewed 392 of them. The actual number of Catholics who go to Mass on a weekly basis that they interviewed was 153. Most polls ask self-identified Catholics if they “attend church weekly”; “attend church nearly every week or monthly”; or “seldom or never attend church.” Not this one—there were just two choices: “attend weekly” or “less.” In other words, the poll does not distinguish between those who attend monthly and those who have stopped going—they’re lumped together.

They are lumped together for a reason, and it is a dishonest one: Every poll ever taken shows that the more practicing the Catholic is, the more in line he is with the Church’s teachings. In this poll, 60 percent of the Catholics questioned said that they do not attend church weekly. Keep in mind that many of these never attend! To what extent can a person be considered a Catholic if he never practices his religion? About as much as a teetotaler can be considered a boozier.

Last March, Quinnipiac interviewed 497 Catholics; this poll is even worse. The margin of error in the poll released in early October was plus or minus 5 percent; this is worse than the 4 percent figure in the March poll.

The data on abortion are particularly interesting. It is being reported that 36 percent of Catholics think abortion should be legal in most cases. But the figure drops to 20 percent for Catholics who attend church weekly; it is 45 percent for those who do not. Fully 61 percent of practicing Catholics think abortion should be illegal in most cases, while only 29 percent of non-practicing Catholics think this way. These differences are huge, but don’t look for the media, or

Quinnipiac, to trumpet them.

Maurice Carroll, the director of the poll, delights in saying how Catholics differ with the “pulpit thundering” perspective they are offered. Spoken like a man who hasn’t seen a pulpit in decades.