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# 1. 2016

## 1.1 April

### Religious Practitioner's Negotiations of Official Religious Beliefs (2016-04-15 03:20)

There are many controversial topics in our society concerning our morality. Catholics are viewed to be extremely conservative and have a strong hold on their beliefs. Some of the topics that are debated the most include gay marriage, abortion, cohabitation, contraception, divorce, and sex before marriage. In my blog, I strive to explore the official beliefs of the Catholic Church and analyze the statistics behind Catholics who still believe or practice them and relate them to Catholic students at Florida State University.

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### Gay Marriage (2016-04-15 03:26)

In the eyes of the Catholic Church, it is the official belief that gay marriage is not agreed with. The Catholic Church teaches that homosexuality is essentially a disorder and is only considered sinful if one acts on their feelings. Relating off the sinful view of acting on homosexuality, the church teaches that marriage can only be between one man and one woman, therefore a marriage between two people of the same sex is rejected and deemed morally wrong and sinful.



[1]

Though this is the official belief of the Catholic Church, it has become apparent that gay marriage and homosexuality is accepted much more than in the past. It was found that about 60 percent of Catholics in the United States agreed that homosexual individuals should have the right to marriage in a study done by the Public Religion Research Institute.

After taking the time to interview some Catholic students at Florida State University, a consistent split with the view on gay marriage was prevalent. Some of the individuals interviewed expressed their belief that homosexuals are born with an innate attraction to the same sex, therefore they should have just as much of a right to marriage as two people of different genders. On the other hand, some of the interviewed individuals expressed their belief that gay marriage is morally wrong and sinful and should not be allowed.

Looking at the statistics found by the Public Religion Research Institute and what the individuals interviewed had said, it is apparent that as society progresses the views of gay marriage is being accepted more and more by people in the Catholic denomination. Along with a growing acceptance, there is still a solid group of individuals that stand with the official beliefs of the church and continue to practice their beliefs in their daily lives.

[2][https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homosexuality\\_and\\_Roman\\_Catholicism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homosexuality_and_Roman_Catholicism)

[3]<http://www.christianpost.com/news/catholics-support-gay-marriage-as-much-as-general-population-and-believe-pope-francis-has-backed-it-prri-study-finds-143871/>

1. <https://2.bp.blogspot.com/-2u1SJ4P-Euo/VxBfQxCODXI/AAAAAAAAAAM/0seCHrMldzQH6MSsCis4hB3rPn6oHVnvACLcB/s1600/gay%2Bmarriage.jpg>

2. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homosexuality\\_and\\_Roman\\_Catholicism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homosexuality_and_Roman_Catholicism)

3. <http://www.christianpost.com/news/catholics-support-gay-marriage-as-much-as-general-population-and-believe-pope-francis-has-backed-it-prri-study-finds-143871/>

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## Abortion (2016-04-15 03:32)

Abortion is one of the most controversial subjects in our society and is constantly debated over publicly, as it is commonly one of the main stances of a politician. The Catholic Church condemns abortion and views it as a grave evil. The act of aborting an unborn baby is equivalent to murdering someone in the churches eyes.

[1]



Though the act of aborting a fetus is black and white, the reasoning behind it is grey. This is where the controversy thrives. Many people believe that abortion is extremely wrong in every situation possible, while others take into the consideration of “mothers” aborting their fetus because it was the result of an act of sexual assault or because the pregnancy is endangering the mother’s life.

Statistical analyses show that abortion is accepted more by white Catholics than by the United States as a whole. In a poll done by *The Washington Post*, it was found that 55 percent of white Catholics agree that abortion should be legal in all or most cases, while 43 percent believe that abortion should be illegal. In comparison with the nation as a whole, it was found that 55 percent of Americans think that abortion should be illegal.

[2]



After taking the time to interview Catholics that attend Florida State University, there was a more unanimous belief that abortion should be illegal. When I asked them their view under different conditions, they still believed that aborting an unborn child is morally wrong and extremely sinful under any circumstance. With their belief of the controversial subject, each person also stated that they, personally, would never have an abortion.

