

NAProTECHNOLOGY: A MEDICAL EMBODIMENT OF THE CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVE ON AN INFERTILE COUPLE'S RIGHT TO FAMILY PLANNING

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Abstract

This article considers one question: How does the Catholic Church guide infertile couples to exercise their right to build a family? Part One examines the principal tenets of Catholic social teaching on human rights in general. Part Two focuses in particular on the Church's guidelines regarding the right to family planning for infertile couples. And Part Three contrasts NaProTechnology protocols for infertility with in vitro fertilization and concludes that NaPro provides infertile couples not only a responsible means of conceiving a baby that remedies the injustice of in vitro fertilization but also a medical embodiment of the Church's teaching on the right to family planning.

Part One: The Salient Principles of the Roman Catholic Doctrine on Human Rights¹

I. Human Rights Stem From the Inherent Dignity of the Human Being as a Person Created in God's Image

The Catholic Church reads human rights and dignity through the lens of Sacred Scripture. The two creation accounts in the first chapters of the Book of Genesis confirm the full truth of human dignity and its source—the Creator God. These Biblical narratives substantiate the Church's first principle on human rights: "The ultimate source of human rights is not found in the mere will of a human being, in the reality of the State, in public powers, but in man himself and in God his Creator."²

First, these chapters form a portal through which the Church helps us grasp what it means for God to create man "in his own image and likeness."³ The human being is set apart from the rest of the animal world by the fact God informs and enlivens only the human body with the breath of life, with an immortal soul: "The Lord God formed man out of the clay of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living being" (Gen 2:7). At conception, when God informs, organizes, and unifies the human body with the life principle of an intellectual and immortal soul, God gives the human being the highest degree of embodied life. Not just vegetative life, as in plants. Not just sentient life, as in animals. But an embodied life that is, at once, intelligent and free. An intelligent life that allows human persons to know why things are what they are. And a free life that bestows on the human being the self-governance to choose the good that truly perfects him and to reject the

evil that really harms him.⁴ In contradistinction to animals, then, the human creature is the kind of composite being—embodied, intelligent and free—who is capable both of claiming a right and of fulfilling the duty to honor and protect both his own rights and those of others.

Second, according to the Genesis narrative, God settles the man in the garden of Eden with the duty “to cultivate and care for it” (Gen 2:15) and to “fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all living things that move on the earth” (Gen 1:28). As a free agent, God makes the man his partner. God deputizes the human being, invites him to name the animals, and permits him to have sole proprietorship over those names. In other words, God confers on every human being the dignity of acting as his secondary agents, his collaborators. The Church consistently teaches the way a human person affirms his primacy over things is by perfecting the earth in harmony with the nature of all creatures—but especially in harmony with the dignity of his own nature and the basic human rights that follow therefrom.

Third, the Church also sees the creation narratives as a window onto the truth that men and women are of equal dignity. Genesis is clear: “God created man in his image, in the divine image he created him; *male and female he created them*” (Gen. 1:27, italics mine). The fact that God loves every man and every woman unconditionally, just because they exist, explains why every male or female member of the human race has the desire to be accepted as a person and to be loved unconditionally by others. This universal desire to be loved without qualification underscores the equal dignity and worth of all human beings. It acknowledges our common origin in God’s creative act of unconditional love. To the point of our discussion, the fundamental law of human equality constitutes the basis for the demands of interpersonal justice; for instance, that one human being—a spouse—owes the other spouse loving acts of sex open to life,⁵ or one human being (a parent) has the duty to render to another (the child) unconditional love and respect for its basic human rights.

Fourth, the Genesis creation narratives convince the Church that the social nature of the human being is an integral part of human dignity. From the time of his conception forward, every human being is a personal subject who stands in relation to his Creator God, to other human beings, and to the rest of the natural world. Human rights, then, are the natural consequence of the social nature of man. As the Church counsels: “Man . . . is not a solitary being, but a social being, and unless he relates himself to others he can neither live nor develop his potential.”⁶ Since we will discuss the relationship of rights to basic human needs below, suffice it to say here that you and I are meant to live in community and will only thrive when our basic human needs for life, family, society,⁷ and the truth are recognized and promoted.⁸

II. Human Rights Are Actualized When Each Person Carries Out His Duty to Recognize, Respect, and Promote the Rights of Every Other Person

Human intelligence and freedom dictate all persons are responsible for the moral choices they make in relation to others. For this reason, the Catholic Church has consistently presented human rights as a double helix of interwoven rights and duties. Human rights must be understood and realized from the perspective of the individual’s

correlative duties toward the other.⁹ Only when every person carries out his duty to recognize and honor not only his own but also the entire panoply of his neighbor's rights, will the entire swath of basic human needs—both bodily and spiritual—be realized.¹⁰ For that reason, the Church insists affirming rights without acknowledging corresponding responsibilities is an inherent contradiction: “Hence, to claim one's rights and ignore one's duties, or only half fulfill them, is like building a house with one hand and tearing it down with the other.”¹¹

So how does Catholic philosophical teaching specify basic human rights and their correlative duties?¹² The Church distinguishes between four basic general goods to which every person has a right and particular goods that help realize the former. First, since every human being has a basic need to live—that is, to share in the good of life—he has the right to life. The basic human right to the good of life and bodily integrity will only be actualized, however, when the holder of the right not only responsibly maintains his life but also protects and promotes (or at least does nothing to violate) his neighbor's right to life, including related particular rights to food, clothing, housing, medical care, rest, and necessary social services.¹³

Second, the right to life includes the right to perpetuate that life by reproducing the species. Therefore, the common good of each and every species is to reproduce itself. Since the characteristic mode of human reproduction is through the family,¹⁴ every human being needs to be conceived and born into a family and, therefore, has a right to a family. But the basic human right to a family, including the right to procreate¹⁵ and to plan one's family by spacing children, will only be attained when the holder of the right—husband and wife—discharge their duty to conceive children in cooperation with God's plan for human procreation; that is, within the particular goods of a loving act of sexual union that is open to life and a stable, lasting marriage.¹⁶

Third, since every human being needs the larger society for his development and maturation, he has a right to live within and enjoy the benefits of the society at large. This basic human right to the good of society will only be achieved when the claimant of the right fulfills his duty to live justly with his fellow-citizens. That requires each person respect his neighbors' rights to particular goods: to a good name, to freedom of speech and publication, to own private property,¹⁷ to pursue whatever profession they may choose, to share the benefits of culture—especially education and technical or professional training—and to worship God in accordance with the right dictates of their conscience.¹⁸

