

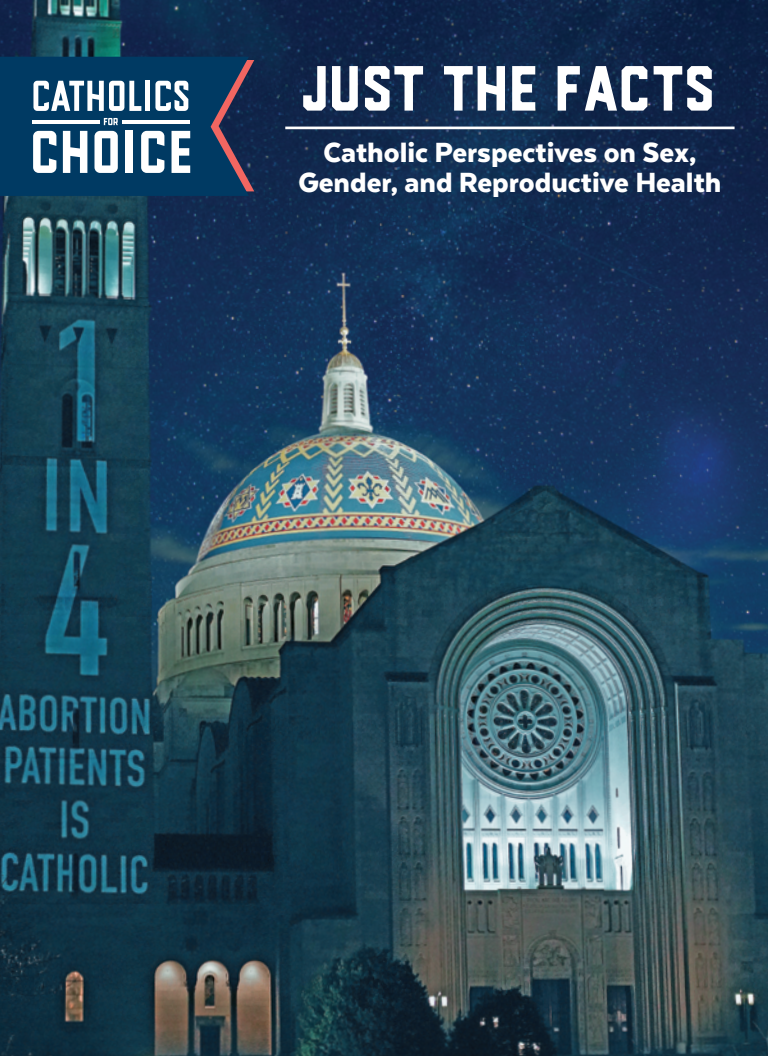
CATHOLICS
FOR
CHOICE

JUST THE FACTS

Catholic Perspectives on Sex,
Gender, and Reproductive Health

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IN
4

ABORTION
PATIENTS
IS
CATHOLIC



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ABOUT CATHOLICS AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Let's face it: There are a lot of **misconceptions** about what Catholics believe about sexual and reproductive ethics, and the church hierarchy doesn't represent the views of all — or even most — Catholics.

How do we know? Just look at the data.

63%

of Catholics think abortion should be legal in all or most cases

(PRRI 2023)

1 in 4

abortion patients is Catholic

(Guttmacher 2016)

98%

of Catholic women have used birth control

(Guttmacher 2020)

Anti-choice Catholics can be loud, but **they are the minority** in the church. We believe that the Catholic tradition's teachings on social justice, human dignity, and the primacy of conscience **compel us to support the right to reproductive freedom** — and the facts in this brochure prove that we're not alone.

*Unless otherwise indicated, statistics in this brochure refer to the United States.

