

# The Papal Visit: Catholics Reflect



May 2008

# How the Survey was Conducted

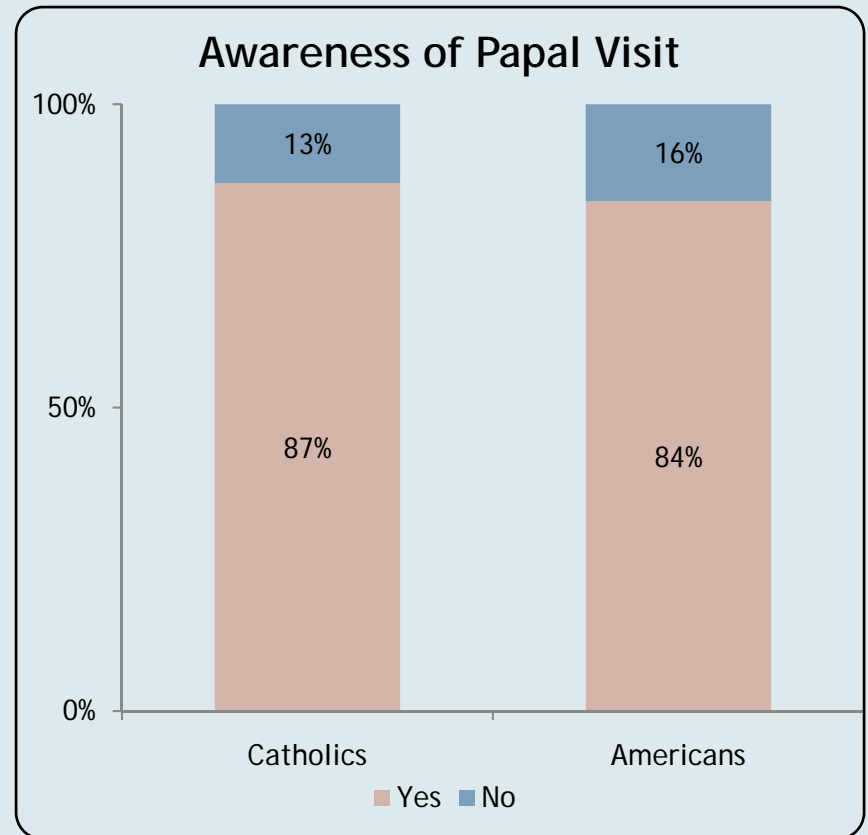
- *The Papal Visit: Catholics Reflect* reports the results of a national survey of Catholic Americans' reactions to Pope Benedict XVI's trip to the United States in April 2008. It is part of a larger study of Americans' impressions of the Papal visit.
- The survey by the Knights of Columbus was conducted by the Marist College Institute for Public Opinion.
- 502 Catholics eighteen years of age or older who live in the continental United States were interviewed April 22<sup>nd</sup> through April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2008.
- The survey results for all Catholics are statistically significant at  $\pm 4.4\%$ . The margin of error increases for sub-groups in the population.

# Introduction

- Most Catholics believe Pope Benedict XVI's trip to the U.S met or exceeded their expectations including 88% of practicing Catholics and 73% of non-practicing Catholics.
- Catholics generally have a more positive view of Pope Benedict XVI as a result of his trip. More Catholics are likely to describe His Holiness positively in his role as a spiritual leader, a world leader, as someone who cares about people like themselves, and as someone who promotes good relations between the Catholic Church and other religions.
- The most meaningful part of the visit for nearly four in ten Catholics was the meeting between Pope Benedict XVI and the victims and families of children abused by priests. This is followed by 15% of Catholics who were most moved by his visit to Ground Zero, and 13% who say the Masses at Nationals Park and Yankee Stadium were most meaningful to them.
- Catholics say they were personally affected by Pope Benedict XVI's visit: many are more likely to appreciate being a Catholic and to understand the Catholic Church's position on important issues; a majority are more in touch with their own spiritual values; and half are more likely to make family a bigger part of their life and lead a moral life.

# An Historic Event: Catholics Aware of the Papal Visit

- Like most Americans, 87% of Catholics saw, read, or heard something about Pope Benedict XVI's visit to the United States in April 2008.



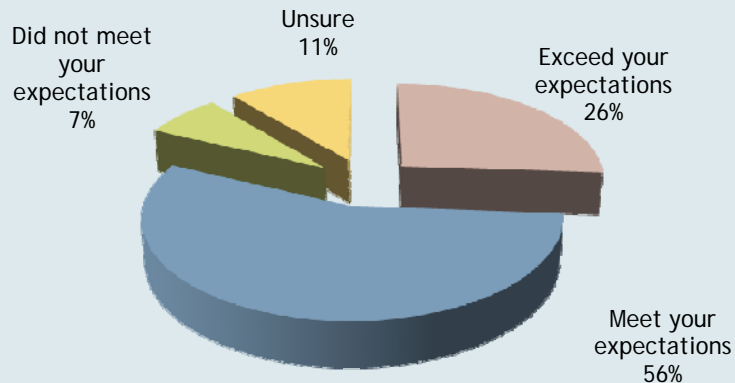
Question wording: Pope Benedict XVI recently visited the United States. Did you see, read, or hear anything about Pope Benedict's visit?

# Were Expectations Met?

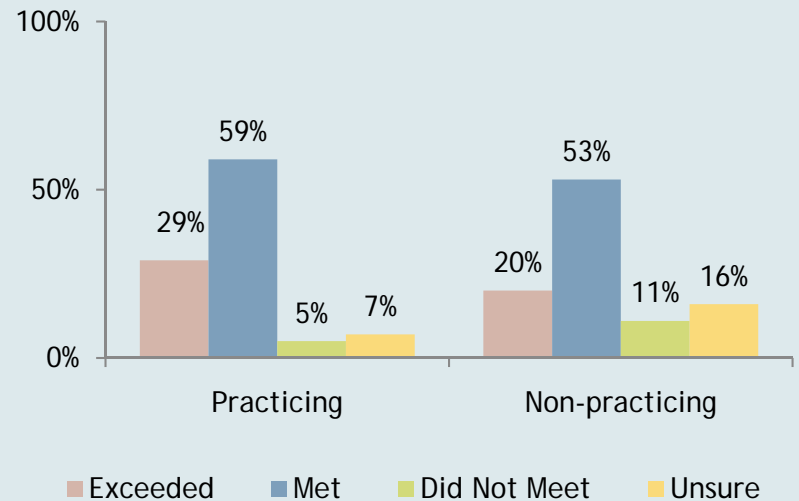
- 82% of Catholics feel Pope Benedict XVI's trip to the United States met or exceeded their expectations.
- This includes 26% of Catholics who believe the Papal visit was even better than what they had expected.

- 88% of practicing Catholics feel Pope Benedict XVI's trip to the United States met or exceeded their expectations.
- 73% of non-practicing Catholics share this view.

### Catholics' Expectations of Pope Benedict XVI's Visit



### Catholics' Expectations of Pope Benedict XVI's Visit

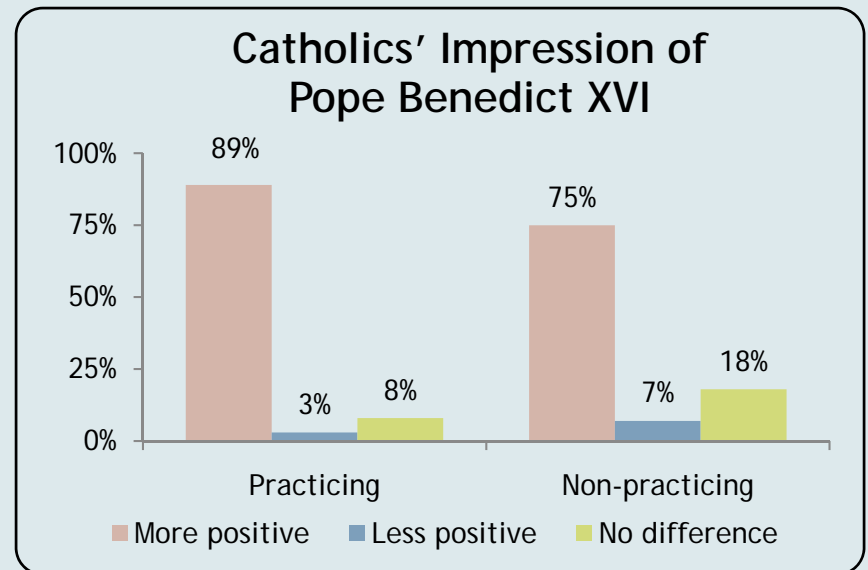
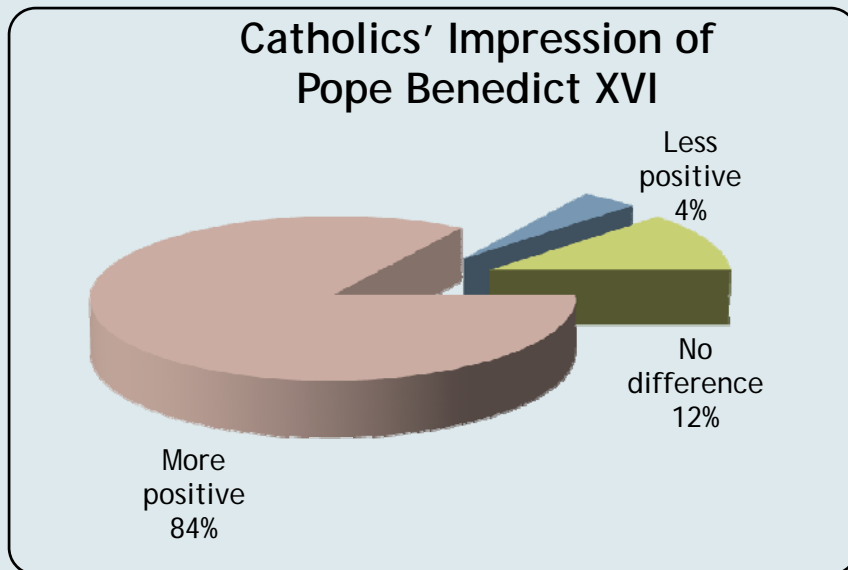


Question wording: Overall, thinking about Pope Benedict's visit to the United States, did his visit exceed your expectations, meet your expectations, or did his visit not meet your expectations?

# Making an Impression

As a result of what they saw and heard during Pope Benedict XVI's trip to the U.S.:

- 84% of Catholics have a more positive view of Pope Benedict XVI;
- This includes 89% of practicing Catholics and 75% of non-practicing Catholics who share this view of Pope Benedict XVI.

