

***Mercy for All,  
Including Embryos***

**Pastoral Letter of  
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## 1. Introduction: Embryos, the First Pilgrims to Knock at Our Door

I write this Letter as part of the Lent core in the context of the Jubilee Year of Mercy and in view of the Day for Life which will take place, God willing, in April this year. Pope Francis invites us to place our heart in the human misery to help it. God, with His Grace, always precedes us and gives us the capability to love, to put our hands at His service and at the service of our brethren with concrete works: the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. Among the latter I would like to underline, now, the one that says: *to give shelter to the pilgrim*. The first image that comes to mind when we think about this particular work of mercy is probably of the refugees and migrants, whom we must *urgently embrace with love, steadfastness and generosity*, according to the established criteria by which the Word of God presents it in the Social Doctrine of the Church.

*Gulags of laboratories and freezing camps: forgotten existential peripheries*

But, on the other hand, who is thinking about the millions of embryos in the whole world brought to existence in *gulags of laboratories* and piled up in *freezing camps* for whom the doors of their families and society have been closed?

*The agar plates, where fertilization occurs, and the liquid nitrogen tanks, where embryos are confined, are also existential peripheries, - as explained by Pope Francis<sup>1</sup> - forgotten by all.*

*The embryos also deserve mercy, as they are the first defenseless pilgrims whose personal and inalienable dignity claims to be brought to life as a result of the conjugal embrace. Thus, the work of mercy “give shelter to the pilgrim” is also applicable here. This shelter is but their mother’s womb<sup>2</sup>. As a matter of fact, embryos are the new Lazarus that beg at the door of the rich Epulon, blinded by his power and wealth. For that very reason, Pope Francis, in his Message for Lent 2016, states that the blindness that prevents us from acknowledging one’s own mistakes and sins “is often accompanied by the proud illusion of our own omnipotence, which reflects in a sinister way the diabolical “you will be like God” (Gen 3:5) which is the root of all sin. This illusion can likewise take social and political forms, as shown by the totalitarian systems of the twentieth century, and, in our own day, by the ideologies of monopolizing thought and technoscience, which would make God irrelevant and reduce man to raw material to be exploited. This illusion can also be seen in the sinful structures linked to a model of false development based on the idolatry of money” (Pope Francis, Message for Lent 2016).*

The Pope, in this same message, explains that Lazarus “is a figure of Christ, who through the poor pleads for our conversion. As such, he represents the possibility of conversion which God offers us and which we may well fail to see”. Thus, also the embryos that are abandoned to their fate are the figure of Christ who invites us to conversion, to ask he whom we have offended for forgiveness and, lastly, it is an invitation to humbly approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation so that God might forgive all our sins, also those against life.

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<sup>1</sup> POPE FRANCIS: “In fidelity to the Gospel, and in response to the urgent needs of the present time, we are called to reach out to those who find themselves in the existential peripheries of our societies and to show particular solidarity with the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters: the poor, the disabled, the unborn and the sick, migrants and refugees, the elderly and the young who lack employment” (*Message to Cardinal Kurt Koch on the Occasion of the 10<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the World Council of Churches, October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013*).

<sup>2</sup> CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH: “It has also been proposed, solely in order to allow human beings to be born who are otherwise condemned to destruction, that there could be a form of “prenatal adoption”. This proposal, praiseworthy with regard to the intention of respecting and defending human life, presents however various problems not dissimilar to those mentioned above (...). All things considered, it needs to be recognized that the thousands of abandoned embryos represent *a situation of injustice which in fact cannot be resolved*. Therefore John Paul II made an “appeal to the conscience of the world’s scientific authorities and in particular to doctors, that the production of human embryos be halted, taking into account that there seems to be no morally licit solution regarding the human destiny of the thousands and thousands of ‘frozen’ embryos which are and remain the subjects of essential rights and should therefore be protected by law as human persons” (*Instruction Dignitas personae on Certain Bioethical Questions, n. 19, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008*).

While writing these words I want to remind all of you that, as usual, my considerations are made with all due respect to all people, proposing the Truth, of which the Catholic Church is its witness, and from mercy and love. As we all know, only God can judge the subjective responsibility of the committed immoral actions.

## **2. A New Attack Against Human Life**

Last February 2<sup>nd</sup>, some Spanish media reported the sad news of a new attack against human life. Summarising the news, this is the information that can be found in the sources<sup>3</sup>, in the comments<sup>4</sup> and in the news:

a) The Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority (HFEA) of the United Kingdom has given its approval to a research team conducted by Dr. Kathy Niakan, of the “Francis Crick Institute”, to renew the research licence of her laboratory including “genetic editing” on embryos, that is, the genetic manipulation of human embryos.

b) Embryos will be left to develop during the first seven days, to be then “destroyed” in the maximum term of two weeks.

c) Origin of the embryos: these will be provided by those people who have given their consent to the “donation”<sup>5</sup> of the embryos that are a surplus of a previous procedure of an *in vitro* fertilization (FIVET).

d) The granted licence is conditioned by the approval of a properly constituted Ethics Committee, therefore, the research will not begin until within a few months.

## **3. Some Notes on the Teaching of the Church Concerning the Experimentation on Human Beings, Some at an Embryonal Stage**

The Magisterium of the Church concerning the experimentation on human beings and, particularly, on human beings at an embryonal stage, is copious. This letter does not want to be a treatise on the subject, but only a small light in the *cultural tunnel* we live in. Thus, I quote only some of the texts of the Magisterium of the Church, proposing some reflection in the light of these documents.

### *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

“Science and technology are precious resources when placed at the service of man and promote his integral development for the benefit of all. By themselves however they cannot disclose the meaning of existence and of human progress. Science and technology are ordered to man, from whom they take their origin and development; hence they find in the person and in his moral values both evidence of their purpose and awareness of their limits” (n. 2293).

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. HUMAN FERTILISATION AND EMBRYOLOGY AUTHORITY (HFEA), *HFEA Approves License Application to Use Gene Editing in Research* [online]. [Consultation: 3-2-2016]. Available on the website: [guide.hfea.gov.uk/10187.html](http://guide.hfea.gov.uk/10187.html)

Cf. HUMAN FERTILISATION AND EMBRYOLOGY AUTHORITY (HFEA), *Licence Committee - Minutes* [online]. [Consultation: 3-2-2016]. Available on the website: <http://guide.hfea.gov.uk/guide/ShowPDF.aspx?ID=5966>

Cf. THE FRANCIS CRICK INSTITUTE, *HFEA Approval for New “Gene Editing” Techniques* [online]. [Consultation: 3-2-016]. Available on the website: <https://www.crick.ac.uk/news/science-news/2016/02/01/hfea-decision>

<sup>4</sup> NICOLÁS JOUVE (Emeritus Professor of Genetics, University of Alcalá de Henares), *Inconvenientes éticos de la edición de genes en embriones humanos* [online]. [Consultation: 4-2-2016]. Available on the website: <http://www.investigadoresprofesionales.org/drupal/content/inconvenientes-%C3%A9ticos-de-la-edici%C3%B3n-de-genes-en-embriones-humanos>

<sup>5</sup> A human being cannot “donate” another human being; this is called slavery. As we will see, the “official language” has been created to dehumanize the embryos.

“It is an illusion to claim moral neutrality in scientific research and its applications. On the other hand, guiding principles cannot be inferred from simple technical efficiency, or from the usefulness accruing to some at the expense of others or, even worse, from prevailing ideologies. Science and technology by their very nature require unconditional respect for fundamental moral criteria. They must be at the service of the human person, of his inalienable rights, of his true and integral good, in conformity with the plan and the will of God” (n. 2294).

“Research or experimentation on the human being cannot legitimate acts that are in themselves contrary to the dignity of persons and to the moral law. The subjects' potential consent does not justify such acts. Experimentation on human beings is not morally legitimate if it exposes the subject's life or physical and psychological integrity to disproportionate or avoidable risks” (n. 2295).

*Pope Francis*

“On the other hand, it is troubling that, when some ecological movements defend the integrity of the environment, rightly demanding that certain limits be imposed on scientific research, they sometimes fail to apply those same principles to human life. There is a tendency to justify transgressing all boundaries when experimentation is carried out on living human embryos. We forget that the inalienable worth of a human being transcends his or her degree of development. In the same way, when technology disregards the great ethical principles, it ends up considering any practice whatsoever as licit. As we have seen in this chapter, a technology severed from ethics will not easily be able to limit its own power” (Encyclical *Laudato si'*, n. 136).

