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**THE USE OF SCIENCE OF NAPRO TECHNOLOGY FOR
TREATMENT OF INFERTILE COUPLES IN THE WAKE OF IVF
MENTALITY: THE CHURCH MORAL RESPONSE**

Supervisor

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A Long Essay Submitted in Partial
Fulfilment of the Requirements for the
Ecclesiastical Degree of Baccalaureate in Sacred Theology

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work:

To my beloved parents LALSAGA Tambi Boniface and KIEMTORE Lanoaga Marie

Therese who gave birth to me and through their wisdom made of me who I am today.

To my lovely brothers and sister: Emile, Emilienne, Edouard, Evariste, who always

believed in me and supported me in many ways. To Louise and Aminata the wives of

my brothers. To my teacher and mother TRAORE Nadège Sita who inspired me not to

give up on my studies. To my Director and Lecturer Rev. Dr. Sr. KABALA who

inspired me through her lectures and simplicity to focus working on moral theology. To

my beloved God parents Rose Mutamia, Joseph Were, and Gilbert Nacoulma who

stood for me to show me the right path as a Christian.

To Father Denis Rabier who supports me in many ways and inspired me through his

missionary life to join the Missionaries of Africa.

Mostly, with all my heart I dedicate this work to my late Dad LALSAGA TAMBI

BONIFACE who truly inspired me during the short time we spent together. May you

rest in peace father.

To the society of the Missionaries of Africa and all its members who contributed in one

way or the other in making of me who I am today all that by the Grace of God.

May you all who contributed in my life be blessed for ages unending. Amen!

EPIGRAPH

The challenge that couples experience because of not having children due to infertility related issues is a challenge that should concern all humanity and at the same time, we all are called to support those couples. Wanting to be a mother or a father is a desire if not a dream of many people namely when two people come together to form one body through a matrimonial act. Wanting in fact to be a parent becomes a stronger need when a couple suffers from infertility. However, couples who go through that in life should be given support by the Christian community so that they don't feel rejected or marginalized. (*Donum Vitæ* 8).

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Praise and glory to God for my life, my parents, friends, relatives, benefactors and benefactresses and to all human beings who have been created in the image and likeness of God.

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To my fellow students at Tangaza University College, thank you for your generous contributions towards my being and my work.

To all readers of this humble research, may you come to know that as human beings, we all share the same dignity which we ought to respect and protect and I hope that my little findings will be of great help to you.

May you all be blessed in the name of the Mighty Lord Jesus Christ! Amen!

STUDENT’S DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this long Essay is my original work achieved through my personal readings, scientific research method and critical reflection. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the ecclesial Degree of Baccalaureate in Sacred Theology. It has never been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit. All sources have been cited and acknowledged.

Signed:

.....

Name of the student: LALSAGA Weindnogo Aimé Bienvenu

Date.....

This Long Essay has been submitted for examination with my approval as the college supervisor.

Signed.....

Name of the supervisor: Rev. Dr. Sr. KABALA Florence

Date.....

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ABBREVIATIONS

CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church
IVF	In Vitro Fertilization
Gn	Genesis
Napro	Natural Productive

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

In the Christian faith, we firmly believe that the world including humanity has been created by God. God after creating the world entrusted it into the hands of humanity to till and subdue it. Therefore, humanity was entrusted with the procreation ministry by God. In the procreation ministry, the human person's main activity is to multiply and fill the earth through birth giving which makes humanity partake in the creation ministry started by God. Procreation in this aspect is an important role for the human person who is then made responsible for the continuation of their race. With the procreation task assigned to humanity by God, it is important to know that there are challenges linked to that task, and one of the challenges that couples face these days is the problem of infertility and this very problem will be the focus of our research to help people continue fathering and mothering children. In this modern world, the human person through science has developed artificial ways of tackling the problem of infertility within couples and many people ought to use those ways without finding out the physical and moral implications of the artificial ways of helping a couple have a child. Because couples are desperate in their search for a child, they tend to ignore the moral, physical, and even psychological dangers that those artificial ways of solving infertility may have on one. To be able to tackle the problem of procreation mainly the problem of infertility among couples we are going in our endeavors to look into the following theme that we propose and think will help us shed more light in our procreation ministry which is a divine ministry. The theme that we are proposing is the following: the use of the science of Napro Technology for the treatment of infertile couples in the wake of IVF: the church moral response. What are the implications of this theme in terms of our moral and pastoral life? In the following lines, we will focus on analyzing in detail things which have to do with our topic.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The background of our research paper is based on our daily experience of couples who suffer infertility in their marriage due to either psychological or health-related problems. In fact, since adulthood and mainly when I was in high school, I have always been so passionate about the reproductive system of the human person, and seeking to know more about it has been one of my priorities. My aim in seeking to know well the reproductive system of the human person is to be able to enlighten those who have little pieces of knowledge about their reproductive system and how after gaining some knowledge of it they can be masters of their sexuality by living it well while respecting the human dignity who is a divine being by the simple reason that he/ she is called to procreate. Having said so, I have come in contact with people who suffer physically and spiritually because they cannot conceive a child and that situation always leaves me wondering what to do for such people. Hence my interest is to research about few means to help my brothers and sisters who cannot conceive because they are infertile. Infertility these days is one of the reasons why couples are not happy with each other and therefore ready to separate or even divorce.

What motivates me to research and write about this topic is to mainly discourage all those who are using or are thinking of using artificial ways (IVF) for conception. We are in a world where a lot of people tend to valorize and normalize a lot of artificial things without even knowing the real consequences of what they are using to solve certain problems which in a long run will generate new problems.

AIMS AND THE OBJECTIVES

My aim in this research paper is first of all to create awareness about the moral implication of our human sexuality and how to fully live our sexuality with dignity. In addition to that, I aim at discouraging couples who use artificial methods for conception. Why use something that has negative side effects when the same problem of infertility can be tackled naturally? Having mentioned the above points, it is clear that my objectives create exposure to all couples who use artificial reproductive methods and let them know that there is what we call Napro Technology which is a natural and a sure way of addressing infertility problems. My major objective is to discourage the use of artificial methods of conception and promote the natural method of conceiving for it is only through the natural way of conceiving that the dignity of the human person is respected.

The purpose of writing this paper is to let people mainly Christians know that these days, there are natural ways of addressing certain issues related to sexuality such as infertility, sexual appetite, etc. I wish to research and share knowledge about Napro Technology and how it can truly help many couples that experience challenges related to procreation or conjugal love. My main focus is really to sensitize as many as possible about this new methodology of solving sexual-related problems within the Church for couples mainly to help the infertile couples know that there is a natural way instead of artificial ways of dealing with their conception issues.

PROBLEM STATEMENT /CENTRAL QUESTION

The problem here is the revolution of the use of IVF among couples. Many couples are very impatient when it comes to dealing with their marital life hence the challenge of resolving themselves to quick ways of solving certain issues such as infertility problems. When a couple is facing a challenge of conception, they quickly go to doctors to seek medical help and those medical agents most of the time propose IVF as the miraculous solution to their problems without even taking time to explore with the couple the pros and cons of such a practice. The essential question remains. Why should couples use IVF as the solution to their conception problem? The use of IVF has a considerable number of dangers that one might need to take a close look at of them. IVF increases the risk of many births if more than one embryo is transferred in the uterus, IVF may cause premature birth with a baby not having the average weight of a normal baby, IVF may be the prominent cause of the ovarian hyper-stimulation syndrome and it can also cause miscarriage. In the process of using IVF, the egg needs to be retrieved from the woman and that practice may lead to some complications for that very woman.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In my research methodology, I will mainly focus my paper on the actual findings of IVF and Napro Technology of some researchers and authors; this mainly makes me say that books, articles, and revue consultation will be my main source of information. In addition to that, I will make use of the notes of my lecturer Sr. Dr. Florence Kabala who taught me courses such as the theology of natural family planning, family ministry. She is the one who matures my reflection to research and write my long essay on the topic of tackling Napro Technology.

WORKING HYPOTHESIS

Researching and writing on that topic is amazing because it shows the effort that the Church is putting in place in helping couples to faithfully live their covenantal union to its fullest by being procreative and also one. What is Napro Technology and how can it be of major importance for couples? Why should Napro Technology be used instead of artificial ways (IVF) of helping couples conceive? The above is some of the questions that we can put forth when talking about that topic.

Our very first hypothesis is that IVF or else artificial ways of inducing procreation should be avoided. Our second hypothesis is to advocate for natural ways of procreating thus we ought to promote the use of Napro Technology as a tool to help those facing challenges when it comes to procreation.

Our third hypothesis is based on the fact that we should accept children as gifts from and of God and in case one is not able to procreate, he/she should accept the situation and maybe adopt, for adaption is morally good and accepted.

DELIMITATION OF THE RESEARCH

People might not be interested much in Napro Technology because it is a painstaking effort activity to carry on. My challenge will therefore be how to find sufficient and accurate information to let my surrounding know that the Church has come up with a very good and efficient way of helping couples who experience some challenges in their sexuality mostly on the side of conception. Encouraging people to go for Napro Technology instead of fecundation in-vitro will as well be one of the challenging goals to achieve.

CHAPTER I

UNDERSTANDING NAPRO TECHNOLOGY, INFERTILITY, AND IVF

Introduction

In this first chapter, the concepts that we are going to define are related to our sexuality as human beings for it addresses the human reproductive system. Our whole work constitutes of contrasting Napro Technology and IVF and for us to be able to understand some of the important implications of Napro Technology and IVF, we will in this first part of our work try to define some of the key elements that compose our theme. In doing so, we aim at making it easy for our readers to grasp we main points of our work. In fact, in this chapter, we will expound our understanding on the notions of Christian marriage, Infertility, IVF, and Napro Technology. This first chapter is in short the pillar upon which we are going to build our argumentation.