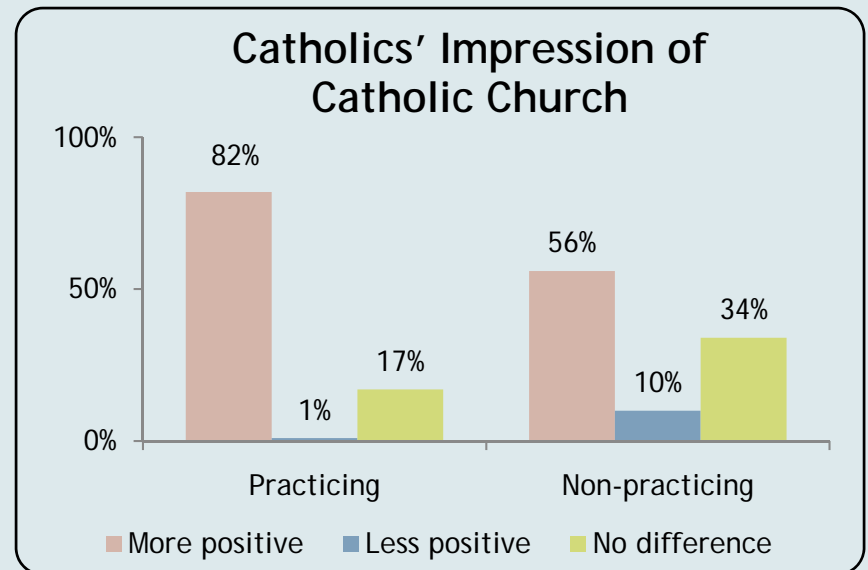
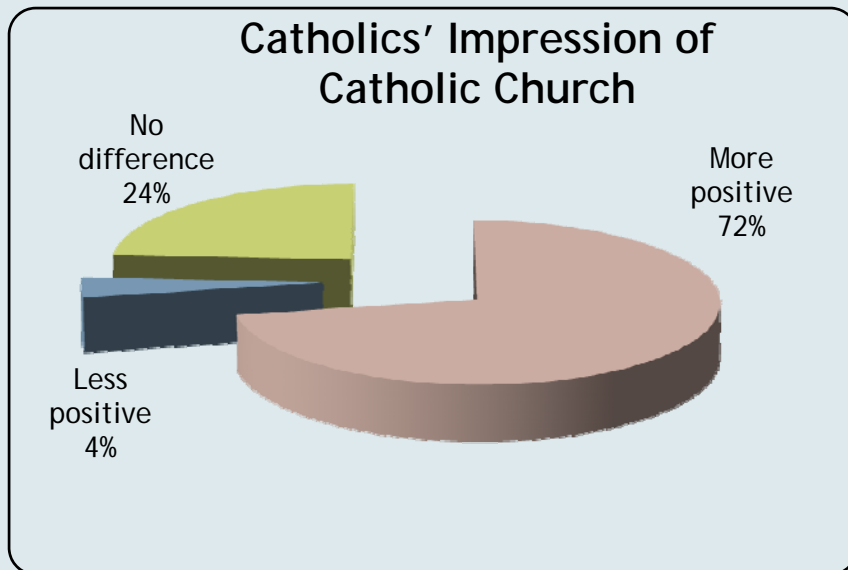


Question wording: From what you know about Pope Benedict's visit to the United States, do you have a more positive or less positive impression of Pope Benedict XVI?

# Making an Impression

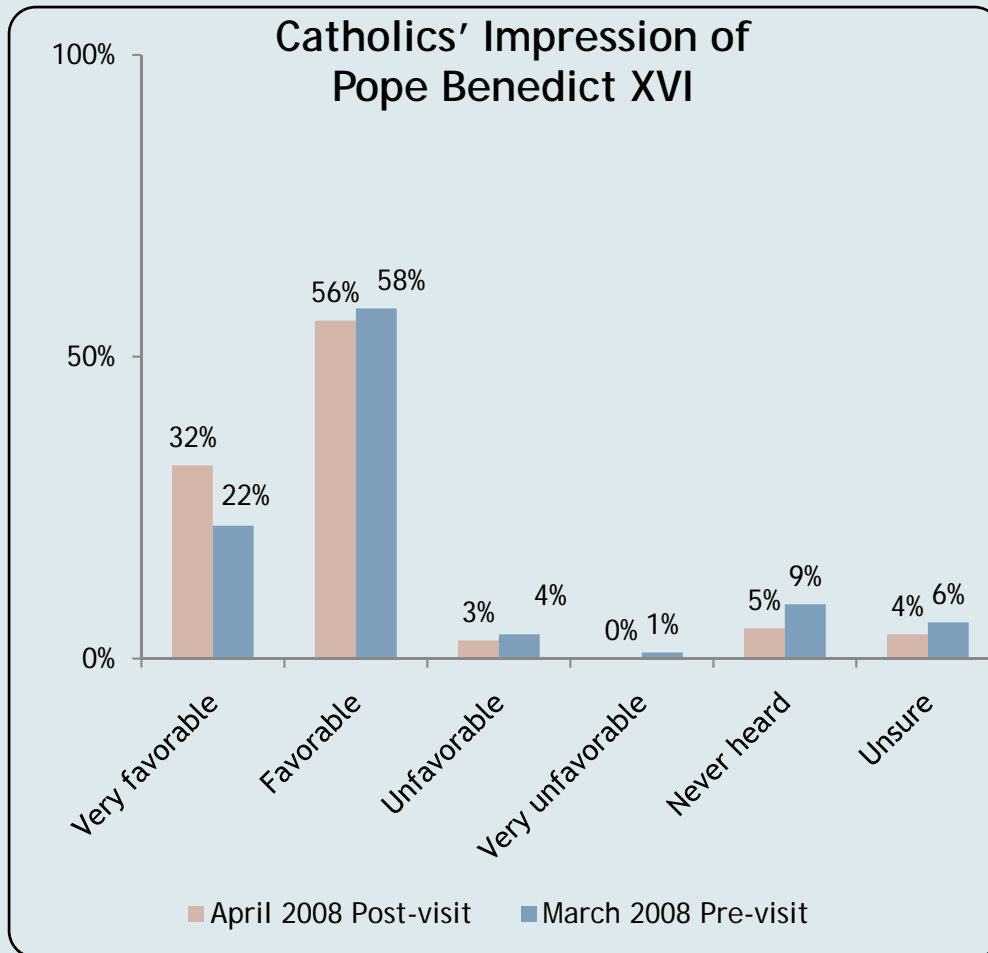
As a result of what they saw and heard during Pope Benedict XVI's trip to the U.S.:

- 72% of Catholics have a more positive view of the Catholic Church;
- This includes 82% of practicing Catholics and the majority of non-practicing Catholics.



Question wording: From what you know about Pope Benedict's visit to the United States, do you have a more positive or less positive impression of the Catholic Church?

# Making an Impression

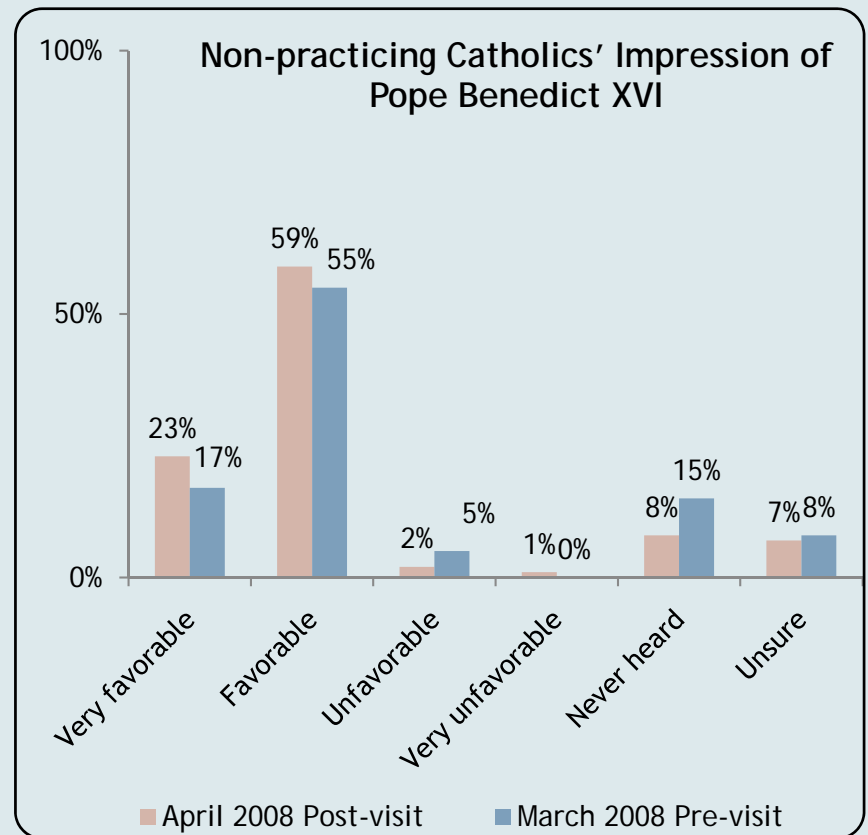
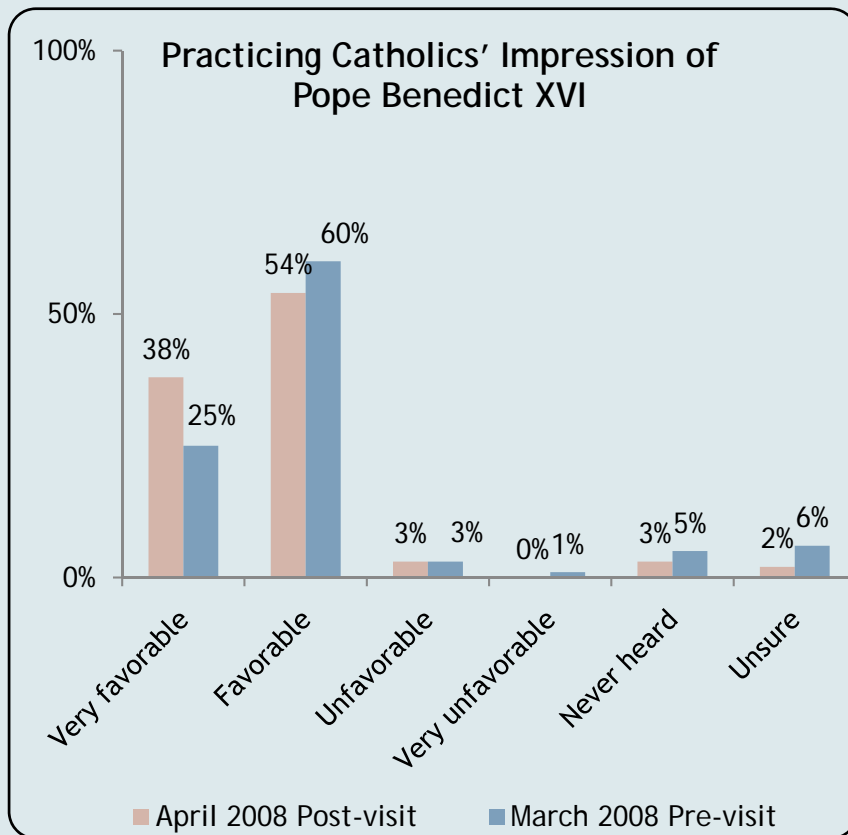


- More Catholics have a positive view of Pope Benedict XVI than they did before his visit to the U.S.
- 88% of Catholics now have either a very favorable or favorable impression of Pope Benedict XVI. Prior to his visit to the U.S., 80% of Catholics shared this view.
- The difference is in the increase in the proportion of Catholics who have a very favorable view of His Holiness and a decline in the proportion who do not have an opinion of him.

Question wording: Do you view Pope Benedict XVI as very favorable, favorable, unfavorable, or very unfavorable?

