



Notes for Clergy **ADDRESSING IVF WITH THE FLOCK**

- ◆ The profound and intense desire to have children is both natural and good. It is from God.
- ◆ Infertility is a real, heartbreaking and increasingly common struggle for couples. Almost 20% of U.S. married couples have experienced infertility.
- ◆ Ethical restorative reproductive medicine that takes a comprehensive and holistic approach is often able to authentically heal the underlying conditions causing infertility.
- ◆ Restorative reproductive medicine is typically overlooked (and, unfortunately, it can take significant work to find a provider). A number of national Natural Family Planning (NFP) education organizations can assist married couples with a list of medical professionals who provide restorative reproductive medicine. NFP organizations can be found on the USCCB's website or through an online search.
- ◆ *In vitro* fertilization (IVF), in contrast, represents a profitable and underregulated industry that does not address the causes of infertility but seeks to override the symptoms—and is regularly ineffective at doing so. Yet patients are often placed on an IVF track after limited testing and waiting periods.
 - At the extreme, there are stories of scandals with mix-ups, abusive doctors using their own sperm, and broken freezers. IVF is legal everywhere in the U.S. The 2024

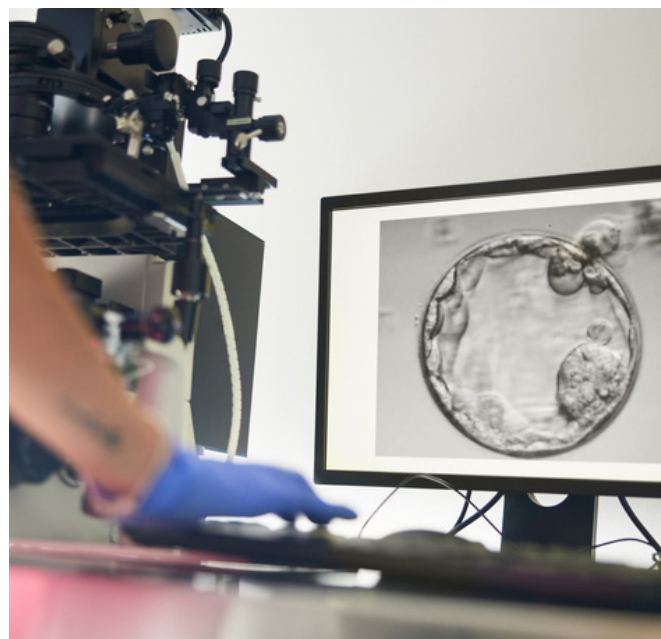
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Alabama Supreme Court case, in fact, did not ban it but merely attempted to hold the clinic accountable to parents when it let a patient wander into the unlocked freezer and start dropping (killing) frozen embryos. Clinics rebelled by shutting themselves down and then running (successfully) to politicians to ask for immunity from standard medical malpractice liability.

- ◆ IVF is harmful, gravely unethical, and has long been understood to be a grave violation of Church teaching and principles in multiple respects.
- ◆ We likely all know people who have conceived or been conceived through the use of IVF. They have the same inherent dignity as everyone else and are worthy of love. Because of that same dignity and love of all involved with IVF, the Church cannot condone it.
- ◆ The grave harms and wrongs of IVF include:
 - IVF kills or freezes millions of our preborn brothers and sisters. The IVF

process creates more embryos than are “successfully” implanted within a womb. For every birth by IVF, there are other embryonic baby siblings who die in the process, are selectively killed because they are deemed too weak, or are condemned to suspended animation in a frozen state. Practices have improved somewhat in this respect over the years, to create fewer embryos per birth, especially in other countries; but this deadly evil and other issues nonetheless remain.

- IVF treats human beings—children—like products to be ordered, manufactured, exposed to “quality controls,” and paid for.
- In cases where people act as sperm or egg donors or as surrogate birth mothers, IVF also treats them like objects to be used and paid for as well. Moreover, in the case of surrogacy, intentionally growing children within a woman’s womb with the intent to take them away from their birth mother—whose voice they came to know—is appalling and horrific.
- IVF is a distortive intervention of third parties and technology into the exclusive marital bond and act of mutual self-gift of husband and wife.
- A new human life is a gift. No one, no matter how earnest their intentions or desires, can claim a “right” to have a child.



Parents of course have the right to naturally conceive and to then raise and educate a child whenever possible.

- Children themselves—as human beings—have the right to be conceived and born of a natural act of love, free of technological manipulation, and to know their own married mother and father.
- ◆ Where restorative reproductive medicine may not work (or even where it does), there is also always beauty and love in adoption, whether of newborns or of children in the foster care system where there is so much need for open hearts and homes.

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