REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES

Techniques that entail the dissociation of husband and wife, by the intrusion of a person other than the couple (donation of sperm or ovum, surrogate uterus), are gravely immoral. These techniques (heterologous) artificial insemination and fertilization) infringe the child's right to be born of a father and mother known to him and bound to each other by marriage. They betray the spouses' "right to become a father and a mother only through each other." (*CCC*, #2376)

Techniques involving only the married couple (homologous artificial insemination and fertilization) are perhaps less reprehensible, yet remain morally unacceptable. They dissociate the sexual act from the procreative act. The act which brings the child into existence is no longer an act by which two persons give themselves to one another, but one that "entrusts the life and identity of the embryo into the power of doctors and biologists and establishes the domination of technology over the origin and destiny of the human person. Such a relationship of domination is in itself contrary to the dignity and equality that must be common to parents and children." "Under the moral aspect procreation is deprived of its proper perfection when it is not willed as the fruit of the conjugal act, that is to say, of the specific act of the spouses' union....Only respect for the link between the meanings of the conjugal act and respect for the unity of the human being make possible procreation in conformity with the dignity of the person." (*CCC*, #2377)

Respect of the dignity of the human being excludes all experimental manipulation or exploitation of the human embryo. (The Holy See, *Charter of the Rights of the Family*, 4; b)

In recent decades, medical science has made significant strides in understanding human life in its initial stages. Human biological structures and the process of human generation are better known. These developments are certainly positive and worthy of support when they serve to overcome or correct pathologies and succeed in re-establishing the normal functioning of human procreation. On the other hand, they are negative and cannot be utilized when they involve the destruction of human beings or when they employ means which contradict the dignity of the person or when they are used for purposes contrary to the integral good of man. (CDF, *DP*, September 8, 2008, #4)

Certainly, techniques aimed at removing obstacles to natural fertilization, as for example, hormonal treatments for infertility, surgery for endometriosis, unblocking of fallopian tubes or their surgical repair, are licit. All these techniques may be considered *authentic treatments* because, once the problem causing the infertility has been resolved,

the married couple is able to engage in conjugal acts resulting in procreation, without the physician's action directly interfering in that act itself. None of these treatments replaces the conjugal act, which alone is worthy of truly responsible procreation. (CDF, *DP*, September 8, 2008, #13)

Cryopreservation is *incompatible with the respect owed to human embryos*; it presupposes their production *in vitro*; it exposes them to the serious risk of death or physical harm, since a high percentage does not survive the process of freezing and thawing; it deprives them at least temporarily of maternal reception and gestation; it places them in a situation in which they are susceptible to further offense and manipulation. (CDF, *DP*, September 8, 2008, #18)

[I]t needs to be stated that *cryopreservation of oocytes for the purpose of being used in artificial procreation is to be considered morally unacceptable.* (CDF, *DP*, September 8, 2008, #20)

Some techniques used in artificial procreation, above all the transfer of multiple embryos into the mother's womb, have caused a significant increase in the frequency of multiple pregnancy. This situation gives rise in turn to the practice of so-called embryo reduction, a procedure in which embryos or fetuses in the womb are directly exterminated. The decision to eliminate human lives, given that it was a human life that was desired in the first place, represents a contradiction that can often lead to suffering and feelings of guilt lasting for years. From the ethical point of view, *embryo reduction is an intentional selective abortion.* It is in fact the deliberate and direct elimination of one or more innocent human beings in the initial phase of their existence and as such it always constitutes a grave moral disorder. (CDF, *DP*, September 8, 2008, #21)

Preimplantation diagnosis – connected as it is with artificial fertilization, which is itself always intrinsically illicit – is directed toward the *qualitative selection and consequent destruction of embryos,* which constitutes an act of abortion. Preimplantation diagnosis is therefore the expression of a *eugenic mentality* that "accepts selective abortion in order to prevent the birth of children affected by various types of anomalies. Such an attitude is shameful and utterly reprehensible, since it presumes to measure the value of a human life only within the parameters of 'normality' and physical well-being, thus opening the way to legitimizing infanticide and euthanasia as well." (CDF, *DP*, September 8, 2008, #22; Quoting *EV*, #63)

Behind every "no" in the difficult task of discerning between good and evil, there shines a *great "yes" to the recognition of the dignity and inalienable value of every single and unique human being called into existence.* (CDF, *DP*, September 8, 2008, #37)