*Pope Benedict XVI*

“If there is a lack of respect for the right to life and to a natural death, if human conception, gestation and birth are made artificial, if human embryos are sacrificed to research, the conscience of society ends up losing the concept of human ecology and, along with it, that of environmental ecology. It is contradictory to insist that future generations respect the natural environment when our educational systems and laws do not help them to respect themselves. The book of nature is *one and indivisible*<sup>6</sup>: it takes in not only the environment but also life, sexuality, marriage, the family, social relations: in a word, integral human development. Our duties towards the environment are linked to our duties towards the human person, considered in himself and in relation to others. It would be wrong to uphold one set of duties while trampling on the other. Herein lies a grave contradiction in our mentality and practice today: one which demeans the person, disrupts the environment and damages society” (Encyclical *Caritas in veritate*, n. 51).

*Pope Saint John Paul II*

“Consequently, to use an embryo as a pure object of analysis or experimentation is to attack the dignity of the person and the human race. Indeed, no one has the right to determine the threshold of humanity for an individual being, which would amount to claiming for himself an inordinate power over his fellow man.

Therefore at no moment in its development can the embryo be the subject of tests that are not beneficial, or of experimentation that would inevitably lead to its destruction or mutilation or irreversibly damage it, for man's nature itself would be mocked and wounded. The genetic inheritance is the treasure that belongs or could belong to a unique being who has the right to life and integral human growth. Thoughtless manipulations of gametes or embryos, which consist in transforming the specific sequences of the genome that bear the traits proper to the species and the individual, make humanity run the serious risk of genetic mutations that will necessarily alter the spiritual and physical integrity not only of the human beings on which these alterations are made but even more on individuals in future generations.

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<sup>6</sup> The Italics is ours.

If it is not ordered to his good, experimentation on man, which first seems an achievement in the area of knowledge, risks leading to the degradation of the authentic dignity and value of what is human. In fact, the moral criteria for research is always man in his physical and spiritual being. The ethical sense implies not being willing to engage in research that would offend his human dignity or hamper his overall growth. This is not however to condemn researchers to ignorance; they are invited to redouble their ingenuity. With a keen sense of what a man is, they will be able to find new paths of knowledge and carry out the invaluable service, expected from them by the human community” (*Address to the Working Group on the Subject ‘The Legal and Ethical Aspects of the Human Genome Project’ promoted by the Pontifical Academy of Sciences*, ns. 6 and 7, November 20<sup>th</sup>, 1993).

#### 4. A Short History of the Illicit Experimentation on Human Beings

##### 4.1. Some of the Most Known Cases

The illicit experiments carried out on human beings are many, and very harsh. Here I bring to your attention some of these cases as examples. It is not the place here to give more details, but it is worthwhile reading about them to understand the immense ghastliness that human beings, when their intelligence is blinded and their heart is hardened, can carry out on other human beings:

a) With Afro-Americans: experiment “Tuskegee Syphilis Study”, (United States of America, 1932-1972)<sup>7</sup>.

b) With Jews and other non-Aryan people: experiments under the Nazi regime (Germany, until 1945)<sup>8</sup>.

c) With Chinese and other “non-Japanese” people: experiments carried out by the Japanese Imperial Army (until 1945)<sup>9</sup>.

d) With Guatemalan People: experiment with syphilis carried out by the USA (Guatemala, 1946-1948)<sup>10</sup>.

e) With children with cognitive disability: experiment carried out by infecting children in the “Willowbrook State School for the Retarded” of New York, USA (1956-1972)<sup>11</sup>.

f) With elderly people: experiment carried out by injecting cancerous cells in the elderly of the “Jewish Chronic Disease Hospital” of New York, USA (1963)<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. FUNDACIÓN PARA LA INVESTIGACIÓN, DOCENCIA, FORMACIÓN Y COMPETENCIA PROFESIONAL DE LOS MÉDICOS COLEGIADOS EN ESPAÑA, *Ética de la investigación clínica* [online].[Consultation: 3-2-2016]. Available on the website: [http://www.ffomc.org/CursosCampus/Experto\\_Etica\\_Medica/U10\\_Etica%20Investigacion%20y%20CEIC.pdf](http://www.ffomc.org/CursosCampus/Experto_Etica_Medica/U10_Etica%20Investigacion%20y%20CEIC.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Cf. HORACIO RIQUELME U (PhD in Medicine and Philosophy, International Council of the Commission Truth and Justice of Paraguay), *La medicina nacionalsocialista: ruptura de los cánones éticos en una perspectiva histórico-cultural* [online]. [Consultation: 3-32-2016]. Available on the website: [dialnet.unirioja.es/descarga/articulo/2917100.pdf](http://dialnet.unirioja.es/descarga/articulo/2917100.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Cf. PABLO DE LORA (Professor of Philosophy of Law. Universidad Autónoma de Madrid), *Las fronteras de la experimentación con seres humanos: dilemas éticos en la realización de ensayos clínicos en países empobrecidos* [online]. [Consultation: 3-2-2016]. Available on the website: [https://repositorio.uam.es/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10486/669288/AFDUAM\\_18\\_4.pdf?sequence=1](https://repositorio.uam.es/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10486/669288/AFDUAM_18_4.pdf?sequence=1)

<sup>10</sup> Cf. FUNDACIÓN PARA LA INVESTIGACIÓN, DOCENCIA, FORMACIÓN Y COMPETENCIA PROFESIONAL DE LOS MÉDICOS COLEGIADOS EN ESPAÑA, *Ética de la investigación clínica* [online].[Consultation: 3-2-2016]. Available on the website: [http://www.ffomc.org/CursosCampus/Experto\\_Etica\\_Medica/U10\\_Etica%20Investigacion%20y%20CEIC.pdf](http://www.ffomc.org/CursosCampus/Experto_Etica_Medica/U10_Etica%20Investigacion%20y%20CEIC.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *Ibidem*.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Ibidem*.

## 4.2. They All Found a Justification

It is easy to imagine that to carry out these atrocities, the authors and their protectors (legislators, media, lobbies, etc.) explicitly or implicitly relied on two iniquitous premises:

a) The chosen victims have been considered by the “dominant culture” of the time as “having less value”, as “being less human”, as “being infra-human” or “non-human”. Thus, in all cases, the victims either did not have the legal capacity to defend themselves or it was very difficult for them to do so due to their vulnerable condition. Illicit experiments on human beings are never carried out on strong and powerful people; the victims are always the weakest of our society.

b) The end justifies the means. Protected by noble ends and words such as “scientific progress”, “progress”, “advances”, “the possibility of finding a cure for some diseases”, etc., the “small moral problem” of attacking someone who seems human but, really, is not, or not fully, is “avoided”; and in the case that he or she is human, his or her value is lesser than that of the ends that want to be achieved, always according to their criterion.

## 5. The Case We Are Dealing with: Experimentation on Human Beings

“As with all medical interventions on patients, one must uphold as licit procedures carried out on the human embryo which respect the life and integrity of the embryo and do not involve disproportionate risks for it but are directed towards its healing, the improvement of its condition of health, or its individual survival” (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Instruction on respect for Human Life in Its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation - Donum vitae*, Part I, n. 3, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1987).

“The corpses of human embryos and fetuses, whether they have been deliberately aborted or not, must be respected just as the remains of other human beings” (*Ibidem*, n. 4).

With things as they are, the present case is absolutely immoral, as taught by the Catholic Church, at least for the following reasons:

a) The origin of the embryos: as explained by the Pontifical Magisterium - also Pope Francis<sup>13</sup> - and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith<sup>14</sup>, the *in vitro* fertilization (FIVET), be it homologous<sup>15</sup> or heterologous<sup>16</sup>, is always illicit; this applies also to the other techniques called

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<sup>13</sup> POPE FRANCIS: “We are living in a time of experimentation with life. But it is harmful experimentation. Making children, rather than accepting them as a gift, as I said. Playing with life. Be careful, because this is a sin against the Creator: against God the Creator, who created things this way” (*Address to Participants in the Commemorative Conference of the Italian Catholic Physician’s Association on the Occasion of its 70th Anniversary of Foundation*, November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2014). “There are still too many situations in which human beings are treated as objects whose conception, configuration and utility can be programmed, and who can then be discarded when no longer useful, due to weakness, illness or old age” (*Address to the European Parliament*, November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014).