1. Christian Marriage

“A couple begins to themselves and because they love, they give themselves to one another in that life-long relationship we call marriage.”¹ Marriage is defined as the union between a man and woman given founding a family through the creation and the above-mentioned understanding of marriage can be seen as Christian marriage. Marriage originated at the beginning of the world when God created Adam and from his rib created Eve to be the partner of Adam. Adam from seeing Eve acknowledged her as his half meaning that she was made for him and him for her, and that brings about the unitary aspect of marriage. According to the code of canon law, marriage can be understood as:

The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life and which is ordered by its nature to

¹ John Marshal M.D, *Catholics, Marriage and Contraception*, (Calvert Street: Helicon press Inc., April 26, 1965), 68.

the good of the spouses and the procreation and upbringing of children is something that was made a sacrament by Jesus himself through baptism.²

Christian marriage as we know it is a marriage that unites freely a man and a woman who already live and express their love through matrimonial consent. In short, Christian marriage has its ontological roots from God the creator and the aim of it is to bring men and women together to allow them to perpetuate God's creative work through procreation. According to *Gaudium et Spes*, conjugal love and life are both initiated by God himself and the two should be lived consensually. A man and a woman coming together therefore is seen as a sacred act willed by God and such act is forever.³

We can't talk of Christian marriage without mentioning the essential properties of marriage which according to the code of canon law (canon 1056) are unity, indissolubility. Saint Augustine goes further by pointing out that the most essential goods of marriage are: "offsprings, fidelity, and sacrament."⁴ Offsprings here refer to the fact that through the legal union of a man and a woman, there will be children who will be born of that union and the very children can be seen as the fruits of the marital union. The bond that exists between husband and wife after matrimony is not of human origin but of divine origin as well for the simple reason that God is the author of marriage by creating Eve and Adam to complete each other.⁵ In addition to that, fidelity in marriage is a key element for it strengthens the bond of the spouses and also perpetuates their love. To finish, Christian marriage is sacramental because it has a Christological aspect in it for Christ elevated marriage to the rank of a sacrament through His presence during the wedding at Cana and as we know, Christ is the author

² Code of Canon Law, 1055

³ *Gaudium et Spes*, 48

⁴ A dictionary of canon law, John burke SMA P.201.

⁵ *Gaudium et Spes*, 48

of all sacrament. “The union of the human family is greatly fortified and fulfilled by the unity, founded on Christ.”⁶ Marriage is a sacrament according to what we have just mentioned.

Christian marriage is the ultimate expression of the unity between Christ and the church in love; therefore, love is the pillar of Christian marriage.

We may now go further: love must be the basis of Christian marriage. The idea of marriage without love should be something utterly repugnant to Christian thought. Pius XI in his encyclical “*Casti Connubis*” spoke of: “Marital love, which pervades all the duties of married life and holds in Christian marriage a sort of primacy of honor. Conjugal fidelity requires husband and wife to be united by a special kind of love; they must love each other faithfully as Christ loved the church from its beginning.”⁷

In short, Christian marriage is a sacramental value that we need to make explicit to everyone.

1.1.1. Indissolubility of Marriage

Marriage has a binding force for those who have taken the step to come together as one in the same way our Lord Jesus Christ is one and united with the church. Saint Paul in his letter to the Ephesians (Eph 21-33) brings to light the indissoluble character between Christ and the church linking that very relationship of Christ and the Church as the relationship that unites husband and wife; a purely indissoluble relationship. In fact, following that example, it is clear that husbands are called to love their wives the same and very way Christ loves the church to the extent of laying down his life for humanity. Thus, the total, surrendering love of Christ for his Church, and of the Church for her Lord, is a model and measure for the mutual love of man and wife in marriage. In addition to that, the Vatican II council points out the sacramentality contain in marriage by linking it as we said to How Christ is united with the Church. According to

⁶ *Gaudium et Spes*, 42

⁷ John Marshal M.D, *Catholics, Marriage and Contraception*, 36.

the very document, God united Himself to His people through love and fidelity and it is the same covenant of love and fidelity that married couples are with Christ as their example for Christ love the church and is faithful to the church (GS 48).

1.1.2. Unity of Christian Marriage

Unity in Christian marriage is simply about the permanent relationship of husband and wife through marital/ conjugal love and this is made clear to us when husband and wife exchange their consent during the celebration of marriage (CCC 1644). Husband and wife are no longer two but one. They both become one flesh (Mt. 19: 6, Gen 2:24). Covenant in marriage is unique and cannot be broken according to canon 1056. What The Lord God has put together, let no man asunder. Matrimonial covenant is unique and indissoluble (Can. 1056). (Mk 10:9, Mt. 19:1-12, 1Cor 7:10 - 11). The unity of man and woman is therefore accomplished in the unity of Christ with the Church and this unity can only be experienced in matrimony. Vatican II council still goes ahead to emphasize that: The intimate union of marriage, as a mutual gift of two persons, and the good of the children demand total fidelity from the spouses and require an unbreakable unity between them” (GS 48). “The unity of marriage, distinctly recognized by our Lord, is made clear in the equal personal dignity which must be accorded to man and wife in mutual and unreserved affection” (GS 49). Taking into account the above-mentioned ideas, we can therefore say that polygamy and polyandry in all their forms are contrary to the ends of marriage due to the simple fact that it breaks the ultimate unity of man and woman, and also children born in such union might not benefit of a good education.

1.1.3. Indissolubility of Marriage

The indissoluble character of man and woman sanctified during the celebration of matrimony simply means that there cannot be a divorce between husband and wife once the knot is tied. Their union indeed constitutes one of the ultimate realities of matrimony. For the precedent reason, no one can talk of marriage if there is no union between husband and wife, and the union we are referring to here is a total union of body soul, and heart. View in that aspect, indissolubility in marriage can be regarded as the most important good of marriage. It aims to keep husband and wife together until death do them apart as it is said during matrimonial celebrations. The indissoluble aspect of the Christian marriage is indissociable with its sacramental character. Given that marriage has a permanent bond, this very bond is the bond of Christ and His church. Since man and woman agree to become one through matrimony, they belong to each other. They complete each other for each one of them constitute half of the other and it is only by coming together that they will be one and indissoluble. Indissolubility here implies that any of the partners should not engage themselves in another marriage as long as one of them is alive, the same thing in a situation whereby one of the partners quits the matrimonial house. Marriage is a lifetime commitment and therefore should not be compromised. The indissolubility of marriage not only imposes an obligation not to attempt remarriage, but it also makes remarriage in the case of sacramental marriages impossible, for the bond of marriage is a reality, not a matter of human convention, and when that bond is created in the life of two Christians, it simply cannot be broken

1.2. Infertility

Defining the term infertility requires that we look at it from different angles. Infertility is a symptom of a more serious illness. Infertility is caused by disorders that have a "two-pronged effect." They not only obstruct reproduction, but they also create both short and long-term health issues.⁸ By infertility, we understand the fact of a man or a woman not being able to conceive because of reason or the other. It is the inability of a man or an animal to naturally reproduce. According to the World Health Organization, infertility is a disease because it is a dysfunction of the male or female reproductive system hindering reproduction for at least 12 months. "A couple is considered to be infertile after attempting to conceive for one year".⁹ In this case, we need to know that infertility affects both men and women with no distinction. Infertility can be of different types.

1.3. Types of Infertility

There is what may be considered as temporary infertility which may be caused by a situation of stress or drugs abuse; in this case, infertility can be treated. We have infertility that is not permanent for example during lactation; one may be infertile for a while."¹⁰

There is also what we can be considered as permanent infertility caused by either disease or comes naturally meaning it is inborn. It may also be the result of a lack of fallopian tubes or uterus and in this case, it is called sterility. Permanent infertility cannot be resolved and the only solution for a couple experiencing such a challenge is

⁸ Thomas W. Hilgers, MD. *The Napro Technology Revolution: Unleashing the Power in a Woman's Cycle*, (New York: Beaufort Books, 2010), 227.

⁹ Roger R. Sonnenberg, *Human Sexuality: A Christian Perspective*, (Concordia publishing house, 1998), 127.

¹⁰ [Types of Infertility in Females and Males, Causes & Treatment \(eggdonors.asia\)](http://eggdonors.asia) (consulted on September 17th 2021 at 12:41).

to turn to adoption. Infertility is a disease that affects men and women and can have the same causes. The causes of infertility can be drugs abuse, some sexually transmitted diseases, abortion, contraception, and stress just to mention but a few.

There are several factors that can contribute to a woman's infertility. One of the more common reasons is endometriosis, a condition in which the endometrium or uterine lining grows out of the uterus onto surrounding organs. Other reasons include diabetes, hypertension, and pelvic inflammatory disease. Infertility among males is usually due to a low sperm count or because of slow mobility of sperm.¹¹

Infertility is a great challenge for couples since children are considered to be God's gift. The problem of infertility is not a recent struggle for in the bible we have some cases such as the case of Sarah and Abraham and also the case of Hannah and Elkanah.

1.4. Meaning and History of IVF

In Vitro Fertilization also known as IVF is a medical process used to create human life without making use of a sexual act. It is in short an artificial way of helping some procreates in which man and woman does not need to come together in the unitary aspect of their marriage life to make children. "The word in vitro means "in glass" because the fertilization occurs in a laboratory."¹² With IVF, eggs and sperm are harvested in both man and woman and fecundation is done outside the uterus of the woman specifically in a laboratory tube. Once fertilization takes place and the wanted embryo is selected, the very embryo will then be transferred to the woman's womb where the process of growth of the embryo will continue normally up to the state of fetus and later on a child who will be born. Given the fact that we know what In Vitro Fertilization is, one may want to know where originated from.

¹¹ Roger R. Sonnenberg, *Human Sexuality: A Christian Perspective*, 129.

¹² Roger, 130.

1.5. Origin/History of IVF

In vitro fertilization was discovered when couples faced infertility-related challenges without necessarily having a possible solution to remediate the situation in which they are. It is this perspective that science has tried to offer infertile couples some practical solutions that would help them conceive a child. It is in this perspective that we need to know the true origin and history of IVF.

The history of In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) and embryo transfer (ET) dates back as early as the 1890s when Walter Heape a professor and physician at the University of Cambridge, England, who had been researching reproduction in several animal species, reported the first known case of embryo transplantation in rabbits, long before the applications to human fertility were even suggested. However, it was not until 1959 that indisputable evidence of IVF was obtained by Chang (Chang MC, Fertilization of rabbit ova in vitro. *Nature*, 1959 8:184 (suul 7) 466) who was the first to achieve births in a mammal (a rabbit) by IVF. The newly-ovulated eggs were fertilized, in vitro by incubation with capacitated sperm in a small Carrel flask for 4 hours, thus opening the way to assisted procreation.¹³

It is also good for us to mention and acknowledge that “the first successful test-tube baby, named Louis Brown, was born in 1978 to a mother in Oldham, England. Since that time, in vitro fertilization has been used to bring about the birth of thousands of babies.”¹⁴ Knowing the history behind In Vitro fertilization leads us to ask the why question. If procreation is to take place through the act of conjugal love, why should a married couple refer themselves to artificial ways to conceive a child?

The answer to this question is that most of the time, those who use IVF are infertile people who cannot perpetuate human life following the natural law processes which are simply through the sexual act. Couples who find themselves childless after a certain time together most of the time resolve to seek medical help and as we all know,

¹³ [IVF History - IVF-Worldwide](#) (consulted on the 2nd September at 11:15pm).

