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How Catholic universities' contraceptive ban fails our students

Tom Gallagher | May. 8, 2012 NCR Today

Fordham University sociology professor Jeanne Flavin has thrown aside the risk of eternal damnation (or at least damnation by some U.S. bishops and their Republican staff at the bishops' conference) in an essay on the issue of contraception over at the Huffington Post [1].

These paragraphs capture Professor Flavin's view:

> With or without support from home, many students will seek out the contraception they need. Still, the ban contributes to a climate of shame and stigma surrounding sexuality that -- as we learned from victims of the widespread priest sex abuse scandal -- can be incredibly harmful. Fear of disclosure and shame, in turn, can lead to difficulty finding information and services, and the avoidance of needed health care and support. If universities are to succeed in the mission of educating and graduating the students they admit, they must fill in the gaps in care left unmet by dysfunctional or struggling families, not deny that such dysfunction exists. To do otherwise is to fail our students.
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> The principle of *cura personalis* (or "care for the whole person"), central to the mission of Catholic schools, does not come with a qualifier that says "unless you are sexually active" or "except if you are a woman." While Catholic social teachings communicate powerful and uplifting messages about the dignity of the human person, the contraceptive coverage ban (not to mention the Vatican's recent rebuke of the American Catholic nuns for not promoting the "Church's biblical view of family life and human sexuality") shouts volumes about women's second-class status in the Catholic Church. This disrespect for the women who are here -- in our midst, on our campuses -- being shown by a powerful minority of conservative Catholics in favor of purported concern for the unborn must be called out for what it is: profoundly unchristian.

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[1] http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jeanne-flavin/how-catholic-universities-contraceptive-ban-fails-students_b_1471667.html