The spread of technologies of intervention in the processes of human procreation raises very serious moral problems in relation to the respect due to the human being from the moment of conception, to the dignity of the person, of his or her sexuality, and of the transmission of life. (CDF, *DV*, February 22, 1987, Conclusion)

The practice of artificial insemination, when it refers to man cannot be considered either exclusively or principally from a biological and medical point of view to the neglect of morals and law. Artificial fecundation practiced outside of marriage must be condemned purely and simply as immoral. (Pius XII, *Allocution to the International Congress of Catholic Doctors*, September, 29, 1949)

Artificial insemination in marriage-produced with the active element of a third person-is equally immoral, and as such is condemned without appeal. The mere fact that the result which is desired is achieved by such a means does not justify the use of such means; nor does the desire to have a child-a perfectly legitimate desire of husband and wife-suffice to prove the legitimacy of resorting to artificial insemination which would fulfill such a desire. (Pius XII, *Allocution to the International Congress of Catholic Doctors*, September, 29, 1949)

Artificial insemination exceeds the limits of the right which the married couple has acquired by the matrimonial contract, namely, the right to exercise fully their natural sexual capacity in the natural accomplishment of the matrimonial act. The contract in question does not confer on them the right to artificial insemination, for such a right is in no way expressed in the right to the natural conjugal act and cannot be thence deduced. Less still can it be derived from the right to offspring, the primary end of marriage. (Pius XII, *Allocution to the Members of the II World Congress of Fertility and Sterility*, May 19, 1956)

In Our allocution to the World Congress on Fertility and Sterility, May 19, 1956, (we returned to this question) of artificial insemination to condemn once more every type of artificial insemination, because this practice is not included in the rights of spouses and because it is contrary to natural law and to Catholic morality. (Pius XII, *Allocution to the Members of the Seventh Congress on Hematology*, September 12, 1958)

The transmission of human life is the result of a personal and conscious act, and, as such, is subject to the all-holy, inviolable and immutable laws of God, which no man may ignore or disobey. He is not therefore permitted to use certain ways and means which are allowable in the propagation of plant and animal life. (*MM*, #193)

Homologous artificial fertilization, in seeking a procreation which is not the fruit of a specific act of conjugal union, objectively effects an analogous separation between the goods and meanings of marriage. Thus, fertilization is licitly sought when it is the result of a 'conjugal act which is per se suitable for the generation of children to which marriage is ordered by its nature and by which the spouses become one flesh.' But from the moral point of view procreation is deprived of its proper perfection when it is not desired as the fruit of the conjugal act, that is to say of the specific act of the spouses' union. (CDF, *DV*, February 22, 1987, II A 2)

[*F*]*ertilization of a married woman with the sperm of a donor different from her husband and fertilization with the husband's sperm of an ovum not coming from his wife are*

morally illicit. Furthermore, the artificial fertilization of a woman who is unmarried or a widow, whoever the donor may be, cannot be morally justified. (CDF, *DV*, February 22, 1987, II A 2)

No [surrogate motherhood* is not morally licit], for the same reasons which lead one to reject heterologous artificial fertilization: for it is contrary to the unity of marriage and to the dignity of the procreation of the human person. Surrogate motherhood represents an objective failure to meet the obligations of maternal love, of conjugal fidelity and of responsible motherhood; it offends the dignity and the right of the child to be conceived, carried in the womb, brought into the world and brought up by his own parents; it sets up, to the detriment of families, a division between the physical, psychological and moral elements which constitute those families.

> * By "surrogate mother" the Instruction means:
>
> a) the woman who carries in pregnancy an embryo implanted in her uterus and who is genetically a stranger to the embryo because it has been obtained through the union of the gametes of "donors". She carries the pregnancy with a pledge to surrender the baby once it is born to the party who commissioned or made the agreement for the pregnancy.
>
> b) the woman who carries in pregnancy an embryo to whose procreation she has contributed the donation of her own ovum, fertilized through insemination with the sperm of a man other than her husband. She carries the pregnancy with a pledge to surrender the child once it is born to the party who commissioned or made the agreement for the pregnancy. (CDF, *DV*, February 22, 1987, II A 3)

In reality, the origin of a human person is the result of an act of giving. The one conceived must be the fruit of his parents' love. He cannot be desired or conceived as the product of an intervention of medical or biological techniques; that would be equivalent to reducing him to an object of scientific technology. No one may subject the coming of a child into the world to conditions of technical efficiency which are to be evaluated according to standards of control and dominion. (CDF, *DV*, February 22, 1987, II B 4 c)