¹⁴ Roger R. Sonnenberg, *Human Sexuality: A Christian Perspective*, 130.

most of the medical ways of addressing this issue of infertility are artificial and violate the dignity of the human person created in the image and likeness of God.

1.6. The Reasons for In-Vitro-Fertilization – IVF

The woman is sterile meaning she has no ovaries and also that there is a malfunction in her fallopian tube and many more things that do not allow her to conceive naturally. If the man is sterile, impotent, or has a low sperm count he may use IVF so as this problem of fathering a child naturally. IVF is as well used by couples when both husband and wife are sterile or else if one has a transmitted disease that the couple wants to avoid their children contracting. In most cases, couples resolve to use IVF when their efforts of procreating through the natural case result in a failure to procreate. Given the reason for using IVF, what types of IVF do we have?

1.7. Types of In Vitro Fertilization

There are different types of IVF:

There exist two types of IVF: classical or conventional IVF, and ICSI (Intracytoplasmic Sperm Injection). The only difference between them is how fertilization takes place in the lab. In the case of classical IVF, egg and sperm are placed in the same plate at the lab so that fertilization occurs as it would naturally. Inversely, in ICSI, a previously selected sperm is injected manually inside the egg.¹⁵

1.8. Napro Technology

Napro Technology is a natural protective technology that aims at treating infertility in both men and women. It is a technique that enhances the reproductive system of the human person to treat infertility and infertility-related issues.

Napro Technology is a medical science that has the education of the patient as its foundation integrated with good medical practice. Specifically, it educates women in the objective parameters of their menstrual and fertility cycles in such a way that

¹⁵ Types of in vitro fertilization available today (invitra.com) consulted on the 21 September 2021 at 10:50pm.

they can develop a partnership with the properly-trained physician in the evaluation and eventual treatment of whatever gynecologic or reproductive problem they may encounter.¹⁶

What Napro Technology does is something therapeutic, it seeks to solve the infertility problem permanently be it physical, spiritual, or psychological related issues. It is clear that with Napro Technology, infertility is something that can be tackled without violating human life. In general, that is why Napro Technology is to use a new area in which humanity should turn to when it comes to addressing issues concerning infertility. Napro Technology uses a monitoring system of the reproductive and gynecology system of men and women to detect the real cause of infertility and after detecting what causes infertility in a person, Napro Technology tries to address those causes by resolving them without violating the ultimate human dignity. For that, Napro Technology is morally acceptable as a method of solving infertility. Napro Technology provides real-time solutions to actual problems such as discouragement, low sperm count, hormonal imbalance, etc., therefore, Napro Technology in this sense “is a medical science that serves the humanity. It helps women asses the challenge they are going through when it comes to infertility and at the same time, it helps them explore some treatments in short, it helps women contribute to their healing.”¹⁷ This is to say that NaPro technology has an inclusive approach in treating infertility for it involves the patient in all procedures engaged toward solving the treated problem. In short,

Natural procreative technology is referred to as Napro. The basics of the regular menstruation and fertility cycles are studied in Napro Technology. We're looking for a consistent and objective way to track the cycle..... Indeed, the Creighton Model Fertility Care TM System and its biological markers learned via education are employed by Napro Technology to steer its medical and technological resources so that it can work in tandem with the woman's cycle.¹⁸

¹⁶ Thomas W.Hilgers, MD. *The Napro Technology Revolution: Unleashing the Power in a Woman's Cycle*, 26.

¹⁷ Thomas W.Hilgers, MD. *The Napro Technology Revolution: Unleashing the Power in a Woman's Cycle*, 34.

¹⁸ Thomas, XXI.

In short, Napro Technology is a morally and acceptable new science that the Catholic Church ought to promote for it respects the dignity of the human person in a whole. Napro Technology offers to us a wide variety of options when it comes to infertility treatment and we will explore those options as we go deep into our research.

Conclusion

By exploring the definitions of the different key words found in our theme, we have set a solid foundation for us to grasp what this paper is all about. In addition to that, defining the key elements of the very theme allowed us to make important discoveries when it comes to how different people and entities perceive differently some concepts. In the following lines, we will now explore in a deeper level, issues concerning infertility, In-Vitro fertilization and some moral dangers of In-Vitro fertilization.

CHAPTER II

CAUSES OF INFERTILITY AND THE DANGER OF IVF

Introduction

In this chapter, our main objective is to analyze the main causes of infertility and how they can affect the matrimonial life of a couple. Infertility, as we know now, is a disease that affects both men and women and according to circumstances, infertility can be permanent or temporary. In this very chapter, we will as well present to you the moral dangers of IVF.

2.1. Causes of Infertility

Infertility is a disease that affects both men and women and the consequence of it is that a couple that suffers from it may be called to live without children if the problem is not addressed. “In a review of the causes of infertility identified by various authorities, infertility was thought to be due to the malefactor in a range of 6.2 to 30 percent”.¹⁹ Many men suffering from infertility experience things such as low sperm count, low quality of sperm, etc. For women, there are a certain number of factors affecting them and therefore leading them to experience fertility problems. “There was a multitude of causes found in women, including tubal factor, tubal/peritoneal factor, ovulatory dysfunction, and endometriosis”.²⁰ However, how can we address the infertility problem without first of all knowing the major causes of it or at least some of the causes? Infertility may affect people differently but in most cases, infertile couples may share some common causes of their problem and in the following lines, we are going to analyze some of the causes of infertility.

¹⁹ Thomas W. Hilgers, MD. *The Napro Technology Revolution: Unleashing the Power in a Woman's Cycle*, 209.

²⁰ Thomas, 209.

2.1.1. Stress

Stress is a phenomenon that can be of physical or emotional implications. Stress causes an abnormality in the function of the human person at all levels and in some cases, stress can negatively impact the reproductive system of both men and women leading them to experience difficulties in procreating. In fact,

Stress has an enormous impact on the ovulation and menstrual cycle. The stress may be physical or emotional. It may be acute or chronic..... It is a situation that can happen to any woman; it may be a protective mechanism at work, delaying fertility until the stress is relieved.²¹

The main reason why stress can be the cause of infertility is that stress leads to anxiety or depression and in those cases, the woman reproductive system is impacted and major changes can take place,

Stress can cause a variety of aberrations in the charting system. The classic example of a charting aberration due to stress is the “double peak. This is a situation in which stress delays ovulation and the second peak generally occurs after stress is relieved.²²

In the case of women, for example, we know that every month, women produce eggs that they release to be fertilized in case there is an unprotected sexual relationship with a man. When a woman suffers from stress, her ovulation process is tempered with and her body does no longer produces the required amount of hormones (progesterone) to release the eggs. In short, the more a woman is stressed, the less she ovulates and the less she has chances to conceive. When women are stressed, their body releases a certain amount of adrenaline which does not facilitate the use of progesterone which is responsible for fertility.

In extreme stress, stress hormones such as adrenaline, catecholamines, and cortisol are released in the body. The release of sex hormones is inhibited by

²¹ Thomas W. Hilgers, MD, *The Napro Technology Revolution: Unleashing the Power in a Woman's Cycle: Revolution*, 169.

²² Thomas W. Hilgers, M.D., *The Medical and Surgical Practice of Napro Technology*, 341.

high amounts of stress hormones in the body. Inhibition of sex hormone release can cause ovulation suppression in women and sperm count reduction in men.²³

Stress is, therefore, something to be taken seriously if a couple needs to procreate otherwise it can affect each member of the couple or at least one member of the couple making it difficult or even impossible for the very couple to have their child through the natural way which is the natural procreation. Stress is caused by many factors such as social and financial instability etc. that make a couple feel a certain amount of pressure in them and around them. As far as the “white lotus clinic” is concerned the hormonal release in the body can cause infertility in the following instances:

Stress reduces the secretion of estrogen, stress reduces the secretion of progesterone. It impairs follicle health and development. Stress reduces the secretion of progesterone. Stress can cause luteal phase defects from the corpus luteum in the luteal phase. Stress increases prolactin secretion by the pituitary gland, which inhibits ovarian function. Stress as well affects the part of the immune system responsible for preventing miscarriage in early pregnancy.”²⁴

Stress in short is something that should be dealt with daily because if left unaddressed, it impacts the holistic life of the human person, and to some extent, as we have mentioned above, stress may constitute a hindrance for a couple to procreate the natural way. Stress is always triggered by something in life and until we get to know the root cause of our stress, there will be nothing we could do to counterattack the stressful feelings we may experience daily or from time to time.

2.1.2. Recurrent Ovarian Cyst

An ovarian cyst is a disease that affects the women’s reproductive system and according to the level of development of the disease, it can negatively affect one who suffers from it to the extent of making one infertile either momentarily or permanently.

²³ Stress – Cause of Infertility (hegdefertility.com), (consulted on the 04th September 2021 at 21:20).

²⁴ Stress – Cause of Infertility (hegdefertility.com), (consulted on the 04th September 2021 at 21:20).

In fact, “ Most of these cysts result from an underlying hormonal dysfunction”²⁵.

Recurrent ovarian cysts may be of two types. The first one is referred to as a “persistent follicular cyst”.

A persistent follicular cysts often are associated with chronic pelvic pain, which is usually on one side but also may be on both sides. Follicular cysts have, as one of their hallmarks, the dominant and prolonged production of estrogen that is unopposed by progesterone.²⁶

This follicular cyst may affect the peak moments of a woman during her menstrual cycle and once the cycle is affected, one may struggle to get pregnant.

The second type of recurrent ovarian cyst is what is referred to as “luteal cyst” which

Also is referred to as a luteinized un-ruptured follicle (LUF syndrome). In this situation, the follicle grows and develops to the time of ovulation, but ovulation does not occur. The follicle remains un-ruptured and a cyst forms and increases in size during the remaining portion of the cycle. Varying degrees of internal debris will form within the follicle suggesting some amount of hemorrhage within that cyst. These also are called hemorrhagic luteal cysts.²⁷

With this type of cyst that constitutes an obstacle to any ovulation is clear that without ovulation, fertilization cannot take place as well as pregnancy. The above two types of ovarian cyst may be for one reason or the other recurrent which will require one to go through a surgical procedure to get rid of the cyst. During the procedure, the reproductive system of a woman suffering from the recurrent ovarian cyst may be tempered with and that can cause infertility.

²⁵ Thomas W.Hilgers, MD. *The Napro Technology Revolution: Unleashing the Power in a Woman's Cycle*, 175.

²⁶ Thomas, 176.

²⁷ Thomas, 177.

