NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Clergy's professional reputation hovers

Daniel Burke | Dec. 6, 2010

What do nurses, soldiers, pharmacists, elementary school teachers, doctors, and police officers have in common?

Americans say they are all more ethical and honest than members of the clergy, according to a Gallup survey released Dec. 3.

Slightly more than half of Americans (53 percent) rate the moral values of priests, ministers and other clerics as "very high" or "high." That percentage is a slight bump from 2009, when only 50 percent of Americans said men and women of the cloth are ethical paragons, the lowest number in Gallup's 32 years of measuring professional reputations.

Before the Roman Catholic clergy sexual abuse scandal erupted in 2002, two-thirds of Americans had regularly approved of ministers' morals, according to Gallup.

"Stability is generally the norm in Americans' ratings of the honesty and ethics of professions, but Americans' opinions do shift in response to real-world events, mostly scandals, that reflect poorly on a profession," Gallup said.

A third of Americans this year said the clergy's morals are "average," and 8 percent rated them "poor," according to the survey.

Bringing up the bottom of the professional ethics list were lobbyists, car salesmen, and members of Congress.

Results for this Gallup poll are based on telephone interviews conducted Nov. 19-21, 2010, with a random sample of 1,037 adults, aged 18 and older. The margin of error is plus or minus 4 percentage points.

Source URL (retrieved on *04/23/2014 - 20:48*): http://ncronline.org/news/accountability/clergys-professional-reputation-hovers