

Easy access to drugs trivializes abortion, says Vatican official

VATICAN CITY – Promoting easy access to RU-486 and other drugs that induce abortion risks trivializing the termination of a pregnancy, said the president of the Pontifical Academy for Life.

Commercializing abortion medication can turn “an unwanted pregnancy into being almost like an annoying cold to be gotten rid of with a pill,” Monsignor Ignacio Carrasco de Paula told the Vatican newspaper, L’Osservatore Romano, in an interview published July 30.

The Spanish monsignor, who is also a medical doctor, recalled working in Armenia after the 1998 earthquake. He said many of the women patients he worked with had already had more than 20 abortions and that “for them abortion had become like having a coffee.”

Such a blase attitude “is a serious phenomenon” that could easily spread to other parts of Europe, he said.

However, indiscriminate use of the abortion pill may increase the number of women who experience post-abortion syndrome, he said.

Monsignor Carrasco, who was named head of the life academy in June, said scholars are working on a document focusing on the psychological and emotional aftereffects of abortion because “it is certain that abortion, beside killing an innocent person, weighs heavily on the conscience of the woman who resorts to one.”

The academy will study the impact and nature of the syndrome more in-depth and release its findings and recommendations in a document by October 2011, he said.

“When abortion is being talked about, unfortunately, it triggers many issues that always spark a heated debate, sometimes even within the Catholic world,” he added.

He said he believes the academy’s role is to “always go beyond polemics in order to

reflect on every single aspect of the issue, even if it is uncomfortable to face. Internal or external debate does not scare us, rather, it enriches us.”

In an interview with the Italian Catholic online magazine *Il Consulente Re*, the monsignor criticized Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero and the new abortion law that went into effect in early July.

The Spanish parliament approved a measure that allows abortions without restrictions for up to 14 weeks. The new law allows 16- and 17-year-olds to have abortions without parental consent although the parents have to be informed. It also declares abortion to be a woman’s right.

The law “is foolishness, absolute foolishness, and it goes along with the mentality of Zapatero,” who presents every issue in terms of human rights, said Monsignor Carrasco.

The prime minister promotes everything as a human right, “but he is incapable of understanding what a right is,” he added.

The same dangerous tendency can be seen in other countries in which the relationship between patient and doctor is being eroded, he said. Medical decisions will no longer be determined by a medical professional who acts according to moral guidelines but by a judge, he said.

“Such a development is very disturbing because it would also mean an undermining of medicine,” he said.

Monsignor Carrasco urged people to at least try to resist the large financial and ideological interests lobbying for pro-abortion legislation. He praised Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega for abandoning his support of limited abortion laws and becoming a strong opponent of abortion.

The academy is also studying the issue of umbilical cord blood banks. While the church supports the use of stem cells derived from adults and umbilical cord blood, the academy will look at whether public or profit-driven private facilities would better and more fairly conserve and use such cells, he said.