2.1.3. Endometriosis

Endometriosis is a sickness that affects the sexual wellness of a woman prevents him, therefore, to conceive if left untreated. Endometriosis as we know it causes female's infertility. "Endometriosis is a disease marked by the implantation of endometrial tissue in locations other than the lining of the uterus. The first known description of this disease was by a German physician, Daniel Shroen, in 1690."²⁸ Endometriosis is an illness that does not affect a specific part of a woman for it is a disease that can spread in many parts of the body according to the level of advancement of illness and that makes it a time a bit difficult to locate. For that, the best way of diagnosing it is through "The "gold standard" for diagnosis is a diagnostic laparoscopy with histological (microscopic examination of the tissue) confirmation. Laparoscopy should be performed in the first half of the menstrual cycle (the pre Peak phase."²⁹ A woman who suffers from endometriosis has a higher risk of not carrying to term the pregnancy for the disease may lead to an unwanted abortion. In a major case, women who suffer from it find themselves incapable of conceiving for the simple reason that endometriosis affects their reproductive system and organs such as fallopian tubes. In short,

There is little question that endometriosis hurts fertility by being strongly associated with infertility and an association with a higher risk of spontaneous abortion..... It also has been suggested that infertility may be caused by quality of embryos coming from ailing oocytes obtained from unhealthy ovaries.³⁰

On a final note, it is good for us to know that endometriosis is a disease that affects an important number of women reason why it is good for women to be screened

²⁸ Thomas W.Hilgers, MD., *The Napro Technology Revolution: Unleashing the Power in a Woman's Cycle*, 277.

²⁹ Thomas, 277.

³⁰ Thomas, 283.

to find if they suffering from it and if yes, the disease needs to be treated to decrease the chances of one being infertile with time.

2.1.4. Polycystic Ovarian Disease

As we know, there is a certain number of diseases affecting women and the diseases may contribute to important risk factors of infertility. Among the multitude of diseases that can make one infertile, polycystic ovarian disease is something to be seriously considered. Polycystic ovarian disease is a disease that distorts a woman's fertility cycle. "A polycystic ovarian cyst is associated with a long and irregular menstrual cycle. For women who suffer from that, much of their infertility is because they are not ovulating regularly".³¹ In short, a woman who suffers from a polycystic ovarian cyst does not ovulate and we all know by now that without ovulation there can't be fertilization of whatsoever egg in a woman's uterus and for that, no conception can take place.

2.1.5. Contraceptive

Defined as an artificial method of birth control, contraception is according to the Catholic Church a practice that needs to be eradicated because it is against life yet we as human persons should continue the work of procreation initiated in us by God. It here clear that the Catholic Church is against contraception. Contraceptives are different methods used by both men and women to avoid pregnancy or in some cases to regulate the birth rate. Contraceptives are artificial ways of controlling birth and the use of contraceptives can negatively affect the reproductive system of men and women, leading in some cases to a situation of infertility. The reason why we use contraceptives is that we want to control children's birth. What contraceptives does to the human

³¹ Thomas W. Hilgers, M.D, *The Medical and Surgical Practice of NaPro Technology*, 497.

reproductive system is that it suppresses the hormones responsible for fertility in both men and women but mainly in women since women contraceptives are more in number than men. When contraceptives prevent the release of certain hormones responsible for pregnancy it affects the human reproductive system to some instances that when one stops making use of a certain contraceptive method, there is no return of fertility causing therefore infertility. Normally the way contraceptives work is that, after stopping their usage for some time, one should be able to normally conceive but let us remind ourselves that human beings have different body systems. Some people will say that the percentage of those being affected by infertility after using contraceptives is low but that should not be the reason why we should go ahead and use contraceptives.

Contraceptives may not be the cause for one not to observe her normal menstrual cycle but as we say, they can delay fertility. For example, those who use oral contraceptives or devices may get their cycles even suppressed temporarily or even permanently. Research has also proved that some contraceptives methods may affect cervical mucus liquid which is one of the indispensable elements for conception. In addition to that, the more one uses contraceptives, the higher the chances of hormonal dysfunctions and even in some cases, thickening of the endometrial lining and we all know that when those elements are tempered with, getting pregnant becomes a daily struggle.

Procreation is a renewal of “the mystery of creation” (John Paul II, *Theology of the Body*, 80-83). According to the Church’s tradition, any deliberate action contrary to either the procreative purpose of sexuality or the fidelity of marriage is gravely disordered (cf. CCC. 2370, 2400).

Casti connubii condemned contraception as shameful and intrinsically immoral because it was against nature as was very act of direct sterilization. Children are gifts from God and should be therefore preserved and cherished.

2.1.6. Abortion

Abortion can be seen as the interruption or termination of any condition of being pregnant by removing the fetus out of the uterus of a woman. It can also be defined as the removal of the embryo from a woman's womb. Abortion is something that can happen naturally without any medical interference and that is known as "miscarriage;" abortion can also be induced and in that case, there is an intervention of a third party. Abortion is usually of three types: selective abortion, abortion as means of family planning, and therapeutic abortion.

Selective abortion is an abortion that takes place when a couple or one member of a couple decides that the child that is to be born is not of the gender that they want; for example, if the woman is carrying a male child in her womb and yet the couple was looking for a female child. In addition to that, a selective abortion means an abortion based on Utilitarian calculations. In this case, a selection is done on which type of child to keep or not to keep. For instance, one may say that I have five children and I do not want another child, the sex of the child, the quality of the child to be born. Some may say I need only sex, not children.³²

An abortion can also be conducted as a result of family planning. This kind of abortion takes place when a pregnancy occurs and a couple or a member of a couple judges that the pregnancy has come as a result of a mistake because the couple did not plan to have a child at that specific time. In this situation, we talk of "interceptive

³² William E. May, *Catholic Bioethics and the Gift of Human Life*, (Our Sunday visitor publishing division, May 8. 2008), 168-169.

abortion.” The claim is that the child was conceived against the will of the parents or at least against the will of the parents.

From the above-mentioned types of abortion we need to know that abortion can cause infertility in women because when it is conducted, abortion can affect and even infect the pelvic of the woman who is aborting. Abortion can cause inflammation of the pelvic resulting in infertility in some cases. In the same line, an abortion can damage the uterus, and the more a woman aborts, the higher the risk she has to experience any kind of infertility. Another cause of infertility is the damage of the fallopian tubes which may be the consequence of pelvic inflammatory disease.

One common risk factor for infertility is Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID), which is caused by inflammation from an infection that has traveled from the vagina or cervix and infected the uterus, fallopian tubes, and/or ovaries. PID can cause scarring in the fallopian tubes which can inhibit both egg and sperm movement, can prevent fertilization from ever happening, or cause an ectopic pregnancy if fertilization does happen. PID can also cause damage to other parts of a woman’s reproductive tract, from her ovaries to her uterus.³³

In short, Pelvic inflammatory diseases should be tackled in a situation whereby one aborts either naturally through miss-courage or artificially through induced abortion. In general, we are called to avoid aborting children for abortion may lead to one being permanently infertile and the burden of not being able to conceive a child might be overwhelming with time and may as well affect one’s quality of life.

2.1.7. Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Sexually transmitted diseases can contribute to some extent to making one infertile. Some sexually transmitted diseases can affect the fallopian tubes leading to their inflammation without one getting to know that there is a problem with one’s reproductive system. Some of the STD’s such as gonorrhoea, chlamydia can damage the uterus, fallopian tubes in women, and in men, they can damage the urethra and in both

³³ Abortion, Fertility, Pregnancy Outcomes, and Informed Consent - ERI Blog (equalrightsinstitute.com) (consulted on the 07th October 2021).

situations can lead to infertility. In fact, in most cases, untreated STDs can be factors for one not to be able to conceive and that is most noticeable in women. For men, STDs can consequently reduce their semen's production and even the quality of what is produced. Adding to that, STDs can damage the urethra and epididymis in men. Many STDs cause infertility in both men and women but for us to be able to know how STDs can cause infertility, we will focus on two of them: gonorrhea and chlamydia

Chlamydia is a sexually transmitted disease that affects mostly women and if left untreated, chlamydia causes the inflammation of the fallopian tubes and can even block the way for eggs to move from the fallopian tubes to the uterus for fertilization. Chlamydia is known to be one of the main causes of infertility worldwide; therefore, it is a sickness that needs to be treated. Chlamydia can cause serious inflammation of the genital tract damaging permanently at times the uterus, fallopian tubes, etc.³⁴

Gonorrhea is as well a sexually transmitted disease that can affect the reproductive system of the human person and if left untreated, it can cause infertility because it damages like chlamydia the fallopian tubes. In situations where the disease is diagnosed at a later stage, the consequences can be irreversible. Gonorrhea can as well cause pelvic inflammatory disease in women and men it can lower the sperm count and quality but in both cases, gonorrhea is a causing factor of infertility.³⁵

2.1.8. Smocking

Smocking can be a risk factor for many people to contract a certain number of illnesses infertility includes. The chemicals inhaled during smoking such as nicotine, cyanite, Carbone monoxide affect the quality of the sperm in men and affect the eggs in women. Because of the chemical inhaled, the risk of infertility, therefore, increases with also the quantity of tobacco or any related substance-related that one smock as

³⁴ Thomas W. Hilgers, M.D, *The Medical and Surgical Practice of Napro Technology*, 592-593.

³⁵ Thomas, 594.

well. By smocking, one ends up damaging his/her genetic contents of eggs and even sperms.

Smocking is something that is practiced by both men and women. In men, smocking contributes significantly to lowering the sperm count, quality, and even mobility, and science has proven that when the above-mentioned elements lack in men's sperm, one can hardly impregnate a lady. Smocking can lead to one becoming impotent and following the Christian pattern of procreation which should happen naturally, when one is impotent, one cannot conceive and is considered infertile.

In women, smocking can highly destroy their ovaries which results in being infertile. Adding to that, smocking can as well damage the uterus of a smocking woman's organ without which conception can't take place. One of the risk factors in smocking women is the occurrence of menopause early enough before the normal time. When a woman smocks, the time of her menopause shortens by one year or even four years.

2.2. Moral Dangers of IVF

IVF is considered by many people as the ultimate solution for those who suffer from infertility challenges. IVF in most cases is used by couples or individuals when they attempt much time to naturally have a child unsuccessfully. IVF is a method of helping people conceive artificially and it being artificial, it comes with a certain number of negative impacts on the life of the person making use of it. Some of the negative impacts or dangers may be physical and even moral. In our research, we will focus only on the moral dangers that IVF comes with.

2.2.1. Abnormal growth

In the case of practices of IVF, there can be some abnormalities during the process of formation of the embryo being fertilized in a laboratory. In such a situation, we talk of abnormal growth of some parts of the body of the future child in its early stages of life.

