

The Technologization of the Generation of Life in Homologous IVF

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ABSTRACT: The current practice of generating a new human life through in vitro fertilization embryo transfer (IVF-ET) has generated conflicting opinions within the Catholic circle, with the Church magisterium's firm stand against it and with moral theologians coming from both sides of the camp. The paper brings into discourse some moral issues raised by the practice of IVF-ET from the perspective of moral theology. The discussion limits itself to simple or homologous IVF-ET. It will not include the issue on the moral status of the "wasted" embryos. The focus is on the validity of the principle of inseparability, which is the basis of magisterium's position against IVF-ET, and on the proper understanding of the natural law. The paper further clarifies whether or not the technologization of the generation of life leads to an instrumental attitude toward the embryo and the child-to-be.

KEYWORDS: Technology, IVF, morality, Catholic Church, inseparability, procreation

This paper intends to bring into discourse the moral issue raised by the practice of *in vitro fertilization-embryo transfer* (IVF-ET). Specifically, it will present the arguments of the church regarding her stand against the use of such technology in generating a new life. The paper, however, will not include in its discussion the issue of the moral status of the "wasted" embryos—the view that the technology results to the production of embryos many of which cannot be implanted in the uterus. The paper simply focuses on why the church considers the generation of a new life bypassing marital act as intrinsically wrong. It will further clarify whether the technologization of the generation of life will lead to an instrumental attitude

toward the embryo and the child-to-be. Furthermore, the paper limits itself only to simple or homologous IVF-ET which uses only the gametes of the husband and wife, where the embryos are to be implanted in the womb of the wife. This is so since the magisterium's rejection of the procedure rests on the principle of inseparability.

The paper has five parts. It starts with a short discussion of the technological procedures involved in IVF-ET with its attendant risks and costs. The second part is a discussion of the principle of inseparability upon which the argument of the church against the use of technology bypassing marital act in generating life hinges. This includes a proper understanding of natural law, one that does not reduce it to biologism or physicalist interpretation. The third part explains why a child generated using IVF-ET is said to be "made" and not "begotten." The fourth part is the debate among Catholic theologians on the issue represented by Richard McCormick who sees nothing wrong in the use of the technology and William May who defends the stand of the church magisterium. The last part considers how the technological manufacture of embryos promotes the culture of having an instrumental attitude toward babies and children.

The Technology of IVF-ET

For married couple, the usual way of having a child is through the marital act. However, through an array of modern reproductive technologies, it is now possible to "make" babies in the laboratory. The most common method of reproductive technology is in vitro fertilization, which literally means "fertilization in glass." In vitro fertilization followed by embryo transfer is a system of reproductive technology that replaces not only sexual intercourse but also tubal fertilization in the natural process of reproduction. It makes possible for human life to be conceived outside of the body of the (genetic) mother, uniting the sperm—male gametic cell—and the ovum—female gametic cell—in a glass dish (May 2000, 75). Thus, the glass dish, not the fallopian tube or womb, is the place where new life begins.

IVF-ET is a highly invasive procedure as it does involve the following: Stimulation of ovulation during the treatment cycle (sometimes called super-ovulation); semen collection, analysis and preparation; egg collection, insemination in vitro; fertilization and embryo culture and embryo transfer back to the woman's uterus. At any of the stages of the process, the treatment can and frequently does fail. In fact, the percentage of failure is quite high. About "75 percent of couples who tried IVF and who spent from \$10,000 to \$100,000 still go home without a baby" (Pence 2008, 102). In the Philippines, an IVF clinic states in its website a 44 percent success rate, thus, more than half of those who try it fail. Chances worsen for women over forty years of age, and drop with each unsuccessful attempt.

Not only is there a small chance of success, the procedure is risky. Hormonal stimulation can lead to dramatic enlargement of the ovaries and fluid imbalances that can be—in extreme cases—life threatening (Mappes 2006, 546). Complications can include rupture of the ovaries, cysts and cancers. Moreover, the practice of transferring multiple embryos brings a higher incidence of multiple pregnancy, which can lead to pregnancy complications and increased risk for mothers. Multiple gestations have also adverse impacts on the health of born children. There is the risk of prenatal death, and premature birth with attendant health problems such as serious long-term physical and mental disabilities resulting to substantial social and economic burdens for families and society (Cahill 2005, 195). To reduce the problems associated with multiple pregnancy, "fetal reduction" is done. Yet fetal reduction still has possible adverse effects on children.

