

Dear Padre,

God gave humanity the skills for a child to be born to those suffering from infertility. So why does the Church oppose *in vitro* fertilization (IVF) after a couple has exhausted other options to conceive?

While the Church views having, raising, and educating children as a primary purpose of marriage, it also teaches that the means to achieve that goal must be morally appropriate. The Church considers *in vitro* fertilization (Latin for fertilization “in glass” or a laboratory) to be a morally inappropriate means for attaining that goal for two main reasons:

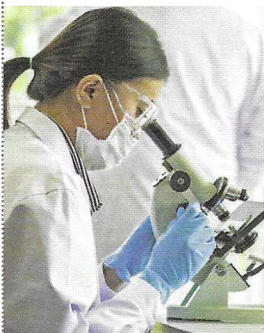
First, in practice, the IVF process almost always results in the destruction of living human embryos that do not get implanted in the woman, which the Church considers morally equivalent to abortion. Second, just as the Church teaches contraception is wrong because it entails the willful separation of the natural ends of the marital act, it also teaches that IVF is wrong because it replaces the dignity of the marital act with a technical procedure. In other words, IVF supersedes the act God willed to be the genesis of new life.

In addition, IVF demeans the dignity of the spouses and their parental role (and the dignity of a third-party sperm or egg donor, if one is involved). All of this deprives the resulting child of a true filial

relationship with his or her parents, turning the child into a technological commodity rather than a gift from God.

Couples must be careful not to become so obsessed with pregnancy that they lose perspective and fail to see other expressions of marital generativity, such as adoption, that expand marriage and provide a home to children who wouldn’t otherwise have one.

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JOSEPH HEADSHUTTERSTOCK

- Monday**
MAY 23
Easter Weekday
Acts 16:11–15
Jn 15:26—16:4a
- Tuesday**
MAY 24
Easter Weekday
Acts 16:22–34
Jn 16:5–11
- Wednesday**
MAY 25
Easter Weekday
Acts 17:15, 22—18:1
Jn 16:12–15
- Thursday**
MAY 26
St. Philip Neri, Priest
Acts 18:1–8
Jn 16:16–20
- Friday**
MAY 27
Easter Weekday
Acts 18:9–18
Jn 16:20–23
- Saturday**
MAY 28
Easter Weekday
Acts 18:23–28
Jn 16:23b–28
- Sunday**
MAY 29
The Ascension of the Lord
Acts 1:1–11
Eph 1:17–23 or
Heb 9:24–28;
10:19–23
Lk 24:46–53

Do you have a question for the Padre?

Go to DearPadre.org to send your question and learn more about Dear Padre.

A WORD FROM Pope Francis

We are living in a time of experimentation with life. But it is harmful experimentation. Making children, rather than accepting them as a gift, as I said. Playing with life. Be careful, because this is a sin against the Creator: against God the Creator, who created things this way.

ADDRESS TO ITALIAN CATHOLIC PHYSICIANS, NOVEMBER 15, 2014