<sup>14</sup>Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, *Instruction on Respect for Human Life in Its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation - Donum vitae*, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1987) and *Instruction Dignitas personae on Certain Bioethical Questions*, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008).

<sup>15</sup> The Instruction of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (note 33) “by artificial homologous fertilization or procreation means the technique used to obtain a human conception using the gametes of the two spouses joined in marriage. Homologous artificial fertilization can be carried out by two different methods:

a) Homologous IVF and ET: the technique used to obtain a human conception through the meeting in vitro of the gametes of the spouses joined in marriage.

b) Homologous artificial insemination: the technique used to obtain a human conception through the transfer into the genital tracts of a married woman of the sperm previously collected from her husband”.

<sup>16</sup> The same Instruction (note 33) “by the term heterologous artificial fertilization or procreation means techniques used to obtain a human conception artificially by the use of gametes coming from at least one donor other than the spouses who are joined in marriage. Such techniques can be of two types

a) Heterologous IVF and ET: the technique used to obtain a human conception through the meeting in vitro of gametes taken from at least one donor other than the two spouses joined in marriage.

“assisted reproductive techniques”, in which the unitive action is divided from the procreative one (conjugal act<sup>17</sup> and fertilization). We must remember that the iniquitous actions committed by those who collaborate with the *in vitro* fertilization do not affect the inalienable dignity of the child thus conceived, that still is a creature loved by God, fully innocent of the attack committed by others against the natural law and the Divine Law.

b) The parents of a human being, even at an embryonal stage, cannot “donate” their child, because he or she is not their slave; a child is not his/her parents’ property, they cannot sell him or her, nor donate him or her. Thus, nobody can buy the child or receive him or her as a donation.

c) The experimentation suffered by an embryo is against his or her dignity as a human being and against the Moral Law; moreover, the aim of embryo editing<sup>18</sup> and the modification of his or her genetic data is not his or her treatment; he or she is only being manipulated and, then...

d) He/she is killed<sup>19</sup>.

e) Finally, he or she is thrown away, without a dignified burial, as if the embryo were mere biological material.

## **6. Afro-Americans, Jews, Chinese, Guatemalans, Handicapped Children, Elderly People and Embryos: What Do They All Have in Common?**

### *Creation*

All the cited cases are human beings and, thus, with an “inalienable dignity”; they are God's creatures, loved by Him with Fatherly tenderness. “ ‘God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them’. Man occupies a unique place in creation: he is ‘in the image of God’; in his own nature he unites the spiritual and material worlds; he is created ‘male and female’; God established him in his friendship.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, n. 355). “From the time that the ovum is fertilized, a new life is begun which is neither that of the father nor of the mother; it is rather the life of a new human being with his own growth.” (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Instruction *Donum vitae*, I.1).

“Being in the image of God the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just something, but someone. He is capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving himself and entering into communion with other persons. And he is called by grace to a covenant with his Creator, to offer him a response of faith and love that no other creature can give in his stead.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, n. 357). Furthermore, “the human *body* shares in the dignity of “the image of God”: it is a human body *precisely* because *it is animated by a spiritual soul, and it is the whole human person that is intended* to become, in the body of Christ, a temple of the Spirit (cf. 1 Cor 6,19-20; 15,44-45)” (*Ibidem*, n. 364).

### *Incarnation and Redemption*

Through the Incarnation of the Son of God, man has achieved his higher dignity. Moreover, God the Father entrusted, for the sake of men, His only-begotten Son to a death on the cross. “The sacrifice of the Cross ensures that we become “God’s property” because the Blood of Christ has redeemed us from sin, cleanses us from evil, removes us from the slavery of sin and death.” (Pope

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b) Heterologous artificial insemination: the technique used to obtain a human conception through the transfer into the genital tracts of the woman of the sperm previously collected from a donor other than the husband”.

<sup>17</sup> POPE PIUS XII: “The conjugal embrace, in its natural structure, is a personal action, a simultaneous and immediate cooperation of husband and wife that, for the same nature of the agents and the characteristics of the action, is the expression of a mutual donation that, according to the word of the Scripture, carries out the union ‘in one and only flesh” (*Address to Participants in the Conference of the Italian Catholic Union of Obstetricians*, October 29<sup>th</sup>, 1951)

<sup>18</sup> It would be of the outmost importance to study how to baptize the embryos who are in danger.

<sup>19</sup> POPE FRANCIS: “Men and women risk being reduced to mere cogs in a machine that treats them as items of consumption to be exploited, with the result that – as is so tragically apparent – whenever a human life no longer proves useful for that machine, it is discarded with few qualms, as in the case of the sick, of the terminally ill, the elderly who are abandoned and uncared for, and children who are killed in the womb” (*Address to the European Parliament*, November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014).

Benedict XVI, *General Audience*, June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012). With the Incarnation, the mystery of Redemption highlights the infinite value of each human life.

### *Resurrection of the Body*

We were created in the image and likeness of God. The Second Person of the Holy Trinity has taken on our body and has redeemed us by His Death and Resurrection. But, moreover, we know that our body, the body of all men and women, will resurrect on the last day: “those who did good will come forth to life; and those who did evil will come forth to judgement” (Jn 5, 29; cf. Dn 12, 2). And this will happen as we are now, as men and women. Saint John Paul II explained this with the following words: “The words delivered by Christ about the resurrection allow us to deduce that the dimension of masculine and feminine - that is, being in the body a man or a woman - will be constituted again with the resurrection of the body in the “other world”. (...) In the other world, the definitive land of man, that which we call the Kingdom of God or the House of the Father, we will enter in the eternal dimension of the human being through Resurrection. There will be a new dimension and condition, in which the body of the man and the body of the woman will keep the characteristics that are their own, covered by immortality and with a spiritualisation of the human nature that will make them like angels”. (*General Audience*, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1981).

### *Sacred and Inviolable Nature of Each Human Life*

According to what has already been said before, “human life is thus given a sacred and inviolable character, which reflects the inviolability of the Creator himself. Precisely for this reason God will severely judge every violation of the commandment “You shall not kill”, the commandment which is at the basis of all life together in society. He is the “goel”, the defender of the innocent (cf. Gen 4:9-15; Is 41:14; Jer 50:34; Ps 19:14). God thus shows that he does not delight in the death of the living (cf. Wis 1:13). Only Satan can delight therein: for through his envy death entered the world (cf. Wis 2:24). He who is “a murderer from the beginning”, is also “a liar and the father of lies” (Jn 8:44). By deceiving man he leads him to projects of sin and death, making them appear as goals and fruits of life.” (Pope Saint John Paul II, *Enciclica Evangelium vitae*, n. 53).

## **7. Spain's Situation: Some Examples**

Nowadays, Spain's law does not include, for the time being, this new attack against human life. However, it's been some years now since we have had laws that violate the fundamental rights of human beings at an embryonal stage: the right to be conceived as a result of the conjugal embrace between legitimate spouses, man and woman; the right to life; the right to have a known father and a known mother, etc. I would like to give some examples.

I do not want to face the subject without remembering, with sadness, the laws that, in the last years, have “regulated” in Spain the death of millions of unborn children: the Constitutional Law 9/1985, of July 5<sup>th</sup>, that reforms the article 471bis of the Penal Code; the Constitutional Law 2/2010, of March 3<sup>rd</sup>, regarding sexual and reproduction health and the voluntary interruption of pregnancy; and the Constitutional Law 11/2015, of September 21<sup>st</sup>, that reinforces the protection of girls under age and of women with different disabilities from a judicial point of view regarding the voluntary interruption of pregnancy.



### 7.1. Law 14/2006 from May 26<sup>th</sup> Concerning the Techniques of Assisted Human Reproduction

This law “regulates” a very high number of attacks against the sacredness and inviolability of human life. I want to quote only some of these:

- a) In article n. 5 it regulates the donation of gametes<sup>20</sup> and embryos (that are called “pre-embryos” to dehumanize them).
- b) In article n. 15 it regulates the utilization of embryos for research.
- c) The “Frankenstein Syndrome”. In annex B, some procedures are taken into consideration whose aim is to evaluate the fertilization ability of human spermatozoa, consisting in the fertilization of animal oocytes, thus producing embryonic chimeras with genetic heritage half-animal and half-human. No reason at all, not even the fact that the Law forces to “interrupt the research” once the aim is achieved, can justify the atrocity of fertilizing the ovule of a female animal with the semen of a man.