Aside from the attendant risks, the procedure is also very costly. In the Philippines, one IVF clinic state in its website the total cost per IVF cycle as amounting to more or less Php 350,000.00 depending on the fertility plan. With the exorbitant cost, not everybody can have access to it. Moreover, emotional and physical tolls are high, especially for women, as IVF-ET requires "an intrusive and rigorous regimen of drugs, medical procedures, and scheduled sex that can throw lives into chaos and put relationships under duress" (Cahill 2005, 197). For couples who have tried IVF and failed,

bearing a child can become an all-consuming goal, making them go for an ever more extreme, high-risk and low success technologies.

Yet, despite the high percentage of failure, many are willing to take the risks and shoulder the costs for they see in reproductive technologies a solution to the problem of infertility, a promise of fulfilling the desire of an otherwise childless couple to have a child of their own. Some hail this new technological development as human progress, the practice of which has yielded a great good—that is, relief to the suffering of many who are afflicted with infertility, helping them to conceive biologically related children. However, others warn against its use not simply because of its attendant risks and costs but more so because it raises ethical issues. One major dissenting voice is the church magisterium with its negative stand on the generation of a new life bypassing genital intercourse. Others, however, contend that the technology in itself is neutral but becomes good by virtue of the intention.

The Principle of Inseparability

The Catholic magisterium considers the unitive and procreative goods or values of marriage as inseparable. These goods or values make the marital relationships and the activities involved distinctively human and different from lower forms of life. The reason for this inseparability is that in marriage, a man and woman are called to a loving relationship, a relationship reflective of the loving, life-giving personal nature of the divine relationships of the Holy Trinity (unitive dimension); furthermore, they are called to share in God's work as creators and parents (procreative dimension). Marriage shares in this love-union and creative parenthood, thus, it possesses goods or values of union and procreation. And since the love-union and creative parenthood are present and united in the personal divine reality, they must likewise be present and united in the personal analogate, that is, in the marriage relationship of love (Ronquillo 2014, 2). The two are, thus, inseparable.

This analogy between the marital relationship and the divine relationship provides the argument why the goods or values of love-union

and procreation attributed to marriage in its totality must not be separated at least in principle. Thus, *Donum vitae* further states: “The moral value of the intimate link between the goods of marriage and between the meanings of the conjugal act is based upon the unity of the human being, a unity involving body and spiritual soul” (1987, IIB, 4b). This implies the moral significance of the human body.

Since the human person is an embodied spirit, that is, a unity of body and spirit, the human body is not simply a biological reality. For inasmuch as it embodies the spiritual soul, it is an ensouled or inspirited body through which the spiritual soul expresses itself and in which spiritual values are embodied and expressed. Seen from this perspective, the marital act is not simply a genital act between a man and a woman who just happen to be married; even unmarried persons are capable of genital acts yet theirs are not considered marital acts. As marital, it is an act that inwardly participates in the marital union of the husband and wife who have given themselves irrevocably to each other, and who have established each other as irreplaceable, nonsubstitutable, nondisposable persons (May 2000, 67). The marital act is unitive for it is a communion of being, whereby in and through such act the husband and wife give themselves to each other in such a way that they personally become “one flesh,” thus renewing the marital covenant they made with each other. The marital act, thus, speaks the “language of the body” for through it the exclusive nature of marital love is expressed, symbolized and manifested. The marital act, hence, cannot simply be reduced to the biological.

Moreover, the marital act is also life-giving. For “in giving themselves to each other in this act, in becoming ‘one flesh,’ husband and wife also become one complete organism capable of generating human life” (*Donum vitae*, IIB, 4b). The origin of the human being that thus follows from the conjugal act is “linked to the union, not only biological but also spiritual, of the parents, made one by the bond of marriage” (*Donum vitae*, II, 4b). Thus, the origin of a human person is the result of an act of giving, the fruit of his or her parents' love. The marital act, therefore, is not only love-giving (unitive) but also life-giving (procreative).

As seen from the above discussion, the spiritual goods of marriage—love-union and procreation—are at the same time embodied values, meaning, that these are values realized in and through the physical structures of the human body. And the particular physical structure in which these goods are realized is the marital act. The marital act is designed to realize these goods or values, and thus derives its meaning from these same values. It is integrally love-giving (unitive) and life-giving (procreative).