Fourth, every human being needs to know the truth and, therefore, has a right to the basic good of truth. The basic human right to truth—served by the particular right to be accurately informed by free speech and free press, the right to investigate the truth of the physical world, and the right to probe the metaphysical truths of God and the moral order—will only be secured when the human person actually fulfills his duty to seek the truth about current events, about nature, about nature's God, and about moral truth. As Pope John Paul II attests: “While paying heed to every fragment of truth which [the human person] encounters in the life experience and in the culture of individuals and of nations, he will not fail to affirm in dialogue with others all that his faith and the correct use of reason have enabled him to understand.”¹⁹

If all the general goods and their related particular goods are protected and if all persons have a share in them, the consequent social reality constitutes what the Church understands as the common good.²⁰ Catholic human rights doctrine, then, moves *pari passu* between the two poles of individual good and the common good.²¹ The Church insists it will be possible to safeguard the dignity and rights of each person and of every people “only if this is done as a community, by the whole of humanity.”²² In sum, the Church maintains everyone has the right to share in these basic goods, and the common good is only realized when all human beings, in solidarity with each other, share in these goods together.²³

III. Human Rights Are Best Understood Within a Virtue Ethics/Natural Law Context Based on Reason and Christian Revelation

With his gift of a rational intellect, every human being is able to understand God’s plan or God’s law for the full flourishing and happiness of human beings. We call our reasoned understanding²⁴ of how we ought to reach the perfection of our nature²⁵ the “natural law” or the “natural moral law.”²⁶ A former professor of mine liked to use the 1998 movie *Out of Sight* to illustrate what it means to understand natural law. He liked to point out that, as a viewer of the film, you spend the last twenty minutes of the movie trying to figure out whether bank robber Jack Foley will do the right thing. The important point my professor was making is that there is a right (i.e., just) thing to do, and that *he—and you—know what it is*. How do we know right from wrong? Through our conscience. “Well,” you might ask, “isn’t that enough?”

The answer is: no! Because we sin, because our culture can be corrupted, because our reasoning is sometimes flawed, our conscience is not enough. It needs to be informed. So, to guide our conscience, God reveals the Ten Commandments that sum up the natural law and gives us the Church’s social and moral teaching that applies the Ten Commandments to new problems. When we understand natural law—when we grasp how we ought to embody justice in all our relations with others—we are freely enacting God’s Eternal Law. We are appropriating God’s plan for ourselves, thus the natural law.

Furthermore, when we consistently give what we owe to others—to the extent we are able—we are perfected in the virtue of justice. You and I become a just person when we give every other person with whom we interact what is his due, not just now and then, but consistently. We have, as Confucius advised, “set our heart right”—as in habitually directing our sense inclinations, emotions, will, and mind—to the good of interpersonal justice. As Catholic philosopher Josef Pieper contends:

All just order in the world is based on this: that man give man what is his due. On the other hand, everything unjust, implies that what belongs to a man is withheld or taken away from him—and, once more, not by misfortune, failure of crops, fire or earthquake, but by man.

This notion, then, the notion of the “*suum cuique*,” [to each his own] which ever since the very earliest times became the common possession of the Western tradition through Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Ambrose, Augustine, and, above all, Roman law, will have to be discussed *in the context of the virtue of justice*, the intentional habit that enables one human being to give to another what is his.²⁷ [italics mine]

Pieper's supposition is emblematic of the Church's view that someone is a just person when he exercises the *virtue* of justice. Acting out of the good habit of justice, the just person has the capacity to consistently, readily, and, with a sense of satisfaction, respect the other "as other" and help him to receive his due, his rights. That first step of justice—recognizing the other "as other"—is not mere treacly sentiment, but a firm act of the will. Christians believe the redemptive order of grace endows them, as baptized persons, with the infused virtue of justice so they may even more surely render to others their *suum cuique*,²⁸ their rights.

IV. Human Rights Are Universal

The Catholic Church affirms that, based on reason and confirmed by God's revelation, all members of the human family possess the same innate dignity. All human beings, for that same reason, are equal in human rights.²⁹ As Pope Benedict XVI reiterates:

Since rights and the resulting duties follow naturally from human interaction, it is easy to forget that they are the fruit of a commonly held sense of justice built primarily upon solidarity among the members of society, and hence valid at all times and for all peoples.³⁰

Catholic teaching on human rights is the etiology of what the Universal Declaration of Human Rights expounds: human rights are the common language, the ethical substratum of "interpersonal and international relations."³¹ They "apply to everyone by virtue of the common origin of the person, who remains the high-point of God's creative design for the world and for history."³²

Again, Benedict XVI cautions us that to deny a natural law theory of universal rights is to wander into the land of relativist sophistry:

The rights that are common to all persons "are based on the natural law inscribed on human hearts and present in different cultures and civilizations." Removing human rights from this context would mean restricting their range and yielding to a relativistic conception according to which the meaning and interpretation of rights could vary and their universality would be denied in the name of different cultural, political, social and even religious outlooks.³³

V. Human Rights Are Inalienable

Human rights are something I discover or recognize as inherent to a fellow human being;³⁴ not something that I or the state concoct and then award to the other. Therefore, when I deprive another of his rights, it does violence to the very integrity of his being. To rob another of particular goods which every human being needs for full human flourishing and sanctification desecrates the very embodied, intelligent, free nature of that individual.³⁵

But the harm incurred when I alienate rights from another does not stop with the other person. As Pieper points out:

That something belongs to a man inalienably means this: the man who does not give a person what belongs to him, withholds it or deprives him of it, is really doing harm to himself; he is the one who actually loses something—indeed, in the most extreme case, he even destroys himself. At all events, *something incomparably worse befalls*

*him than happens to the one who suffers an injustice: that is how inviolable the rights is! That is how strongly the inalienability of the right asserts itself. . . . Expressions such as this should not be construed as simply heroic hyperbole; they are meant as a very precise description of the condition that justice (and protection and promotion of basic human rights) belongs to man's true *being*.*³⁶ [first italics mine]

VI. Human Rights Are Indivisible

The universality and inalienability of human rights require they be defended “not only individually, but also as a whole.”³⁷ For that reason, the Catholic Church stipulates human rights cannot be applied piecemeal but must be understood and implemented *in toto*, as a total package.³⁸ Neither should we select one right while neglecting others, nor promote one right to the detriment of others.³⁹ As correspondents to the integrity and body-soul unity of the human being, human rights entail “the fulfilment of the essential needs of the person in the [totality of his] material and spiritual spheres.”⁴⁰ The indivisibility of human rights—following from the body-spirit composite of the human holder of rights—demands they be applied, *in toto*, to everyone.

