

'open another window on the world' and call 'the winds of change' to blow. This time, the Church may yet declare that sex, and an entire human being's sexuality comes from God, and is beautiful, creative, erotic, life-giving, and life-enhancing. And it will recognize and appreciate that this is not a desire for licentiousness or sexual laxity but is simply a celebration of ourselves.

Endnotes

1. For the Catholic Church's History, I relied heavily on *Maggie Hume's Contraception in Catholic Doctrine: The Evolution of an Earthly Code*; John T. Noonan Jr. who authored *Contraception: A History of its Treatment by the Catholic Theologians and Canonists*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1965; and *Ute Ranke-Heinemann's Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven*. Penguin Books, 1990. 2. Religious News Service/Washington Post, Nov. 19, 1988 and Commonweal, Feb. 10, 1989, as cited in *Maggie Hume's Contraception in Catholic Doctrine: The Evolution of an Earthly Code*. Washington, D.C.: Catholics for a Free Choice, 1991. 3. *Bernard Haring, Charles Curran and Gregory Baum* level their criticisms against *Humanae Vitae* in *The Catholic Case for Contraception*. London: Arlington Books, 1965.

Marilen J. Dañguilan MD, a Filipina, is an international women's health consultant, a government health policy analyst and a women's health rights activist. She is the author of **Making Choices in Good Faith: A Challenge to the Catholic Church's Teachings on Sexuality and Contraception**, WomanHealth 1993. This paper was presented at the Southeast Asian Regional Consultation of the Independent Commission on Population and Quality of Life, September 1994, Manila. ♀

Is The Pope Catholic?

A new study released by Catholics for a Free Choice (CFFC) shows that Catholics worldwide disagree with the Vatican's stand on reproductive issues - abortion and contraception - and on social issues such as divorce, a married priesthood and the ordination of women.

Proponents of the institutional position on abortion and contraception often assert that dissent from official teachings is an almost exclusively American phenomenon. However, according to the data collected by CFFC and compiled in the new report, *Catholics and Reproduction: A World View*, disagreement among Catholics with church leaders on questions ranging from abortion to divorce is common worldwide.

Among the report's findings:

- Sixty-one per cent of Polish voters favor a legal right to abortion. Only 10 per cent agree with the hierarchy's position banning abortion completely. Sixty-one per cent of Poles think that the church has too much power, 76 per cent believe it should not interfere in elections, and 70 per cent believe that it should not interfere in government.
- When Ireland voted on the Irish abortion law in 1992, two-thirds of the electorate (66 per cent) disagreed with the Vatican's position against abortion by favoring a change in the constitutional amendment

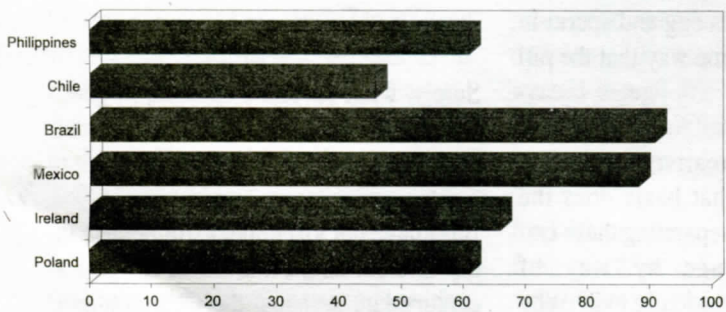
which banned abortion entirely. Fifty-two per cent of the Irish are also opposed to the Vatican's teaching in opposition to contraception. Among those aged 18-34, the number opposing the church's teaching on contraception is 71 per cent.



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- In Mexico, 88.4 per cent believe that the decision to have an abortion belongs either to the couple or to the woman. Only 7 per cent believe that this decision belongs to others.
- Although 76 per cent of Catholics in Brazil know that the Catholic church prohibits abortion under any circumstances, 40 per cent say that couples should be free to decide for themselves and 51 per cent said that they would not try to convince others not to have an abortion. Seventy-two per cent of Brazillian Catholics believe that it is permissible to use any method of birth control regardless of the Catholic hierarchy's position.
- In Chile, 46 per cent of the population believe that abortion should be either permitted in special cases or available to all women. Seventy-three per cent of Chileans disagree with the church's position against legal divorce, even though it remains illegal in Chile.
- Sixty-one percent of respondents in the Philippines agree that the choice of family planning methods is a personal decision of a married couple with which no one should interfere, and, contrary to the church's total prohibition, 83 per cent agree with the use of condoms to prevent the spread of AIDS.

Catholics opposed to official Vatican position on family planning and abortion



Frances Kissling, President of Catholics for a Free Choice, says, "these surveys prove that the Vatican's views are out of step with the 994 million Catholics they purport to represent throughout the world."

Source: Catholics for a Free Choice, August 3, 1994 Memo, 1436 U Street, N.W., Suite 301, Washington, D.C. 20009-3997, USA. Tel: (202) 986-6093 Fax: (202) 332-7995.