The church further teaches that the inseparable connection between these two meanings of the marital act—the unitive and the procreative—is willed by God and cannot be lawfully broken by human beings on their own initiative (*Humanae vitae* 1968, 12). It further states that “by its intimate structure, the conjugal act, while most closely uniting husband and wife, capacitates them for the generation of new lives, according to laws inscribed in the very being of man and woman” (*Donum vitae* 1987, II, 4b).

What are these laws? Do these refer to the biological laws? For clearly, it is because of its physical, biological structure that the conjugal act capacitates persons for the generation of new life. The physical or biological structure of the act is morally relevant. In what way? For the physicalist interpretation of natural law, the biological structure of the act is relevant because that is the normal pattern for all animals. However, *Donum vitae* does not want to attempt to derive the moral norms governing human procreation from analogies with lower forms of life; rather, *Donum vitae* refers to it in terms of the rational order, which in *Donum vitae* is another name for the natural law. Thus, for *Donum vitae* the rational order or natural law does not simply refer to that order or those laws discoverable by human reason in human reality, including biological reality. Rather, it refers to that “order which comes into view when reason grasps the connections between the divine and the human personal, and between the personal and the biological” (Ronquillo 2014, 5).

As discussed above, the highest level of morality is the giving of love by the divine person symbolized in the giving of love by the married couple as their participation in the divine love. This self-giving of human persons is symbolized and expressed in the logic of the body, which in turn is expressed

concretely in the marital act. Therefore, the integral unity of the unitive and procreative meanings of the marital act is grounded not in the biology but in the analogy between the marital love and the divine love, and ultimately, in the integral unity of the inner life of God. It is a religiously founded unity, not physical. Seen in this light, the order, hence, emerges as a “kind of total, symbolic value organism, embracing the religiously grounded values of love and procreativity, through which persons express love and procreativity” (Ronquillo 2014, 5). This organic totality has to be recognized and embraced. To desire or to intend to realize one element of this organic totality to the exclusion of another is to break apart this religiously founded unity.

Procreating vs. Reproducing Human Life

In the marital act, husbands and wives give themselves to each other through the language of the body, as well as open themselves to the gift of human life. It must be considered though that in engaging in the marital act, husbands and wives are not ‘making’ anything. They are not ‘making’ love or ‘making’ babies. Rather, they are *doing* something, that is, giving themselves to each other as irreplaceable and nonsubstitutable persons. The life brought about through their one-flesh union is not merely the product of their act. The coming of a new life involves the creative act of God. Through the act of intimate conjugal love, the parents participate in the creative act of God. Life is not simply “reproduced” but is “procreated.” The child, thus, is a gift, and a truly parental attitude should be one of unconditional welcome.

Furthermore, as procreated, children are one in nature with their parents. Their personal dignity is equal to that of their mothers and fathers. They are not products inferior to their producers (May 2000, 86). Can the same be said with babies produced using artificial reproductive technology (ART), such as IVF-ET?

In IVF-ET, the generation of human life is dissociated from the marital act; it is no longer the result and fruit of a conjugal act expressing the love of a husband and wife. In fact, in bypassing sexual intercourse, IVF-ET establishes the dominion of technology over the origin of the human person.

The generation of human life by this means becomes a reproduction. As Agneta Sutton (2008, 60) says: "If the term *procreation* suggests the creative involvement of God, the term *reproduction* might suggest that the child is the *product of human making*." So when the child is generated outside of the marital act, even by procedures making use of gametic cells of husband and wife, the generation of human life changes from an act of "procreation" to one of "reproduction."

In "production," interest centers on the product made, and products that do not measure up to standards are discarded or not appreciated and are frequently called "defective." Furthermore, the logic of manufacturing is applied, such as, using the most efficient procedures, time-saving and cost-effective means available to deliver the desired good under good quality controls. The same logic of manufacturing is applied in homologous IVF-ET (May 2000, 81). The spouses "produce" the gametic materials which others—the technicians—manipulate in order to make the final product. Since it is an act of reproduction, it follows a standard procedure:

To overstimulate the woman's ovaries so that she can produce several ova for fertilization by sperm, usually obtained most economically through masturbation and then washed and "capacitated" so they can do better their job; of the resulting new human embryos, some are frozen and kept on reserve for use should initial efforts to achieve implantation and gestation to birth fail; it is also common to implant several embryos (two to four) in the womb to enhance likelihood that at least one will implant, and should too large a number of embryos successfully implant, to discard the "excess" number through procedure some euphemistically call "pregnancy reduction." Finally, it is common practice to monitor development of the new life both prior to being transferred to the womb and during gestation to determine whether it suffers from any defects and should serious defects be discovered or thought likely, to abort the product that does not measure up to standard (May 2000, 81-82).