In sum, the salient Catholic principles on human rights proclaim this: the intertwined double helix of human rights and duties is rooted in the incomparable dignity that belongs to each human being as an *imago Dei* and arises from a virtue ethics of natural law, which specifies what each owes to the other in order to attain the common good of justice within the temporal order. The universality, inalienability, and indivisibility of the basic human rights to life, family, society, and truth are the natural consequences of the social nature and equality of human persons.

With the Church's human rights doctrine in mind, we are prepared to focus on the next section of this paper.

Part Two: The Church's Guidelines Regarding the Right of Infertile Couples to Plan their Family

Within the “most important” of human rights, Pope John Paul II includes “the right to establish a family, to have and to rear children through the responsible exercise of one's sexuality.”⁴¹ In other words, the basic human right to a family demands the duty of parents to found their family and to plan their family responsibly—that is, in a way that accords with the full truth of the marital act of sex. The important question is: what constitutes a responsible exercise of marital sexuality?

For answers, the Church peers through the lens of Sacred Scripture. Chapter two of Genesis pictures the creation of the woman from the side of the man, signifying her personal equality with him. By virtue of her rational intelligence and freedom, the woman is able to join the man in exercising responsible obedience to God's command “be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it” (Gen 1:28). Jesus's teaching on divorce, recorded in the gospels of Matthew and Mark, takes his audience (and us) back to the beginning, back to Genesis and God's original plan for human procreation. By integrating the procreative phrase from Genesis chapter 1 (“be fruitful and multiply”) with the unitive phrase from Genesis chapter two (“for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh”), Jesus teaches us that only the security and commitment of a marriage that lasts unto

death and the couple's life-giving acts of unitive love can be the proper context for the procreation of a new human being. Just as the married spouses form an unbreakable bond in their two-in-one-flesh union, so also the unitive and procreative meanings of their marital act of sexual love are indivisibly intertwined.

The Divine plan for human procreation and marital sexuality, then, is this: in the same way God creates all life out of His radical self-giving act of creative love so, too, ought the life of a baby be conceived within the intimate union of the parents' bodily act of self-giving love. Only in the context of their sexual act of love and union are parents able to fulfill the demands of justice: responsibly actualizing their right to procreate and to plan a family and their child's right⁴² to be conceived within marriage.

Donum Vitae, a 1987 Instruction from the Vatican doctrinal office, applies the Scriptural teaching on the responsible use of marital sexuality to the question of how an infertile couple ought to fulfill their duty to plan their family responsibly. Couples struggling with infertility should seek a treatment that respects both the procreative and unitive meanings of their acts of marital intercourse. In short, they ought to conceive a child within their loving act of marital union. But, since these couples are infertile or subfertile, they have a condition preventing them from conceiving naturally. For that very reason *Donum Vitae* directs them to an infertility treatment like NaProTechnology that diagnoses and treats the underlying causes of infertility so that the couple might conceive a child within their own unitive act of sexual love. This also means the infertile couple ought to avoid a reproductive treatment like in vitro fertilization that replaces the act of conjugal union. *Donum vitae* teaches that, by resorting to IVF, the couple act unjustly. Not only do they fail to fulfill their duty to conceive within the essential unitive dimension of their married love, but they also threaten the newly developing life of their IVF embryo through cryopreservation, destructive embryonic research, and preimplantation genetic testing. The IVF couple fail on two fronts: in their duty to procreate in accord with the responsible exercise of their sexuality and in their responsibility to respect the child's right to life.

Therefore, in the context of how infertile couples ought to responsibly exercise their right to plan their family, we must look first to the Catholic vision of the good of human life.

I. The Good of Human Life

It's the inherent dignity or the ontological goodness of *bios* (human life) that grounds the inviolability of the life of every human person—unique and unable to be given over completely to someone else. For this very reason, *Donum vitae* defines each person's right to life as “a sign and requirement of the very inviolability of the person to whom the Creator has given the gift of life.”⁴³ No matter their size, age, or stage of development, all human beings share equally in fundamental human rights, the first of which is the right to life.

As already discussed, a being whose rational soul is infused by an immediate, creative act of God is a being who stands in an irrevocable relationship with his Creator. The human person, nuptially related to God, receives all of creation, including his or her life and embodied existence—as well as those of other persons—as gift.

The vocation to give self and to receive the other as gift resounds, then, in the nature of every human being created in the image of the person of God, the Radical Giver.

The Church applies three norms pertaining to infertility treatment that protect the child's dignity and basic right to life:

- Infertility interventions must respect the right to life and inviolable integrity of a newly developing human life in utero or in vitro.
- While spouses have a right to marital acts of sex, they do not have a right to a child. Every child, a person to be loved in and for himself, is a gift.
- Every child has the right to be conceived within marriage.

Second, seeking an answer to the question of how infertile couples ought to exercise their right to plan a family, we also turn to the Catholic vision of the good of human procreation.

II. The Good of Human Procreation

God calls a husband and wife to image their inner family life through the language their bodies speak in the act of marital intercourse. The spousal meaning of a couple's vocation to procreate—to share in the divine “mystery of creator and Father”—is *inscribed in the meaning of their vocation to love*, “the mystery of their personal communion.”⁴⁴ The Church invokes this powerful image of inscription to help a husband and wife better grasp how the procreative meaning of their sex acts—their vocation to parenthood—*defines, activates,*⁴⁵ and *demands* its love-giving counterpart. We might even say that in this imagery the Church is exposing infertile couples—and all of us—to a glimpse of the providential mercy of the divine design for human conception. God intends that human beings be conceived naturally so that each and every last one of us could take consolation from, and find security in, the knowledge that *we came to be out of a personal act of our parents' love*. Through the simple but powerful image of inscription, the Church opens the minds of infertile couples to see why their act of sexual union is the *only* genuinely loving, and therefore human, moral, and responsible means of begetting children.

