

RESPECT LIFE

Prayer & Action

INTERCEDE



PRAY

Our Father, 3 Hail Marys, Glory Be

REFLECT

The ability to cooperate with God's creative power to conceive and raise a child is one of the most profound gifts that a married couple can receive. Yet for many, the joy of conception never happens. Others suffer repeated miscarriages. Still others experience secondary infertility: after giving birth to one or more children, they experience difficulty having another. When couples are unable to bear children, very often there is an understandable feeling of great loss. The Church has true compassion for couples suffering in this way and wants to be of real help to them. Many causes of infertility and recurrent pregnancy loss can be addressed through medical assistance that is fully in accord with Catholic teaching.

The desire to have a child is beautiful and good. At the same time, we are called to cooperate with God's design for married love and the creation of new life. Some practices, such as *in vitro* fertilization (IVF) and surrogacy, are not morally legitimate ways to address difficulty having children. In addition to failing to respect the dignity of the couple's marital relationship, of their sexuality, and of the child, some procedures often result in the loss of human life—for example, IVF and surrogacy that involves IVF.

St. John Paul II affirmed to couples who cannot have biological children, “you are no less loved by God; your love for each other is complete and fruitful when it is open to others.”¹ It is important that couples who carry this cross—and those who desire to offer them support—know that their love is still *fruitful* and their married life remains filled with meaning. We pray that these couples will know Christ's closeness in a special way and embrace God's design as they seek to grow their families.

For more information, please visit respectlife.org/navigating-infertility.

ACT (choose one)

- Choose one day this week to abstain from sweets or your favorite snack as a reminder to draw close to Christ in times of suffering and to trust in his plan for our lives.
- Take time to learn more about moral problems posed by some reproductive technologies and to learn about types of medical assistance that are consistent with Church teaching (<https://bit.ly/repro-tech>).
- Offer some other sacrifice or prayer that you feel called to do.

ONE STEP FURTHER

Bishop Michael Burbidge, former chair of the USCCB's Committee on Pro-Life Activities, wrote a pastoral letter on “The Christian Family, In Vitro Fertilization, and Heroic Witness to True Love” (<https://bit.ly/heroic-witness>).

¹Excerpt from Pope John Paul II, “Homily at the Mass for the Families” on February 13, 1982 © 1982, Libreria Editrice Vaticana. Used with permission. All rights reserved.



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