From the above description of the standard procedure of the IVF-ET, it can be seen that the new human life that comes to be is the end product of a series of actions undertaken by different persons in order to make a particular

product—a human baby. The child is not procreated but reproduced similar to what is produced in an assembly line. Such technologization of the generation of human life raises moral questions, foremost of which is whether or not the generation of life bypassing marital act is intrinsically wrong.

The Debate

Church's position

In making moral judgments on ART, *Donum vitae* (IV, 1) considers two important values—the life of the human being called into existence and the special nature of the transmission of human life in marriage. On the value of every human life, it says:

From the moment of conception, the life of every human being is to be respected in an absolute way because man is the only creature on earth that God has "wished for himself" and the spiritual soul of each man is "immediately created" by God; his whole being bears the image of the Creator. Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves "the creative action of God" and it remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end (*Donum vitae*, Introduction, 5).

This implies that human procreation is distinctive by virtue of the personal dignity of the parents and the child, and the dignity of the origin of human life. The generation of life proper to and respectful of that dignity is that of a responsible collaboration of the spouses with the love of God; that is to say, the gift of human life must be brought about as the fruit of the mutual self-giving of the parents, which is realized and symbolized in the language of the body—the marital act—wherein the spouses cooperate as servants and not as masters in the work of the Creator who is Love. Human procreation, thus, is of a spiritual and personal order (Ronquillo 2014, 2). It must be noted too that the marital or conjugal act, by which the couple mutually express their self-gift and which at the same time expresses openness to the gift of life, is an act that is inseparably corporal and spiritual. Thus, the new life that results from that bodily expression of conjugal love is a fruit not only

of the biological but also of the spiritual union of the parents who are made one by virtue of the marital bond.

Arguing thus from the principle of inseparability, the church considers it not lawful for human beings on their own initiative to separate the unitive and procreative meanings of the marital act, and the language of the body. IVF-ET effects an analogous separation of the unitive and procreative meanings of the marital act and of the unitive and procreative values of marriage. Furthermore, in IVF-ET, fertilization is achieved outside of the bodies of the couple, thus, the generation of life is deprived of the meanings and the values which are expressed in the language of the body and in the union of human persons. It is also deprived of its proper perfection, namely, that of being the result and fruit of a conjugal act in which the spouses can become “cooperators with God for giving life to a new person.”

Moreover, as discussed above, the non-marital ways of engendering human life changes its generation from an act of procreation to an act of reproduction, and treats the child as if s/he is simply a product of scientific technology. For the church, children must be respected and recognized as equal in personal dignity to those who give them life. They must not be conceived as the product of an intervention of medical or biological techniques nor should their coming into the world be subjected to conditions of technical efficiency, which are to be evaluated according to standards of control and dominion (*Donum vitae*, II, 4b). For if such is the case, they are treated in the initial stages of their existence not as persons equal in dignity, but as if they were products inferior to their producers and subject to quality controls. Such “production” of human babies is *dehumanizing*.

This results from the sundering of the inseparable bond between the unitive and procreative meaning of the marital or conjugal act, and the lack of respect for the integrity of the human being as a unity of the body-spirit. The ‘yes’ to the moral demand of respect for the principle of inseparability and of the ‘language of the body’ is the indispensable and necessary means of respecting life in its origin. Such respect is absent in homologous IVF-ET. Yet, though the child comes into the world through this technology, s/he must still be respected because his or her life remains as a gift from God.

McCormick’s counter-argument

A number of prominent Catholic theologians has made it clear that they took issue on the view that conception outside of the marital act is necessarily wrong. Among them is Richard McCormick who argues against the position taken in *Donum vitae*.