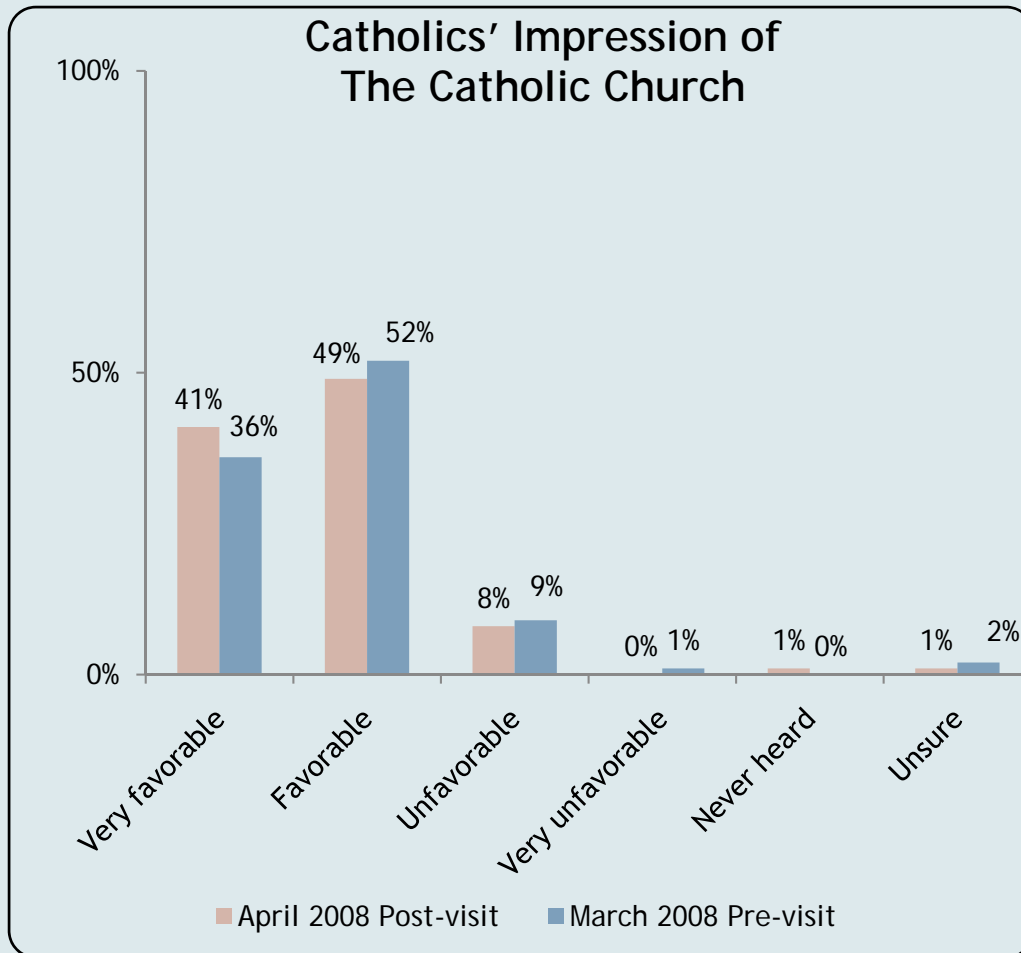
# Making an Impression

- 92% of practicing Catholics have a positive view of Pope Benedict XVI since his visit to the United States compared with 85% who felt this way before his trip.
- In addition, 82% of non-practicing Catholics now have a favorable impression of His Holiness compared with 72% who had this opinion prior to his visit.



Question wording: Do you view Pope Benedict XVI as very favorable, favorable, unfavorable, or very unfavorable?

# Making an Impression

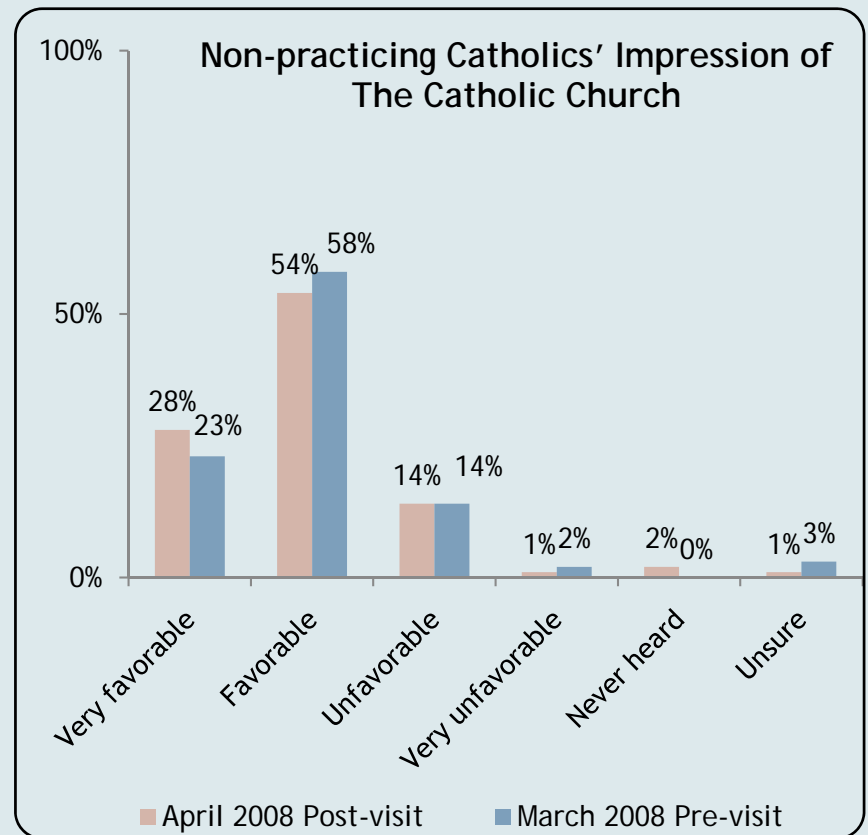
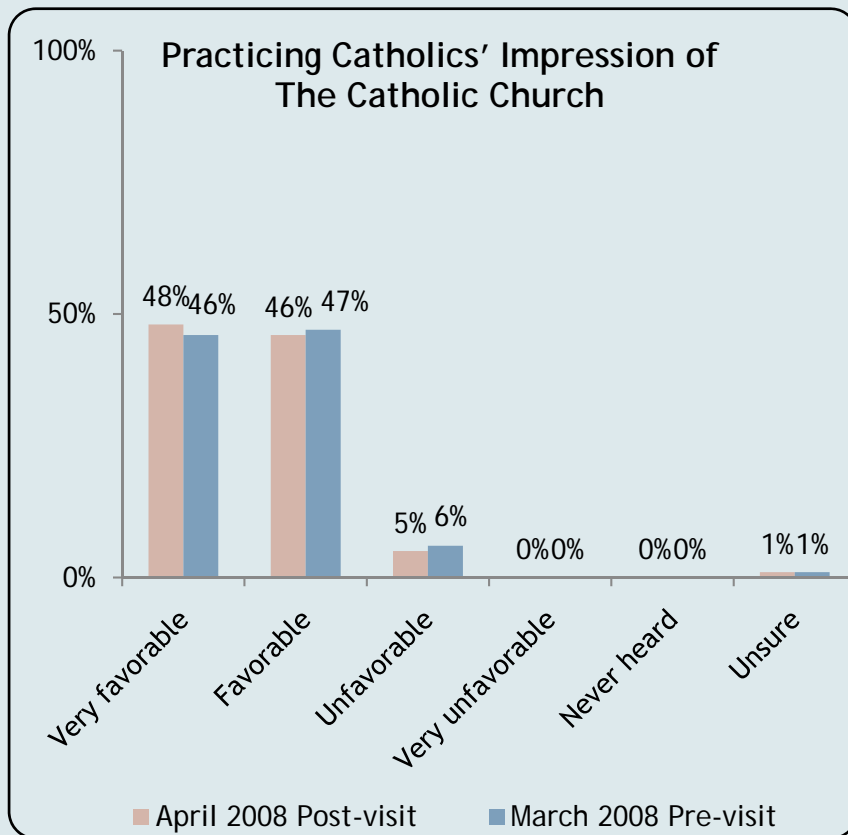


- 90% of Catholics now have a favorable impression of the Catholic Church compared with 88% who had this view prior to Pope Benedict XVI's visit to the U.S. This is statistically unchanged from March.

Question wording: Do you view the Catholic Church as very favorable, favorable, unfavorable, or very unfavorable?

# Making an Impression

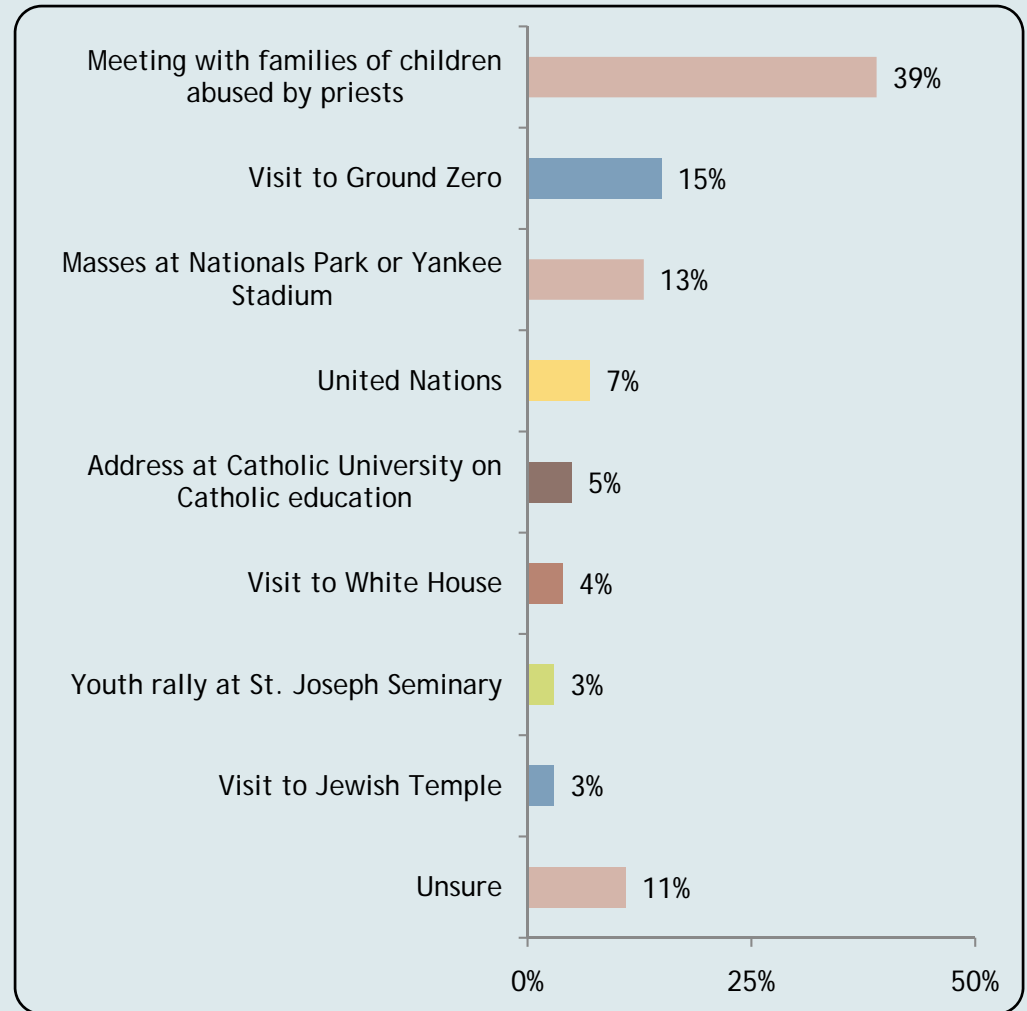
- 94% of practicing Catholics have a positive impression of the Catholic Church since the Papal visit statistically unchanged from March.
- 82% of non-practicing Catholics share this view.