### 7.2. Law 14/2007 from July 3<sup>rd</sup> Concerning the Biomedical Investigation

This Law also “regulates” a high number of attacks against human life. Here are some examples:

- a) Title III, Chapter I, is dedicated to regulate the donation of human embryos and fetus.
- b) Title III, Chapter II, regulates the conditions for the biomedical research with human embryos and foetuses.
- c) Title IV, Chapter I, regulates the utilization of oocytes and of the euphemistically called pre-embryos, that is, embryos produced *in vitro* and formed by the group of cells that are the result of the progressive division of the oocyte from the moment it is fertilized, until 14 days later.
- d) Title IV, Chapter II regulates the research with biological samples of embryonic nature.

## 8. “You Will Be Like God” (Gen 3:5)

Paraphrasing Saint John Paul II, we can say that Lucifer, after having shouted the words “*Non serviam*”<sup>21</sup> and having been thrown to Hell, has continued his effort to destroy the human being<sup>22</sup>. Behind original sin, Abel's murder, the Tower of Babel and many other episodes of rebellion against God, is the Devil whispering in our ears: “You will be like God” (Gen 3:5). He only wants our ruin, here and after our death.

### 8.1. A Scientifically and Systematically Planned Attack Against the Order of Creation and Redemption

As we have seen before, Pope Benedict XVI stated that “the book of nature is one and indivisible”; that Pope Francis develops the same concept in ‘*Laudato Si*’ with the expression “integral ecology”, the same as Pope Saint John Paul II did when talking about “human ecology” in the *Centesimus annus* (ns. 37-39). However, we all tend to look at reality in a fragmented way - and

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<sup>20</sup> As it is known, the donation of embryos is illicit; but the donation of gametes (ovules and spermatozoa) and gonads (ovaries and testicles) is also illicit. Cf. PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR HEALTH PASTORAL CARE, Letter to the Pastoral Agents, in Spanish, n. 88; PIUS XII, *Address to the Association of Cornea Donors and to the Italian Association of Blind People*, 14-5-1956; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, *Instruction on Respect for Human Life in Its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation - Donum vitae*, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1987 and *Instruction Dignitas personae on Certain Bioethical Questions*, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

<sup>21</sup> POPE SAINT JOHN PAUL II: “The “*Non serviam*”, by which the rebel angels fell and the first man lost himself and his descendants” (*Letter to Card. William W. Baum on the Occasion of the Course on the Internal Forum Organised by the Apostolic Penitentiary*, March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1996).

<sup>22</sup> “Then the dragon was enraged with the woman and went away to make war on the rest of her children, who obey God’s commandments and have in themselves the witness of Jesus.” (Rev 12, 17).

this is how power wants it to be, as if things were not related to each other, as if all occurred by chance, as if evil had no organization of its own. Let's not fool ourselves! That which our eyes contemplate is no more than one of the many puzzle pieces of the enslaving and deadly structure that is being built worldwide.

Social injustice (synthesis of Marxism and Liberalism)<sup>23</sup>, idolatrous and fragmented ecology, contraception, sterilisation, abortion, “romantic love”, divorce, “free love”, assisted reproduction techniques, ‘pornification’ of personal relationships and culture, sexuality without truth, deliberate misappropriation of the natural filiation of children, hormonal manipulation / amputation and extirpation of healthy organs / re-assignment of personal identity<sup>24</sup> (systematically promoted by the media), euthanasia and assisted suicide, manipulation of human embryos, “polyamory”, substitute virtual reality, etc.; they are only one part of the stages, scientifically and systematically scheduled, whose aim is to deconstruct the “identity-mission” wanted by God for the human being: in his and her essential body-soul unity, in the man-woman difference, in the call to be in communion with his or her neighbour and in the vocation to worship and love, among all things, the Holy Trinity. Going back to the “*Non serviam*”, this war against the order of Creation is, actually, an attack on the Incarnation and, thus, on Redemption. But this is not the place and the moment to explain all this in detail.

## 8.2. The New Goal to Achieve: Transhumanism and Post-humanism

“Science and technology have made, and still make, important advances that contribute to improve the material conditions of existence”<sup>25</sup>. However, “science and technology are ... ambivalent

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<sup>23</sup> POPE BENEDICT XVI: “Paul VI had already recognized and drawn attention to the global dimension of the social question[155]. Following his lead, we need to affirm today that *the social question has become a radically anthropological question*, in the sense that it concerns not just how life is conceived but also how it is manipulated, as bio-technology places it increasingly under man’s control. In vitro fertilization, embryo research, the possibility of manufacturing clones and human hybrids: all this is now emerging and being promoted in today’s highly disillusioned culture, which believes it has mastered every mystery, because the origin of life is now within our grasp. Here we see the clearest expression of technology’s supremacy. In this type of culture, the conscience is simply invited to take note of technological possibilities. Yet we must not underestimate the disturbing scenarios that threaten our future, or the powerful new instruments that the “culture of death” has at its disposal. To the tragic and widespread scourge of abortion we may well have to add in the future — indeed it is already surreptitiously present — the systematic eugenic programming of births. At the other end of the spectrum, a *pro-euthanasia mindset* is making inroads as an equally damaging assertion of control over life that under certain circumstances is deemed no longer worth living. Underlying these scenarios are cultural viewpoints that deny human dignity. These practices in turn foster a materialistic and mechanistic understanding of human life. Who could measure the negative effects of this kind of mentality for development? How can we be surprised by the indifference shown towards situations of human degradation, when such indifference extends even to our attitude towards what is and is not human? What is astonishing is the arbitrary and selective determination of what to put forward today as worthy of respect. Insignificant matters are considered shocking, yet unprecedented injustices seem to be widely tolerated. While the poor of the world continue knocking on the doors of the rich, the world of affluence runs the risk of no longer hearing those knocks, on account of a conscience that can no longer distinguish what is human. God reveals man to himself; reason and faith work hand in hand to demonstrate to us what is good, provided we want to see it; the natural law, in which creative Reason shines forth, reveals our greatness, but also our wretchedness insofar as we fail to recognize the call to moral truth.” (*Encyclical Caritas in veritate*, n. 75).

<sup>24</sup> POPE FRANCIS: “Human ecology also implies another profound reality: the relationship between human life and the moral law, which is inscribed in our nature and is necessary for the creation of a more dignified environment. Pope Benedict XVI spoke of an “ecology of man”, based on the fact that “man too has a nature that he must respect and that he cannot manipulate at will”. It is enough to recognize that our body itself establishes us in a direct relationship with the environment and with other living beings. The acceptance of our bodies as God’s gift is vital for welcoming and accepting the entire world as a gift from the Father and our common home, whereas thinking that we enjoy absolute power over our own bodies turns, often subtly, into thinking that we enjoy absolute power over creation. Learning to accept our body, to care for it and to respect its fullest meaning, is an essential element of any genuine human ecology. Also, valuing one’s own body in its femininity or masculinity is necessary if I am going to be able to recognize myself in an encounter with someone who is different. In this way we can joyfully accept the specific gifts of another man or woman, the work of God the Creator, and find mutual enrichment. It is not a healthy attitude which would seek “to cancel out sexual difference because it no longer knows how to confront it.” (*Laudato Si*, n. 155).

<sup>25</sup> POPE SAINT JOHN PAUL II, *Address on the Occasion of a Congress about the Gravissimum educationis*, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1985.

values, capable of effecting great benefits or great evils, depending upon the use to which they are put”<sup>26</sup>.

Thus, without decreasing the great good that science and technology can contribute when they are put at the service of the truth of man, we observe that after the previous stages of deconstruction of the family, marriage and human being (ideological feminism, “gender” ideology and *queer* theories), the aim of the powerful is, now, transhumanism, that is, “to produce”, at a medium term, a new post-human being: genetically improved, embodied with technology (cyborgs) and, lastly, trying to load his or her conscience into the computers. It is the chimeric dream of immortality and of the overcoming of the space-time barriers that are typical of those who will be considered “miserable biological human beings unable to improve” (you and I).

