

THE HUFFINGTON POST

A Thank-You Note to Birth Control

Dear Birth Control,

My mother raised me to understand the importance of thank-you notes. I grew up writing them at the dining room table for birthday presents from my grandparents. I sent them to the parents of college friends in thanks for weekend hospitality. I still send one after a dinner party, an evening at the theater or a trip to the ballpark. And so this week, I'm sending you this thank-you note to add my voice to the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy's #ThxBirthControl campaign.

As a priest, pastor and faith leader, I'm writing to say thank you, because birth control matters. In my faith tradition, among our core values are "strive for justice and respect the dignity of every human being." The ability to plan, prevent and space pregnancies is directly linked to benefits to women, men, children and a just society, including more educational and economic opportunities, healthier babies, more stable families and reduced taxpayer burden. And all of those advantages support respecting the dignity of every human being... including supporting the choices women make about when and if to become pregnant.

As the mother and stepmother of four young adults, I'm writing to thank you for the impact you have had on my children's generation. U.S. teen pregnancy and birth rates have declined dramatically over the past two decades and are now at historic lows. There has been significant progress in all 50 states and among all racial/ethnic groups. Even so, U.S. rates of teen childbearing remain far higher than in other comparable countries. So, while there is still more work for us to do, I am writing to thank you for the work you are doing to help ensure that children are born into stable families who are committed to and ready for the demanding task of raising the next generation.

Finally, as a woman who grew up in the '60s and '70s, I want to thank you for the transformative power contraception has had in women's health, economic power and participation in the workforce during my lifetime. Your influence has helped make us a stronger, better nation -- and our continued commitment to responsible behavior by both men and women and responsible policies in both the public and private sectors will mean less poverty, more opportunities for young men and women to complete their education or achieve other life goals, fewer abortions and an even stronger nation.

So thank you, birth control. For what you have done and for what you will continue to do to improve lives, to strengthen families and to support the dignity of every human being. #YouRock

Sincerely,

The Reverend Canon Susan Russell

All Saints Church, Pasadena CA