[3]<http://www.catholic.com/tracts/abortion>

[4]<https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/poll-50-percent-of-all-catholics-support-abortion-in-all-or-most-cases>

1. <https://1.bp.blogspot.com/-jeFUp5-1KFc/VxBf4zw0xiI/AAAAAAAAAY/znCFm5Tw-7A12nW5vnRe35fSfcjpcWbkACLcB/s1600/world-abortion-statistics-2015.jpg>
2. <https://3.bp.blogspot.com/-kFpZk7zHfdQ/VxBgCv3PU0I/AAAAAAAAAg/zSB2BrHb1asj1VlQ1a8mXhP4UZoWulioQCLcB/s1600/abortion-debate1.jpg>
3. <http://www.catholic.com/tracts/abortion>
4. <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/poll-50-percent-of-all-catholics-support-abortion-in-all-or-most-cases>

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## **Cohabitation (2016-04-15 03:39)**

Cohabitation is one of the less controversial subjects in society today. It has become a norm for the younger population, or even for adults who plan to get married. Although it is more accepted in our society, the Catholic Church believes that love between two people cannot exist with a trial marriage. The church accepts two people moving in with each other as long as they intend to marry, but do not encourage it.

These contradicting circumstances is what makes the act of cohabitation tricky. For cohabitation to be deemed acceptable by the church, the two moving in with each other must not participate in sexual activities or use it as a time to see if they will work out when married, they must be fully committed to one another. These, along with the statistical finding that cohabitation before marriage leads to higher divorce rates, are just some of the reasons the Catholic Church find cohabitation so concerning.



As mentioned before, it has been found that cohabitation leads to a higher possibility of divorce later in life with that person. Along with this statistical finding, it has been found that 37 percent of Catholics have cohabited or are currently cohabiting in a 2013 Pew poll. Though this number seems rather low it is more broadly accepted than in the past.

Cohabitation with or without the intention of marriage is starting to become more and more accepted in our world today. After interviewing Catholic students at FSU it became more apparent to me. Every single person I asked agreed that they would, have, or plan on cohabitation before marriage, knowing that it is not encouraged by the church.

[1]<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/resources/life-and-family/marriage/cohabitation-and-churchs-teaching/>

[2]<http://www.foryourmarriage.org/catholic-marriage/church-teachings/cohabitation/>

[3][http://www.huffingtonpost.com/paul-herrnson/american-catholics-poll\\_b\\_5899854.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/paul-herrnson/american-catholics-poll_b_5899854.html)

1. <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/resources/life-and-family/marriage/cohabitation-and-churchs-teaching/>

2. <http://www.foryourmarriage.org/catholic-marriage/church-teachings/cohabitation/>

3. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/paul-herrnson/american-catholics-poll\\_b\\_5899854.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/paul-herrnson/american-catholics-poll_b_5899854.html)



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## Contraception (2016-04-15 03:45)

Contraception is the act of deliberately refraining from the possibility of getting pregnant by using a condom, different types of birth control, sterilization, or “pulling out” method. The Catholic Church believes that all of these forms of contraception are wrong. The act of sex should be between two married people who love each other and plan to have children, anything that interrupts a new life coming into existence is deemed sinful because it is our gift from God to have the ability to have children.



The use of contraception is widely accepted not only by Catholics, but by the United States population as a whole. In fact, the use of contraception is widely accepted worldwide. Certain statistics show that 79 percent of Catholics worldwide accept different forms of contraception, while 82 percent of Catholic Americans find different forms of contraception morally acceptable though this is against the Catholic teaching. While the percentages of the acceptance of contraception is high, the use of it at least once by childbearing age females, who are Catholic, is even higher at 98 percent.

