

Vatican blasts New York's sex ed program

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VATICAN CITY (RNS) The Vatican took a swipe at new sex education classes in New York City schools on Wednesday (Aug. 31), saying teaching middle school students how to use a condom is "useless, and even harmful."

The front-page editorial of the Vatican's official newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano, criticized all mandatory sex ed classes in public schools but was aimed particularly at New York's new program, which has been opposed heavily by Archbishop Timothy Dolan.

The editorial criticized governments' "magical trust in the effectiveness of sex education." Citing longtime sex ed programs in Britain, the paper said "boys and girls continue to have early sexual intercourse without any kind of protection, and the number of pregnancies and abortions among adolescents has multiplied."

Governments would rather "ignore" the problem than address the underlying issue of the "failed utopia of the sexual revolution and subsequent breakdown of ... the family," the paper said.

And whenever the church opposes such programs, it is labeled "an obscurantist force" and accused of cruelty for its "indifference to the consequences" of unwanted pregnancies and disease, the paper said.

The Vatican paper touted Italy where, despite the absence of sex ed from school curricula, teenage pregnancies and STDs remain low. The newspaper cited Italy's "loving vigilance of parents over their children":

"Kids are not left to themselves with a box of contraceptives as the only defense against their passions and mistakes."