With ART procedures such as IVF, there is an increased emphasis on prenatal diagnosis and selective abortion. Many parents are advised that a healthy baby cannot be guaranteed and thus it should be decided in advance that prenatal diagnosis is to be undertaken so that if the abnormal baby is identified, it can be aborted.³⁶

To be more specific, we talk of abnormal growth when the embryo grows with either more chromosomes or fewer chromosomes than the normal average which is 46 chromosomes. When there is an abnormal growth of the embryo and the very embryo still is transferred to the future mother, the embryo may fail to implant itself successfully in the mothers' womb given the fact that fertilization took place outside the womb. "To avoid the situation of abnormal growth within the womb of a mother after a transfer of the embryo, doctors do run some medical tests (genetic tests for example) of the embryo to detect some abnormalities"³⁷ and in case some abnormalities are found with the embryo, that embryo is considered "aneuploidy" and therefore cannot be transferred to a future mother.

Aneuploidy can cause early miscarriages and failed IVF cycles due to implantation failure and chromosomal birth defects. These abnormalities can be inherited or "de novo," meaning they are new to the person. A typical human cell has 46 chromosomes. When a chromosome is missing, a birth defect such as Turner Syndrome could develop. Down syndrome is a birth defect that occurs from a cell with an extra chromosome 21, also known as trisomy 21.³⁸

When those abnormalities are not taken into consideration before the embryo is transferred, the growth of the embryo will follow its course to the fetal stage and later

³⁶ Thomas W. Hilgers, M.D, *The Medical and Surgical Practice of Napro Technology*, 486.

³⁷ Thomas, 486.

³⁸ Chromosomal Abnormalities – Nashville Fertility Specialists (consulted on the 26th October at 9:26 Am)

on to a baby who will be born with either missing body parts, excess body parts, or even malformation of some body parts and this may affect psychologically and even financially the parents of the child born with physical/ psychological challenges. “Children who are gotten through in vitro fertilization may stand a higher chance of having brain and nerve related problems”³⁹. The abnormal growth that occurred during in vitro fertilization may lead to a baby being born with sicknesses such as *Down syndrome*, *Patau syndrome*, or Edward syndrome. Those sicknesses will impact the growth of the child and even in society; most of them may suffer rejection for the simple reason that they are born different.

2.2.2. Stillbirth

We talk of stillbirth when a baby dies in the mother’s womb after the mother has carried the pregnancy up to a certain number of weeks. According to the number of weeks after conception, the death of the fetus can be classified into three types of stillbirth. We, therefore, have an early stillbirth which occurs between the 20th to the 27th week after conception, a late stillbirth is when the fetus dies between the 28th to the 36th weeks after conception and lastly, we have the term stillbirth which occurs either at week 37 of pregnancy or even after that.⁴⁰ Stillbirth is something that affects parents in one way or the other and parents may try to know the causes of stillbirth.

The causes of stillbirth are multiple but we can at least mention the following: infections such as chlamydia, gonorrhoea malaria can affect the pregnancy of a woman can cause the death of the unborn child in the mother’s womb. In addition to that, the style of life one lives while being pregnant is very important. By lifestyle we talk of things like smoking, using hard substances that can affect in one way or the other the mother and the child. To that, we may add inappropriate clothing such as putting on

³⁹ Thomas W. Hilgers, M.D., *The Medical and Surgical Practice of Napro Technology*, 488.

⁴⁰ What is Stillbirth? | CDC

very tight clothes that might not facilitate proper blood circulation or even oxygen circulation on the side of the mother and that can result in losing the life of the unborn child.

The reason why IVF constitutes a risk factor of stillbirth is that during the IVF procedure, the embryo is constituted in a lab outside a woman's womb to be later on transferred in the uterus of a woman. In the process of transferring the embryo, if some errors occur, it may lead to a situation of stillbirth.

Stillbirth which is about the loss of an unborn baby is highly considered to be a moral danger in a situation in which parents use IVF as a remedy to the infertility problem that they experience. It is to say that stillbirth affects psychologically the parents of the unborn child and in a case whereby IVF was used, parents may blame themselves for the failure of the medical procedure. "Women's emotional responses to their bodies can be complex. Many mothers held themselves responsible for the baby's death, blaming their "bodies' failure." Because they did not have a kid, many felt ashamed and guilty about their post-pregnancy bodies."⁴¹ It is now clear to us that the practice of IFV may cause stillbirth and at the same time it is clear to us that those who experience stillbirth may perceive things differently to the extent of blaming themselves for what they go through.

Stillbirth can largely contribute to how parents perceive life. This can make them loose their self-esteem. Others reported increased or decreased fear of death after stillbirth. Many women perceived themselves as failures at the role of mother, wife, daughter, and daughter-in-law. Fathers' responses to stillbirth often corresponded with feelings of failure in the role of provider and protector.⁴²

In short, we are simply trying to portray the moral impact that may result from an IVF practice that led to one experiencing a stillbirth. In situations like that, a proper psycho-spiritual accompaniment is highly recommended for people affected by

⁴¹ Burden et al. BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth (2016) (16:9 DOI 10.1186/s12884-016-0800). 9

⁴² Burden et al. BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth (2016) (16:9 DOI 10.1186/s12884-016-0800).9.

stillbirth which resulted from IVF practices. The mental health of parents should not be downplayed in such situations for it can lead to serious psychological trauma and even in some cases physical trauma such as the fear of being pregnant anew.

2.2.3. Psychological dysfunction

The reason why people use IVF is that they face a great challenge in their quest of procreating and that challenge is infertility. Infertility creates a certain level of stress on those who suffer from it. For example, when a couple cannot conceive, they resolve in using IVF to resolve their infertility problem. In this specific situation, IVF appears as the solution to them. What the couple does not notice is that the same thing they consider to be the ultimate solution to their problems comes with a load of negative impacts in their life. This is to say that people who use IVF may have anxiety problems and also insecurity. Those using this artificial way of conceiving may start asking endless questions such as: will everything go on well during the pregnancy? What if it does? What do I/we do? Etc., and women who used IVF without being taken through the process of counseling may experience some insecurities leading to what we may call psychological dysfunction. A psychological dysfunction can be defined as the change of behaviors noticeable in a person who suffers from any type of trauma. Psychological dysfunction is nothing more than when someone is emotionally and spiritually affected by something that makes the person not think straight anymore and in some cases, the person may even doubt his/her purpose in life.

People who suffer from a psychological dysfunction caused by fecundation in vitro are somehow fearful for they consider themselves to be so different from others who conceive naturally and that may contribute to lowering their self-esteem. Also, because the one used in vitro fecundation, there might be a perpetual reminder in the

person's mind that the person is sick and this can lead to stigmatization of the one using IVF. False accusations such as, it's because one aborted many times and is now unable to naturally conceive may rise against the person using that method to conceive. In short, in vitro fertilization raises the problem of moral dysfunction and it is not accepted for it is a process during which many embryos will be killed. The chance for a single egg to grow or transplant is slim and thus there is a need for multiple egg transplants where the average survival of the embryo is 10-15%. When many embryos are transferred into the womb of a woman and all of them get implanted, the woman is forced to do a selective abortion which is morally wrong and may affect the psychological state of the woman if later on, she realizes that the act of aborting was morally wrong. In vitro fertilization violates matrimonial consent of man and woman accepting to come together as one and in a situation whereby IVF is used to help a couple get a child, there has to be a donation of ovum or sperm or both or embryo. It destroys the unity of marriage.

IVF, according to *Donum Vitae*, is incompatible with Christian living. Surrogate motherhood is an objective failure to meet the responsibility of conjugal love and conjugal fidelity in a surrogacy circumstance. The principle of responsible motherhood' has been breached. In vitro fertilization is an offense against the dignity and the right of the child to be conceived by the legal union of father and mother meaning through normal and natural sexual intercourse. Fertilization has to take place in the womb naturally without interference and the child should be given the full right to grow in the womb and be born naturally and raised naturally. A human person must be respected from the moment of fertilization. The human character of an embryo should not be denied at any level of its development. It must be given a chance to grow that we have a human being.

Conclusion

This chapter has allowed us to explore various infertility issues in males and females and also to assess the moral implications or dangers of In-Vitro fertilization as a remedy to infertility. In the above chapter, we have come to discover that infertility causes are multiple and can be physical or even psycho-spiritual. However, people who suffer from it tend to run into scientific solutions which we took time to explore and the conclusion we have come to is that artificial ways of fertilization such as in vitro fertilization causes more harm to the infertile couples than we thought. IVF can stillbirth etc.

CHAPTER III

THE CHURCH MORAL TEACHING ON TREATMENT OF INFERTILITY AND IVF

Introduction

As we know by now, one of the main goals of the church is treating the human person as a special being lies in the dignity that we human beings have. That dignity is simply based on the fact that we have been created in the “image and likeness of God” and through that, we are called to carry on God’s work of creation through procreation. However, we need to acknowledge that the mission or act of procreation is not without challenges and one of its biggest if not its biggest challenge is infertility. Since time immemorial, infertility has been a challenge encountered by many couples in their mission of procreating. Based on that challenge, couples always tried looking for solutions toward infertility and it is for that reason that in this chapter, we propose to take you through the church’s moral teachings on the treatment of infertility.

3.1. Scriptural Foundation for Infertility Treatment

Infertility treatment is not only physical for it involves the psycho-spiritual aspect of those affected by infertility and for the Church, but it is also very clear that “although conception may never be possible, it is helpful to invite those who are unable to conceive to develop an intercessory prayer relationship with others who have had similar circumstances”⁴³ and that is what we are going to explore in the following lines by looking at concrete cases of infertility in the Bible.

⁴³ The pope John Centre, Reproductive Technologies, Marriage and the Church, (The pope John XXIII medical-moral research and education centre Braintree, Massachusetts, September 1, 1988), 155.

3.1.1. The Old Testament.

In the Old Testament, we have quite a several people who suffered from infertility, and given that there was no modern science by then, all couples who suffered from infertility cried to God at some point and God heard their prayers and took away the yoke from their heads. Among the multitude of examples found in the bible of infertile couples, we have: in the first place the example of Abraham and Sarah. In Genesis 18:11, we are told that this very couple was advanced in age and could not conceive anymore but upon crying to God requesting for a child, God heard their supplication and promises them a child (Genesis 17: 15-21). Because of that promise, Abraham and Sarah had faith in God (Genesis 18: 9-15), and God, at last, gave them Isaac as a child. Secondly, we have the example of Isaac himself who got married to Rebekah who unfortunately was barren. Given that his wife could not bear him a child, we are told that Isaac pleaded with God who finally gave to Isaac and his wife twins (Genesis 25: 21-22). The third example of infertility in the Old Testament can be found in the book of Judges Chapter 13 where we are told of the story of Manoah and his wife who could not conceive because his wife was barren. Because of their faith, God sent an angel to tell Manoah's wife that she will conceive. Because they believed in God, they got a son by the name of Samson.