The Church applies two norms pertaining to infertility to protect the infertile couple's right to procreate and to plan a family and their duty to do so responsibly:

- Infertility treatments must assist, not replace, the conjugal act.
- The dignity of conceiving a baby demands the sexual complementarity, the “two-in-one-flesh” union, of husband and wife.

Part Three: NaProTechnology: The Medical Embodiment of the Church's Position on the Right to Family Planning

A medical profile of the two types of infertility treatment contrasted in Part Three will facilitate the subsequent moral analysis, where we apply the norms of *Donum vitae* to IVF and NaPro respectively.

*I. Medical Profile of In Vitro Fertilization*⁴⁶

Ovarian follicles in superovulated cycles are aspirated using a needle guided by transvaginal ultrasonography. Follicular fluids are scanned by the embryologist to locate

all available eggs. The eggs are placed in a special media and cultured in an incubator until insemination. If the man's sperm parameters are normal, approximately 50,000 to 100,000 motile sperm (previously collected by the man through masturbation) are transferred to the dish containing the eggs. This is called standard insemination because fertilization occurs in a culture medium rich in essential nutrients and electrolytes conducive to fertilization and embryonic growth. If the man's sperm parameters are abnormal, the embryologist uses the ICSI technique to fertilize mature eggs. This procedure is performed under a high-powered microscope. The embryologist picks up a single spermatozoa using a fine glass micro needle and injects it directly into the egg cytoplasm. ICSI increases the chance that fertilization will occur when the man has a low sperm count and/or poor motility, morphology, or progression. Following the fertilization process, both gametes are incubated in a culture medium for eighteen to twenty-four hours at 39 degrees Celsius in an atmosphere of 5 percent carbon dioxide. For pregnancy to occur, blastocyst stage embryos derived from these fertilized oocytes are placed in the uterus through a process called embryo transfer.

II. Medical Profile of NaProTechnology's Infertility Protocols⁴⁷

NaProTechnology⁴⁸ (*Natural Procreative Technology*) has a distinct set of protocols that treat infertility. These procedures have one principal goal in reference to infertile couples: to resolve the condition(s) causing their infertility so they are better able to achieve a pregnancy within their own acts of intercourse. In other words, NaPro infertility protocols take a disease-based approach to infertility or subfertility, viewing it as a symptom of an underlying organic, hormonal, or ovulatory dysfunction. To date, NaPro has been extremely successful in identifying and treating infertility precisely because it comprehensively evaluates and corrects the multiple causes of the "symptom" of infertility.⁴⁹ And its diagnostic and treatment strategies manage infertility so well because the Creighton Model FertilityCare System of charting precisely tracks the menstrual/ovulatory cycles of the particular infertile patient being evaluated. The characteristic biomarkers of these charts point the physician with consistent reliability to the underlying pathophysiology of the infertile patient. With these charts, the woman and her husband know their window of fertile days or the vulvar mucus cycle. They know that fertility-focused intercourse increases their chances of getting pregnant. Most importantly, the infertile couple understand that if they direct their acts of intercourse to their days of peak-type mucus, they optimize their chances of achieving a pregnancy. NaPro's surgical techniques effectively treat the various organic and structural abnormalities that underlie infertility and do so in a way that prevents postoperative pelvic adhesions that could reduce the infertile patient's future chances of conceiving.

Part Four: Moral Analysis

Let's apply each of the Church's norms protecting the baby's right to life, dignity-as-gift, and the right to be conceived within marriage first to IVF and then to NaPro infertility protocols.

I. Infertility Treatments Must Respect the Inviolable Integrity and Right to Life of Newly Developing Human Life in Utero or In Vitro⁵⁰

Applied to IVF: *Donum vitae* highlights the logical contradiction of reproductive technologies, such as IVF, that bring life through death. Prior to any fertilization in the laboratory, the IVF specialist arrogates to himself the right to instruct the couple which of their embryos will be transferred, which will be surrealistically suspended through cryopreservation, which will be donated to destructive embryonic research, and which will be discarded because of developmental abnormalities.⁵¹ IVF's failure to respect the life and integrity of the newly developing embryo hallmarks its injustice toward the baby.

Applied to NaProTechnology: All NaPro treatments for infertility respect the right to life and bodily integrity of human beings in utero. Because NPT protocols do nothing to deliberately threaten the right to life of the newly developing baby and do everything to facilitate a healthy full-term pregnancy, they facilitate the couple's just relationship to the baby. Furthermore, NaPro's ovulation induction protocols require the woman be tracked with daily ultrasounds to determine the effects of the drug on ovarian production of mature follicles. If four or more ovarian follicles mature, the couple is counseled not to have intercourse that cycle, and the dosage of clomid, metformin, letrozole, or hCG is decreased the next cycle. In short, the cachet of NaPro protocols is to provide an infertility treatment that is just, one that allows the couple to fulfill their duty to respect the inherent dignity and life of their baby.

II. Infertility Treatments Must Inculcate the Truth that Parents Do Not Have the Right to a Child; Children Are and Must Be Viewed as a Personal Gift, "the Supreme Gift . . . of Marriage."⁵²

Applied to IVF: Providers and users of IVF demonstrate an overtly utilitarian outlook that is an injustice against the dignity of baby-as-gift and the dignity of parents as intelligent collaborators with God's plan for human procreation. Infertile couples assume they have the "right" to reproduce in any way they please and to conceive their own baby in the easiest, most expedient way they can. But the tradeoff for expedient baby-making is a devastating depersonalization. IVF specialists reduce the parents to suppliers of fertilization material and reduce the baby to an end-product controlled by scientific technology. With this kind of objectification, IVF's aim is straightforward: to ensure the embryonic "product" it literally makes "by hand" is commensurate with the demand of consumers and conforms to the specification of parental will and design. The quality and number of embryos are judged not by the parents' duty to love their child unconditionally and to receive him as a gift but by "conditions of technical efficiency" which are, ultimately, "standards of control and dominion."⁵³

Applied to NaProTechnology: NaPro's approach to infertility, together with the genuine just culture it generates, encourages couples to fulfill their duty to work cooperatively with nature, to use their reason not primarily to calculate the most expeditious way for the greatest number of infertile couples to get pregnant, but to discover and appreciate the laws of their nature—God's plan for human procreation—and to freely cooperate with them. This dispositive attitude of husband and wife toward fertility begets a genuine appreciation of—first—the child as a gift, a person

who, equal in dignity to them, has a right to their love and, second, of their duty to love their baby without stipulation—that is, just because he or she exists.