McCormick challenges the church’s understanding of the inseparability of the unitive-procreative dimensions of sexuality as expressed in *Humanae vitae*. He argues that the church’s teaching is not firmly grounded and is inconsistent since there are periods when the two aspects of conjugal love or marital act are separable: During recurring periods of infertility and during menopause (McCormick 1993, 117). God, thus, through the laws of nature, provides for the separation of the procreative and unitive meanings of conjugal act. Adrian Hastings (quoted in Cahill 2005, 195) also “points out that sexual intercourse is not of its nature always open to life;” rather, the case is that “nature has been so devised by God that conception cannot always follow upon intercourse.” In such cases, McCormick (1993, 117) asks: “In what sense is the act procreative? In what sense are the unitive and procreative held together in an individual act?” Thus, for him, the unitive-procreative inseparability should be held together not in an individual marital act but in the relationship of marriage.

McCormick, however, admits to a germ of truth contained in the inseparability principle, but that germ is only an aesthetic-ecological concern, that is, a bodily integrity. He agrees with *Donum vitae* that conception achieved through in vitro fertilization is ‘deprived of its proper perfection’ for it contains a disvalue—the absence of fertility—thus, is resorted only because of this deprivation. He argues that a “procedure ‘deprived of its proper perfection’ is not necessarily morally wrong in all cases—unless we elevate an aesthetic-ecological concern into an absolute moral imperative” (McCormick 1993, 118). This, according to him, is what the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (which authored *Donum vitae*) insists on regarding the inseparability of the unitive and procreative dimensions in every marital act. Moreover, this elevation of an aesthetic-ecological concern

into an absolute moral imperative is a descendant of a view held by Catholic theological thought for centuries—the view that procreation is the only legitimate meaning and purpose of sexual intercourse.

McCormick agrees with the congregation that the one conceived must be the fruit of parental love. But he says to conclude from that general premise that the child must be conceived through marital act without the intervention of technology involves a gap of logic, which implies that the marital act is the only loving act in marriage. By citing the moral theologian John Mahoney who asserts that “the procreation of a new human being is from a union not just of bodies but of spirits also” and that “marital intercourse is not the only vehicle of such creative love” (McCormick 1981, 790), he argues that medical interventions to overcome sterility can be a concrete manifestation of marital love. IVF, thus, is an “extension” of the marital act, and that the child can still be regarded as the “fruit” of the spouses’ love (Cahill 2005, 82). McCormick (1981, 790) argues further that spouses who resort to homologous IVF do not perceive this as the ‘manufacture of the product’, and that the ‘attitudes of the parents and the technicians can be as reverential and respectful as they would be in the face of the human life naturally conceived. For him and other like-minded theologians, what matters most is not whether or not the child is co-created in the warmth of the sexual embrace but whether it is co-created within the warmth of the spousal relationship and is the genetic child of both spouses (Sutton 2008, 79).

McCormick, thus, finds the congregation’s analysis and reasoning unpersuasive. The technology that offers married couples, who otherwise are childless, the possibility of having a child of their own is not necessarily anti-unitive in the sense that it does not of itself destroy spousal relationship. Moreover, any disadvantages are counterbalanced by the great good of new human lives and fulfillment of the desire for children of couples who otherwise would not be able to conceive (May 2000, 83).

May’s rebuttal

The Catholic theologian William May considers this last justification of homologous IVF-ET as rooted in the proportionalistic method of making moral judgments. This method claims that one can rightly intend the so-called ‘ontic’ evils (the ‘disadvantages’ just referred) in order to attain a proportionately greater good, in this case, helping a childless married couple to have a child of their own. However, the church considers this as a flawed method because the primary source of the morality of the human act is neither the intended end (hoped-for result) nor the surrounding circumstances but the object of the act (or object-act)—that which the acting person freely chooses to do in the here and now.

Human act is not a mere physical happening but rather a reality flowing from the inner core of the person insofar as it is freely chosen. It is, thus, the “outward expression of a person’s choices, for at the core of a human act is a free, self-determining choice, which as such is something spiritual which abides within the person, determining the very being of the person” (May 2000, 48). Precisely because it embodies and carries out human choices, it abides within the person as a disposition to further choices and actions of the same kind, until a contradictory kind of choice is made. Thus, the freely chosen act is significant for it is in and through it that we determine ourselves and establish our identity as moral beings. It makes us the kind of person willing to do the act; we become our freely chosen acts. Thus, in choosing to lie, for instance, we are not simply lying but we become a liar.