In conclusion what can be said about situations of infertility in the Old Testament is that in all the cases, we see God's intervention in the lives of different couples to lift the burden of infertility on them. This simply means that life comes from God and He is the one that gifts us with children. In all cases where couples were infertile, prayer is the tool that they all used as a solution to their problem. In this modern life where human beings are so desperate for quick solutions, we often ignore

the power of prayer and quickly run into science but the stories in the Old Testament tell us that faith can help many people overcome infertility.

3.1.2. The New Testament

In the New Testament, when talking of infertility, the first example that comes to our mind is the example of Elisabeth and Zechariah who were both advanced in age and barren. Only the age factor alone constitutes the major reason why the couple could not get a child but again as what happened in the Old Testament, Elizabeth and Zechariah prayed to God who sent an angel to them to let them know that they would be able to conceive a child who is John the Baptist (Luke 1). Again in this scenario, we can notice that God is as well the real solution to whoever suffers from infertility, and what we need to do is to have faith in Him and trust Him. Fertility is God's gift to humanity and God does not show partiality or favouritism to human beings. God does not give because we deserve it, He gives out of love. Given that God Himself intervened in people's lives to grant them the blessings of conception, we may ask ourselves the following question: if God answered those prayers, will he not answer yours too? (Acts 10: 34)

3.1.3. The Church Fathers

Infertility in the catholic Church has since time immemorial been a fundamental challenge that theologians and church fathers have tried to find a solution given the fact that most of the time, infertile couples run to the church seeking help and support. In the same perspective, church fathers in one way or the other conquer that marital though should be open to life; couples should bear in mind that the same act may not lead to procreation and that is a fact. For Saint Thomas Aquinas, "I should not treat my wife as an electrode. She herself is what I should cherish, experiencing the pleasure of

that cherishing. What she and I enjoy in both procreative and unitary aspects of our marital friendship, is delightful. It is delightful to rest in hope of new life.”⁴⁴ What Saint Thomas is clarifying here is that in case a couple is not able to conceive, this couple should cherish each other in love and that may help them deal with situation of infertility. The couple has to grow together in love and accept that the gift of procreation was not given to them.

3.1.4. The Magisterium of the Church

Since time immemorial has always stood for what is right within the Catholic Church and when it comes to things hindering the dignity of the human person, the magisterium remains firm in its position which is that every human person shares the same dignity because they were created by God. Pope Benedict the XVI confirms that when he said:

The Church is concerned about the suffering of infertile couples; she cares about them, and it is for this reason that medical research is encouraged. Science, on the other hand, isn't always capable of responding positively to the aspirations of a large number of couples. As a result, I'd like to remind partners who are experiencing infertility.... As a result, whenever science comes up empty-handed, the solution that sheds light comes from Christ.⁴⁵

That is to say, that though science offers to humanity some ways of dealing with medical issues, we should not forget about faith because through faith we can as well obtain graces from God. What the pope means here is that the treatment of infertile couples should respect all the ethical implications which should help see the human person as a person rather than an object.

⁴⁴ Charles J. Chaput, *Humanae Vitae 50 years Later: Embracing God's Vision for Marriage, Love and Life*, (Washington DC: Catholic University of America press, 2009), 87.

⁴⁵ BENEDICT XVI To participants in the General Assembly of the Pontifical Academy for Life (February 25, 2012) | (vatican.va), (consulted on the 11th January 2022 at 10:20pm).

In addition to how the magisterium looks at infertility treatment, Pope Benedict XVI wrote the following,

The couple's legitimate aspirations to parenthood who experience a condition of Infertility, therefore, requires the assistance of science to develop a solution that truly respects their dignity as individuals and couples. In the face of the infatuation with artificial fertilization technology, the humility, accuracy, and depth with which you research these issues are thought superseded by some of your peers and deserve encouragement and support.⁴⁶

This is to say that though we need to remain open to science for infertility treatment, we should as well as Church remind scientists to respect human life in all its spheres. However, when all possibilities of treating infertility have been explored the church through magisterial teaching says the following,

According to the Gospel message, the fact of not being able to conceive is not something bad. The Gospel suggests that couples who after exploring various solution to their infertility and still cannot conceive should identify themselves to Jesus bearing His cross. The same Gospel recommends adoption of children which is as well an act of love. (CCC 2379)

Regarding all that, what can we draw as lessons from papal documents to help people understand all the implications of infertility treatments within the church?

3.1.5. Papal Documents

When it comes to how the Church sees the different ways of treating infertility that has evolved throughout the year, it is important to notice that “the same does not encourage treatments that violate the human person in its dignity. The church simply advocates for couples freedom to decide about having children or not having them. (Familiaris Consortio, 30). It is clear enough that human dignity should not, in any case, be compromised, and at the same time, the church is inviting all of us not to look down upon people who may not be able to partake in God's creation ministry through procreation. In the same line, “*Donum Vitae* reaffirmed an obligation that human life

⁴⁶ BENEDICT XVI To participants in the General Assembly of the Pontifical Academy for Life (February 25, 2012) | (vatican.va), (consulted on the 11th January 2022 at 10:20pm).

should be preserved no matter the technique used to conceive. It is taught in the same document that techniques that can help achieve pregnancy through a marital act may be considered moral but in case those techniques replace the conjugal, they are seen as immoral.”⁴⁷ It is explicitly clear that papal documents express the same view of the church which is that human life and dignity should be respected and we should avoid using artificial ways of creating life.

3.2. The Church Moral Teaching on IVF

Given the fact that IVF as we now know is an artificial way of helping someone conceive and the methods used are not ethical for the simple fact that there is no respect of the human life in the practice of IVF, the church stands firm in its faith according to which we human being has been molded God and that makes us all share the same human dignity. In our task to share with you the church’s moral teaching on IVF, we will explore a few aspects such as the scriptural point of view on IVF, the pastoral implications of IVF, we will analyze IVF as violating human life and as well, we will look at the practice of IVF inside and outside marriage.

3.2.1 Scriptural View of IVF

Given the fact that in vitro fertilization is an artificial and non-ethical way of assisting someone to procreate, the church for the above-mentioned reason does not approve of the practice of IVF for its members and humanity in general because it violates the human dignity in many ways. Firstly, the Church holds that, “in virtue of the nature of marriage and of the intimate bond between its ends, the church teaches about the unity between man and woman that no one can break.”⁴⁸ Following the above

⁴⁷ Begotten Not Made: A Catholic View of Reproductive Technology | USCCB, (consulted on 20th January 2022 at 10:50 am).

⁴⁸ Joseph Card. RATZINGER *Donum Vitae: the Gift of Life, the Instruction on Respect for Human Life in its Origin and on Dignity of Procreation*, (February 22 1987) 4.

quotation, we can clearly state that the church advocates for procreation in the natural way as we were mandated by God himself. In the same logic, canon 1061 states the following “morally speaking, procreation that is triggered by a third party without a sexual act is not acceptable.” In vitro does violate the dignity of the human person by simply throwing away the fertilized eggs obtained in the process of treating infertility; this is to say that “in the usual practice of in vitro fertilization, not all of the embryos are transferred to the woman’s body; some are destroyed. The church condemns anything that is anti-life.”⁴⁹ Life should be respected for there is no lesser or super-being. We all as human beings share the same dignity.

3.2.2. Pastoral Implications of IVF

Human life is ought to be respected because of its sacredness. In the pastoral fields, pastors or pastoral agents should promote the respect of human life from conception till death. At the same time, pastoral agents should not deny infertile couples to explore moral ways of responding to their mission of procreation through conception, and as Pope John Paul II puts it, “couples that suffer of infertility should be helped with all acceptable treatments available so as to help them conceive naturally.”⁵⁰

In addition to that, in vitro fertilization creates more pastoral challenges for us in our daily life. Talking of pastoral challenges linked to IVF, the fact that IVF goes through a process of fertilizing many eggs resulting in having many embryos constitutes a fundamental problem to humanity for the simple reason that there are a certain number of embryos that will be disposed of after the required embryo is selected and transferred into the woman’s womb. Also, given that the IVF procedure can financially and physically drain a couple, pastoral agents should provide a special

⁴⁹ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Instruction on the Respect for Human Life in its origin and on the Dignity of Precreation: replies to certain questions of the day*, (Nairobi: Saint Paul Publications-Africa), 18.

⁵⁰ William E. May, *Catholic Bioethics and the Gift of Human Life*, 88.

accompaniment to infertile couples to let them know that artificial ways of inducing reproduction do not solve the problem of infertility; it rather creates new problems that require more attention. Pastorally speaking, in vitro fertilization should be discouraged because it involves the killing of embryos which violates the right to life, and also according to *Donum Vitae*, IVF violates the unity of marriage and the dignity of procreation. “With this in mind, it is helpful to point out that, to bear a child, is a gift rather than an absolute right.”⁵¹ However, since children are God-given gifts, they have the right to life and no one should tamper with that right which begins from conception till death.

3.2.3. IVF and Violation of Human Life.

In vitro fertilization violates human life because the act itself is an act of reproduction rather than procreation. The difference between the two is that through procreation children are conceived naturally through marital/ conjugal act yet in the reproductive act conception is made possible through science. Through procreation no egg is wasted yet through reproduction, a lot of eggs have to be fertilized and the good one transferred to the woman’s womb. “When it comes to being in and through the marital embrace, and how the generation of human life in and through the marital act is an act of procreation, not reproduction, new human life is rightly acknowledged in God's loving purpose for human existence.”⁵² In vitro fertilization, as we know by now is an act of reproduction rather than an act of procreation. Procreation uses artificial ways of inducing child conception and the artificial ways used to achieve that do not respect the human life in its totality reason why “in vitro fertilization is inherently

⁵¹ The pope John Center, *Reproductive Technologies, Marriage and the Church*, 155.

⁵²William E. May, *Catholic Bioethics and the Gift of Human Life*, 67.

wicked, namely, that this way of generating human life fails to respect the dignity of the child by treating it as a product.”⁵³ Life is ought to be generated naturally so as not to violate the human person in His humanity because we all have the right to life and no embryo should be disposed of as it is being done through in vitro fertilization.