The moral relevance of the link between the meanings of the conjugal act and between the goods of marriage, as well as the unity of the human being and the dignity of his origin, demand that the dignity of his origin, demand that the procreation of a human person be brought about as the fruit of the conjugal act specific to the love between spouses. (CDF, *DV*, February 22, 1987, II B 4 c)

Medicine which seeks to be ordered to the integral good of the person must respect the specifically human values of sexuality. The doctor is at the service of persons and of human procreation. He does not have the authority to dispose of them or to decide their fate. (CDF, *DV*, February 22, 1987, II B 7)

Science and technology require, for their own intrinsic meaning, an unconditional respect for the fundamental criteria of the moral law: that is to say, they must be at the service of the human person, of his inalienable rights and his true and integral good according to the design and will of God. (CDF, *DV*, February 22, 1987, Introduction 2)

An intervention on the human body affects not only the tissues, the organs and their functions but also involves the person himself on different levels [corporal and spiritual]. It involves, therefore, perhaps in an implicit but nonetheless real way, a moral significance and responsibility. Pope John Paul II forcefully reaffirmed this to the World Medical Association when he said: "Each human person, in his absolutely unique singularity, is constituted not only by his spirit, but by his body as well. Thus, in the body and through the body, one touches the person himself in his concrete reality. To respect the dignity of man consequently amounts to safeguarding this identity of the man *'corpore et anima unus'*, as the Second Vatican Council says (*GS*, #14). It is on the basis of this anthropological vision that one is to find the fundamental criteria for decision-making in the case of procedures which are not strictly therapeutic, as, for example, those aimed at the improvement of the human biological condition." (CDF, *DV*, February 22, 1987, Introduction 3)

Applied biology and medicine work together for the integral good of human life when they come to the aid of a person stricken by illness and infirmity and when they respect his or her dignity as a creature of God. No biologist or doctor can reasonably claim, by virtue of his scientific competence, to be able to decide on people's origin and destiny. This norm must be applied in a particular way in the field of sexuality and procreation, in which man and woman actualize the fundamental values of love and life. (CDF, *DV*, February 22, 1987, Introduction 3)

Advances in technology have now made it possible to procreate apart from sexual relations through the meeting *in vitro* of the germ-cells previously taken from the man and the woman. But what is technically possible is not for that very reason morally admissible. (CDF, *DV*, February 22, 1987, I 4)

The connection between *in vitro* fertilization and the voluntary destruction of human embryos occurs too often. This is significant: through these procedures, with apparently contrary purposes, life and death are subjected to the decision of man, who thus sets himself up as the giver of life and death by decree. This dynamic of violence and domination may remain unnoticed by those very individuals who, in wishing to utilize this procedure, become subject to it themselves. The facts recorded and the cold logic which links them must be taken into consideration for a moral judgment on IVF and ET (*in vitro* fertilization and embryo transfer): the abortion-mentality which has made this procedure possible thus leads, whether one wants it or not, to man's domination over the life and death of his fellow human beings and can lead to a system of radical eugenics. (CDF, *DV*, February 22, 1987, II)

The origin of the human being…follows from a procreation that is "linked to the union,

not only biological but also spiritual, of the parents, made one by the bond of marriage." Fertilization achieved outside the bodies of the couple remains by this very fact deprived of the meanings and the values which are expressed in the language of the body and in the union of human persons. (CDF, *DV*, February 22, 1987, II B 4 b)

Artificial procreation, when it is such that it replaces the marriage act, as also occurs in the homologous form, involves a separation of the procreative act from its proper context, which is the marital union, it is an offense against the unity of the family in the forms of heterologous procreation and, in the case of procreation outside the body, exposes the newly conceived human being to external control with the possibility of manipulating, experimenting on, losing and even killing those human beings that are conceived. (Participants in the Meeting of European Politicians and Legislators on the 10th Anniversary of the *Charter of the Rights of the Family*, *The Rights of the Family on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, March 10, 1993, II 4 d)

The answer to problems of infertility must be sought through scientific improvement of both the preventive and therapeutic treatment of infertility, and through greater and more generous access to social parenthood through adoption into a real family, foster care and the various forms of commitment on behalf of lonely and abandoned children. (Participants in the Meeting of European Politicians and Legislators on the 10th Anniversary of the *Charter of the Rights of the Family*, *The Rights of the Family on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, March 10, 1993, II 4 d)