Question wording: Do you view the Catholic Church as very favorable, favorable, unfavorable, or very unfavorable?

# Most Meaningful Part of the Visit

- 39% of Catholics think the most meaningful part of Pope Benedict XVI's visit to the U.S. was his meeting with the victims and the families of children abused by priests.
- 15% are also moved by his visit to Ground Zero followed by 13% who feel his stadium Masses were most important to them.



Question wording: As you may have heard, Pope Benedict XVI had many scheduled public appearances during his visit to the United States. Which one of the following was the most meaningful part of his trip for you:

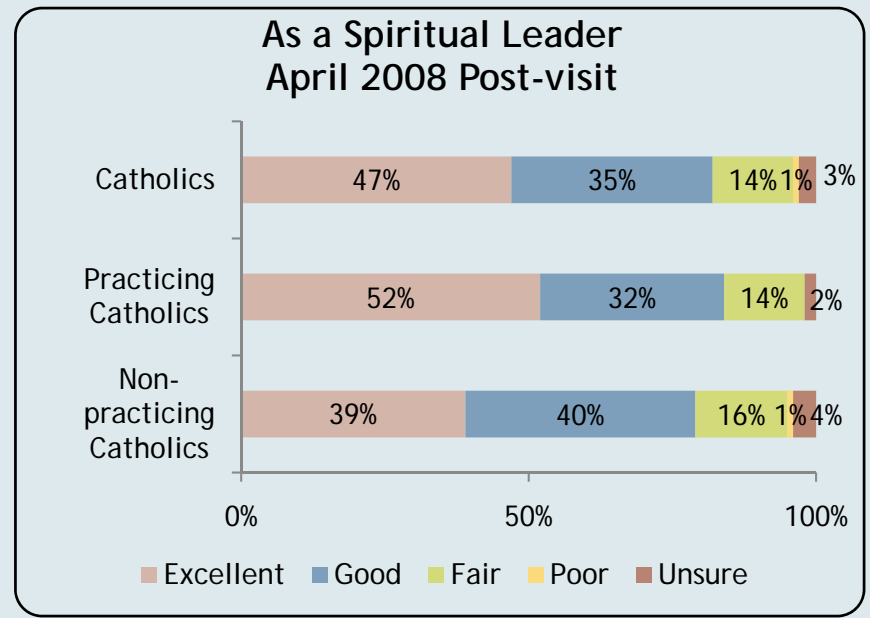
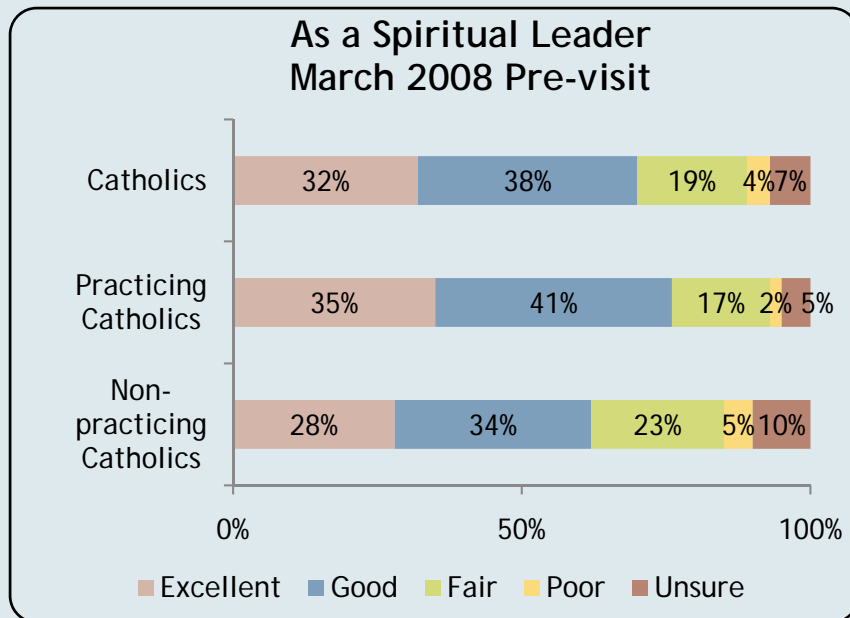
# Catholics' View of Pope Benedict XVI

Before Pope Benedict XVI's visit to the U.S:

- 70% of Catholics described him positively as a spiritual leader;
- This included 76% of practicing Catholics and 62% of non-practicing Catholics.

After Pope Benedict XVI's visit to the U.S:

- 82% of Catholics describe him positively as a spiritual leader;
- This includes 84% of practicing Catholics and 79% of non-practicing Catholics.



Question wording: From what you know about Pope Benedict XVI, would you rate him as excellent, good, fair, or poor on each of the following: As a spiritual leader?

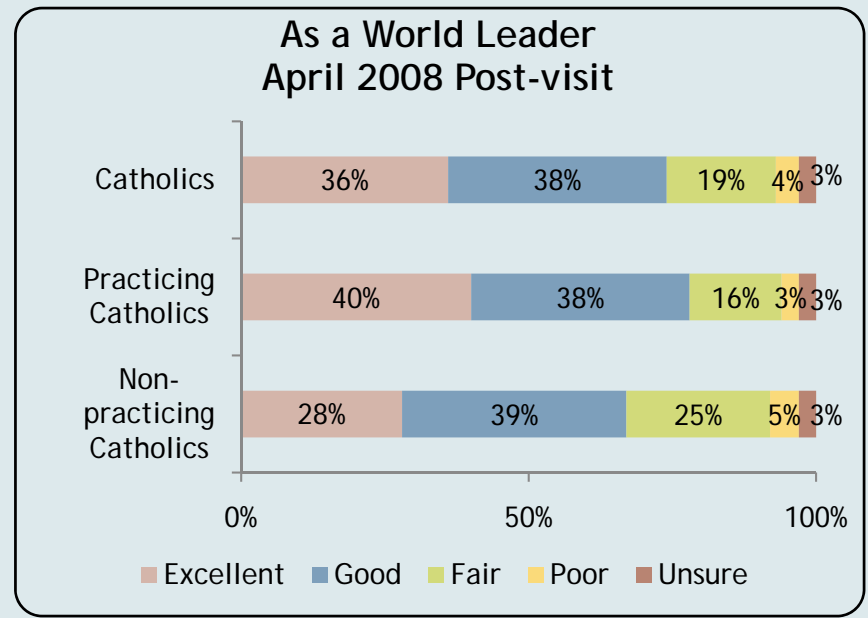
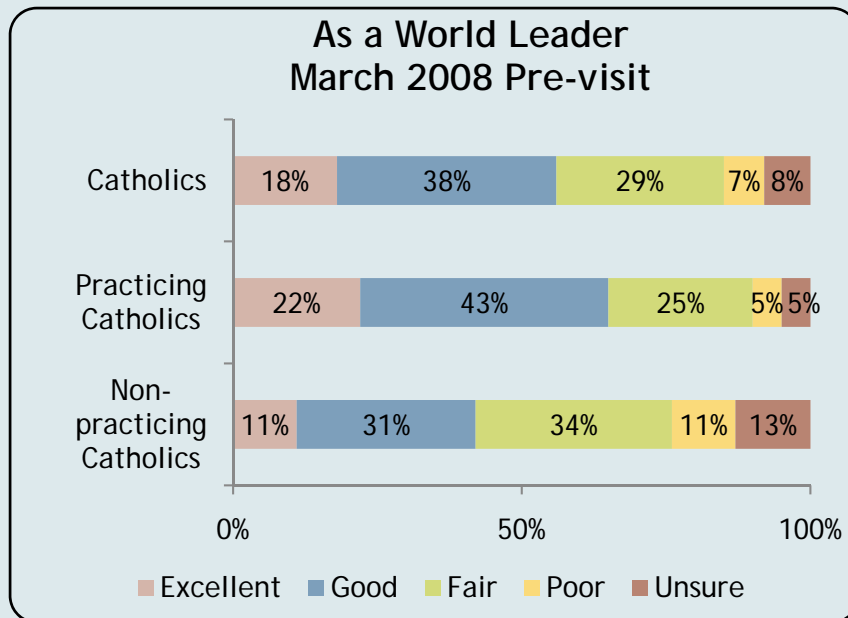
# Catholics' View of Pope Benedict XVI

**Before Pope Benedict XVI's visit to the U.S:**

- 56% of Catholics described him positively as a world leader;
- This included 65% of practicing Catholics and 42% of non-practicing Catholics.

**After Pope Benedict XVI's visit to the U.S:**

- 74% of Catholics describe him positively as a world leader;
- This includes 78% of practicing Catholics and 67% of non-practicing Catholics.



Question wording: From what you know about Pope Benedict XVI, would you rate him as excellent, good, fair, or poor on each of the following: As a world leader?

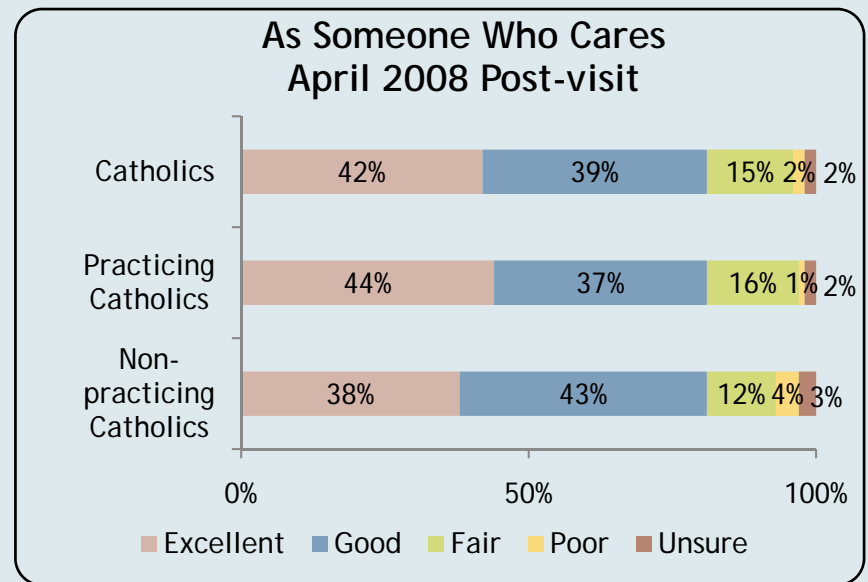
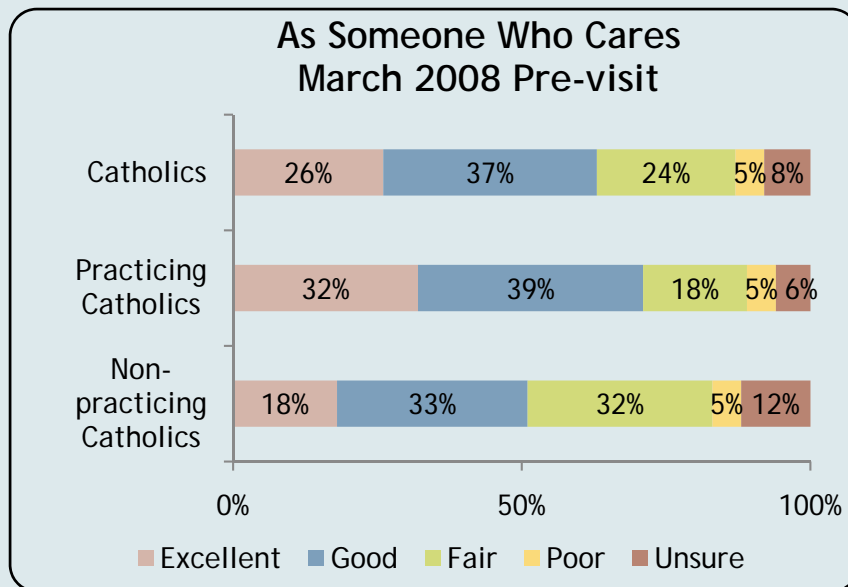
# Catholics' View of Pope Benedict XVI

Before Pope Benedict XVI's visit to the U.S:

- 63% of Catholics described him positively as someone who cares about people like themselves;
- This included 71% of practicing Catholics and 51% of non-practicing Catholics.

