

Videos offer insights into talking

One of the funniest videos I have ever seen is a French advertisement for glue: www.culturepub.fr/videos/rubber-cement-colle-les-nonnes.



Population Matters!

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a terrible accident has happened: His protruding member – not his nose – has been broken off.

The member is found, and taken to the Mother Superior, who knows just how to fix his broken penis. She reaches for

a tube of rubber cement and heals the poor fellow. The video closes as a young novice sneakily turns the member from the resting to the ready position.

This hilarious video brings up some serious food for thought for us in the United States.

Yes, even those pledged to abstinence still have urges. The pretty young nun in the video didn't leave her libido behind when she put on her habit. The Roman Catholic Church in this country is finally – although tacitly – admitting this by paying out huge sums because some priests did not live up to their vows and abused children.

In the past, women became nuns for many reasons. Desire to have power and education in a society that didn't respect women, poverty and lack of pulchritude were all secular motives.

Fear of childbirth was an-

other, although one we might not even think of today. Until recently, a woman had a substantial risk of dying from a complication of pregnancy. Furthermore, there was no reliable way to prevent pregnancy until the 20th century. Serving God had a notable side effect of saving your neck.

The video illustrates the differences in mores between France and the United States. For instance, this advertisement could never be shown on our television. Furthermore, we in the United States live in an era that gives young people mixed messages.

Sex is used to market products, is featured on TV and draws crowds to the movies. We are continually exposed to the sexual highjinks of celebrities such as Tiger Woods and Jimmy Swaggart. Yet we often fail to give teens the straight scoop on sexuality and how to protect themselves against infections and pregnancy.

to teenagers about sex

Not long ago, teens were not taught about contraception and were supposed to keep their virginity until marriage. Yet many studies show that modern "abstinence only" programs do not work and, indeed, may expose our adolescents to greater risks because of their ignorance.

In 2007, Colorado voters showed their wisdom in rejecting abstinence-only idiocy by passing a law that requires any sexuality education curriculum to include accurate information about sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy prevention. Nationally, the current administration has put a nationwide stop to "abstinence only" programs.

The teen birth rate in the United States is at least four times that of any other rich country. Our teen pregnancy rate is more than five times that of the French. The difference between teen birth rates is not a result of more

abortions in France; the teen abortion rate is lower there than in the United States. The principal reason for the difference is that French teens use more contraception.

Why? I have some ideas, although I am not a sociologist. We have mores left over from the Victorian era, when sexuality was swept under the carpet. We still pretend that adolescent sexuality will go away if we ignore it.

Remember: The best way to lower the abortion rate is to encourage the use of effective contraception.

Commenting on the rubber cement video, a French woman said sexuality is just part of life in her country. People talk more freely about sex in Europe. She also observed that the separation of church and state is stronger there. A program such as our "abstinence until marriage" – which was spearheaded by born-again Christians – would never have

been adopted in France.

Another video illustrates the differences between our cultures. Search the Internet for "Teens & Sex in Europe: A Story of Rights, Respect & Responsibility." Its producer, Advocates for Youth, is a leading organization in the field of adolescent reproductive health. Working both here and internationally, it leads study tours to European countries. This film documents the differences between the different cultures.

What can you do to help your children be more rational about their sexuality? One step would be to sit down with them, watch these videos and then talk about them. You might be surprised what you can learn from your kids.

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