### 8.3. *The Control of the Powerful Over the Weak: Techno-nihilism as a Global Ideological Instrument*

In 1995, Pope Saint John Paul II explained: “With time the threats against life have not grown weaker. They are taking on vast proportions. They are not only threats coming from the outside, from the forces of nature or the 'Cains' who kill the 'Abels'; no, they are scientifically and systematically programmed threats. The twentieth century will have been an era of massive attacks on life, an endless series of wars and a continual taking of innocent human life. False prophets and false teachers have had the greatest success. (...) We are in fact faced by an objective “conspiracy against life”, involving even international Institutions (...). Nor can it be denied that the mass media are often implicated in this conspiracy” (*Encyclical Evangelium vitae*, n. 17). We are in a “war of the powerful against the weak” (*Ibidem*, n. 12). In many States, the Legal Frame regarding life, marriage and family has become a gigantic “structure of sin” (Cf. Saint John Paul II, Encyclicals *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, 36-40 and *Evangelium vitae*, 24); the same can be applied to the majority of international institutions, the political parties and the main unions, a great part of the mass media, the NGOs and the big multinational companies. Thanks be to God there are very important exceptions to the above mentioned cases.

The editing of human beings will bring about economic benefits to many people - as a matter of fact, it is already benefiting them. Moreover, with time, if God does not prevent it, a new and more radical social division will be created: rich people who will be able to pay for their “improvement” reproducing themselves artificially, and the poor -not improved-, that will procreate naturally and will be considered, by the “dominant culture”, as “infra-men”<sup>27</sup>. All this is a money matter, that is, idolatry: moloch and mammon - the culture of death and the idolatry of money - always walk together and serve the Master of this world: “You cannot be the slave both of God and of money.” (Lk 16, 13).

#### *The techno-nihilism*

The desire, separated from God, of immortality that wants to overcome any space-time barriers that are typical of our nature needs money and power. This is not the place to develop extensively this concept, but it is necessary to anticipate that the *underlying global ideology*, subtly promoted in the whole process, is what has been called *techno-nihilism*, a natural daughter of the *dictatorship of relativism*<sup>28</sup>. The so-called “techno-nihilistic capitalism” is a “model of economic

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<sup>26</sup> POPE BLESSED PAUL VI, *Address to the members of the Consultant Committee of the United Nations “on the Application of Science and Technology to Development”*, October 24<sup>th</sup>, 1966.

<sup>27</sup> It must “respect the fundamental dignity of man and the common biological nature which is at the base of liberty, avoiding manipulations that tend to modify genetic inheritance and to create groups of different men at the risk of causing new cases of marginalization in society.” (POPE SAINT JOHN PAUL II, *Address at the Conclusion of the Thirty-Fifth General Assembly of the World Medical Association*, October 29<sup>th</sup>, 1983).

<sup>28</sup> POPE BENEDICT XVI: “The “dictatorship of relativism” threatens to obscure the unchanging truth about man’s nature, his destiny and his ultimate good.” (*Homily at Bellahouston Park, Glasgow, Apostolic Journey to the United Kingdom*, September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2010). POPE FRANCIS: “But there is another form of poverty! It is the spiritual poverty of our time, which afflicts the so-called richer countries particularly seriously. It is what my much-loved predecessor, Benedict XVI, called the “tyranny of relativism”, which makes everyone his own criterion and endangers the coexistence of peoples.” (*Address to the Diplomatic Corps Accredited to the Holy See*, March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2013).

accumulation that, in this historical stage, makes the increase of the technical innovation more dependant, so it needs a nihilistic culture to freely have any possible meaning that will not hinder in any way its spreading"<sup>29</sup>. "The psychic economy of techno-nihilism is the imperative "enjoy!", that indicates the passage from duty to pleasure as a principle of reality"<sup>30</sup>. Obviously, this has forced man to submit the noble exercise of good policy<sup>31</sup> to the demands of the Great Money, which really rules the world. Thus, human nature becomes a simple bio-economic instrument at the service of techno-capitalism. The question is clear: in order to maximise the prosperity of these powerful people and to have them achieve their aims (post-humanism), the production-consumption logic must not have any moral limit.

## 9. A Word of Love and Hope for Other Possible Victims

*The assisted reproduction industry market*, together with the other industries of death (contraception, abortion, euthanasia, etc.) resort to sentimentalism to manipulate their future victims. These industries call upon the generosity of young people to take possession of the gametes; they appeal to the desire of men and women to be a father or a mother but they forget that the aim - to have a child - does not justify the means; they appeal to the "gender equality" enslaving women with the euphemism of "surrogate motherhood", etc.

### 9.1. *Pro-creation Is Not the Same as Fecundation, Now "Re-Named" by the Industry as "Modern Fertility"*<sup>32</sup>

"Man and woman, called to live in the process of cosmic creation, appear on the threshold of their own vocation, bringing with them the ability to procreate in collaboration with God, who directly creates the soul of each new human being. Through mutual knowledge and love, and at the same time through physical union, they will call to life beings resembling themselves and, like them, created "in the image and likeness of God". They will give life to their own children, just as they received it from their parents." (Pope Saint John Paul II, *Homily in Rio de Janeiro*, October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1997).

Thus, the husband and the wife collaborate with the action that is proper of the *conjugal embrace* with the creative action of God, that instils the soul directly in every human being. This collaboration of the spouses with God is called "to pro-create".

On its side, the *industry* at the service of power offers "*assisted human reproduction*" in which technology replaces the conjugal embrace. Moreover, as the expression does not certainly sound good, the advertising agents of the *industry* have started to introduce the expression "*modern fertility*", that not only "de-pathologises" the situation, but makes it even desirable.

### 9.2. *The Children Born by Assisted Reproduction*

As explained before, the actions committed by those who collaborate with the *in vitro* fertilization do not affect the inalienable dignity of the child thus conceived, that still is a creature loved by God, fully innocent of the attack committed by others against the natural law and the Divine Law; to all these children, young people or adults, I assure you the support and love of the Church,

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<sup>29</sup> M. MAGATTI, *La fe, ¿esperanza para Europa?*, [online]. [Consultation: 22-2-2016]. Available on the website: [http://vd.pcn.net/es/index.php?option=com\\_docman&task=doc\\_download&gid=&&Itemid=11](http://vd.pcn.net/es/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=&&Itemid=11)

Cf. M. MAGATTI, *Libertà immaginaria. Le illusioni del capitalismo tecno-nichilista*, Feltrinelli, Milano, 2009.

<sup>30</sup> ANTONIO SPADARO, S.J., *La gran contracción. Lección y significado de la reciente crisis*, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, *Revista de Antropología y Cultura Cristiana Humanitas*, 2014, n. 75, pag. 69.

<sup>31</sup> POPE FRANCIS: "Involvement in politics is an obligation for a Christian. We Christians cannot "play the role of Pilate", washing our hands of it; we cannot. We must be involved in politics because politics is one of the highest forms of charity for it seeks the common good. And Christian lay people must work in politics." (*Address to the Students of the Jesuit Schools of Italy and Albania*, June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013).

<sup>32</sup> As example of the new terminology construction, see RADIO Y TELEVISIÓN ESPAÑOLA (RTVE), Documenta2 - *Mi futuro bebé: Avances en la fertilidad moderna* [video online]. [Consultation: 15-2-2016]. Available on the website: <http://www.rtve.es/alacarta/videos/documenta2/documenta2-futuro-bebe-avances-fertilidad-moderna/3479389/>

and also our prayers. On the other hand, I am aware of the different causes of the silent suffering of the people thus conceived: a) if the gametes belong to the husband and wife/parents, the doubt about the existence of a mistake in the laboratory and the feeling of being a “product”; b) if some of the gametes have been “donated”, the desire to know his/her own biological filiation; c) If conceived in a hired womb of a surrogate mother, the desire to know who has gestated him/her; d) if any of his or her siblings were “rejected” or frozen, the suffering for their death or their situation, etc.

To all I must say that, with the help of the Holy Spirit, it is possible - in truth - to love and to forgive. As a matter of fact, in God we can all find the Father that we look for and, in the Church, as in the Virgin Mary, the Mother we desire. However, we must say that “man's coming into being does not conform to the laws of biology alone, but also, and directly, to God's creative will, which is concerned with the genealogy of the sons and daughters of human families (...).The genealogy of the person is thus united with the eternity of God, and only then with human fatherhood and motherhood, which are realized in time. At the moment of conception itself, man is already destined to eternity in God.” (Pope Saint John Paul II, *Letter to the Families*, n. 9).