After Pope Benedict XVI's visit to the U.S:

- 81% of Catholics describe him positively as someone who cares about people like themselves;
- This includes the same proportion of practicing Catholics as non-practicing Catholics.



Question wording: From what you know about Pope Benedict XVI, would you rate him as excellent, good, fair, or poor on each of the following: As someone who cares about people like yourself?

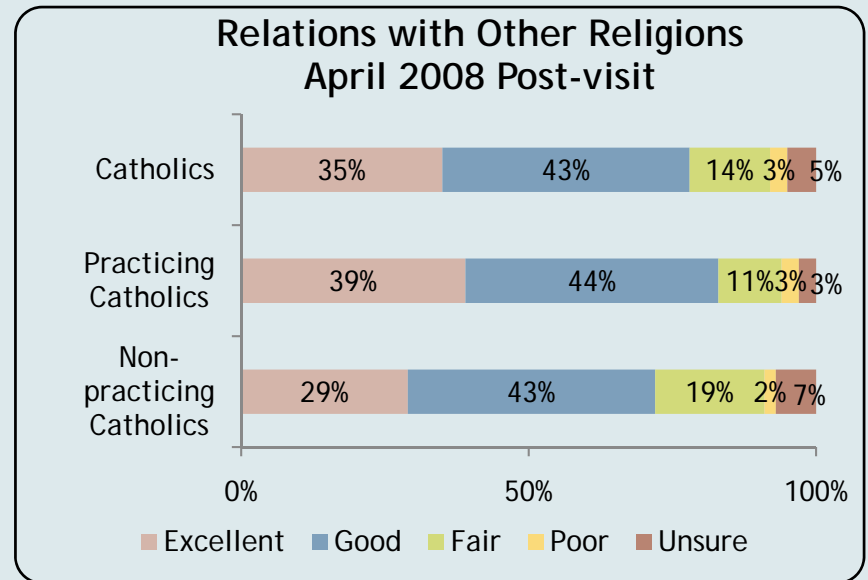
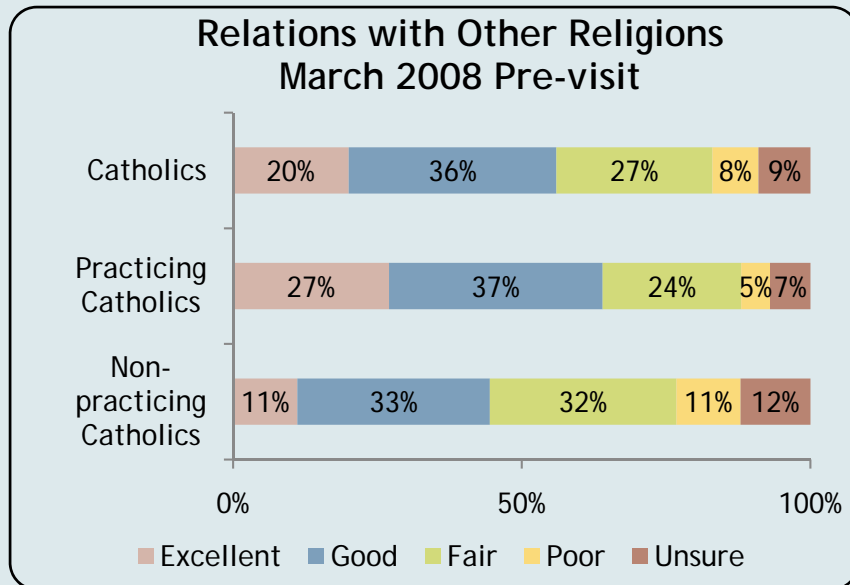
# Catholics' View of Pope Benedict XVI

**Before Pope Benedict XVI's visit to the U.S:**

- 56% of Catholics described him positively as promoting good relations with other religions;
- This included 64% of practicing Catholics and 44% of non-practicing Catholics.

**After Pope Benedict XVI's visit to the U.S:**

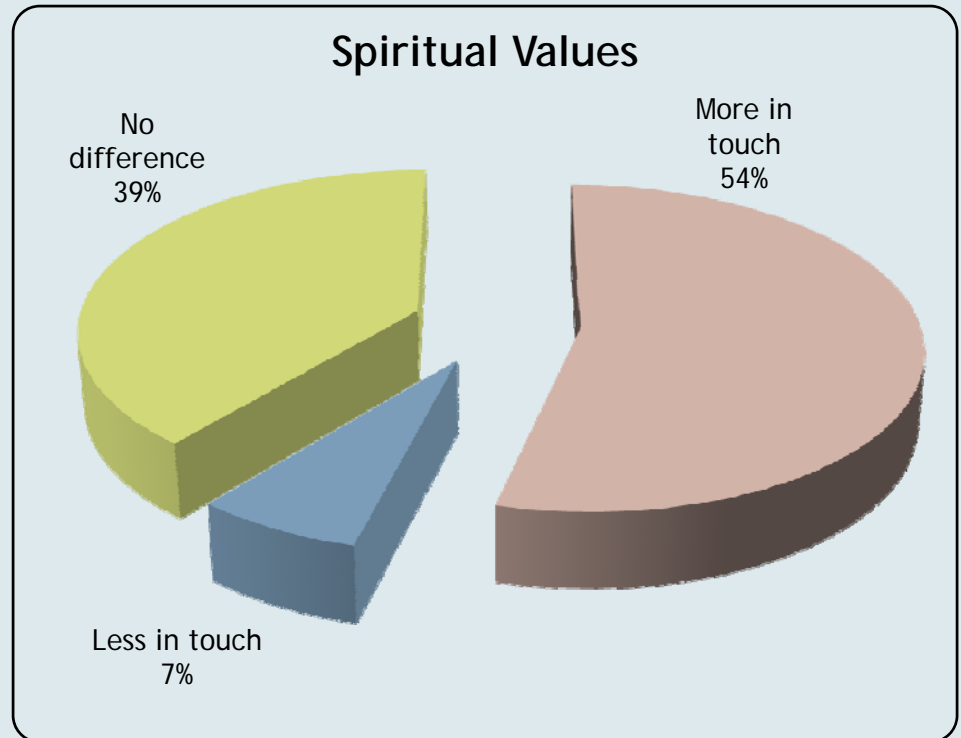
- 78% of Catholics describe him positively as promoting good relations with other religions;
- This includes 83% of practicing Catholics and 72% of non-practicing Catholics.



Question wording: From what you know about Pope Benedict XVI, would you rate him as excellent, good, fair, or poor on each of the following: As promoting good relations between the Catholic Church and other religions?

# Making a Difference

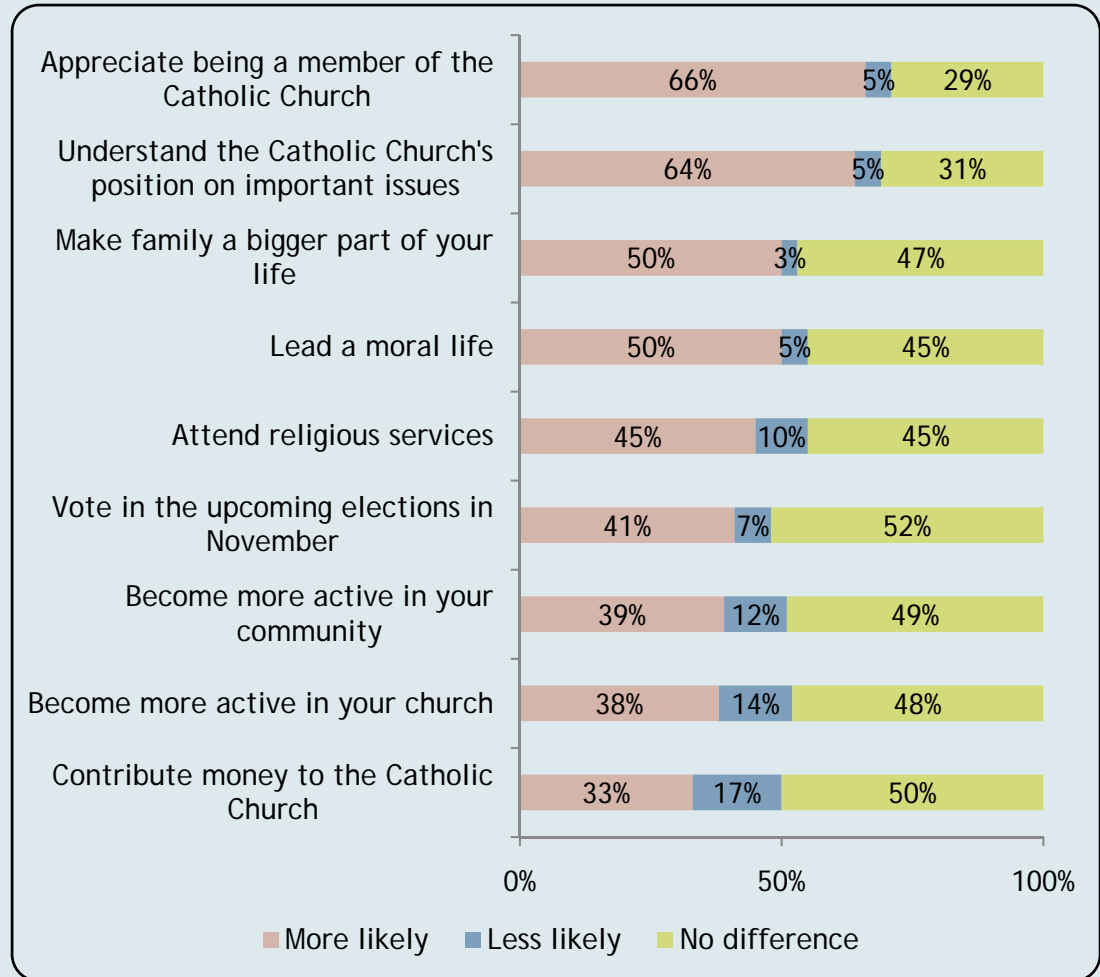
- A majority of Catholics, 54%, say they are now more in touch with their own spiritual values as a result of Pope Benedict XVI's visit to the U.S.
- Only 7% say they are less in touch.



Question wording: Did his visit put you more in touch or less in touch with your own personal spiritual values?