3.2.4. IVF inside and outside marriage

In vitro fertilization, as we know now is a procedure that the church considers to be non-ethical for it violates in many ways human life. When IVF is practiced be it by a couple or by an individual (woman) seeking to have a child the following things are violated. Firstly, we have to know that: between the unitive and procreative implications of the marital act, there is an unbreakable bond, willed by God and illegal for a man to sever on his own initiative...from a moral standpoint, procreation loses its proper completeness when it is not desired as the result of a marital act.⁵⁴

Procreation is something that should happen naturally so when it is tampered with by man for one or the other reason, it is not good. Adding to that, when procreation takes place, outside marriage every act does not respect what God Himself willed for us which is the fact of man and woman coming together to form one body and flesh. Secondly, “it is not moral for couples to conceive outside their matrimonial covenant which is a covenant that cannot be broken. Conception should not only seen as a result of a physical union but spiritual as well.”⁵⁵ Procreation is for married couples but because some couples face the challenge of being infertile, modern science came up with a “solution” to help people conceive. What science is proposing to us is not the ideal for it violates the unity of man and woman. Thirdly, “every human being

⁵³ The pope John Center, *Reproductive Technologies, Marriage and the Church*, 119.

⁵⁴ William E. May, *Catholic Bioethics and the Gift of Human Life*, 38.

⁵⁵William E. May, *Catholic Bioethics and the Gift of Human Life*, 38.

should not be regarded and treated like a product.”⁵⁶ A child is a God-given gift that we should be grateful for but in case we do not get one because of medical reasons or physical reasons, we should still learn to accept that rather than using immoral procedures to get a child at whatever cost. The means used for procreation matter a lot so we should avoid replacing the natural with the artificial,

Reason why in vitro fertilization is not accepted for it abrogates couples rights to conjugal love with the aim of generating life. However, from a moral standpoint, procreation loses its proper perfection when it is not desired as a result of the conjugal act, that is, the unique act of the spouse's union.⁵⁷

Children should be seen as a gift of God and should be gotten through a natural way as ordered by God meaning through procreation, not a reproduction. Children should result in short of an act of love, an act through which husband and wife become one.

Conclusion

The desire of infertile couples to have children leads them to venture into different practices which in some ways violates human's dignity. In the above chapter three, our work consisted in exploring some of the moral teachings concerning infertility and in vitro fertilization based on scripture, magisterium, papal documents etc. in fact, it is important that in the process of venturing into new solutions of infertility treatment we do not lose focus on the dignity of the human person created in the image and likeness of God.

⁵⁶ William E. May, *Catholic Bioethics and the Gift of Human Life*, 38.

⁵⁷ The pope John Center, *Reproductive Technologies, Marriage and the Church*, 110.

CHAPTER IV

MORAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND TREATMENT OF NAPRO TECHNOLOGY

Introduction

In this last chapter of our work, we will simply take you through some moral recommendations when it comes to infertility treatment. Mostly, we will explore more a new technology used in treating infertility and that very technology is nothing else than Napro Technology. Also in this chapter, we will be sharing with you the reason why Napro Technology should be used rather than IVF when it comes to infertility treatment.

4.1. The science of Napro Technology

Napro Technology as we know by now is simply a new science that aims at restoring the fertility cycle of both men and women. It is a science for the simple reason that it tries to identify the root cause of infertility and after identifying a certain root cause of infertility, Napro Technology offers a variety of solutions to tackle the problem of infertility.

In many years, people who use Napro Technology have come to be more and more optimistic as far as the respect of human dignity and the success rate is concerned. Napro Technology is according to the church a new venture that couples who face fertility challenges should venture into because “it is common-sense science.” Many people because of being impatient do not at all believe in Napro Technology as a new science for the simple fact that it is a science that works when collaboration between doctors and patients exists or else it is a pain taken effort science that requires patience and endurance. In fact, “Napro Technology, is a new women's health science that involves state-of-the-art surgical techniques, hormone strategies, and ultrasound

procedures..... It produces revolutionary answers to a woman's reproductive health and we will never be the same again.⁵⁸

In short, Napro Technology is a science that looks at the human person holistically and treats him/her in the same way. It is a new science not really known to many people and mostly not known to Christian couples who face challenges of conception. In a lay's man's language, we would simply say that Napro Technology is the new science in town.

4.2. Possible treatment of infertility

Infertility is not an illness that cannot be treated, it is something that science can help treat but its treatment should be done while respecting human dignity and that is the main concern of the church. According to the document the *dignity of the human person*, “the church advises that there are three major elements to be considered when infertility is being treated in the human person. The first one is the right to life of all human persons. By this, the church simply condemns the act of creating many embryos in laboratories to select the “desired one” and since other embryos are not needed, they are disposed of. For the church, human life starts from day one of conception and no one has the right to end it a pert from the creator Himself. The second element concerns the unity of marriage which is one of the fundamental ends or goods of marriage. Husband and wife have the full right to become a parent with the partner one are married to. This is to encourage the natural union between man and woman who ought to continue God's work which is to multiply and fill the earth. Thirdly conception should happen naturally through husband and wife coming together through the sexual act formed by the very act of one and unique body.” (Dignitatis humanae 12).

⁵⁸ Thomas W.Hilgers, MD., *The Napro Technology Revolution: Unleashing the Power in a Woman's Cycle*, 397

Conception should naturally take place and no one has the right to temper with the reproduction system of the human person to trigger the procreation process.

What the church tried to portray through the above three points is that when man and woman come together to form one body and mind, they celebrate their union through an act of consummation which is a sexual act that concretizes their bond. For those reasons, the church recommends that all methods of infertility treatment should not prevent a husband and a wife to get sexually intimate to attain a natural conception. The church by advocating the respect of human dignity does not ignore the suffering that infertile people go through and the church desires for couples to have children through this desire cannot be justified by conceiving children artificially which does not respect the human person as someone created in the image and likeness of God. In that perspective, the church considers the following methods of conception to somehow be morally acceptable:

Treatment of hormones responsible for the conception, surgery to repair certain organs such as the uterus, and finally unblocking the fallopian tubes are in some cases fix them if they have been damaged in one way or the other. If the above treatments are successful and can allow the couple to naturally have their child which is the result of a united love, then there is no problem. In case all the above treatments do not help in the treatment of infertility, the Church pieces of advice for the couple experiencing conception problem is to adopt or else venture into a discovery which is proven to have good results for couples suffering infertility challenges. The new venture we are talking about is Napro Technology.⁵⁹

Napro Technology is a new way of addressing the infertility problem by looking into the reproductive system of the human person to find out the issue behind infertility. The technology is about finding the underlining conditions in women and men's reproductive systems and addressing them through a series of treatments such as hormonal treatment, surgery, etc. Napro Technology makes use of the menstrual cycle of women for example to distinguish the fertile days and also discover some

⁵⁹ Thomas W. Hilgers, MD., *The Napro Technology Revolution: Unleashing the Power in a Woman's Cycle*, 1-436.

irregularities linked to fertility. Napro Technology is morally good and acceptable for it does not in any way violate the dignity of the human being and does not abrogate the unitive aspect of matrimony through a sexual encounter.

4.3. Goals of Napro Technology

Defined as a new science addressing mainly the challenges encountered by couples when it comes to fertility, Napro Technology as we all know is scientifically defined as

A medical science that has the education of the patients its foundation integrated with good medical practice. Specifically, it educates women in the objective parameters of their menstrual and fertility cycles in such a way that they can develop a partnership with the properly-trained physician.⁶⁰

In short, Napro Technology addresses issues concerning directly the sexual health of the human person. By sexual health, we are here talking about the reproductive system of the human person. Men and women at times face challenges regarding their reproductivity thus we now have Napro Technology that helps curb that challenge. Napro Technology has a certain number of goals that we are going to explore. Napro Technology works towards achieving five specific goals.

Firstly, Napro Technology “works towards assessing the underlying causes of the reproductive abnormality”⁶¹. By mentioning the above points, we simply point out that Napro Technology requires patients who suffer from infertility to undergo a few medical and even psychological tests to point out the root causes of infertility in an individual. After discovering the underlying causes of infertility, Napro Technology moves now to address those causes to allow couples to naturally conceive without what we may call a third-party element.

⁶⁰ Thomas W. Hilgers, MD., *The Napro Technology Revolution: Unleashing the Power in a Woman's Cycle*, 26.

⁶¹ Thomas W. Hilgers, M.D., *The Medical and Surgical Practice of Napro Technology*, 515

Secondly, Napro Technology “allows for the treatment of the underlying causes”⁶². The main reason for pointing out the causes of infertility affecting the human person is to address them by treating what affects one’s reproductive system not allowing one to therefore be fertile and conceive naturally. It is good for us to note here that all treatment proposed by Napro Technology is ethical and morally acceptable for it violates in any case the dignity of the human person.

Thirdly, Napro Technology “assists the couple in achieving pregnancy while maintaining the natural acts of procreation”⁶³. This third goal of Napro Technology is to empower any couple suffering from infertility challenge to be able after a period of follow-up to be able to naturally have children without making use of some artificial ways of reproduction such as IVF or GIFT.

In the addition to the above-mentioned goals, we must point out that “If the treatment program is unsuccessful, research into the unknown causes is undertaken”⁶⁴. This is one of the advantages of Napro Technology for the simple fact that it always looks into what may be the real cause of infertility in one’s life. As we all know, infertility may be caused by a physical challenge and even a psycho-spiritual one that is why Napro technology does not only focus on one area when it comes to identifying the root cause of infertility.

The fifth and last goal of Napro technology is that “it offers support to couples and helps them consider adoption as the last solution if the couples really want to raise a child.”⁶⁵. As for artificial reproductive procedures which have nothing to offer after many attempts and failures to help a couple conceive, Napro Technology has the advantage of providing psycho-spiritual support to couples who unfortunately cannot

⁶²Thomas W. Hilgers, M.D, *The Medical and Surgical Practice of Napro Technology*, 515.

⁶³Thomas, 515.

⁶⁴Thomas, 515.

⁶⁵Thomas, 515-516.

conceive at all. The support given to couples allows them to accept their situation of being infertile but at the same time it helps the couple venture into a new perspective which is adoption and in case a couple resolves to adoption, parenting skills are offered to the couple to enable them to raise efficiently the adopted child.

4.4. Success Rate of Napro Technology

Napro Technology as we already know is an ethical way of tackling infertility-related challenges. Napro Technology addresses the above-mentioned challenge naturally without violating the dignity of the human person and compared to the artificial ways of conception.

