



A Matter of Conscience...

CATHOLICS ON
CONTRACEPTION



Having failed to convince Catholics not to use contraception, the bishops now work to keep it out of reach by barring contraceptives at Catholic medical facilities, blocking legislation that would require health insurance coverage for contraceptives and lobbying in the United Nations and U.S. Congress to cut family planning aid for developing countries.

Catholic voices must be heard in this debate. Catholics for Contraception is a leadership network of 1,000 Catholics in all 50 states. Through it, lay Catholic voices are heard in legislatures, media and public forums.

Catholics for Contraception

A project of Catholics for a Free Choice

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96% of Catholic women have used contraceptives at some point in their lives

POPE PAUL VI DECLARED THE USE OF MODERN CONTRACEPTIVE METHODS DOCTRINALLY IMPERMISSIBLE WITH THE 1968 ENCYCLICAL *HUMANAE VITAE*. HOWEVER, THE ISSUE IS FAR FROM RESOLVED—CHURCH OFFICIALS, NOTED THEOLOGIANS AND CATHOLIC LAY PEOPLE DISSENT FROM THE TEACHING IN WORD AND IN DEED.

CATHOLICS USE CONTRACEPTION, CATHOLIC LEGISLATORS SUPPORT FAMILY PLANNING AND 72% OF CATHOLICS BELIEVE THAT YOU CAN BE A GOOD CATHOLIC WITHOUT OBEYING THE CHURCH HIERARCHY'S TEACHING ON BIRTH CONTROL (NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER POLL, 1999).

Columnist Anna Quindlen,
December 18, 1990.

“If more women use better methods of birth control, there are fewer unintended pregnancies and fewer abortions. This sounds like a good thing to me.”

The Washington Statement by leading theologians including Charles Curran, Bernard Häring, Edward Schillebeeckx, Richard McCormick and Giles Milhaven, in response to *Humanae Vitae*, July 30, 1968.

“As Roman Catholic theologians, conscious of our duty and our limitations, we conclude that spouses may responsibly decide according to their conscience that artificial contraception in some circumstances is permissible and indeed necessary to preserve and foster the values and the sacredness of marriage.”



Senator Patrick Leahy
(D-VT), U.S. Senate,
October 12, 1999.

“It is a travesty that so many people around the world want family planning services and still cannot get them. Time and again it has been proven that when these services are available the number of abortions declines, lives are saved and opportunities for women, children and families dramatically increase.”

Representative Nancy Pelosi
(D-CA), U.S. House of
Representatives,
March 28, 2000.

“The right to choose and make family planning decisions is central to women’s liberty and freedom in [the] future.”



Patty Crowley, lay member of
the Papal Commission on
Birth Control, 1966.

“Ninety percent of [the theologians on the papal birth control commission] concluded that birth control was not intrinsically evil and that the teaching against contraception could be changed.”



**Representative Luis Gutierrez
(D-IL), September 12, 2000.**

“I believe that people of good conscience should agree that we have a moral obligation and opportunity to provide women—especially those in the poorest nations around the world or in low-income communities in America—with information on safe and sensible family planning options. Both they and their children deserve healthy lives free of illness, pain and hunger. Simple educational programs, matched with access to basic health care services, can go a long way toward alleviating such problems. I have been proud to stand up for legislation that promotes such goals in the U.S. and in developing nations.”

**Munich Archbishop Cardinal
Julius Döpfner, *The Politics
of Sex and Religion*, 1985.**

**Author Mary Gordon,
Newsday, October 5, 1995.**

“Contraception is not intrinsically evil.”

“The Pope is not the Church... and American Catholics are not going to stop practicing birth control or having abortions. Increasingly, what he says does not affect the way Catholics live their lives.”



**Brazilian theologian
Ivone Gebara, *Conscience*,
Summer 1994.**

“In the Roman Catholic Church, we don’t allow birth control, we don’t allow condoms, we don’t allow anything. It is impossible to [have] reproductive health if you don’t allow these means.”

Senator Barbara Mikulski
(D-MD), U.S. Senate,
February 25, 1997.

Thomas J. Gumbleton,
auxiliary bishop of Detroit,
America, November 20, 1993



Representative
Constance Morella
(R-MD), U.S. House of
Representatives,
November 14, 1989.

Senator Christopher Dodd
(D-CT), U.S. Senate,
March 4, 1997.

“Over 100 million women throughout the world cannot obtain family planning because they are poor, uneducated, or lack access to health care. Twenty million of these women will seek unsafe abortions. Some women will die, some will be disabled. We could prevent some of this needless suffering.”

“[Fr. Richard McCormick maintains that] there are many Jesuits who do not accept the thesis that every contraceptive act is morally wrong. I can vouch for the fact that very many bishops share the same conviction.”

“In the developing world, the inability of women, especially poor women, to access basic family planning services and information undermines women’s efforts to determine their own destiny, increases illness and mortality rates of women and their children, contributes to environmental degradation, and inhibits the ability of families to lift themselves out of poverty.”

“Family planning is one of the best weapons we have to save the lives of women and their children in developing countries.... Family planning enables women to space their births, preserving their health and improving the odds that their children will be born healthy.”

Catholics for Contraception—an initiative of Catholics for a Free Choice—is a public awareness campaign by Catholics who support public funding for family planning and a change in the church’s position on contraception. It began in 1997 and now has over 1,000 members in 50 states.

Please check as many as apply:

- Please add my name to the leadership network of Catholics for Contraception.
- Please send me more copies of this card to distribute to my colleagues.
How many?
- I want to be kept informed about the following initiatives:
 - Writing to congressional and state representatives about forthcoming legislation.
 - Communicating with my local bishop about statement and policy matters.
 - Writing letters to the editor.
 - Organizing other Catholics.

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NAME

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ORGANIZATION/GROUP (IF APPLICABLE)

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ADDRESS

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CITY

STATE

ZIP CODE

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COUNTRY

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E-MAIL

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