*III. Infertility Treatments Must Respect the Child's Right to be Conceived Within Marriage*⁵⁴

Applied to IVF: To date, I have not found any serious discussion referencing rights of an IVF child—to say nothing of whether that child has a right to be conceived in a natural way. Nor do I expect to see such a work in the future. In the world of IVF, the rights of parents trump all. However, I have a theory. I suggest the day we as a society recover the rights of the child will be the day we are able to objectively evaluate the injustice of depriving IVF children of a “secure and recognized relationship”⁵⁵ to their parents’ embodied love from the *first*, and *most vulnerable*, days of their lives.

Applied to NaProTechnology: As already noted, NaPro unambiguously assists infertile couples in fulfilling their duty to conceive a child within their own acts of sexual love. Predictably, this approach to infertility also encourages NaPro parents to appreciate and respect the right of their children to be conceived, in a manner, on the one hand, that neither threatens their life nor thwarts their dignity and, on the other, that intimately connects their children to the protection, security, and, yes, intimacy of their bodily union.

Now let’s apply the Church’s norms protecting the basic duty of infertile couples to build their family from their natural acts of marital love first to IVF and then to NaPro infertility protocols.

*IV. Infertility Treatments Must Assist, Not Replace, the Conjugal Act*⁵⁶

Applied to IVF: Because fertilization of gametes takes place in a laboratory, IVF necessarily replaces the conjugal act.

Applied to NaProTechnology: Insofar as the identification and treatment of infertility’s underlying pathologies facilitate natural conception, NaPro’s medical and surgical treatments unambiguously assist the couple’s act of conjugal union to attain its natural end.

*V. The Dignity of Conceiving a Baby Demands the Sexual Complementarity, the “Two-in-One-Flesh” Union, of Husband and Wife*⁵⁷

Applied to IVF: By ignoring the unitive dimension that alone makes sense out of the mystery of sexuality and human renewal, IVF renders the creation of new human life grossly unjust. The price of generating new human life “sexlessly” requires us “to pay in coin of our humanity.”⁵⁸ To proceed as if procreation can arbitrarily be separated from sexual union without negative consequences, as IVF does, is an injustice to both baby and spouses. IVF eviscerates the ultimate truth of human sexuality, the ultimate truth of human dignity, and the ultimate mystery of beginning life within the mother’s body.

Applied to NaProTechnology: The NPT approach to infertility embraces the wisdom of a natural law insight: the fact that all mammalian reproduction is “the generation of new life from (exactly) two complementary elements, one female, one male, (usually) through coitus.”⁵⁹ This insight automatically takes on the status of

a moral norm when the mammals involved are human persons. Allowing couples to responsibly respect “the language of their bodies” evidenced in their “natural generosity”⁶⁰ and desire to have their own baby is the cachet of NaPro’s approach to infertility.

Conclusion

In sum, there is one critical fact damning IVF as an option to family planning: it is an inherently unjust reproductive technique depriving the couple and the child of their basic human rights. First, formed by a scientific worldview that refuses to respect the comprehensive meaning of marital sexuality, IVF subverts the duty of the infertile couple to conceive a baby within their own sexual act of marital love. Second, driven by a utilitarian view of nascent human life, IVF allows, and even encourages, the repudiation of the right to life of many developing embryos.

NaPro infertility protocols, on the other hand, constitute an inherently just technique for treating infertility. First, they respect couples’ duty to conceive a child within their own loving acts of intercourse. By diagnosing and treating the pathology causing infertility, NaPro protocols optimize infertile couples’ chances of conceiving a baby within their unitive acts of sexual love. Second, these NaPro procedures respect the baby’s inherent right to life and its right to be loved and welcomed into the world unconditionally. They support the pregnancy from day one forward, so mother and baby can live and be healthy through the forty ensuing weeks of gestation and at delivery.

As such, the NaProTechnology approach to infertility, by remedying the injustice of in vitro fertilization, constitutes a medical embodiment of the Church’s teaching on the right to family planning.

Endnotes

1. I am indebted to William D. Virtue, PhD, whose sagacious insights regarding the Church’s social teaching and its implications for human rights were instrumental in helping me shape Part One of this article.
2. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004, #153. [http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html]
3. Francisco Suarez (1548-1617), a Spanish priest and philosopher, expounded a theory of justice that launches the Church’s doctrine on human rights. He argued a universal “jus,” a “justice,” is owed to every human being. This “jus” was translated a “right.” Since human beings are an image of God, they have a dignity as persons created to image God and, therefore, certain things are owed to them as bearers of this Divine image. He assigned three inalienable rights to every human being: the right to life, the right to liberty (the right not to be owned by anyone), and the right to property (the right to provide for our needs).
4. The freedom to choose can belong only to a “moral agent” like the human being. But as the Church likes to remind us: someone who can reason over right and wrong may indeed come to see that he has no right to do a wrong, no right to deprive another of his *suum cuique*, his right, his due.
5. In his encyclical letter *Humanae vitae*, Pope Paul VI explains that a contraceptive method of avoiding a pregnancy is immoral (i.e., unjust) because the couple fail to responsibly exercise their right to procreate. That is, they intentionally suppress the essential life-giving or procreative meaning of all of their unitive acts of intercourse and fail, thereby, to give each other what is their

due: unitive acts of sexual love that are open to life. However, Paul VI explains that, by resorting to abstinence during fertile times and intercourse during infertile times, the couple responsibly avoid a pregnancy, that is, respect the essential procreative dimension of all of their acts of marital union. Each spouse renders to the other what is their due: unitive acts of intercourse open to life. Avoiding a pregnancy or spacing children in the latter way is just because it fulfills the duty of the couple to respect the life-giving or procreative meaning of every act of marital union, strengthening, thereby, the whole reality of their love.

The teaching of *Donum vitae*, on the one side, helps the infertile couple responsibly exercise their right to plan their family by directing the couple to an infertility treatment—like NaPro—that provides the couple a reasonable chance of conceiving within their own loving acts of marital union. On the other, DV directs the infertile couple to eschew the unjust choice of laboratory treatments for infertility—like IVF—that harm the whole of their married love by intentionally subverting the essential unitive dimension of their procreative endeavors.

