News
Vatican



A priest elevates the Eucharist after consecrating it during a Latin Mass. (Creative Commons/Andrew Gardner)



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Pope Francis' decision in July to reimpose restrictions on the celebration of the older form of the Latin Mass appears not to have affected his standing among U.S. Catholics, according to a report released Oct. 7 by the Pew Research Center.

About 83% of Catholics in the country have a favorable view of Francis, based on responses from 1,374 Catholics to a Pew online survey in September.

Some 65% of the respondents said they had heard "nothing at all" about Francis' decision, which reversed a 2007 move by retired Pope Benedict XVI to allow priests to celebrate the form of the Mass used before the 1962-65 Second Vatican Council.

Francis cited worries that some groups celebrating the older Mass were rejecting the council itself, which brought about a number of reforms in the church. The pope now requires that individual bishops across the world specifically approve celebrations of the old Mass in their dioceses.

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Of the 35% in the Pew survey who had heard at least "a little" about the changes, 14% declined to give an opinion about them, 12% disapproved and 9% approved.

Francis' overall favorability numbers appear steady among U.S. Catholics. The last Pew survey, conducted in March, found 82% of respondents holding a favorable view of the pontiff.

However, there continues to be polarization in the way Americans think about Francis. In the latest survey, 49% of Catholics who identified as Republican said Francis is "too liberal." Only 16% of Catholics who identified as Democrats said the same.

The Pew survey was conducted Sept. 20-26 among a total of 6,485 U.S. adults, with 1,374 of those identifying as Catholic. The margin of error is 1.9 percentage points for all respondents and 4.3 percentage points for Catholic respondents.

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