

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a baptized Catholic seeking an exemption from a requirement to administer or refer for contraceptives. This letter explains how the Catholic Church's teachings may lead individual Catholics, including me, [name], to decline to provide this intervention.

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that a person may not use a medication or device whose sole direct effect is to hinder conception. As an extension of this, a person may not directly assist another person in doing the same, which includes referral to receive the same from another provider. The following authoritative Church teachings demonstrate the principled religious basis on which a Catholic may refuse to cooperate with the administration of, or referral for, contraceptives:

- The generation of human life is a cooperation in the creative power of God and a reciprocal self-giving between married persons (John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, n. 43).
- Sexual intercourse, through which new human life is created, is inherently both procreative and unitive, and this intrinsic connection cannot intentionally and directly be separated without denying the meaning of human sexuality and therefore violating the "integration of sexuality within the person and thus the inner unity of man in his bodily and spiritual being" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n 2337; Paul VI, *Humanae vitae*, n. 12).
- Any action whose sole purpose is to make a person incapable of procreating, either permanently or temporarily, either for its own sake or as a means to achieve some good goal, "is a grave violation of moral law and therefore unlawful" (Pius XII, *Address to midwives on the nature of their profession*; Paul VI, *Humanae vitae*, n. 14).
- This assault on human dignity is heightened when the methods of contraception have a post-fertilization effect (John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, n. 13).
- According to "classical moral doctrine," Catholics in good conscience cannot directly and intentionally participate in or other facilitate the sinful actions of others (Pontifical Academy for Life, *Moral Reflections on Vaccines Prepared from Cells Derived from Aborted Human Foetuses*).

An individual Catholic may invoke these Church teachings to refuse to administer or refer for contraceptives, as carrying out such actions would force one to disobey the judgment of his or her own informed and certain conscience. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* instructs that following one's conscience is following Christ himself:

In all he says and does, man is obliged to follow faithfully what he knows to be just and right. It is by the judgment of his conscience that man perceives and recognizes the prescriptions of the divine law: "Conscience is a law of the mind; yet [Christians] would not grant that it is nothing more; . . . [Conscience] is a messenger of Him, who, both in nature and in grace, speaks to us behind a veil, and teaches and rules us by his representatives. Conscience is the aboriginal Vicar of Christ." (n. 1778)

Therefore, if a Catholic comes to an informed and sure judgment in conscience that he or she should not participate in the administration or referral of contraceptives in any way, then the Catholic Church requires that the person follow this certain judgment of conscience and refuse. The *Catechism* is clear: "Man has the right to act in conscience and in freedom so as personally to make moral decisions. 'He must not be forced to act contrary to his conscience. Nor must he be prevented from acting according to his conscience, especially in religious matters'" (n. 1782).

Sincerely in Christ,

[Name]