6. *Compendium*, #149.
7. Christians believe that only in the redemptive order, by the grace of Jesus Christ, are human beings made *reliably* capable of overcoming their asocial propensities, especially their sinful tendencies toward pride and selfishness. Only grace empowers the human being to consistently pursue the goods of loving God above all and neighbor as self, ushering in the perfect justice of the kingdom of God—right here, right now.
8. Mary Ann Glendon artfully traces the influence of Leo XIII in *Rerum novarum* and Pius XI in *Quadragesimo anno* on the secular culture, especially on the UN's Human Rights Commission that was ultimately responsible for passage of the *Universal Declaration on Human Rights* (1948). The emphasis this commission and this Declaration places on: "the 'inherent dignity' and 'worth of the human person,' the affirmation that the human person is 'endowed with reason and conscience,' the right to form trade unions; the worker's right to just remuneration for himself and his family; the recognition of the family as the 'natural and fundamental group unit of society' entitled as such to 'protection by society and the state,' the prior right of parents to choose the education of their children; and a provision that motherhood and childhood are entitled to 'special care and assistance'" is redolent of the language, thoughts, and policies of these two social encyclicals and their definition of basic human rights and the common good. ["The Influence of Catholic Social Doctrine on Human Rights," *Journal of Catholic Social Thought*, 10.1, 2013, 70.]
9. Suarez defined justice as our *duty* to give what we owe to others. He spoke of the relationship between families who live together as a "moral union." A union that begins with the assumption of the duties and obligations that make political life workable. In 1891, Pope Leo XIII, in reference to an ecclesiastical mending of contemporary inflammatory relations between labor and capital, sounded this Suarezian theme: "[T]here is no intermediary more powerful than religion . . . in drawing the rich and the working class together, by reminding each of its duties to the other, and especially of the obligations of justice." These bind both the proletarian and the worker: "fully and faithfully to perform the work which has been freely and equitably agreed upon; never to injure the property, not to outrage the person of an employer; never to resort to violence in defending their own cause, not to engage in riot or disorder; and to have nothing to do with men of evil principles, who work upon the people with artful promises of great results, and excite foolish hope which usually end in useless regrets and grievous loss." [*Rerum novarum*, 1891, #19-20. (http://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum.html)]
10. Pope John XXIII, *Pacem in terris*, April 11, 1963, #11-22. [http://www.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_11041963_pacem.html]
11. *Ibid.*, #30.
12. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I-IIae, q. 94, art. 1, sed contra. Cf. footnote 26.
13. *Pacem in terris*, #11.
14. Herbert Ratner, "The natural institution of the family," *Child and Family*. Vol. 20, No. 2, 1988, pp. 89-106.
15. In 1891, Pope Leo XIII, inaugurated the Church's papal teaching on human rights with his letter, *Rerum novarum* (*On new things*). Against the socialist movement and its policy of government takeover of private property, he fought for the human right to private property and strengthened its

defense by presenting property ownership “in relation to man’s social and domestic obligations.” “No human law,” he wrote, “can abolish the natural and original right of marriage, nor in any way limit the chief and principal purpose of marriage ordained by God’s authority from the beginning: ‘Increase and multiply.’ Hence we have the family, the ‘society’ of a man’s house . . . [The] right to property, therefore, which has been proved to belong naturally to individual persons, must in likewise [sic] belong to a man in his capacity as head of a family . . .” [# 12]

16. What’s more, only when parents fulfill their duty to provide their children with a “moral environment conducive to the growth of the child’s personality,” [Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, 1991, 47.1. (http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_01051991_centesimus-annus.html)] only when parents teach their children the meaning of self-gifting love necessary for any life vocation, will the right of family members to choose for themselves the kind of life to which they feel called become a reality. [*Pacem in terris*, #15.]
17. Trying to right the egregious wrongs of the industrial revolution and socialist efforts for governmental takeover of private property, Pope Leo XIII declared: “With reason, . . . the common opinion of mankind . . . has found in the careful study of nature, and in the laws of nature, the foundations of the division of property, and the practice of all ages has consecrated the principle of private ownership, as being preeminently in conformity with human nature, and as conducing in the most unmistakable manner to the peace and tranquility of human existence.” [*Rerum novarum* #11] In words that would benefit our contemporary debate about socialism, the Pope argued: “Hence, it is clear that the main tenet of socialism, community of goods, must be utterly rejected, since it only injures those whom it would seem meant to benefit, is directly contrary to the natural rights of mankind, and would introduce confusion and disorder into the commonweal. The first and most fundamental principle, therefore, if one would undertake to alleviate the condition of the masses, must be the inviolability of private property.” [#15] Forty years later, in the midst of the Great Depression, Pope Pius XI calls for the urgent implementation of Leo XIII’s theory of the just distribution of goods for the sake of the common good: “To each, therefore, must be given his own share of goods, and the distribution of created goods, which as every discerning person knows, is laboring today under the gravest evils due to the huge disparity between the few exceedingly rich and the unnumbered propertyless, must be effectively called back to and brought into conformity with the norms of the common good, that is, social justice.” [Pope Pius XI, *Quadragesimo anno*, 1931, #58. (http://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19310515_quadragesimo-anno.html)]
18. *Rerum novarum*, #14. Pope Leo XIII plumbs the depth of the meaning of the Sabbath rest: “The rest from labor is not to be understood as mere giving way to idleness; much less must it be an occasion for spending money and for vicious indulgence, as many would have it to be; but it should be rest from labor, hallowed by religion. Rest . . . disposes man to forget for a while the business of his everyday life, to turn his thoughts to things heavenly, and to the worship which he so strictly owes to the eternal Godhead. It is this, above all, which is the reason and motive of Sunday rest; a rest sanctioned by God’s great law of the Ancient Covenant—‘remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day,’ and taught to the world by His own mysterious ‘rest’ after the creation of man: ‘He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.’” [#41]
19. *Centesimus annus*, #46.
20. As early as 1891, as the industrial revolution and political change swept across Europe, Pope Leo XIII spoke of the appalling conditions of the working classes and explains the common good in respect to the rights and duties of workers and employers: “The employer ought to respect the dignity of each employee and shouldn’t view them as slaves. Workers must also have time for their religious duties and must receive tasks appropriate for their sex and age. Workers and employers ought to be free to negotiate and come to an agreement, but natural justice must ensure that wages are sufficient to support a ‘frugal and well-behaved wage-earner.’ To ensure these rights and duties are maintained, worker’s associations ought to exist to work towards the common good.” [Commentary on *Rerum novarum*, #45. (<https://www.catholic.org/teachings/catholic-social-teaching/social-encyclicals/rerum-novarum-new-things>)]
21. For example, in answer to the question: How should one’s possessions be used? Pope Leo XIII, replies unhesitatingly, with the words of St. Thomas Aquinas: “Man should not consider his material possessions as his own, but as common to all, so as to share them without hesitation when others are in need.” [*Rerum novarum*, #22]

