

In our March 2012, The Fourth Wall published an editorial titled "The Catholic Church's War on Birth Control" written by my Co-Editor, John Shaffer. In said editorial, he argued that it is a women's right to use birth control, Catholic teachings against birth control are contrary to those rights, and that "the Catholic denial of human sexuality is as backwards as it is harmful." Shortly after publication, I received a counter-editorial from reader Dave Knox as a direct response to Mr. Shaffer's editorial. Mr. Knox's editorial is printed here in its entirety. Absolutely no editorial liberties have been taken with the text, and any grammatical or factual mistakes are of no fault of the editorial staff of The Fourth Wall. I sincerely thank Mr. Knox for his contribution.

-Michael Garrett, Editor-In-Chief

## A Rebuttal to "The Catholic Church's War on Birth Control"

By: Dave Knox

To start with, your title "The Catholic Church's War on Birth Control" is illogical. To say that the church has a war on is to say that it is actively waging a war against. This is not the case. The Catholic Church can tie its requirements against birth control methods to about 4000 years ago, while modern birth control has only been around since the 60's. While there was once a very blurred line between the Catholic Church and government authority, the Catholic Church has not made any anti-contraception dictates in government for a very long time. This new "war" is not caused by the aggression of the church but of the birth control movement. If anything, it is birth control that is waging a war on the church by invading its organizational workings.

In the first paragraph you cite American ignorance and intolerance as issues that make the new debate about birth control interesting and you cite the New York Mosque and prevention of Sharia law as examples. You should know that the New York Mosque, which was officially a cultural center, was debated as a social issue, not religious intolerance. It was specifically stated that the presence of the Mosque would disrespect the dead and the families of the dead who were killed in the name of Islam. Just as it would be in poor taste to build a Christian church over the foundation of a bombed abortion clinic. There was no religious intolerance because no aspect of the religion was intolerated, unless you count the historically established practice of building Mosques over the sites of Islamic victories. And

there is a good reason why Sharia Law is prevented in the US, namely because it directly diminishes the constitutionally protected rights of not only members of Islam, but non-Islamics who may live in Sharia controlled regions. In an article where you discuss Women's rights, I found this to be most puzzling because under Sharia a man may kill his wife for being disobedient, and women are to be stoned to death for adultery when they are raped.

In the second paragraph you state that the Catholic Church is against contraception due to "tradition", that Catholic authorities are denying the fact that people have sex, that religion needs to be updated, and that the Catholic denial of human sexuality is harmful. All of these inferences are wrong. The Catholic Church opposes contraception as a tenant of religious requirement handed down from God, not because of simple tradition. They state that God designed sex for reproduction, and that the pleasure from it is just a bonus. To treat sex as otherwise is to deny God's natural design. They back it up with scripture (Gen38-8-10) where a man named Onan is struck dead for "pulling out". The Catholic Church makes no denial that people are having sex, premarital sex, protected sex, or promiscuous sex. It is fully aware of human sexuality. What the Catholic Church is denying is the idea that its employees' sexual habits have greater importance than the dictates of God. Also the Catholic Churches views on contraception apply to both marital sex and pre-marital sex. But to address your point that the church believes that contraception leads to pre-

marital sex and that its resistance to contraception is harmful I would like to point out that pre-marital sex has indeed increased, along with a huge increase in pre-marital pregnancies from 2% in the 1920's to 33% in 1999. Children born out of wedlock are disproportionately more prone to wind up on drugs and in prison, live in poverty or on welfare, and commit murder according to a study out of the John M. Olin Center for Studies in Law, Economics, and Public Policy Working Papers. So it is not the Church's stance on contraception which has been harmful to society, but the secularists'. Finally you state that the Church's attempt to apply its old teachings to modern generations is impossible, and that the church might need to change with the times. This statement is in error because the church is founded on the idea of an eternal God who is perfect and holy. If such a God existed he would not change his desires for our behavior based on the whims of a fickle society but would expect us to change to fit his already proven methods. And there is no shortage of people who convert to strict religious teachings...it is kinda the Church's whole shtick to convert the "lost". They've been doing it for 2 thousand years to societies far more depraved than our modern one.

In the third paragraph you state Republicans as trampling on women's rights, that women's health needs contraception, and that the church would have no problem with male contraception. First and foremost, the Catholic Church has been politically split between the two parties since the 60s, but in 2008

Obama had 54% of the Catholic vote. And 70% of American Muslims are affiliated with the Democratic Party, despite their views on women's rights. I'd also like to point out that these women are not having their rights violated at all. No one is forcing them to work for Catholic run organizations, and no one is forcing them to have sex. It is completely up to them where they work and if they choose to have sex, protected or not. Under the Bonafide Occupational Qualification laws Catholic organizations are under no legal requirement to offer any working condition that does not jive with their religious beliefs. And women have been having sex without hormonal contraception for thousands of years without significant health problems. So it is hardly a necessity. Finally, the Catholic Church has always been against contraception, and the oldest form of contraception, besides "pulling out" has been the condom or condom like appliances. So there is no sexual favoritism here.

In the final paragraph you mention that due to a decline in unwanted and teen pregnancies that the logical step is to offer contraception and that the church should change for society or be left behind. While it is logical to offer contraception to help reduce unwanted pregnancies, it is not logical to force a religiously run organization to offer it to people whom it is actively trying to convince to not have premarital sex or abortions at all. It would be like telling a fat kid to not eat candy and them locking him in Willy Wonka's chocolate factory over night. And while the CDC mentions

that teen pregnancy rates have dropped according to recent polls, it also states the findings that unmarried women are 4 times more likely to abort than married women. So the contraception vs premarital sex argument for the Catholic Church is still a lose-lose situation as far as their beliefs go. And the Church will never be left behind. There will never be a shortage of people who think they are "moving forward" with society only to discover years later that their lives are wrecked with the consequences of their poor life decisions and remember that they were once told of a better way to live. Like I said before, the Church is about saving the lost.... and there will always be people who are lost.

You also list a quote section that discusses the issue from a public funding stance. While the reception of public funding may require adherence to certain policies, religious violations will never be among them. The First Amendment specifically states that "congress shall make no law" restricting religious practice. So a law that specifically requires a religious organization to act in a way that is contrary to its religion is not constitutional. Also, public requirements for public funds are always directed toward public use, not the private use of the organizations employees. In the case of public funded Catholic Universities, such requirements would be geared toward the environment, the students, and the local populations, not the employees. Public funding having private employee dictates is unprecedented.