# Making a Difference

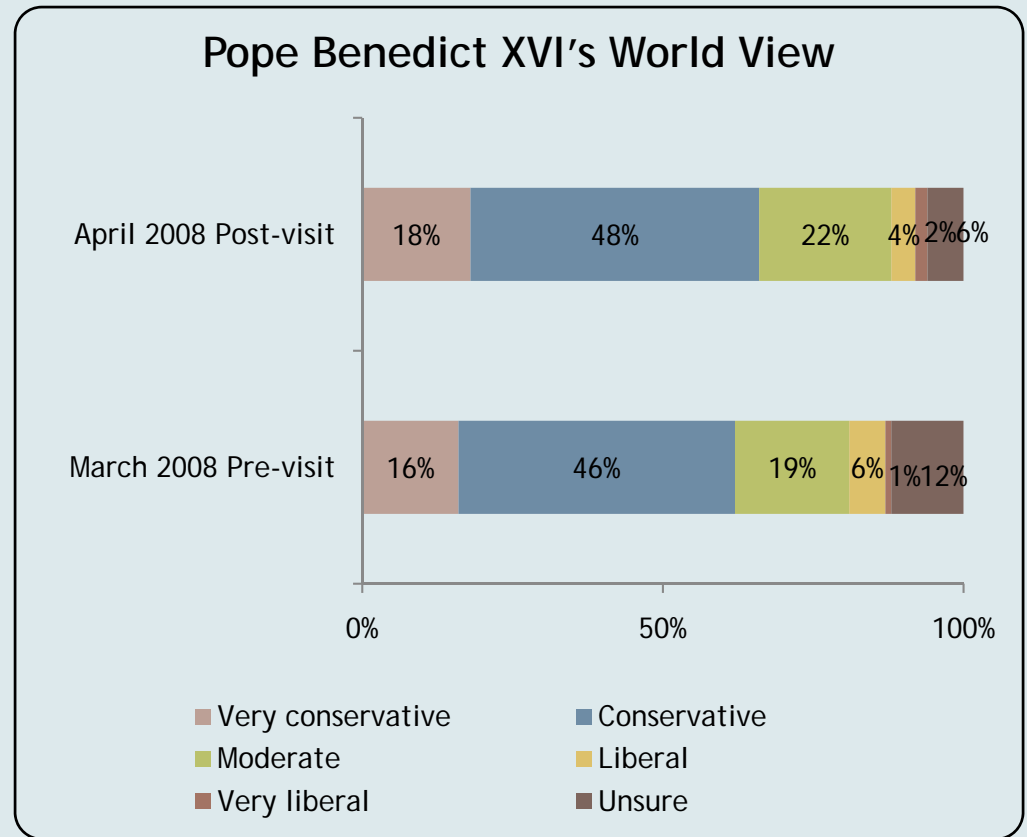
- As a result of the Papal visit, two-thirds of Catholics say they are now more likely to appreciate being a member of the Catholic Church.
- A similar proportion feel they better understand the Catholic Church's positions on important issues.
- Half are more likely to want to make family a bigger part of their lives and are more likely to want to lead a moral life.
- About four in ten Catholics are more likely to attend religious services, participate in elections, and be active in their community or church.
- And, one in three are more likely to contribute financially to the Catholic Church.



Question wording: As a result of Pope Benedict XVI's visit to the United States, are you more or less likely to do each of the following:

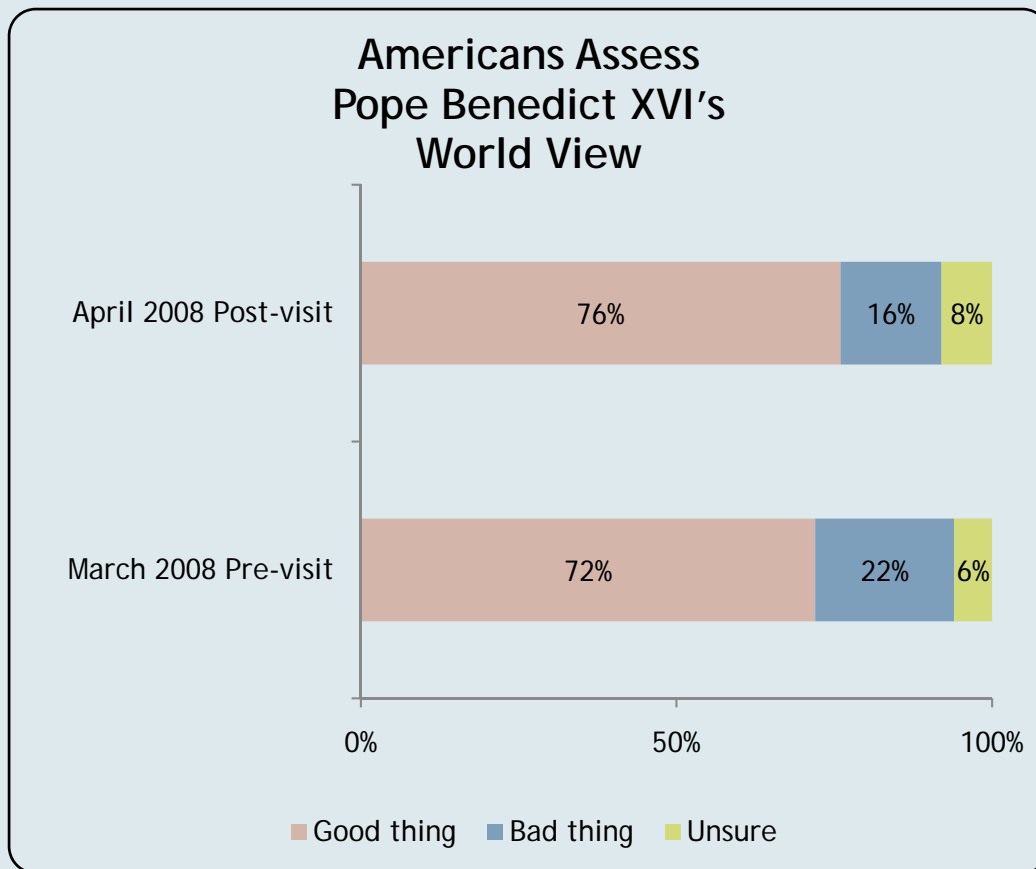
# How Catholics Regard Pope Benedict XVI's World View

- Catholics generally regard Pope Benedict XVI's world view as either conservative or very conservative while only 6% believe his views are liberal.
- These views are statistically unchanged from before his visit to the U.S.



Question wording: Overall, would you describe Pope Benedict XVI as someone whose world view is very conservative, conservative, moderate, liberal, or very liberal?

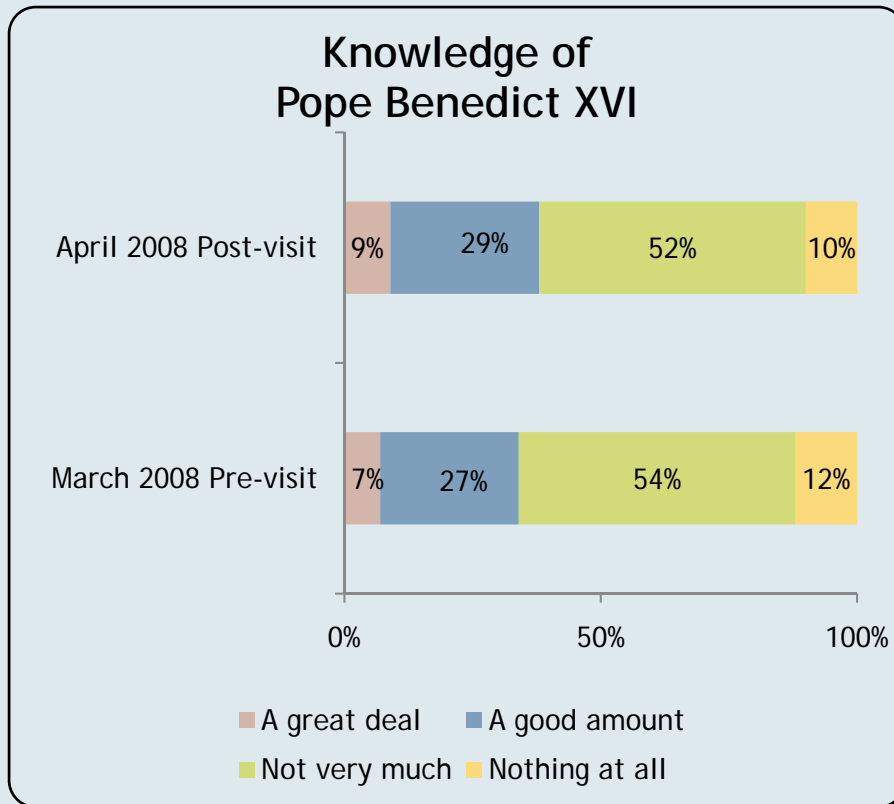
# How Catholics Regard the Pope's World View (Follow-Up)



- 76% of Catholics have a positive impression of Pope Benedict XVI's world view.

Question wording: Do you see this as a good thing or a bad thing that Pope Benedict's worldview is [Respondent's response from previous question]?

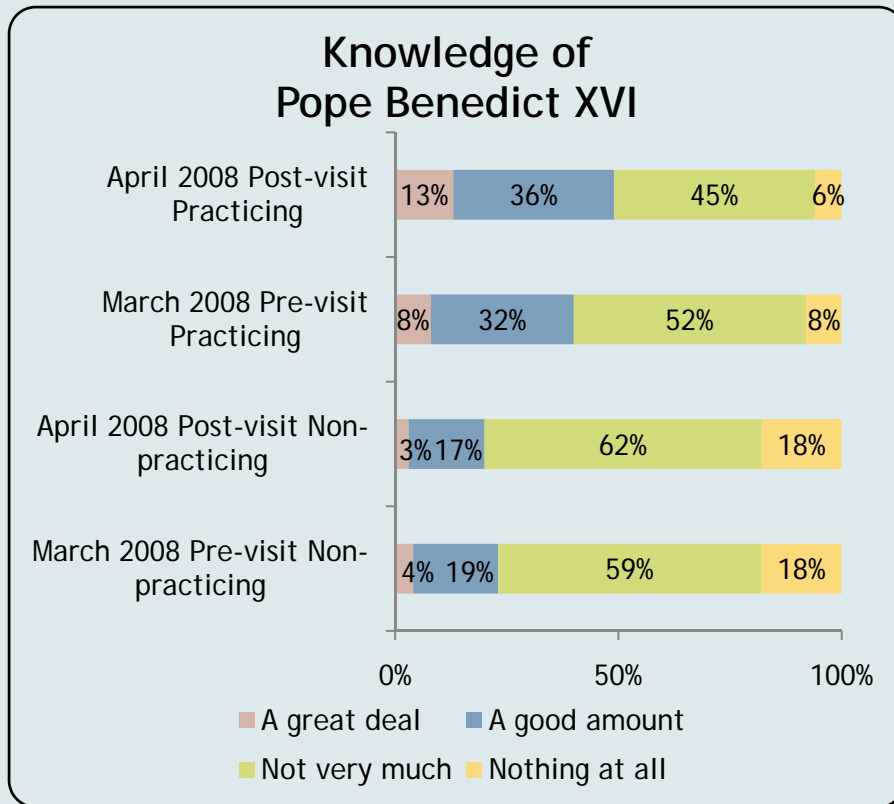
# How Much Do Catholics Know About Pope Benedict XVI?



- Most Catholics still do not feel they know the Pope well. When asked whether they know a great deal, a good amount, not very much, or nothing at all about Pope Benedict XVI, 52% say not very much and another 10% say nothing at all.

Question wording: Overall, would you say that you know a great deal, a good amount, not very much, or nothing at all about Pope Benedict XVI?

