

Why I Am Catholic

We Don't Play God

The Church holds a strong stance against science playing God—including when it comes to human life and reproductive technologies. It is morally wrong and irresponsible when babies are made in laboratories—sperm and egg combined in Petri dishes, life created outside the womb and outside the physical union of husband and wife, etc.

This issue has become very important recently with the birth of the Suleman octuplets in California through the use of scientific manipulation.

Catholic teaching focuses on the union of husband and wife. When there is infertility, artificial insemination or other scientific engineering is morally unacceptable. Other options are morally and spiritually recommended.

Paragraphs 2373-2379 in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* cover this issue under the heading: "The Gift of a Child."

"Couples who discover that they are sterile suffer greatly. 'What will you give me,' asks Abraham of God, 'for I continue childless?' And Rachel cries to her husband Jacob, 'Give me children, or I shall die!'" (2374)

"Techniques that entail the dissociation of husband and wife, by the intrusion of a person other than the couple (donation of sperm or ovum, surrogate uterus), are gravely immoral. These techniques (heterologous artificial insemination and fertilization) infringe the child's right to be born of a father and mother known to him and bound to each other by marriage. They betray the spouses' 'right to become a father and a mother only through each other.'" (2376)

"Techniques involving only the married couple (homologous artificial insemination and fertilization) are perhaps less reprehensible, yet remain morally unacceptable. They dissociate the sexual act from the procreative act. The act which brings the child into existence is no longer an act by which two persons give themselves to one another, but one that 'entrusts the life and identity of the embryo into the power of doctors and biologists and establishes the domination of technology over the origin and destiny of the human person. Such a relationship of domination is in itself contrary to the dignity and equality that must be common to parents and children.'

"Under the moral aspect procreation is deprived of its proper perfection when it is not willed as the fruit of the conjugal act, that is to say, of the specific act of the spouses' union Only respect for the link between the meanings of the conjugal act and respect for the unity of the human being make possible procreation in conformity with the dignity of the person.'" (2377)

"A child is not something *owed* to one, but is a *gift*." (2378) "Spouses who still suffer from infertility after exhausting legitimate medical procedures should unite themselves with the Lord's Cross, the source of all spiritual fecundity. They can give expression to their generosity by adopting," becoming foster parents, helping the neglected, or helping those in desperate situations. (2379)

Abraham and Sarah of the Bible originally did not wait on God. They tried to force things and Abraham had a child with her maidservant Hagar named Ishmael. This caused major family strife. In God's time, in their advanced age, they together had Isaac who became the grandfather of the 12 sons of Jacob. Abraham today has descendents more numerous than the stars in the sky, as he was promised by God.