### *9.3. Male and Female. The Desire for Fatherhood and Motherhood Used by the Industry to Do Business*

As we have already explained, the assisted reproduction industry market makes use of powerful marketing resources to attract vulnerable people that do not see their desire of fatherhood or motherhood fulfilled; thus, they do business at their expense. However, the means and research that deal with sterility with licit procedures are scarce. Before the increase in the number of childless marriages, this is an incomprehensible deficit that indicates that we have forgotten the care and support of what is specifically human.

Men and women have a *spiritual dimension of spousehood-and-of-fatherhood/motherhood* that they must fill in conjugal life or in celibacy, according to God's will. But only the spouses, in virtue of their specific conjugal vocation, can legitimately unite themselves in the flesh to open themselves to the spiritual-biological fatherhood and motherhood as a gift of God.

*“The suffering of spouses who cannot have children or who are afraid of bringing a handicapped child into the world is a suffering that everyone must understand and properly evaluate.*

On the part of the spouses, the desire for a child is natural: it expresses the vocation to fatherhood and motherhood inscribed in conjugal love. This desire can be even stronger if the couple is affected by sterility which appears incurable. Nevertheless, marriage does not confer upon the spouses the right to have a child, but only the right to perform those natural acts which are per se ordered to procreation.

*A true and proper right to a child would be contrary to the child's dignity and nature. The child is not an object to which one has a right, nor can he be considered as an object of ownership: rather, a child is a gift, “the supreme gift” (58) and the most gratuitous gift of marriage, and is a living testimony of the mutual giving of his parents. For this reason, the child has the right, as already mentioned, to be the fruit of the specific act of the conjugal love of his parents; and he also has the right to be respected as a person from the moment of his conception.*

Nevertheless, whatever its cause or prognosis, sterility is certainly a difficult trial. The community of believers is called to shed light upon and support the suffering of those who are unable to fulfill their legitimate aspiration to motherhood and fatherhood. Spouses who find themselves in this sad situation are called to find in it an opportunity for sharing in a particular way in the Lord's Cross, the source of spiritual fruitfulness. Sterile couples must not forget that ‘even when procreation is not possible, conjugal life does not for this reason lose its value. Physical sterility in fact can be for spouses the occasion for other important services to the life of the human person, for example,

adoption, various forms of educational work, and assistance to other families and to poor or handicapped children”<sup>33</sup>.

#### 9.4. *Impoverished Women of Marriageable Age. “Womb for Rent”*

It hurts me deeply to think about so many young women in poverty or precariousness that are pushed to situations that threaten their inalienable dignity. God and the Church love them and want the best for them. We must raise our voice to defend them and provide the means to help them.

Having said this, we must assert that the so-called surrogate or substitute motherhood<sup>34</sup>, “is contrary to the unity of marriage and to the dignity of the procreation of the human person. Surrogate motherhood represents an objective failure to meet the obligations of maternal love, of conjugal fidelity and of responsible motherhood; it offends the dignity and the right of the child to be conceived, carried in the womb, brought into the world and brought up by his own parents; it sets up, to the detriment of families, a division between the physical, psychological and moral elements which constitute those families”<sup>35</sup>. *Moreover, this practice turns women whose “wombs have been rented” into “things”; they are treated in a utilitarian way, and their dignity is under attack.*

One can take the decision about a substitute motherhood because of a false idea of “compassion” (carried out by sisters, mothers or other women of the family or friends) and without an economic recognition; whatever the case may be, “it is contrary to the unity of marriage and to the dignity of the procreation of the human person”.

#### 9.5. *Youth Manipulation. The Gametes (Ovum and Spermatozoa), as the Gonads (Ovaries and Testicles) “Talk” in a Special Way of the Person, and They Are Related to Generation and, Thus, It Is Not Licit to Donate Them*

“The young are the hope of every people”<sup>36</sup>; “the young are any nation’s most valuable resource. To protect them, to invest in them and to offer them a helping hand, is the best way we can ensure a future worthy of the wisdom and spiritual values (...)”<sup>37</sup>. Moreover, “young people are particularly sensitive to the empty, meaningless values that often surround them. Unfortunately, moreover, it is they who pay the consequences”<sup>38</sup>. Many of them, convinced by the advertising campaigns of the industry, that appeal to their generosity - “encouraging” them economically -, donate their gametes unaware of the terrible consequences: they will conceive children - outside the conjugal embrace - that they will never know; some will be killed; others will remain frozen and those who are born will never know their parents; thus, their right to know their own origins will be taken away from them.

“Considering God's plan as it was at the beginning, we realise the nuptial meaning of the body, because in the mystery of Creation man and woman have been created to be, reciprocally, a

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<sup>33</sup> CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, *Instruction on Respect for Human Life in Its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation - Donum vitae* II.8, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1987.

<sup>34</sup> By “surrogate mother” the Instruction of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (note 37) means:

“a) the woman who carries in pregnancy an embryo implanted in her uterus and who is genetically a stranger to the embryo because it has been obtained through the union of the gametes of “donors”. She carries the pregnancy with a pledge to surrender the baby once it is born to the party who commissioned or made the agreement for the pregnancy.

b) the woman who carries in pregnancy an embryo to whose procreation she has contributed the donation of her own ovum, fertilized through insemination with the sperm of a man other than her husband. She carries the pregnancy with a pledge to surrender the child once it is born to the party who commissioned or made the agreement for the pregnancy”.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*, II.3.

<sup>36</sup> POPE FRANCIS, *Address to Students, Fr. Félix Varela Cultural Centre, Havana, Cuba, September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015.*

<sup>37</sup> POPE FRANCIS, *Address on the Occasion of the Meeting with Authorities and the Diplomatic Corps accredited in Nairobi, Kenya, November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015.*

<sup>38</sup> POPE FRANCIS, *Angelus, August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013.*

gift one for the other”<sup>39</sup>. Thus, gametes are not another biological structure, but they are a very special part of the body's sacramental language<sup>40</sup> and of its nuptial meaning, because they determine the generation, the offspring, they “talk” of the person they proceed from in such a particular way that the Church teaches that it is not licit to donate gametes nor the gonads from which they proceed<sup>41</sup>. As a matter of fact, fertilization “speaks” of a nuptial dance in which there is a dialogue, certainly biochemical, but also a dialogue in which the husband's spermatozoon goes on a pilgrimage to the wife's womb, where it asks to be admitted; in its turn, the wife's ovule, making a move, accepts it. It is interesting to observe that the grammar of the mutual gift and the mutual acceptance that takes place in the macroscopic field of the conjugal embrace, takes place also in the microscopic field of fertilization. Certainly, all this can be achieved outside the truth that it should express, but in this case only injustices are committed. Nothing of what I have described is the result of a blind biological evolutionism: also the body language<sup>42</sup> - with its own grammar - is in the image and likeness of the Holy Trinity; as a matter of fact, the body language is the icon of the way God espouses Himself with His People and the way in which Christ gives Himself and fertilises His spouse, the Church<sup>43</sup>.

## 9.6. Healthcare Staff

“Many researchers are engaged in the fight against sterility. While fully safeguarding the dignity of human procreation, some have achieved results which previously seemed unattainable. Scientists therefore are to be encouraged to continue their research with the aim of preventing the causes of sterility and of being able to remedy them so that [biologically] sterile couples will be able to procreate in full respect for their own personal dignity and that of the child to be born”<sup>44</sup>.

We must express our sincere gratitude to all the health workers that work for the objective good of people; they are called to be “guardians and servants of human life”<sup>45</sup>. But the healthcare staff can also be pushed by the assisted reproduction industry market, that appeals to their “good feeling” and avoids any moral evaluation, motivating them either professionally and/or economically. However, nobody is predestined to do evil. With the help of God's grace, conversion is possible. I know a lot of people working in the field of healthcare whose eyes have been opened, or are

<sup>39</sup> POPE SAINT JOHN PAUL II, *Address to the Bishops Participating at the Meeting on “Human Sexuality and Personality”, Dallas, USA, February 10<sup>th</sup>, 1981.*

<sup>40</sup> POPE SAINT JOHN PAUL II, “The body, in its masculinity and femininity, assumes the value of a sign, sign which is in a certain sense sacramental” (*General Audience, October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1980.*)

<sup>41</sup> “Not all the organs can ethically be donated. Regarding transplantation, the encephalon and the gonads, which give the personal and the procreative identity of the person, are excluded. They are organs in which, in a specific way, the unmistakable unicity of the person takes shape, and medicine must compulsorily protect them” (PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR HEALTH PASTORAL CARE, *Letter to the Health Care Agents*, in Spanish, n. 88).

