

Jesuit magazine says universal health care must also protect unborn

VATICAN CITY – If U.S. Republicans and Democrats can promise to work together on economic policy – an area where they have legitimate differences – they also must try to cooperate in finding a health care plan that can serve the needy while respecting the sacredness of human life, said an influential Jesuit journal.

“Authentic legal consensus is not at the service of relativism, but of the passionate search for the truth in order to defend the real human rights of all,” said *Civiltà Cattolica*, the Jesuit magazine written in Rome and reviewed before publication by the Vatican Secretariat of State.

An editorial in the magazine’s March 19 edition, distributed to journalists before publication, sought to explain to readers the position of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops on President Barack Obama’s health care plan, passed in 2010, and on modifications to the plan proposed this year.

When the plan first passed, *Civiltà Cattolica* hailed it as the “needed and long-awaited beginning” of bringing greater justice to all citizens. The journal also lamented the strong polemics that surrounded passage of the program, and it described the contrasting positions of the U.S. bishops and some Catholic health and justice organizations as a disagreement over how best to put the Catholic Church’s social teaching into practice.

In the new editorial, the journal said the initial positive reactions, particularly by the Catholic Health Association, were “hasty and partial” as well as “not in harmony with the position of the U.S. bishops, who expressed their judgment on the basis on the moral teaching of the church, taking into account every aspect of the reform,” including provisions for funding abortion.

In a footnote, the magazine said its initial article “expressed an analogous judgment”

to that of the Catholic Health Association.

The magazine said that in the eyes of the Catholic Church, the goal must be health care for all accomplished in a way that also “guarantees the protection of the unborn and of the consciences” of Catholics who want to continue their jobs as health care workers, but cannot participate in abortions or other procedures they and the church consider immoral.