This is what John Paul II implies in his 1993 encyclical *Veritatis splendor* (1993). He affirms that if the object-act freely chosen is “in conformity with the order of reason, it is the cause of the goodness of the will; it perfects us morally” (67). Obviously, this implies that if the object-act is not in conformity with the order of reason and is known not to be, then it will be the cause of the badness of the will, thus, debasing us morally.

Thus, the morality of a human act considered in its totality depends on the object-act (the proximate end), the intended result (the ulterior end), and the circumstances. The act is morally good only if all these factors are morally

good, that is, in conformity with the order of reason. This is the *principle of plenitude* or *perfection* (May 2000, 52). If any of these morally relevant factors is contrary to the order of reason, then the act is morally bad. And of all these sources of morality of a human act, the “object-act” is primary. If a human act is morally bad by reason of the object freely chosen, no end, no matter how noble, or any circumstances, whatever they may be, can make it good. The act remains morally bad.

It is from this perspective that May considers the argument advanced by McCormick as not based on a realistic understanding of the issue involved. For while it is true that those who choose to produce a baby make that choice as a means to an ulterior end—that a baby be received into an authentic child-parent relationship, in which s/he will live in a communion of persons—their “present intention,” that is, the choice they are making here and now, is precisely “to produce a baby” through technology (May 2000, 83). This is the “object” specifying their freely chosen act. The baby’s initial status is the status of a product.

In addition, the act chosen as the generation of a new life bypassing the marital act by the use of technology effectively puts asunder the procreative and unitive aspects of the conjugal life, thus, of the integral unity of the spiritual and the bodily, and the integral unity of the human person as an embodied spirit. Moreover, it sunders the unitive and procreative values of marriage. Not only is there a fragmentation of the integrity of the totality of the values involved but also the perversion of the divine vocation of the married couple to symbolize and participate in the unitive and procreative love of the divine (Ronquillo 2014, 6).

Thus, the claim that IVF is an extension of the marital act and not a substitution is contrary to fact. From the perspective of the body-spirit union, technical interventions are replacements, not extensions, because these “are not the human bodily realities which are required as the expression of the values within the total value system” (Ronquillo 2014, 6). Thus, the technician does not simply *assist* the marital act but he “*substitutes* for that act of personal relationship and communication” (May 2000, 84). Parents simply provide the gametic materials which others, the technician, makes use to fabricate human

life. What is extended, therefore, is not the marital act but the *intention*—from an intention to have a child in a natural way to getting it by IVF-ET (May 2000, 84). In these procedures the child’s initial status is that of a product; its status is subpersonal. May (2000, 84) further states: “Thus, the choice to produce a baby is inevitably the choice to enter into a relationship with the baby, not as its equal, but as a product inferior to its producers.” This initial relationship is inconsistent, and so impedes the communion of persons endowed with equal dignity that is appropriate for any interpersonal relationship. It is the choice of a bad means to a good end. As discussed above, a (good) end cannot justify a (bad) means (referring to the act). Moreover, in producing babies, if the product is defective, a new person comes and ends up being unwanted. Thus, the choice to produce babies not only is a choice of life for some, but also a choice of quietly disposing those who are not developing normally.

In concluding the above rebuttals to the counter-arguments forwarded by McCormick and others like him, May says that the nonmarital generation of human life violates the respect due to human life in its generation. This conclusion is supported by everything that is said about the intimate bonds uniting marriage, the marital act, and the generation of life. May (2000, 85) posits that these “bonds are the indispensable and necessary means for properly respecting human life in its origin.” To sunder these bonds is to break the inseparable bond between the unitive and the procreative meanings of the marital act, to refuse to speak the “language of the body,” and above all, to treat the child in its initial stage of existence as a product, as something “produced,” not “procreated.” Consequently, the relationship of product to producer is a relationship of radical inequality.

Effects on Culture

Sutton believes that reproductive technologies are not necessarily anti-unitive in the sense of spoiling the spousal relationship. Yet, she concludes that “marital intercourse alone...[being] a symbolical right for receiving the child as a gift is...not to be dismissed as totally meaningless” (Sutton 2008, 75). She cites Oliver O’Donovan who has expressed the same concern about the

'producer' attitude to the child. The adaptation of a manufacturer's attitude would lead to the encouragement of an attitude of domination on the part of specialists, parents, and indeed society as a whole. The IVF embryo, thus, is treated as a disposable object. Pointing to research on embryos produced by IVF, O'Donovan noted that the medical profession and society had, in fact, already taken a big step in the wrong direction. As quoted by Sutton (2008, 76), Donovan states that:

The practice of producing embryos by IVF with the intention of exploiting their special status for use in research is the clearest possible demonstration that when we start making human beings we necessarily stop loving them; that that which is made rather than begotten becomes something that we can have at our disposal, not someone with whom we can engage in brotherly fellowship.