PIUS XII, *Address to the Association of Cornea Donors and to the Italian Association of Blind People, 14-5-1956*; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, *Instruction on Respect for Human Life in Its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation - Donum vitae, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1987* and *Instruction Dignitas personae on Certain Bioethical Questions, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008.*

<sup>42</sup> “It is in their bodies and through their bodies that the spouses consummate their marriage and are able to become father and mother. In order to respect the language of their bodies and their natural generosity, the conjugal union must take place with respect for its openness to procreation; and the procreation of a person must be the fruit and the result of married love” (CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, *Instruction on Respect for Human Life in Its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation - Donum vitae*, II.B.4, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1987).

Cf. POPE SAINT JOHN PAUL II, *General Audience, 5-1-1983; 12-1-1983; 19-1-1983; 26-1-1983; 9-2-1983; 23-5-1984; 30-5-1984; 6-6-1984; 27-6-1984; 4-7-1984; 11-7-1984; 18-7-1984; 22-8-1984; 5-9-1984; 10-10-1984; 24-10-1984; 31-10-1984; 14-11-1984; 21-11-1984.* POPE FRANCIS, *XLIX World Communications Day, 2015 - Communicating the Family: A Privileged Place of Encounter with the Gift of Love.*

<sup>43</sup> POPE SAINT JOHN PAUL II: “The ‘great mystery’ of the union of Christ with the Church forces us to connect the *spousal meaning of the body with its redeeming meaning*; in such connection the spouses find the answer to the question about the meaning of ‘being body’” (*General Audience, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 1982.*)

<sup>44</sup> CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, *Instruction on Respect for Human Life in Its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation - Donum vitae*, II.8, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1987.

<sup>45</sup> POPE SAINT JOHN PAUL II, *Address to the Participants to the VII International Congress of Medical Oncology*, n. 2, September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1999.

gradually being opened. Each person that works in the healthcare field can become another Saint Giuseppe Moscati<sup>46</sup>; only God knows the last thought of those who die, therefore, we must always hope for everybody's salvation. But, and this is fundamental, it is necessary to provide the ordinary means for the forgiveness of God: approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation and pray for the intercession of those saints who, throughout history, have been related to the healthcare field and to the pastoral care of the sick<sup>47</sup>.

### 9.7. *The Sacrament of Reconciliation*

To all those who could have made mistakes in this serious matter, as in any other - parents, healthcare and biology professionals, legislators, journalists, priests and catechists that have given bad advice to people, etc. - the Catholic Church has the Good News to propose to their freedom: "God has loved us first; He has given us life out of love, He has given life and His Son for love"<sup>48</sup>; "[Jesus] He gave His life for you, for you, for you, for you, for me, for him... for each person, by first and last name. His love is like that: personal. Jesus' love never disappoints, because He never tires of loving, just as He never tires of forgiving, never tires of embracing us. This is the first thing that I wanted to say to you: Jesus loved us, every one of us, to the end."<sup>49</sup>

Thus, as our beloved Pope Francis explains to us constantly when announcing the *kerygma*, God can forgive all sins, all our faults; but "the acts of the penitent are: a careful examination of conscience; contrition (or repentance), which is perfect when it is motivated by love of God and imperfect if it rests on other motives and which includes the determination not to sin again; confession, which consists in the telling of one's sins to the priest; and satisfaction or the carrying out of certain acts of penance which the confessor imposes upon the penitent to repair the damage caused by sin"<sup>50</sup>. "«All grave sins not yet confessed, which a careful examination of conscience brings to mind, must be brought to the sacrament of Penance. The confession of serious sins is the only ordinary way to obtain forgiveness."<sup>51</sup>. "The confession of venial sins is strongly recommended by the Church, even if this is not strictly necessary, because it helps us to form a correct conscience and to fight against evil tendencies. It allows us to be healed by Christ and to progress in the life of the Spirit."<sup>52</sup>. Besides the Sacrament of Reconciliation, it is also convenient to approach the treasure of indulgences: "An indulgence is the remission before God of the temporal punishment due sins already forgiven as far as their guilt is concerned, which the follower of Christ with the proper dispositions and under certain determined conditions acquires through the intervention of the Church which, as minister of the Redemption, authoritatively dispenses and applies the treasury of the satisfaction won by Christ and the saints."<sup>53</sup>

## 10. "Hope Does Not Deceive" (Rom 5, 5)

### 10.1. *Jesus Christ, the True Giver of Hope*

Jesus Christ, being God, in His humanity has shown us where the Love of God reaches. He has given His life on the cross for our sins and for our salvation; He has made clear to us that only love can redeem us. Only God's Love is capable of making itself responsible for all of us, for our being, our time, for everything we love. His omnipotence, expressed in His mercy, is superior to our sins and is stronger than death. The participation in His resurrection is the true justice for all the

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<sup>46</sup> Saint Giuseppe Moscati (1880-1933), an Italian doctor, was canonised by Pope Saint John Paul II in 1987.

<sup>47</sup> The Virgin Mary under the names of Our Lady of Lourdes and of the Perpetual Help, Saint Luke, Saints Cosmas and Damian, Saint John of God, Saint John Leonardi, Saint Camillo de' Lellis, Saint Giuseppe Moscati, Saint Gianna Beretta Molla, etc.

<sup>48</sup> POPE FRANCIS, *Daily Meditation "Surprised by an embrace"*, January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

<sup>49</sup> POPE FRANCIS, *Homily of the Mass of the Lord's Supper*, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015.

<sup>50</sup> CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH - COMPENDIO, n. 303.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibidem*, n. 304.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibidem*, n. 306.

<sup>53</sup> POPE BLESSED PAUL VI, *Const. ap. Indulgentiarum doctrina*, norm 1.



innocent that suffer. And His cross is the last resort for those who sink in the sea of this world. Without the resurrection of the dead there would be no justice for all the generations. Without heaven and the glory of the blessed, without the new heavens and the new earth our salvation would not be complete.

To submit to God's judgement all that happens to us is the greatest lesson of hope. We must not look at God's judgement with fear, but with responsibility. God's judgement is the great defence of the innocents, of the poor and of those who are simple-hearted. The true justice of God for all generations is the resurrection of the dead and the glory of heaven. So it was for Jesus, the Crucified One. God raised Him up and made Him sit at His right hand. To abandon oneself to God's judgement does not mean to live in an irresponsible way, or to live with fear. God is fair and merciful. The one who will judge us is also our lawyer. That's the reason why God's judgement makes us take life seriously and, at the same time, helps us to walk with confidence. Thus says the Psalmist, "How blessed is anyone who delights in the law of Yahweh and murmurs his law day and night. Such a one is like a tree planted near streams; it bears fruit in season and its leaves never wither, and every project succeeds" (Ps 1:1-3).

## 10.2. For the Social Kingdom of Christ: Prayer and Action

Obviously, this demands prayer<sup>54</sup> and action<sup>55</sup> on our part, while working, with the help of grace, for the Social Kingdom of Christ<sup>56</sup>, so that the order of creation and the order of redemption be respected. All this is being taught to us by Pope Francis, the II Vatican Council, the Catechism of the Catholic Church and all the Church's teaching on the subject. We know that our destiny is the

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<sup>54</sup> Cf. CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, ns. 2558-2865.

<sup>55</sup> "So stand your ground, with truth a belt round your waist, and uprightness a breastplate, wearing for shoes on your feet the eagerness to spread the gospel of peace and always carrying the shield of faith so that you can use it to quench the burning arrows of the Evil One. And then you must take salvation as your helmet and the sword of the Spirit, that is, the word of God." (*Eph* 6:14-17).

