

In regard to the “Culture of Life” letter of Jan. 28, my Catholic-formed conscience impels me to point out that the Church’s position against abortion is weakened by its adamant stance against birth control and its institutional blindness to the suffering of women, especially those in the poorest countries of the world. These women give birth in unsanitary conditions, many without the assistance of midwives. According to a 2012 *Newsweek* interview with Catholic Melinda Gates (Gates Foundation), 100,000 women annually die in childbirth after unintended pregnancies. “Six hundred thousand babies born to women who didn’t want to be pregnant die in the first month of life.” Having served as a Peace Corps volunteer in the slums of Peru, I have witnessed the suffering and death of malnourished babies whose undernourished mothers didn’t have enough breast milk to feed them. There are solutions to these problems—literacy, improved health, clean water, civil rights for women, and education for men who feel entitled to a woman’s body. The Church’s call for a “seamless garment” in regard to social justice needs mending.

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