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The Vatican's condom evolution

by John L. Allen Jr.



Members of the Philippines' Reproductive Health Advocacy Network display condoms to support the passage of the Reproductive Health Oct. 1. (CNS)

While it's no secret that many liberal Catholic theologians have long questioned church teaching on birth control, an equal-and-opposite row among conservatives has often flown below radar. In those circles, the question isn't so much whether devices such as condoms ought to be embraced, but whether they're so intrinsically evil that they necessarily add an element of sin to any sexual act.

Some prominent Catholic observers say that question has now been settled by the Vatican, and in a way that pulls the rug out from under some of the church's most unyielding pro-life voices.

English Catholic writer Austen Ivereigh claimed in an analysis yesterday for *America* magazine that the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has, in effect, rejected what he called a "Pharisaical" position on condoms that Ivereigh associates primarily with "pro-life ultras in the English-speaking world."

In a similar vein, Italian Vatican writer Sandro Magister wrote that hard-liners "cannot help but be disappointed" by what the doctrinal congregation has said.

Read the full story: **On condoms, has the Vatican rejected the Pharisees?**

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