22. *Compendium*, #144. Moreover, the Catholic vision of life firmly rooted in the religious dimension helps to achieve the common good, “since recognition of the transcendent value of every man and woman favors conversion of heart.” To promote a good that is common to all, we need to heal the universal ravages of sin—broken minds, divided hearts, and addicted passions. The Church believes that this will only be realized in the fullest sense when we rely on the grace won by Jesus’s life, death, and resurrection. As Pope Leo XIII eloquently states: “. . . if Christian precepts prevail, the respective classes will not only be united in the bonds of friendship, but also in those of brotherly love. For they will understand and feel that all men are children of the same common Father, who is God; that all have alike the same last end, which is God Himself, who alone can make either men or angels absolutely and perfectly happy; that each and all are redeemed and made sons of God, by Jesus Christ, ‘the first-born among many brethren’; that the blessings of nature and the gifts of grace belong to the whole human race in common, and that from none except the unworthy is withheld the inheritance of the kingdom of Heaven.” [*Rerum novarum*, #25] And, again: “. . . if human society is to be healed now, in no other way can it be healed save by a return to Christian life and Christian institutions” [#27]. Through this grace comes a conversion of heart that “leads to a commitment to resist violence, terrorism and war” and promote, instead, justice and peace and the entire panoply of basic human rights for every member of human society. [Benedict XVI, Address (Meeting with the members of the general assembly of the United Nations organization), 18 April 2008.]
23. It is only possible to attain, increase, and safeguard the effectiveness of the common good, if society has “the good of all people and of the whole person—as its primary goal.” *Compendium*, #165.
24. As Mary Ann Glendon points out: “The ‘reason’ that the Church defends is not the calculating reason of Hobbes—in the service of the passions—nor is it narrow scientific rationalism. It is the dynamic, recurrent, and potentially self-correcting process of experiencing, understanding and judging that has animated her best theologians from Thomas Aquinas to Bernard Lonergan.” [“Catholicism and Human Rights,” *Marianist Award Lectures*. 2001, p.19.]
25. Unlike particles that necessarily follow the laws of physics, or molecules that necessarily follow the laws of chemistry, or plants and animals that instinctively follow the laws of biology, human beings follow the laws of their nature freely.
26. Cf. *ST Ia-IIae*, q.94, art. 2: Sed contra: “. . . Now as being is the first thing that falls under the apprehension simply, so good is the first thing that falls under the apprehension of the practical reason, which is directed to action: since every agent acts for an end under the aspect of good. Consequently the first principle in the practical reason is one founded on the notion of good, viz., that good is that which all things seek after. Hence this is the first precept of law, that good is to be done and pursued, and evil is to be avoided. All other precepts of the natural law are based upon this: so that whatever the practical reason naturally apprehends as man’s good (or evil) belongs to the precepts of the natural law as something to be done or avoided. . . . Since, however, good has the nature of an end, and evil, the nature of a contrary, hence it is that all those things to which man has a natural inclination, are naturally apprehended by reason as being good, and consequently as objects of pursuit, and their contraries as evil, and objects of avoidance. Wherefore according to the order of natural inclinations, is the order of the precepts of the natural law.”
27. Josef Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues: Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, Temperance* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World), 1965, p. 44.
28. The origin of international law begins with the Spanish colonization of the Indies. The application of the principle of *suum cuique* to both Europeans and native peoples originates with the legal theory of the Spanish Dominican friar and professor of theology at Salamanca, Francisco de Vitoria (1483-1546). *Suum cuique* was central to de Vitoria’s legal principles dealing with human rights issues. He argued the concept of *suum cuique* proves that “the entitlements properly belonging to a person are relational to others What is due one person cannot be correctly understood until what is also due others, who are in relation to the first person mentioned, is methodically considered.” And this principle, set down in *De Indies*, a work that discussed the relationship between native peoples of the new world and their European colonizers, lays the foundation for the universality of rights: “What is claimed by one must be the sort of thing that can rightfully be claimed by others.” The conclusions de Vitoria reached regarding the legitimate