Here it is apparent that the *cultural influence* of technologically manufacturing embryos has promoted an ever more *instrumental attitude* toward the child-to-be. The embryo used in research is no longer treated as a child-to-be and a fellow human being. So though O'Donovan does not consider IVF as intrinsically wrong, provided that the procreational and relational ends of marriage are held together within a loving relationship and the procedure involves neither embryo wastage nor delicate embryo destruction, the badness of the cultural influences is sufficient to discourage the practice.

The same concern on the impact of reproductive technologies for how children are to be valued are also expressed by some commentators in a debate on reproductive technologies organized by *The New York State Task Force on Life and Law*. They believe that making babies in a laboratory is a degradation of parenthood. They also fear that the "child conceived through reproductive technologies becomes a means to an end of adult happiness, vanity or obsession with genetic lineage" (Mappes 2006, 543). Their concern is that the child will no longer be viewed as an invaluable and unique treasure but rather a product valued for its cost and quality. Children will be seen as just another product to be manufactured, bought and sold. Some express concern that the high cost of assisted reproduction will turn children into commodities from which parents will demand a certain performance and action. The unattractive, slow

or disabled children will become unacceptable, in much the same way that a defective product is unacceptable and usually returned.

One commentator, Thomas Murray, argues against this intrusion of marketplace values into the realm of family life (quoted in Mappes 2006, 355). Though arguing from the context of paid sperm or ova and surrogacy, Murray's insights are also relevant to homologous IVF-ET. He asks whether children are more likely to flourish "in a culture where making children is governed by the same rules that govern the making of automobiles or VCR" or "in a culture where making children...is treated as a sphere separate from the marketplace, a sphere governed by the ethics of gift and relationship, not contract and commerce" (Mappes 2006, 355). Furthermore, according to him, humans as we are, with our patterns of psychological development and needs at different stages of our lives, certain values, institutions and practices support our mutual flourishing better than others. Marketplace values are ill-suited for this. And once marketplace values enter into the family life, it is not only children that are threatened but adults within the families as well. In fact, we are threatened as humans who need affection, trust and, above all, intimate and enduring relationships.

Aside from marketplace values, Murray is also wary of the other values embedded in some practice of ARTs: The values of control and choice, and of reproductive liberty. He considers the values of control and choice celebrated by the champions of procreative liberty as playing only a minor role in family life. What is most important in family life centers on nurturing relationships, thus good families are characterized more by loving acceptance and trust rather than by control (Mappes 2006, 554). But when choice and control become prominent, what is most precious in families is destroyed. Moreover, when unbridled autonomy in the form of reproductive liberty (unbridled, for the exercise of freedom is no longer seen in relation to its divine source and to the natural law God has embedded in human life) with its 'shrunk view of human flourishing' enters into the family life, the value of self-sacrificing love is undermined resulting thus to the destruction of family life. And when

even parents and family members live simply in the selfish pursuit of their own interests, where can the individual go for refuge and support?

Thus, the concern of Murray is on how (some) reproductive practices and the values embedded in these, for example, control and choice and marketplace values, affect the values at the core of family life, and other practices and institutions that protect family life.

Some Concluding Thoughts

McCormick and other theologians like him challenge the church's teaching on the principle of inseparability. Their contention is that nature has provided the separation of the procreative and unitive values of marriage. Thus, they consider this principle not valid, and cannot be used as basis for a stance against artificial reproductive technologies bypassing marital act in generating a new life.

Yet such reading of the principle of inseparability is based on *Humane vitae* which tends to give a naturalistic or physicalist understanding of the natural law (this way of interpreting the natural law is also called biologism or biological reductionism). But the church has made clearer its understanding of the natural law and, consequently, of the principle of inseparability in *Donum vitae* which subsumes the traditional natural law arguments into an essentially theological context governed by the religious-analogy arguments (Ronquillo 2014, 5). This rational order, which reason grasps, is the order of the integral relationship between the divine person and the human person, and the personal and the biological. It is the order of the integral unity of the values of unitive love and procreativity, values that are religiously grounded in the divine love and procreativity, and which married couples are called to participate and symbolize. The church says that the integral unity of totality of values involved should not be fractured.