When interviewing Catholic females and males attending FSU about their view on contraception the answers definitely support these statistics. Every single person I asked acknowledged the fact that using contraception is morally wrong and is not accepted by the church, but still continue to use it. When asked why, they began to explain that they do it so they won't get pregnant, which leads to another controversial topic of engaging in sex before marriage.



[1]<http://thinkprogress.org/politics/2015/08/04/3687844/chris-christie-birth-control/>

[2]<http://www.catholic.com/tracts/birth-control>

1. <http://thinkprogress.org/politics/2015/08/04/3687844/chris-christie-birth-control/>

2. <http://www.catholic.com/tracts/birth-control>

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### **Sex Before Marriage (2016-04-15 14:56)**

As time has gone on, more people are starting to have sex at a younger age. Less people are waiting till marriage and jumping right into such a huge emotional commitment. This emotional commitment is core to what Catholics believe. The Catholic Church believes that sex is the greatest expression of love between a married couple. Having sex before you are fully committed and in the absence of this expression of love in a married setting is considered a mortal sin. Though most people think that it is only sex before marriage is morally wrong, it is actually any sexual activity before marriage that is deemed morally wrong.



Statistics show that 80 percent of unmarried young adults of a Christian faith are participating or have participated in sex. About half of the individuals included in the 80 percent are currently in a relationship.

Knowing that an alarming amount of Catholics have sex prior to marriage, I went into interviewing some Catholic students at FSU with an expectation of what they would say. Their answers met those expectations. Every single Catholic that I asked had or continues to have marriage outside of marriage. Each one of them acknowledged that sex is deemed morally wrong and is a mortal sin. When asked why they continue to participate in sex without marriage they began to explain it as being a social norm.

In our society sex has become so normal and so weird if you're still a virgin by the age of 18. Teenagers are constantly receiving a pressure from social media and the people they surround their selves with that sex is "cool." I left the

people I interviewed with a question. I didn't want them to answer it, but I figured it would help them self-reflect on what is important. So I'll leave you with the same question, "Is sex really that cool and that fun, if you're damaging your relationship with God?"

[1]<http://www.christianpost.com/news/are-most-single-christians-in-america-having-sex-56680/>

[2]<http://www.epigee.org/guide/catholicism.html>

1. <http://www.christianpost.com/news/are-most-single-christians-in-america-having-sex-56680/>

2. <http://www.epigee.org/guide/catholicism.html>

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## Divorce (2016-04-15 16:46)

Divorce is something that no couple wants to go through. When you get married you make vows to each other to love one another and to be together until death. In the eyes of the Catholic Church, when one man and one woman get married they become one in a union by God. Marriage is considered a sacrament and is seen as impossible to undo. In receiving this sacrament Catholics are called to be 100 percent faithful in their marriage and with God, because God is 100 percent faithful in his relationship with the married couple.



Statistics show that people of the Catholic faith divorce less than people outside of Catholicism and of no religious denomination. According to national surveys only 28 percent of married Catholics have been divorced, while people of other denominations or none at all show almost 40 percent. Along with these statistical analyses, it has been found that the divorce rate between two Catholics is much lower than if a Catholic married someone of a different religion.

Though I interviewed Catholics between the ages of 18-22, I was still able to get a view on their perspective on divorce. Of all the Catholic students I asked, they each stated that they did not believe that divorce was right because when two people are married and are bound by God they should do everything in their power to make it work. They acknowledged that divorce does happen and that it has become quite normal in society, but they do not personally believe in it.

After hearing these students talk about marriage and their belief that anything can work out with help from God, it restored my faith in what love has the power of doing.

[1]<http://www.ncregister.com/daily-news/divorce-statistics-indicate-catholic-couples-are-less-likely-to-break-up/>

[2]<http://www.aboutcatholics.com/beliefs/divorce-annulments-and-remarriage/>

1. <http://www.ncregister.com/daily-news/divorce-statistics-indicate-catholic-couples-are-less-likely-to-break-up/>

2. <http://www.aboutcatholics.com/beliefs/divorce-annulments-and-remarriage/>

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