<sup>56</sup> CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH: "The social duty of Christians is to respect and awaken in each man the love of the true and the good. It requires them to make known the worship of the one true religion which subsists in the Catholic and apostolic Church. Christians are called to be the light of the world. Thus, the Church shows forth the kingship of Christ over all creation and in particular over human societies. (cf. Leone XIII, Lettera enc. *Immortale Dei*; Pio XI, Lettera enc. *Quaer primas*)" (n. 2105).

II VATICAN COUNCIL II: "But the laity, by their very vocation, seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God." (*Lumen gentium*, n. 31).

POPE FRANCIS: "Reading the Scriptures also makes it clear that the Gospel is not merely about our personal relationship with God. Nor should our loving response to God be seen simply as an accumulation of small personal gestures to individuals in need, a kind of "charity à la carte", or a series of acts aimed solely at easing our conscience. The Gospel is about the kingdom of God (cf. Lk 4:43); it is about loving God who reigns in our world. To the extent that he reigns within us, the life of society will be a setting for universal fraternity, justice, peace and dignity. Both Christian preaching and life, then, are meant to have an impact on society. We are seeking God's kingdom: "Seek first God's kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Mt 6:33). Jesus' mission is to inaugurate the kingdom of his Father; he commands his disciples to proclaim the good news that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mt 10:7)." (*Evangelium gaudium*, 180).

POPE BENEDICT XVI: "Both capitalism and Marxism promised to point out the path for the creation of just structures, and they declared that these, once established, would function by themselves; they declared that not only would they have no need of any prior individual morality, but that they would promote a communal morality. And this ideological promise has been proved false. The facts have clearly demonstrated it. The Marxist system, where it found its way into government, not only left a sad heritage of economic and ecological destruction, but also a painful oppression of souls. And we can also see the same thing happening in the West, where the distance between rich and poor is growing constantly, and giving rise to a worrying degradation of personal dignity through drugs, alcohol and deceptive illusions of happiness.

Just structures are, as I have said, an indispensable condition for a just society, but they neither arise nor function without a moral consensus in society on fundamental values, and on the need to live these values with the necessary sacrifices, even if this goes against personal interest.

Where God is absent—God with the human face of Jesus Christ—these values fail to show themselves with their full force, nor does a consensus arise concerning them. I do not mean that non-believers cannot live a lofty and exemplary morality; I am only saying that a society in which God is absent will not find the necessary consensus on moral values or the strength to live according to the model of these values, even when they are in conflict with private interests." (*Address in the Conference Hall, Shrine of Aparecida, May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2007*).

civilisation of love, of truth and of mercy, in which a “human and integral development”<sup>57</sup> is accomplished; the triumph of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus<sup>58</sup> and Mary<sup>59</sup>, the triumph of the Divine Mercy<sup>60</sup>.

The Sacred Scriptures, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church and the Pontifical Magisterium - now of Pope Francis - will be of great help for this task on behalf of the Kingdom. I will explain this more accurately on another occasion, but I would like to say that one thing is the administrative separation between State and Church and another one, very different and seriously illegitimate, is the separation between Truth and State. In any case, I invite you to read attentively the teachings of the Church on these subjects. A good part of them can be found on the website: [www.obispadoalcala.org/bioetica.html](http://www.obispadoalcala.org/bioetica.html)

### 10.3. Mary, Mother of Life

To conclude, let's turn our eyes towards our Virgin Mary, Mother of Hope. She is the door through which Jesus Christ, in whom all our hope is placed, has entered our world. She, as a good Mother, greeted the pilgrim that came from Heaven. She, through the Holy Spirit, welcomed in her womb the Son of God. As Benedict XVI reminds us: “Human life is a journey. Towards what destination? How do we find the way? Life is like a voyage on the sea of history, often dark and stormy, a voyage in which we watch for the stars that indicate the route. The true stars of our life are the people who have lived good lives. They are lights of hope. Certainly, Jesus Christ is the true light, the sun that has risen above all the shadows of history. But to reach him we also need lights close by—people who shine with his light and so guide us along our way. Who more than Mary could be a star of hope for us? With her “yes” she opened the door of our world to God himself; she became

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<sup>57</sup> POPE BENEDICT XVI: “A particularly crucial battleground in today’s cultural struggle between the supremacy of technology and human moral responsibility is the field of bioethics, where the very possibility of integral human development is radically called into question. In this most delicate and critical area, the fundamental question asserts itself force-fully: is man the product of his own labours or does he depend on God? Scientific discoveries in this field and the possibilities of technological intervention seem so advanced as to force a choice between two types of reasoning: reason open to transcendence or reason closed within immanence. We are presented with a clear either/ or. Yet the rationality of a self-centred use of technology proves to be irrational because it implies a decisive rejection of meaning and value. It is no coincidence that closing the door to transcendence brings one up short against a difficulty: how could being emerge from nothing, how could intelligence be born from chance?[153] Faced with these dramatic questions, reason and faith can come to each other’s assistance. Only together will they save man. *Entranced by an exclusive reliance on technology, reason without faith is doomed to flounder in an illusion of its own omnipotence. Faith without reason risks being cut off from everyday life.*” (*Encyclical Caritas in veritate*, n. 74).

<sup>58</sup> POPE BENEDICT XVI: “Faith, which sees the love of God revealed in the pierced heart of Jesus on the Cross, gives rise to love. Love is the light—and in the end, the only light—that can always illuminate a world grown dim and give us the courage needed to keep living and working. Love is possible, and we are able to practise it because we are created in the image of God.” (*Encyclical Deus Caritas est*, n. 39).

POPE PIUS XI: “ He must reign in our minds, which should assent with perfect submission and firm belief to revealed truths and to the doctrines of Christ. He must reign in our wills, which should obey the laws and precepts of God. He must reign in our hearts, which should spurn natural desires and love God above all things, and cleave to him alone. He must reign in our bodies and in our members, which should serve as instruments for the interior sanctification of our souls, or to use the words of the Apostle Paul, as instruments of justice unto God.” (*Encyclical Quas primas*, n. 33).

<sup>59</sup> CARDINAL JOSEPH RATZINGER, PREFECT OF THE CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH: “I would like finally to mention another key expression of the “secret” which has become justly famous: “my Immaculate Heart will triumph”. What does this mean? The Heart open to God, purified by contemplation of God, is stronger than guns and weapons of every kind. The fiat of Mary, the word of her heart, has changed the history of the world, because it brought the Saviour into the world—because, thanks to her Yes, God could become man in our world and remains so for all time. The Evil One has power in this world, as we see and experience continually; he has power because our freedom continually lets itself be led away from God. But since God himself took a human heart and has thus steered human freedom towards what is good, the freedom to choose evil no longer has the last word. From that time forth, the word that prevails is this: “In the world you will have tribulation, but take heart; I have overcome the world” (Jn 16:33). The message of Fatima invites us to trust in this promise.” (*Theological Commentary to the secret of Fatima - Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, Documents regarding the “Message of Fatima”, June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2000*).

<sup>60</sup> POPE SAINT JOHN PAUL II: “The peace given by the Risen is, thus, the triumph of Divine Mercy. What is mercy but the endless love of God that, before man’s sin, slows down the feeling for a severe justice, and He lets himself be softened by the misery of His creature, pushing Himself to the end with the gift of Himself on the cross of His Son? “O happy fault that earned for us so great, so glorious a Redeemer!” (Praeloquium paschale)” (*Regina Coeli*, April 10<sup>th</sup>, 1994).

the living Ark of the Covenant, in whom God took flesh, became one of us, and pitched his tent among us (cf. Jn 1,14)” (*Encyclical Spe salvi*, n. 49).

Thus, She is the one we pray to as Mother of Life, and ask for Her intercession for all the little ones, the people in need and those who are suffering; for those who attack life, for the rulers, for the legislators and the powerful of this world. And also for the Church, for Pope Francis, for the families and for all of us. May the Holy Children Justus and Pastor, patrons of our diocese of Alcalá de Henares and witnesses of hope, lead us to be at the service of the *Gospel of Life* with their strength. Their witness through martyrdom may be of inspiration to us to continue the work for a true “culture of life”, convinced that, as the Apostle of the people reminds us, “hope does not deceive” (*Rom 5: 5*).

Alcalá de Henares (Spain), February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2016  
Feast of Blessed Esteban Vicente Frelichowski, Priest and Martyr  
Jubilee Year of Mercy  
XXV Anniversary of the Reestablishment of the Diocese of Complutum

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