# How Much Do Catholics Know About Pope Benedict XVI?



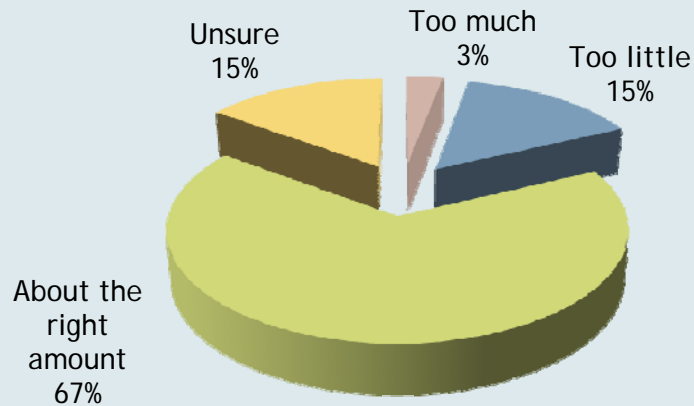
- But, more practicing Catholics do feel they have some knowledge of Pope Benedict XVI since his visit to the U.S.
- Nearly half of practicing Catholics say they know either a great deal or a good amount about him compared with 40% who felt this way prior to his trip.
- There is statistically no change in the proportion of non-practicing Catholics who feel they know Pope Benedict XVI.

Question wording: Overall, would you say that you know a great deal, a good amount, not very much, or nothing at all about Pope Benedict XVI?

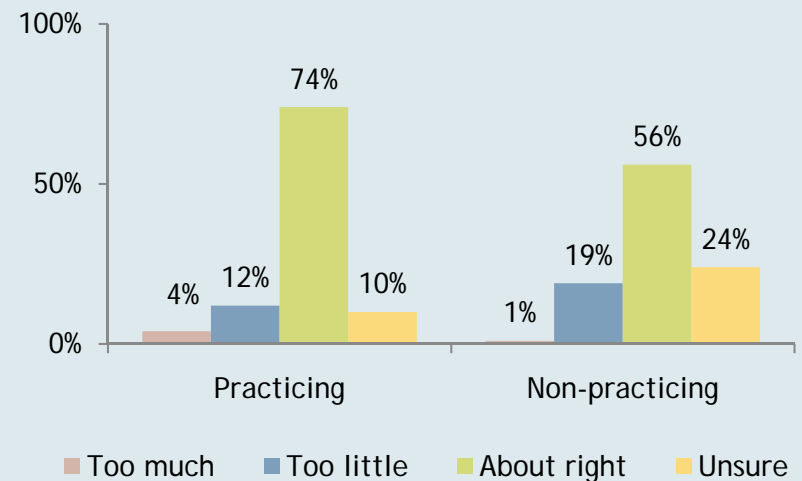
# Pope Benedict XVI Addresses Sex Abuse Scandal

- Most Catholics believe Pope Benedict XVI spent the right amount of time during his visit discussing the sex abuse scandal; only 15% think he should have spent more time on the issue; and, three percent think he focused too much on the topic.
- 74% of practicing Catholics and 56% of non-practicing Catholics believe His Holiness spent the right amount of attention on the scandal during his visit.

Pope Benedict XVI's Attention to Scandal



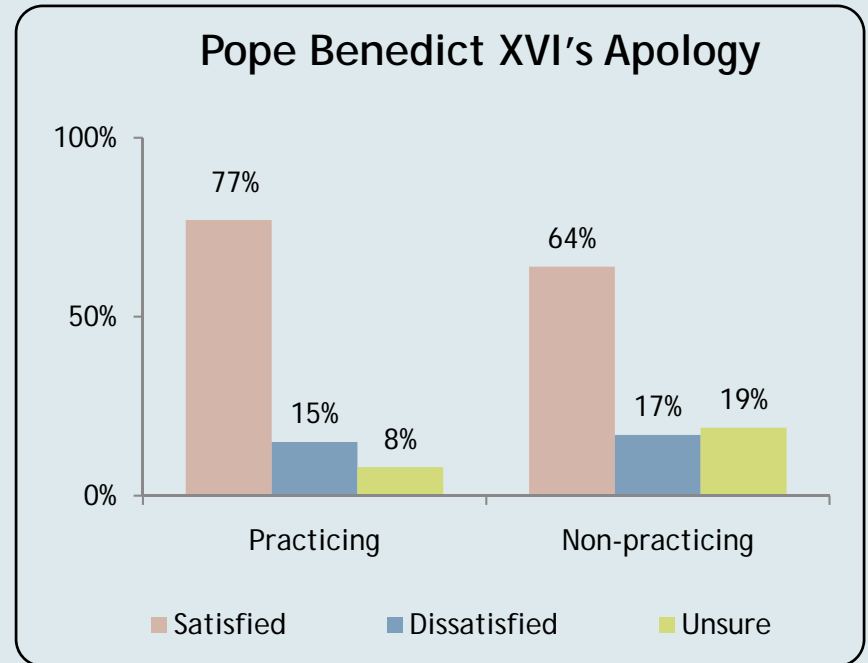
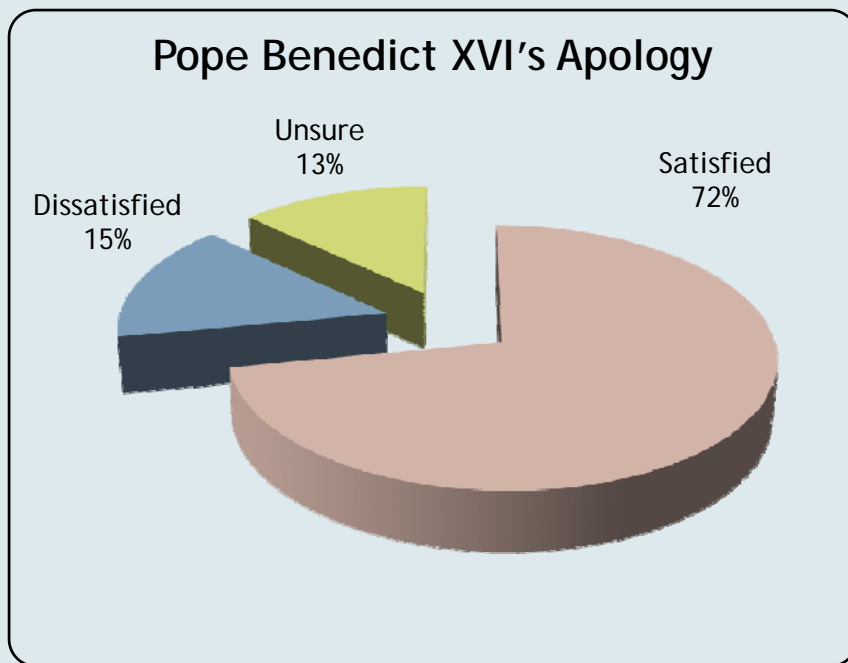
Pope Benedict XVI's Attention to Scandal



Question wording: During his visit to the United States, Pope Benedict XVI spoke about the sex abuse cases involving priests: did he talk about the issue too much, too little, or about the right amount?

# Catholics React to Pope Benedict XVI's Apology

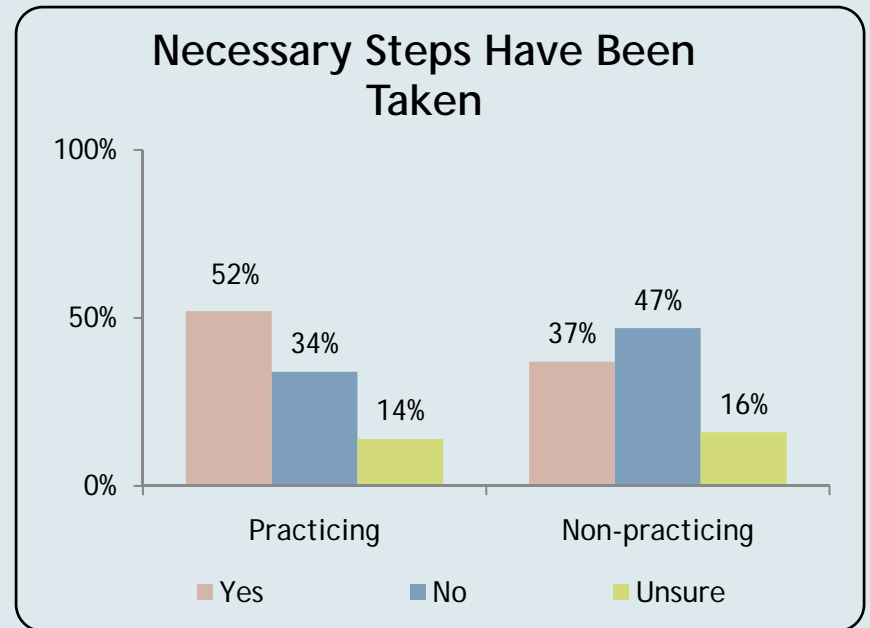
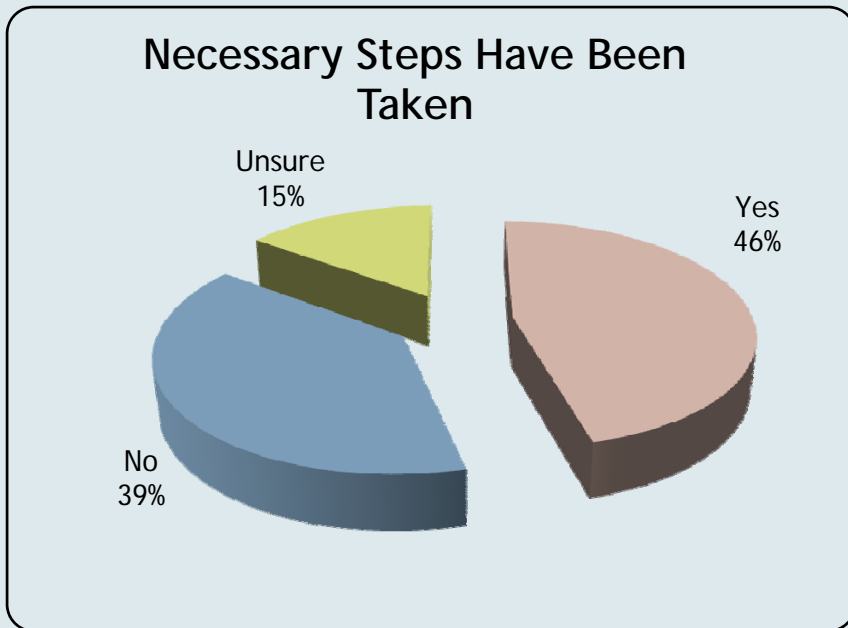
- 72% of Catholics are satisfied with Pope Benedict XVI's apology for the sex abuse scandal; 15% are dissatisfied; and 13% do not have an opinion.
- 77% of practicing Catholics are satisfied with Pope Benedict XVI's apology, and 64% of non-practicing Catholics share this opinion.



Question wording: Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with Pope Benedict's apology for what happened?

# Has the Catholic Church Taken Steps to Avoid Similar Situation?

- 46% of Catholics believe the Catholic Church has taken the steps to avoid a recurrence of a sex abuse scandal in the future, and 39% do not think enough has been done.
- A majority of practicing Catholics do feel the necessary steps have been taken, and 34% think more should be done.
- However, more non-practicing Catholics think the Catholic Church has not taken the necessary steps on this issue than think it has.



Question wording: Do you think the Catholic Church has taken the necessary steps to avoid this happening again, or not?

