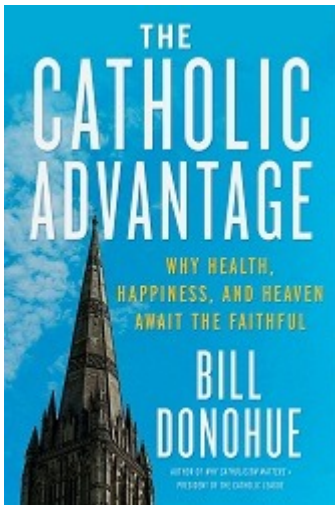


# SUICIDE AND THE CATHOLIC ADVANTAGE



Bill Donohue comments on the link between religion and suicide:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently found that suicide rates in the U.S. spiked between 1994 and 2014. While women are less likely to kill themselves than men, their rate of suicide jumped by 80 percent over this period. But not all women are at risk.

A study released this week by JAMA Psychiatry, an American Medical Association journal, reported that “Frequent religious service attendance was associated with substantially lower suicide risk among U.S. women compared with women who never attended religious services.” To be exact, the researchers studied approximately 90,000 nurses, mostly women, and found that Catholic and Protestant women had a suicide rate that was half that for women as a whole.

Of the nearly 7,000 Catholic women who went to Mass more than once a week, none committed suicide. Overall, practicing Protestant women were seven times more likely to commit suicide than their Catholic counterparts, suggesting there really is a Catholic advantage. Indeed, my 2015 book, [\*The Catholic Advantage\*](#), substantiates this finding.

Today, those without a religious affiliation have the highest

suicide rates, illustrated most dramatically in San Francisco: someone jumps off the Golden Gate Bridge to his death every two weeks. It is not the faithful who are waiting in line to jump—it's the non-believing free spirits.

On a related note, Gallup released a survey yesterday that shows approximately 9 in 10 Americans believe in God. But as we learned from the JAMA Psychiatry study, only those who regularly attend religious services are less likely to commit suicide.

In other words, mere belief, and amorphous expressions of spirituality, aren't enough to ward off the demons that trigger suicide. And no group is more at risk than atheists.