



CBS NEWS POLL
For release: Friday, April 2, 2010
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ABUSE SCANDALS AND POPE BENEDICT XVI

March 29 - April 1, 2010

As more cases of sexual abuse by Catholic priests in the United States and Europe have come to light, most Americans (and more than half of Catholics) think the Pope and the Vatican have done a poor job handling the matter. Moreover, these evaluations may be having an impact on overall opinions of Pope Benedict XVI -- fewer Catholics view him favorably today than did four years ago.

55% of Catholics give the Pope poor marks for his handling of charges of sexual abuse by priests, while just 20% say the Pope has done a good job. Both Catholic men and women think he has handled the issue poorly.

Assessments among Americans nationwide are even more critical - nearly seven in 10 say the Pope has done a poor job handling charges of sexual abuse by priests.

POPE'S HANDLING OF CHARGES OF ABUSE BY PRIESTS

	All	Catholics
Good job	13%	20%
Poor job	69	55
Don't know	18	25

Pope Benedict XVI, who has been the leader of the Catholic Church since April 2005, continues to receive favorable views from American Catholics, but these opinions are less positive today compared to four years ago. 27% of Catholics now view Pope Benedict XVI favorably, a drop of thirteen points since 2006. And while few Catholics - just 11% - hold an unfavorable opinion of the Pope, the percentage who says they are undecided about him has risen from 15% to 36% today.

The Pope is less popular among Americans overall: more now view him negatively than positively. 24% of Americans hold an unfavorable opinion of the Pope, up from 4% in 2006. 15% hold a favorable opinion of him, virtually unchanged from four years ago.

VIEWS OF POPE BENEDICT XVI

	All Americans		Catholics	
	Now	4/2006	Now	4/2006
Favorable	15%	14%	27%	40%
Unfavorable	24	4	11	1
Undecided	26	17	36	15
Haven't heard enough	31	59	19	39

This poll was conducted among a random sample of 858 adults nationwide, interviewed by telephone March 29- April 1, 2010. Phone numbers were dialed from random digit dial samples of both standard land-line and cell phones. The error due to sampling for results based on the entire sample could be plus or minus three percentage points. The error for subgroups is higher. This poll release conforms to the Standards of Disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

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q28 Is your opinion of Pope Benedict the Sixteenth favorable, not favorable, undecided, or haven't heard enough about Pope Benedict the Sixteenth yet to have an opinion?

	** TOTAL RESPONDENTS **		
	Total	Catholics	Apr06a
	%	%	%
Favorable	15	27	14
Not favorable	24	11	4
Undecided	26	36	17
Haven't heard enough	31	19	59
Refused	4	7	6

q29 Do you think the Pope and the Vatican have done a good job or a poor job handling charges of sexual abuse of children and teenagers by priests?

Good job	13	20
Poor job	69	55
DK/NA	18	25

	<u>UNWEIGHTED</u>	<u>WEIGHTED</u>
Total Respondents	858	
Total Catholics	204	212