



## *Pro-Life Activities*

UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

The Spanish version is attached. Thank you!

### **LIFE ISSUES FORUM**

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For Immediate Release**

#### **FDA Blurs the Abortion-Contraception Line Again By Deirdre A. McQuade**

Late on Friday, August 13, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the new drug called “ella” (Ulipristal acetate) for use as an “emergency contraceptive” up to five days after sexual intercourse. If I were superstitious, I would say that this particular Friday the thirteenth brought bad luck for women and their unborn children. Why?

Even more than other drugs proposed for “emergency contraception,” ella crosses the line between contraception and abortion. It is similar in its formula and biological effects to the abortion drug RU-486, which can be used to induce abortion up to 49 days’ gestation. Both drugs inhibit progesterone – a hormone needed to sustain a healthy pregnancy – by blocking progesterone receptors in the lining of the womb (the endometrium) and causing it to deteriorate. But if the mother’s endometrium is not hospitable or starts to shed prematurely, the 6-to-10-day-old embryo will have difficulty becoming *or remaining* implanted in the womb. Her vulnerable child will die from the lack of nutrients and oxygen and be sloughed off in her menstrual cycle. Thus, ella can effectively starve a newly conceived unborn child even after implantation in his or her mother’s womb, what the American Medical Association calls an “established pregnancy.”

Although the drug works like RU-486 -- which the FDA approved in 2002 as an abortion method, not as contraception -- ella has been approved as a “contraceptive” for use up to five days after intercourse. The FDA approval blurs the line between preventing conception in the first place, and preventing implantation or even ending an established pregnancy after implantation, killing a person in the earliest weeks of life.

You don't have to be Catholic or even pro-life to oppose the promotion of abortion as contraception. According to a recent Rasmussen Reports poll of likely voters, 58% of women consider abortion morally wrong in most cases. If ella is promoted as a way of preventing pregnancy, many women will be misled as to how it actually works, and will not know that they are putting their newly-conceived children at risk. Blurring the line between abortion and contraception undermines women's informed consent. The Catholic Church objects to all contraception, but marketing abortion as "emergency contraception" is an additional offense against human dignity. It is also a huge disservice to women of any religious faith (or none) who would not knowingly choose to abort. Women and men alike deserve to know that ella can cause abortions.

Friday the thirteenth got its bad reputation, in part, from Judas' betrayal of Jesus on Good Friday for a bag of silver coins. Now the FDA has betrayed women as well as their unborn children, by selling out to abortion advocates. Abortion is not health care, because pregnancy is not a disease to be treated with drugs or surgery. Ella is just the latest drug to treat pregnancy as a pathological condition. Drug manufacturers will profit while innocent humans pay with their lives. The Catholic bishops will continue to oppose the promotion of ella, and to raise awareness about this abortion-causing drug.

Deirdre A. McQuade is Assistant Director for Policy & Communications at the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. For more information on the bishops' pro-life activities, please visit [www.usccb.org/prolife](http://www.usccb.org/prolife).