Napro Technology allows for therapeutic approaches to be taken that are different from the ones currently in use. Because of this, it can solve many problems that we have not been able to solve in the past! These treatments hold great promise, and they are all used within respect for a woman's health and the health of a woman's baby.⁶⁶

Napro technology has a considerable success rate that makes it the first and ultimate option when it comes to treating infertility. According to Thomas Hilger, the success rate of Napro Technology treatment is more considerable than the success rate of In-vitro Fertilization.

Napro Pechnology reveals success rates that, in many cases, exceed those of contemporary obstetrics, gynecology, and reproductive medicine..... With Napro Technology approaches to the pregnant woman, we have been able to reduce the preterm birth rate from twelve percent down to seven percent.⁶⁷ In a population of 1045 patients who had some related infertility challenges and have been treated through Napro Technology, studies show that 60% of those who were treated was able to naturally conceive after 24months of treatment and 70% after 36 months of treatment.⁶⁸

These success rates concerned all those who previously had illnesses such as endometriosis, ovarian-related illnesses, and even sexually transmitted diseases.

⁶⁶ Thomas W.Hilgers, MD., *The Napro Technology Revolution: Unleashing the Power in a Woman's Cycle*, 26.

⁶⁷ Thomas, 13.

⁶⁸ Thomas, 680.

According to the above-mentioned success rate, we have a cumulative success rate of around 80% and this shows the effectiveness of Napro Technology treatment of patients who experience infertility-related problems.

This study population had an average age of 30.4 years and an average length of time trying to achieve a pregnancy of 3.42 years. Many of them had previous infertility testing before being seen and many of them also had previous unsuccessful infertility treatment.⁶⁹

In general, studies show that people who use Napro Technology to treat infertility-related problems are most likely to achieve their goal which is pregnancy rather than those who use artificial ways of conception. The most challenging thing about Napro Technology is that it requires patience and focus. It is a process that takes long before one may get effective results. The main element that makes of Napro Technology an effective treatment is that it identifies the main causes of infertility of the one affected by infertility and after identifying those problems, Napro Technology takes upon itself the task in case one cannot conceive after treatment, Napro Technology leaves a room for adaption.

4.5. Pastoral Recommendations

There are indeed many people who suffer from infertility related problems and most of the time, couples find themselves torn between realities such as living with the burden of not having their child or the moral restraint that does not allow them to make use of certain scientific methods for conceiving. From the look of all that, we have come to know that there is a lot to be done to accompany couples suffering from infertility. In this process, we recommend all couples who have infertility related problems to get in touch with doctors, nurses who are familiar with the practices of Napro Technology for the fact that the solution to their problem may be found in the

⁶⁹Thomas W.Hilgers, MD., *The Napro Technology Revolution: Unleashing the Power in a Woman's Cycle*, 249.

new practices of the reproductive healthcare of both men and women. As we know by now, NaPro technology does not only offer possibilities for one who suffers from infertility to be treated physically, it also offers the possibility of looking into the psycho-spiritual state of the person. In some situations, we may find through Napro Technology that one's cause of infertility is not necessarily physical but spiritual or psychological like stress for example.

As pastoral agents, our aim through this study is to create more exposure to both patients and medical practitioners on the existence of science that tackles the problem of infertility in a human way acceptable and ethical. "Physicians must not be forced to abandon their ethical and moral principles. In addition to the above, patients must be protected. They have a right to receive medical evaluation and treatment that also is within the context of their own moral and religious beliefs."⁷⁰ This comes a new way of approaching procreation. Since time immemorial, the catholic church has always tried its best to protect and preserve the dignity of the human person as a whole and regarding the task of procreation, the church has always taught its members to keep away from practices that do not respect the human life in a whole hence the church forbids its members to use artificial ways of conceiving. "It is important that the whole body of clinical evidence be taken into consideration"⁷¹, not only some parts of it. Humanly speaking, we are made of body and soul, and the way we treat one can affect the other either positively or negatively. In a more specific way, in a case of infertility, the focus should not only be about getting a baby; the focus should also be about how getting a baby can affect the couple looking for a baby. Pope Paul VI understood that when he said in *Humanæ Vitæ* that "Fecundity is more than a biological process, an impersonal "it" regarding the natural world that is pitted against the human subject; it is

⁷⁰ Thomas W. Hilgers, MD., *The Napro Technology Revolution: Unleashing the Power in a Woman's Cycle*, 393.

⁷¹ Thomas, 395.

something that is related to human personhood and participates in the sanctity of human life.”⁷²

After saying that there is still the challenge on how to help couples who find themselves in a situation of not being able to have a child biologically; what the Church can do is to pray for those couples, for prayer will strengthen their faith in God and therefore they will accept the situation in which they are. Another thing that the Church can do for those couples is counseling, for counseling will help the infertile couple face the reality of their life and therefore accept the fact that when it comes to procreating they are different from others and that is not a curse. Adding to that is that each parish should be able to establish support groups at the parish level whereby people who face infertility-related challenges would come together to share their experiences and feelings about the very matter. Speaking out will help different couples move on with life and therefore be fruitful in other aspects of life such as being good leaders etc.

4.6. Practice of Virtue

One of the main moral dangers of IVF is that it is against the dignity of the human person. Human life is a gift from God that needs to be preciously preserved. Since the use of IVF does not focus on that but rather focuses on the results while ignoring the means used, many embryos are disposed of / killed in the practice of IVF and that goes contrary to the preservation of life. Why should we “create” human beings in laboratories and then choose the ones we want to and kill others? Because of the selectiveness of the embryo and disposal of the unwanted embryos, IVF is against the preservation of human life. Following the commandment “thy shall not kill,” disposing of the embryos obtained through an in vitro fertilization is morally wrong and should be condemned. The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us that:

⁷² WILLIAM E. MAY, *Sex, Love and Procreation*, (USA: Franciscan Herald Press, august 30, 1979), 35.

A child is not something owed to one but is a gift. The "supreme gift of marriage" is a human person. A child may not be considered a piece of property, an idea to which an alleged "right to a child" would lead. In this area, only the child possesses genuine rights: the right "to be the fruit of the specific act of the conjugal love of his parents," and "the right to be respected as a person from the moment of his conception. (CCC 2378)

As we know, virtue is what can be defined as a moral and ethical way of doing things. Virtues are what helps us want to do good and avoid evil and in this case concerning how to deal with human infertility, the church advocates the respect of the human person and its dignity in this modern world where advanced science is offering to us new ways of tackling infertility related problems which in most of the case, those scientific solutions violate the human person in its whole. The Church has a clear stand when it comes to artificial methods of facilitating conception. For the church, anything that violates the dignity of the human person is immoral and unethical. For that reason, the virtue that the church tries to share with its members is the respect of human life. The church states clearly in the catechism of the catholic church that: "Research aimed at reducing human sterility is to be encouraged, on condition that it is placed "at the service of the human person, of his inalienable rights, and his true and integral good according to the design and will of God." It is clear through this statement that the church is not against science as long as it takes into consideration the respect of human dignity. As human beings, we have been created in the image and likeness of God as it is written in Genesis (Gen 5: 1-2).

In addition to that, the church states in number 2376 of the catechism of the Catholic Church that "any technique that does not bring a couple together through a matrimonial act is immoral. Artificial techniques violates the right to life of the unborn child. By using artificial ways of conceiving, couples the right for couples to parenthood is violated for the reason that the child they will obtain will not be through

the natural way.” Through this statement, it is clear that the church distances itself from the above-mentioned practices that she judges to be immoral for the simple reason that those practices do not offer a real solution to the real problem. What those practices offer is a temporary solution which unfortunately seems to have more negative effects on those making use of artificial ways of procreating such as in-vitro fertilization. The church goes further to say that “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..... 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.” (CCC 2378) Human life is to be respected for there is no one who is less human or more human and for that reason, the ways of bringing one to life should be noble, ways that respect human dignity. At the same time, even though couples have the right to have children it is good to bear in mind as well that “a child is not something owed to one, but is a gift. The "supreme gift of marriage" is a human person. A child may not be considered a piece of property, an idea to which an alleged "right to a child" would lead. In this area, only the child possesses genuine rights: the right "to be the fruit of the specific act of the conjugal love of his parents," and "the right to be respected as a person from the moment of his conception.” (CCC 2378)

Conclusion

Morally speaking, as people who have been created in God's image, we are called to reflect that image and likeness by respect the human dignity and is what we all need to do even when it comes to participating in God's creative ministry through procreation. First of all, to be able to procreate is a God given tasks task that we ought to accomplish with dignity. If in the process of wanting to procreate we find ourselves stuck because of one thing or the other, let us not forget about the power of prayer but also let us make use of our God given talents to help people who cannot procreate and this where Napro Technology comes in as a morally and ethically accepted science that deals with infertility. Despite that if one cannot still conceive, one is invited to adopt or even enjoy the other fruits or goods of marriage for example, the unitive and inseparable principle of marriage.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

This study has enabled us to make important discoveries about IVF and Napro Technology and more specially, this study has open our eyes when it comes to considering the ethical and moral implications of IVF and Napro Technology as recommended treatment of infertility. Researching and writing about IVF and Napro Technology made us discover the causes and consequences of infertility in both men and women. Not only about that, because we have come to explore different ways of treating infertility and infertility related problems. In this modern world, many people suffering from infertility tend to look into easy and artificial solutions given to them (in vitro fertilization, artificial insemination etc.) without considering much the negative side effects those so called solutions could have in the life of a couple suffering from infertility. In our paper, we have come to know that IVF is morally wrong for the simple fact that it violates the respect of the human person in many ways, be it physically, spiritually and even psychologically. From our findings, we discovered that IVF is not what we could consider as solution to treat infertility, it is rather a temporary treatment given the fact that after one has gone through it to get a child, the same procedure has be used again for the second child if need be.

As an effective and long lasting solution to treat infertility, we propose Napro Technology instead which is a new science that assesses the root causes of infertility in men and women and therefore after finding those, Napro Technology proposes natural or ethical ways of addressing the problem and that can be done through surgery, taking of hormonal pills, counselling etc. It is to say that Napro Technology considers the human person as someone who has been created in “the image and likeness of God” which means that his/her dignity needs to be respected and kept.

In addition to that, it is good and important to notice that our work comes as a reminder to Christians that when it comes to infertility treatment, the church our mother suggests to us ethical ways of dealing with the problem. It is true that many people do suffer from infertility and unfortunately they are not supported by the church and this paper comes to remind all those in situation of infertility that everything is not yet lost for Napro Technology offers new ways of tackling the problem which include psycho-spiritual counselling and in case all possibilities have been explored and solutions not found, the church suggests that adoption can be considered. However, for couples who are not open to adopt, the church accompany them to understand that a child is a gift of God and that conception is not the only good of marriage for two people can still share love and live it without conceiving.

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