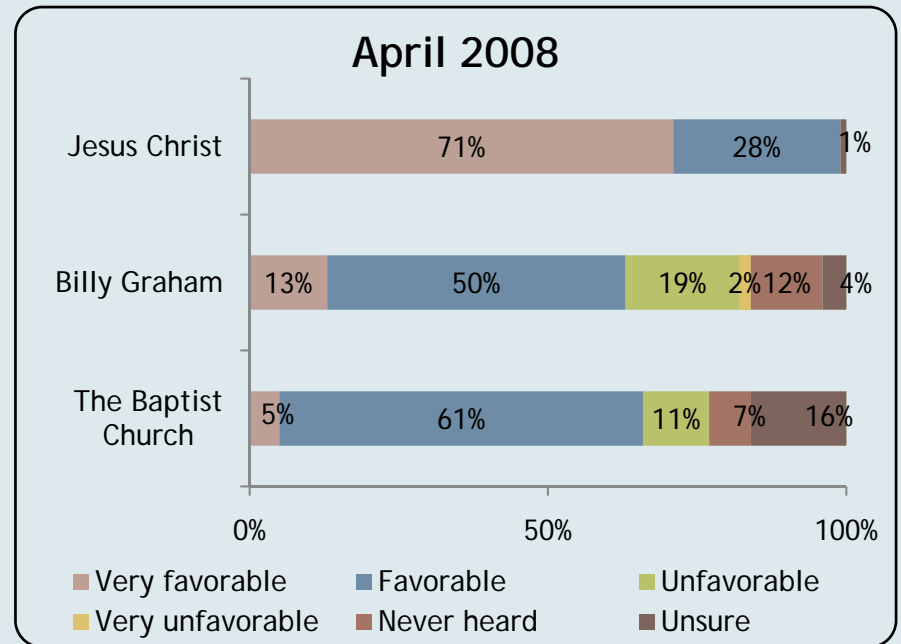
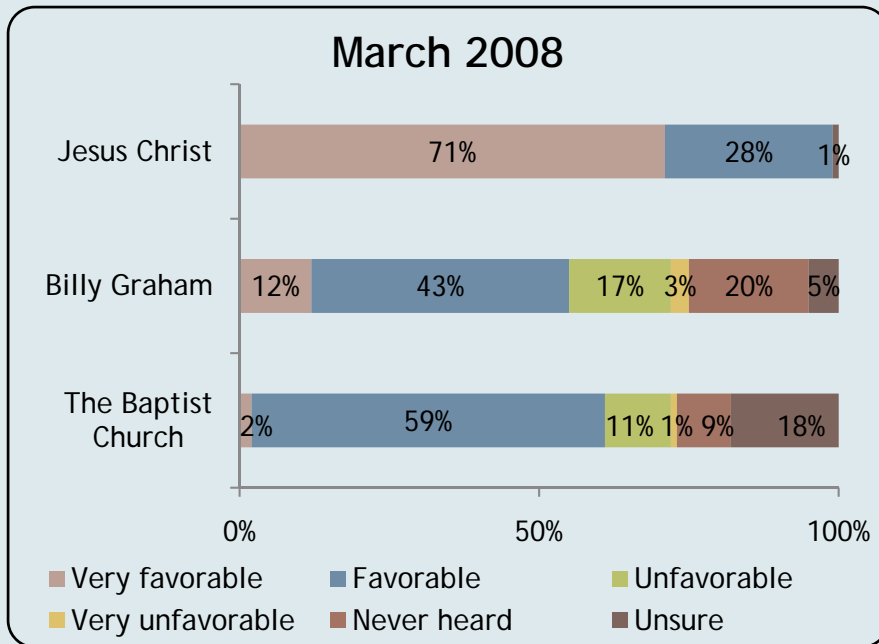
# Name Recognition: Religious

In March 2008:

- 99% of Catholics had a positive view of Jesus Christ;
- 55% characterized Billy Graham positively;
- 61% had a positive impression of the Baptist Church.

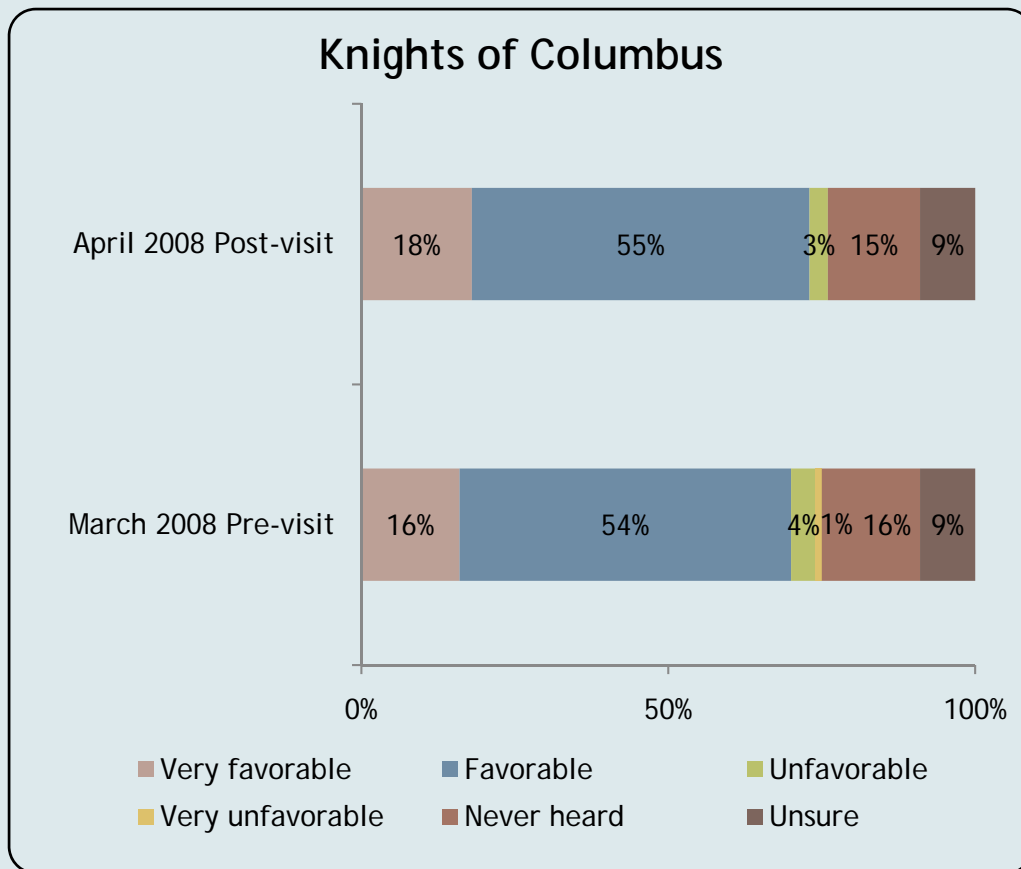
In April 2008

- 99% of Catholics have a positive view of Jesus Christ;
- 63% characterize Billy Graham positively;
- 66% have a positive impression of the Baptist Church.



Question wording: Do you view Jesus Christ/Billy Graham/The Baptist Church as very favorable, favorable, unfavorable, or very unfavorable?

# Name Recognition: Service

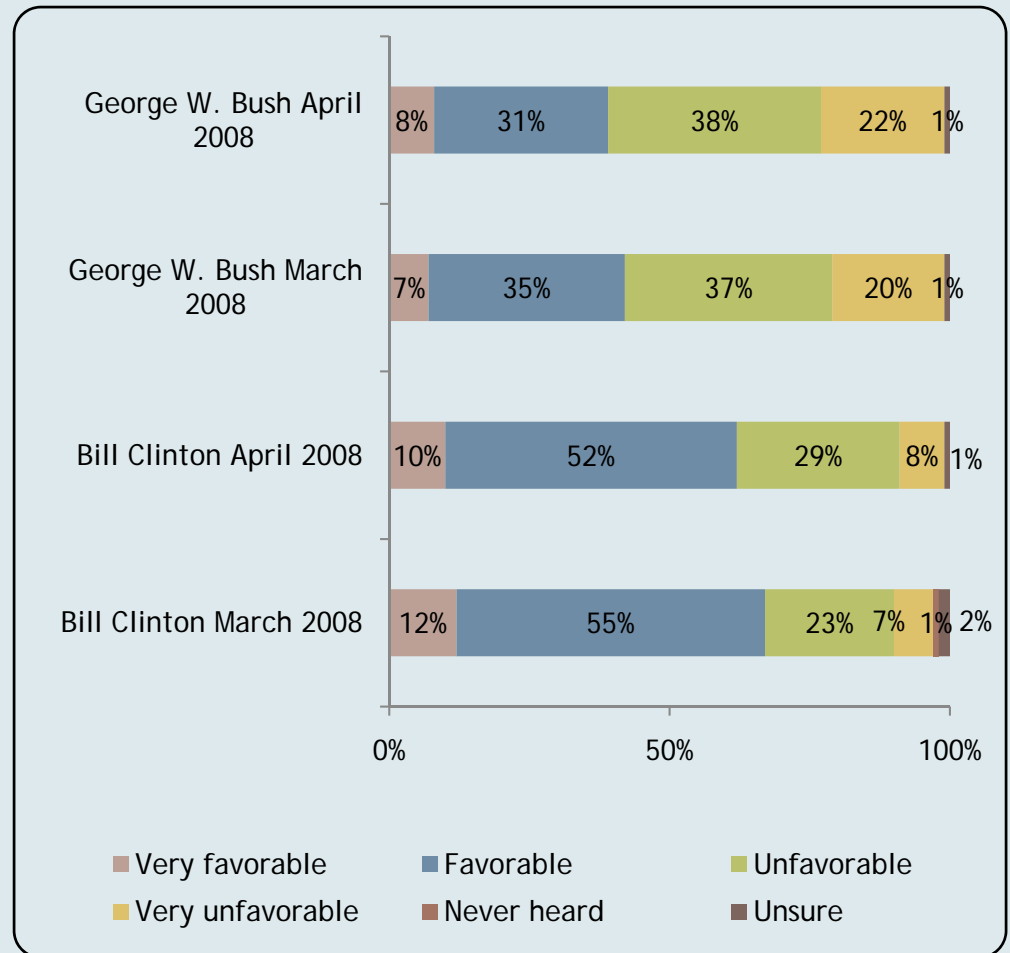


- 73% of Catholics have a positive view of the Knights of Columbus statistically unchanged from a month ago prior to the Papal Visit.

Question wording: Do you view The Knights of Columbus as very favorable, favorable, unfavorable, or very unfavorable?

# Name Recognition: Political

- 39% of Catholics have a positive view of President Bush compared with 42% a month ago.
- 62% of Catholics have a positive view of former President Clinton. In March, 67% of Catholics shared this view.



Question wording: Do you view President George W. Bush/Bill Clinton as very favorable, favorable, unfavorable, or very unfavorable?



Marist College Institute for Public Opinion  
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Founded in 1978, the Marist College Institute for Public Opinion (MIPO) is a survey research center at Marist College in Poughkeepsie, New York. The Marist Poll has conducted independent research on public priorities, elections, and a wide variety of public issues.

Through the regular public release of surveys, MIPO has built a legacy of independence, reliability, and accuracy. Frequently cited by journalists, public officials, and policy experts, the Marist Poll has been recognized for fairness, accuracy, and timeliness. Its results are featured in print and electronic media throughout the world.



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The Knights of Columbus was founded in 1882 as a Catholic fraternal benefit society. It has grown to 1.7 million members belonging to 13,000 local councils located throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico, the Philippines, Poland Central America, and the Caribbean.

In 2007, Knights donated more than 68 million hours of volunteer time and \$143 million to charitable causes, and they carry out a wide range of educational, charitable, religious and social welfare programs. Its 19th century mutual aid and death benefit system has grown over the past 125 years into a highly-rated insurance program with \$66 billion of life insurance in force.