ABORTION

63%

of Catholics think
abortion should
be legal in all or
most cases

(PRRI 2023)

71%

of Catholics of color say
abortion should be legal
in all or most cases

(PRRI 2023)

1 in 4

abortion patients
is Catholic

(Guttmacher 2014)

65%

of Catholics in
12 countries with high
Catholic populations said
abortion should be legal
in all or some cases

(Guttmacher 2011)

70%

of Generation Z
Catholics think abortion
should be legal in all
or most cases

(PRRI 2023)

1917

The year that the Vatican codified a total ban on abortion into canon law

0

The number of times abortion is banned, shamed, or discouraged in the Bible

100%

The percentage of Supreme Court justices who overturned *Roe v. Wade* who are — or were raised — Catholic

34%

The percentage of Catholics who have “a lot” of trust in clergy’s opinions on abortion
(Pew November 2019)

44%

The percentage of Catholics who have heard an anti-abortion homily in the past month
(Pew August 2020)

BIRTH CONTROL

98%

of Catholic women
have used birth control

(Guttmacher 2020)

8%

of Catholics believe that using
birth control is morally wrong

(Pew September 2016)

76%

of Catholics think the church should
allow people to use birth control *(Pew 2015)*

Remember:

According to the hierarchy, “The Church has always taught the **intrinsic evil of contraception**, that is, of every marital act intentionally rendered unfruitful.”

(Pontifical Council for the Family 1997).

But birth control serves **many medical purposes**, and for many people around the world — especially those who are poor or sick — **access to birth control is a matter of life or death.**

MARRIAGE

The Catholic laity's support for marriage equality and divorce has increased in recent years, despite resistance from the hierarchy.

We take this as a sign that **the church, as the people of God, can evolve on matters of sexual and reproductive health**, even if its leadership remains resistant to change.

44%

of Catholics have **lived with a partner** without being married
(Pew 2015)

61%

of Catholics think that **getting divorced is not sinful** *(Pew 2015)*

1 in 4

Catholics has **been divorced**
(Pew 2015)

Catholics who believe same-sex marriage should be legally recognized *(Gallup 2020)*

49%

2006-2010

59%

2011-2015

69%

2016-2020

LGBTQIA+ RIGHTS

47%

of LGBTQIA+ adults are religious
(UCLA 2020)

70%

of Black LGBTQIA+ adults are religious
(UCLA 2020)

76%

of Catholics think the U.S. should be
accepting of homosexuality
(Pew November 2020)

68%

of Catholics oppose laws that allow small businesses
to turn away LGBTQIA+ customers *(PRRI 2017)*

56%

of Catholics oppose anti-trans laws that stipulate
which bathrooms people can use *(PRRI 2017)*

GENDER EQUALITY

The Catholic hierarchy, including Pope Francis, often promotes **gender complementarity**: the belief that men and women should have **separate and unequal roles in both church and society**.

The laity's support for women's ordination demonstrates that they reject this idea.

59%

of Catholics think the church should ordain women

(Pew 2015)

**ONLY
7%**

of Catholic women think the church shouldn't ordain women as deacons

(CARA 2018)



LATINX CATHOLICS

Hispanic Catholics' support for legal abortion in all cases doubled in 2022, from **16%** in March to **31%** in December (PRRI 2023).

75%

of Latinx Catholics support access to legal abortion

(PRRI 2022)

61%

of Hispanic Catholics think abortion should be legal in all or most cases

(PRRI 2023)

85%

of Latinx Catholics say they would support a loved one who had an abortion

(PerryUndem 2018)

62%

of Latinx Catholics do not want Roe v. Wade overturned

(PerryUndem 2018)

Sources: All statistics listed in this brochure have been cited and are available online at catholicsforchoice.org/resources/facts

CONSCIENCE AND DECISION-MAKING

For most Catholics, their consciences are their primary guide for making moral decisions.

When answering difficult questions, **73%** of Catholics say they **rely “a great deal” on their conscience.**

Only **21%** say they rely a great deal on church teachings and **11%** on the pope (*Pew April 2016*).

By **following their consciences** — which are **informed by their personal experiences and religious education** — these Catholics follow tradition even when their conclusions differ from the hierarchy’s.

We trust Catholics to make moral decisions and determine their reproductive destinies.

CATHOLIC SUPPORT FOR ABORTION

(PRRI 2023)

LEGAL IN ALL CASES 26%

LEGAL IN MOST CASES 37%

ILLEGAL IN MOST CASES 28%

ILLEGAL IN ALL CASES 8%

SKIPPED / DON'T KNOW 1%

Catholics for Choice — which serves the **pro-choice Catholic majority** — encounters, educates, and emboldens people of faith who support reproductive freedom.

Catholics for Choice believes **healthcare is a human right** — and that includes access to abortion.

Our faith calls us to affirm reproductive and religious freedom as **essential to Catholic social justice**.