- claims of both native people and Europeans of the 15th and 16th centuries endure today in the Church's social teaching beginning with Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* and figure in the premier document defining human rights in international law, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. [Araujo, Robert John S.J., "Our Debt to de Vitoria: A Catholic Foundation of Human Rights." 10 *Ave Maria Law L. Rev.*, 313 (2011-2012), p. 314.] The focus of recent studies on the School of Salamanca and, in particular, on its founder, de Vitoria, has been to admit that, despite "the catastrophic effects of colonization [of America] on Indian communities," Spain—above all other European colonizers—"took her Christian duty towards native peoples" most seriously and maintained noble motives regarding trusteeship and conversion of native peoples. [Martti Koskenniemi, "Colonization of the 'Indies,' The Origin of International Law," published as "Colonization of the 'Indies': The Origin of International Law?," in Ylanda Gamarra (ed), *La idea de la America en el pensamiento jus internacionalista del siglo XXI*.]
29. The Church also acknowledges a valid pluralism regarding the diverse means of protecting basic rights and of resolving the tensions among rights. "Universality of rights need not entail homogeneity [of application]". In fact, "the more that Western groups promote a top-down, homogenizing vision of human rights, the more credibility they add to the charge of Western cultural imperialism." [Glendon, "Catholicism and Human Rights," p.18]
 30. Benedict XVI, Address, 2008.
 31. The Church's insistence on the universality of human rights stands as a bulwark against those who subscribe to historicism, relativism and the theory that rights are culturally relative. [Benedict XVI, Address, 2008] All too frequently, their beliefs—there are "no common truths to which all men and women can appeal, . . . there are no human rights, and universal rights are really just instruments of Western cultural imperialism"—become justification for flagrant subversion of what is due to the other." [Glendon, "Catholicism and Human Rights," p. 19.]
 32. Benedict XVI, Address, 2008.
 33. Ibid.
 34. The Church incisively teaches that from the order of creation, something is inalienably owed to another because God has created every human being as a person. Precisely what Kant acknowledged: "We have a divine Sovereign, and his divine gift to man is man's right." From the order of redemption, we humans have inalienable rights and duties because Jesus Christ has taken on human dignity and restored its primal sublimity in his incarnation, death, and resurrection. [*Compendium*, #153]
 35. Bartholomew de las Casas (1474/1484 – 1566), a Spanish Dominican priest and member of the Salamancan school of philosophy, contended the Indians and Blacks of the 'Indies' were already human and therefore possessed the rights of life, freedom, and property against the Spanish conquistadores and colonialists who maintained that because these indigenous peoples were not yet human, they could be treated as property. [G. C. Marks, *Australian Year Book of International Law*, p. 26 and *passim*.]
 36. Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues*, p. 47.
 37. Ibid.
 38. On the occasion of the 1998 fiftieth anniversary of the *Universal Declaration on Human Rights*, Pope John Paul II cautioned against a fading sense that human rights are indivisible: "... the tendency of some to choose one or another right at their convenience, while ignoring those which are contrary to their current interests occurs too frequently. Others do not hesitate to isolate particular rights from their context in order to act as they please, often confusing freedom with license, or to provide themselves with advantages which take little account of human solidarity. Without doubt, such attitudes threaten the organic structure of the Declaration, which associates every right with other rights, duties and limits required by an equitable social order. In addition, they sometimes lead to an exacerbated individualism which can lead the stronger to dominate the weak and thus attenuate the relationship between freedom and social justice which is firmly established by the text." [http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1998/november/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19981130_50th-onu.html]
 39. As Pope Leo XIII sagely notes: "It would be irrational to neglect one portion of the citizens and favor another, and therefore the public administration must duly and solicitously provide for the

- welfare and the comfort of the working classes; otherwise, that law of justice will be violated which ordains that each man shall have his due.” [*Rerum novarum*, #33]
40. *Compendium*, #154.
 41. *Centesimus annus*, #47.1.
 42. Because his nature is that of a person, a human being cannot be reduced to the level of a thing. So, for example, the child cannot be used as an object or a mere instrument to the fulfillment of his parents’ desires or goals. Since a child has the right to be conceived within his parents’ sexual acts of unitive love, spouses have the duty to love their child into existence in the same way God creates every human being: with unconditional acceptance.
 43. John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae* (March 25, 1995), #39. [http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031995_evangelium-vitae.html]
 44. *Donum vitae*, Introduction, n. 3.
 45. John Paul II, *Theology of the Body: Human Love in the Divine Plan* (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 1997), 398.
 46. Cf. Sister Renée Mirkes “The Ethics of Infertility Treatment: An Upbeat Update.” in *Live the Truth*, Proceedings of the Twentieth Workshop for Bishops, Edward J. Furton, ed. (Philadelphia, PA: National Catholic Bioethics Center) 2006, pp. 207-11).
 47. *Ibid.*, pp. 211-21.
 48. NaProTechnology is a dynamic, universal women’s health science developed by Dr. Thomas W. Hilgers and his colleagues at the Saint Paul VI Institute, Omaha, Nebraska, U.S.A. Evolving over five decades of clinical research, Natural Procreative Technology (NPT or NaPro) utilizes a standardized and prospective system of charting the ovulatory and menstrual cycle whose biofeedback is critical in helping women understand their health and fertility. One abiding hallmark distinguishes NaPro’s 45-year history: its family planning component, that is, the regulation of a couple’s fertility and the treatment of female reproductive abnormalities are realized *in cooperation with, rather than suppression of*, the woman’s natural procreative system. In contradistinction to mainline OB/Gyn, then, NaPro’s diagnostic and treatment practices eliminate the need for contraception or sterilization as a method of family planning; exclude the use of the birth control pill for treatment of gynecological situations like endometriosis, polycystic ovaries, irregular periods, and premenstrual syndrome. And, to the point of this discussion, NaPro’s approach to infertility replaces production of human life in a lab via in vitro fertilization with medical and surgical protocols that help to resolve the roadblocks to pregnancy so that infertile couples are better able to conceive a baby within their own acts of marital intercourse.
 49. The cumulative pregnancy rate for 1,054 infertile women who were treated at the Saint Paul VI Institute clinic with NaPro for the full spectrum of infertility-causing diseases demonstrates that over 60 percent of these patients became pregnant within twenty-four months, and nearly 70 percent of them within thirty-six months. [Thomas W. Hilgers, *The Medical & Surgical Practice of NaProTechnology* (Omaha, NE: Pope Paul VI Institute, 2004), p. 536.]
 50. *Donum vitae*, II, introduction.
 51. Moreover, usurpation of dominion over the lives and deaths of these in vitro embryos is not limited to decisions to transfer, to cryopreserve, or to destroy. Denial of the embryo’s right to life also extends to serious endangerment of the baby’s postnatal life and health. The number of multiple births that occur through IVF bring a commensurately higher risk for premature birth which compromises the child’s chances for normal motor and mental development. And in the wake of a high-order pregnancy, the IVF specialist is confident that, if necessary, the woman’s OB or perinatologist will suggest the mother “reduce” the pregnancy from triplets to twin or twins to a singleton birth by selecting the least health baby for termination.
 52. *Donum vitae*, II. B. 8.
 53. *Ibid.*, 4c.
 54. *Ibid.*
 55. *Ibid.*, II.A.1.
 56. *Ibid.*, II.B.7.
 57. *Ibid.*, II.B.4b.

58. Leon Kass, *Toward a More Natural Science*, (New York: The Free Press, 1985) p. 114. *Donum vitae* (II, Introduction) warns couples who utilize IVF that they also become the victims or patients of the same unjust “dynamic of violence and domination” that is leveled against the child who is to be conceived.
59. Leon R. Kass and James Q. Wilson, *The Ethics of Human Cloning* (Washington, DC: AIE, 1998), p. 24.
60. *Donum vitae*, II. B. 4b.