



STEWARDS OF OUR EARTH All of God's Creation

Social Justice Committee, Holy Cross Parish, Mt. Airy, September 8, 2024

Season of Creation: Life-Giving Love in an Age of Technology

The Season of Creation (September 1 – October 4) invites us to see the divine presence in all of creation.... (*Laudato Si' Movement*)

There has been a lot in the news about in vitro fertilization (IVF), and many people don't really know what it is and/or why it is controversial.

What is IVF? IVF is a medical procedure that fuses sperm and egg in a lab environment to conceive a child outside of the sexual act. The live embryo is then later implanted into a uterus to continue developing until birth.

What is the Catholic Church's stance on IVF? While the Church encourages certain fertility treatments for couples struggling to have children, the use of IVF is contrary to Catholic teachings. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (No. 2377) states that IVF is "morally unacceptable" because it separates the marriage act from procreation and establishes "the domination of technology" over human life.

What can IVF lead to? "The death rate of embryos conceived by IVF is so high that clinics routinely produce many of them and transfer several at once to the mother's womb, hoping that one will survive. If more embryos than are wanted continue developing in the womb, many clinics offer 'selective reduction' (targeted abortion) to eliminate the unwanted 'extra' children. This can exact a terrible psychological toll on the couple, whose desire for a child has led them to a gravely immoral decision about taking the life of one or more children in the mother's womb. Often embryos not used in a first attempt at pregnancy are frozen and stored for future attempts. This also poses a serious risk to their lives. When their parents have as many live-born children as they want, or abandon their efforts to have a child through IVF, the remaining embryos are considered 'excess' or 'spare.' Some are thrown away as laboratory waste, while others are abandoned indefinitely in a frozen state or slated for experimental purposes...."

The ability to cooperate with God to conceive and raise a child is one of the most inspiring and profound gifts that a man and a woman can receive. It stands to reason that some ways of responding to this gift respect the goods of married love and new life while others do not.... God is love. Made in God's image and likeness, we human beings are created by love and for love, called to share God's unconditional love with each other and the world. Because marriage is the first and most basic human community of love, Pope John Paul II has called it 'the primordial sacrament' (General Audience, October 6, 1982). This community, through its power of procreation, serves to continue God's loving work of creation.... In love, hope, and prayer, then, let us be open to God's gift of life and love in marriage, with profound respect for the dignity of all God's children." (Issued by the *United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*, November 17, 2009)

Comments on this column may be directed to the Social Justice Committee at socialjustice@holycrossphl.org.