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# PRESS RELEASE

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CMA Affirms Truth of Teaching on Contraception

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

*Philadelphia, PA – December 16, 2016*—In recent months, the dissident group The Wijngaards Institute published a statement, [“Catholic Scholars’ Statement on the Ethics of Using Contraception,”](#) claiming to “reassess” the Church’s teaching on contraception, and encouraging “the Catholic hierarchy to reverse its stance against” contraception. They presented it at a Sept. 20 “side-event,” “Keeping the Faith in Development: Gender, Religion, & Health,” during the United Nations (UN) General Assembly. The event was co-hosted by several UN agencies and attended by about sixty participants. In response, several prominent Catholic scholars, including Dr. Janet Smith, wrote their own statement, [“Affirmation of the Catholic Church’s Teaching on the Gift of Sexuality,”](#) proclaiming their fidelity to the Church’s teaching on contraception, and exposing the serious theological and anthropological mistakes within the Wijngaards statement (WS). They hosted a press conference, live-streamed on a Catholic University of America webpage, at the same time as the UN symposium. This statement was signed by over five hundred Catholic scholars with doctoral degrees in theology, medicine, law, and other fields.

The CMA confirms its unity with the authors of the “Affirmation” statement, and its own adherence to the Church’s teaching on contraception. As physicians faithful to the Magisterium, and concerned foremost for our patients, we assert that the use of contraceptives for family planning is unhealthy and unethical. We believe that fertility is a gift, and that a normal fertility system should not be “fixed” via contraception.

Contraception has many harmful physical effects. Oral contraceptives are associated with an [increased risk of breast cancer](#), including of one of the deadliest and most difficult to treat subtypes, [premenopausal Triple Negative Breast Cancer](#). Hormonal contraceptives (HCs) of various types are also associated with increased risk of [venous thromboembolism](#), [myocardial infarction](#), [ischemic stroke](#), [depression](#), and [reduced sexual functioning and interest](#), among other serious medical issues. HCs and intrauterine devices are also associated with being [potentially abortifacient](#), due to [endometrial effects](#). Barrier contraceptives such as condoms are also risky and [cannot provide absolute protection](#) against any sexually transmitted disease. In third-world countries the distribution of condoms to reduce the transmission rate of HIV has proven unsuccessful; abstinence-based programs are the only ones that have [succeeded](#).

Contraception can contribute to an [abortion mentality](#); a baby conceived despite its use seems a “mistake” to those involved. Often, abortion becomes thinkable as the “backup solution” to an unwanted pregnancy, unlike the WS’s faulty assumption that increased contraceptive use will decrease abortions. Contraception also falsifies the language of the body—our bodies were made for love and self-gift; contraception overlays this with a contradictory bodily language of refusal to accept or give oneself completely to another.

Alternatively, Fertility Awareness Based Methods of family planning (FABMs), also known as Natural Family Planning, are healthy, natural, and up to [99% effective](#) when used properly. There are deep [anthropological and moral differences](#) between the [use of FABMs and contraception](#), unlike the WS purports. FABMs allow spouses to respect the language of the body, help individuals grow in self-mastery, value the health of women, and have been found to strengthen marriages. Through charting of fertility patterns, they can assist patients to recognize early when their fertility system is not working, so as to obtain effective treatment. We encourage healthcare professionals to familiarize themselves with FABMs and the science behind them, to see how they might contribute to their patients’ well-being, and to help colleagues and patients appreciate the beauty of God’s gift of fertility.

The CMA affirms that the Church’s teaching on contraception is ethical, morally sound, and ultimately truly healthy for patients. We ask all people of good will to study the truth about contraception, and offer our assistance to anyone wishing to learn more about its moral and healthier alternatives.

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