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Pope Francis in the polls

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Politicians would give anything for these approval ratings. The Pew Forum on Religion in Public Life has just released the results of a nationwide survey of attitudes toward Pope Francis after his first six months in office. The result: Very strong and steady approval.

He is rated favorably by eight in 10 U.S. Catholics (79 percent), and only 4 percent say they have an unfavorable view. Seventeen percent express no opinion or say they have not heard enough about Francis to have an opinion.

Even more remarkable, those 18-49 and those who are 50-plus give him the same favorable rating at 79 percent. Weekly Mass attenders give him a whopping 86 percent approval, but he also does quite nicely with those who don't frequent church as often: 74 percent.

It is not unusual for popes to have high approval ratings ? but presidents and prime ministers can only dream!

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