Through the principle of inseparability, the church's magisterium has provided us a vision of what family life and marital love ought to be. This vision of the ideal to which family life and marriage are called lifts them up to

a greater dignity. Thus, the vocation of married couple is to realize the integral unity of the total value system mentioned in the preceding paragraph. So if the married couple realizes only one dimension of the conjugal act at the expense of the other, the couple has fragmented the totality of values, perverting thus its divine vocation by acting in contrary to the structure of divine love. This is done in IVF, which bypasses the sexual act in the generation of life. Thus, the church considers IVF-ET, even if homologous only, as intrinsically wrong. Moreover, the choice for ART not only undermines one's trust in God who will 'supply for all our needs' but also does not recognize God's active role and authority in the bringing forth of life.

If the magisterium is strict in upholding the inseparability principle, it is not without good and compelling reasons. The fragmentation of the integrity of the values-system evident in the separation of the unitive and procreative aspects of the conjugal act destroys the integrity of marital life. This leads eventually to the degradation of human life and love, of human activities, including the human self from whom those actions ensue. Consequently, human beings find themselves far from that vision of beauty—a fuller participation in the divine life and love—which is supposed to be their ultimate destiny.

In seeing beforehand the detrimental effects of the cultural acceptance of ARTs not only on the children but on adults as well, the church is uncompromising in her teachings against ARTs, including even simple IVF. This is part of her educative function, which is to provide and to hold on to ideals. Yet, in respect for the individual consciences of the faithful, the church cannot impose such teaching. Thus, the Second Vatican Council can only recommend that the wisdom in the church's official teaching be seriously considered. Nor can the church condemn those involved in ART, especially the parents, of being immoral. Morality is not simply objective but must also consider the subjective, that is, the inner dynamism of the person. Nor can she accuse them of having an instrumental attitude toward the child. In this regard, McCormick is right in his assertion that parents, including the technicians, can still have reverential attitude toward the child,

and see the child as a 'love-child.' Though the church is uncompromising in her stance on IVF-ET, on the level of pastoral ministry she must be compassionate and understanding, and not judgmental and condemnatory.

Since the sufferings caused by infertility are real indeed, the church ought to, out of compassion, be more creative in its pastoral care. Faith communities can provide transformative spirituality that can deal constructively with the problem of infertility. For instance, in community liturgies, "more recognition could be given to adopting parents and infertile 'hopeful parents', while special liturgies could be developed to mourn both infertility and pregnancy loss, as well as to mark the end of 'aggressive infertility treatment'" (Cahill 2008, 203). Such communities of faith can be the spaces where 'transcendent hopes' are witnessed, and 'the capacity to trust that all things are working for good' are learned. Thus, women suffering from infertility can learn "to integrate their suffering into 'a life of generativity' and 'loving service to others,' whether family building through adoption or other social commitments" (Cahill 2008, 204).

The church can also promote adoption as an important alternative. By offering adoption as one way to resolve infertility problems and create families, "faith communities and theological leadership can counter the pressure toward expensive and stressful technological 'solutions' to the inability of couples to bear children" (Cahill 2008, 208). Moreover, it can contribute to the common good and promote social justice because a lot of children of other families are without even the barest necessities, and many are without families. Adoption can also be seen "as a way that any Christian family can model in its own relationships of love the covenantal inclusiveness of Christian community" (Cahill 2008, 209).

It is also of necessity for the church to be true to its claim of the equality of dignity of both women and men. This demands seeing women as persons whose human capacities for self-fulfillment are not limited to biological motherhood. But the usual practice of the church is extolling motherhood, which creates the impression that a woman's worth is rooted only in her being able to realize her biological capacity for motherhood. This puts great pressure on women to

bring forth their own biological children, and make them suffer if they are not able to do so. The church has to cease giving undue emphasis to a woman's maternal capacity if she is to be truly compassionate to women.

These are some of the ways in which the church can concretely respond to the sufferings caused by infertility. Though quite uncompromising in the performance of its teaching authority, she has to make her presence felt as a compassionate shepherd who accompanies humanity in their sufferings, bringing her sheep to a transcendent hope and deeper experience of the compassionate love of God in the midst of pain and want.

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