

Pro-life Basics

Note: The following question was published previously, but the accurate response is now being published due to an error in the July-August 2007 issue.

Is it right for Catholic hospitals to give emergency contraception (Plan B) to rape victims?

—Erika

Dear Erika,

Even though the Connecticut Catholic Conference recently approved the provision of these pills to rape victims who are thought not to have ovulated, the fact is that it is not right and should never be condoned for any reason.

The pill is an abortion-causing chemical which does work to thin the lining of a woman's uterus. If this woman is already pregnant and the preborn child is less than a week old, that baby will not be able to implant and will subsequently die. This is called a chemical abortion.

However, at an even more basic level, the Catholic Church is quite clear in stating that medications cannot be used for the purpose of contraception and the Church has never provided an exception to her teaching.

Section 14 of *Humanae Vitae* states, "the direct interruption of the generative process already begun and, above all, all direct abortion, even for therapeutic reasons, are to be absolutely excluded as lawful

means of regulating the number of children...

Similarly excluded is any action which either before, at the moment of, or after sexual intercourse, is specifically intended to prevent procreation—whether as an end or as a means."

Now you might argue that the physician who gives the rape victim this pill does not intend to prevent the procreation of a baby, but that is not the point. These physicians know that the pill has the

potential to cause abortion and, therefore, should not ever consider using it.

Furthermore, there is no pregnancy test on the market that will tell you if fertilization has taken place prior to implantation and Plan B prevents implantation after fertilization. Therefore, the use of this pill for any reason is simply not

in accord with Catholic teaching.

Judie Brown is president of American Life League and a member of the Pontifical Academy for Life.

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