Vatican Decries Condom Machines in Rome High School

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The Vatican is criticizing a high school in Rome for installing condom vending machines, saying that making prophylactics readily available will encourage young people to have premarital sex, which the Catholic Church opposes, The Associated Press reports. While schools in other European countries have installed condom machines to prevent teen pregnancy and HIV transmission, the Keplero high school is believed to be the first school in Rome to do so. Vatican City, the headquarters of the Catholic Church, is located in Rome.

“This is not about stimulating the use of condoms or intercourse,” said the school’s headmaster, Antonio Panaccione, “On the contrary, it’s about prevention and education.”

However, Cardinal Agostino Vallino, the pope’s vicar for Rome, argues that the school’s decision to install the machines trivializes sex. He said it “cannot be approved by Rome’s ecclesiastical community or by Christian families who are seriously concerned with the education of their children.”

The newspaper of the Italian Bishops’ Conference said on March 11 that too much emphasis is being placed on “the health and hygiene consequences of sex” and not its moral implications.

On a recent trip to Africa, the pope said condom distribution “aggravates the problems” of the global HIV/AIDS epidemic. He claimed that abstinence and marital fidelity are the best prevention strategy. His comment drew criticism from health officials, government leaders and HIV advocates worldwide.

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