

INFERTILITY AS A CURRENT CHALLENGE. MORAL AND ETHICAL APPROACH

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ABSTRACT. The issue of Infertility, even though it is not a new problem, it becomes challenging because of its moral, ethical, spiritual, physical, psychological and social implications. As the conception process techniques become more divers and deviant from the natural process, moral implications start to emerge. In vitro fertilization (IVF), in vivo fertilization, surrogacy, embryo cryopreservation, prenatal diagnostic etc., all of these new medical techniques and concepts arise many new ethical and moral aspects for Christians. The fertilization methods become more unnatural and this fact involves some issues related to the human being and the value of life. What is technically possible does not necessarily have to be ethically correct. What is the official position of the Church about this medical concern? How can we improve the communion of love between spouses, even without children? Does the wish to have children entitles me to use every medical conception techniques or we should accept the reality? What is the most useful and right method to fill up the gap and the absence of children in a family's life? Every family has its particularities and in every case we should consider the positive and the negative aspects of using the modern conception techniques. It is proper that, in this issue, to be involved priests, theologians, medics, psychologists, even friends or relatives, in order to underline what are the main risks and the implications of using modern methods of assisted reproduction.

Keywords: *infertility, fertilization techniques, adoption, bioethics, Christian morality.*

REZUMAT. *Infertilitatea ca provocare actuală. O perspectivă morală.* Infertilitatea, chiar dacă nu este o problemă nouă, este actuală datorită provocărilor și implicațiilor care le ridică tehnica medicală de concepție. Din punct de vedere moral și etic, implicațiile devin cu atât mai mari cu cât tehnicile de intervenție asupra procesului concepției sunt mai diversificate și mai deviate de la procesul natural. Fertilizarea in vitro (FIV), fertilizarea in vivo, mamă surrogat, criogenizarea embrionilor, diagnosticare prenatală, etc., toate aceste noi tehnici medicale și concepte ridică numeroase aspecte etice și morale pentru creștini. Metodele de fertilizare devin tot mai nenaturale, iar acest lucru ridică probleme serioase legate de ființa umană și valoarea vieții. Ceea ce este posibil tehnic nu înseamnă că este corect din punct de vedere etic.

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Chiar dacă procrearea este unul dintre scopurile căsătoriei, aceasta nu înseamnă că este unicul scop. Soții pot să își desăvârșească legătura dragostei chiar și în cazul în care nu pot avea copii. Legat de problema infertilității, se ridică câteva întrebări. Dorința de a avea copii mă îndreptățește să apelez la tehnicile medicale sau trebuie să accept realitatea? Care este poziția oficială a Bisericii despre această problemă? Care este cea mai potrivită metodă de a umple golul și lipsa copiilor din viața unei familii? Fiecare familie are particularitățile ei, iar în fiecare caz trebuie să se țină cont de aspectele pozitive și negative ale utilizării metodelor moderne de concepție. În această problemă este indicat să se implice deopotrivă preoți, teologi, medici, psihologi, apropiați, pentru a explica celor aflați în dificultatea de a avea un copil, care sunt riscurile și implicațiile utilizării metodelor moderne.

Cuvinte cheie: infertilitate, fertilizare in vitro, adopție, morală creștină, bioetică.

Introduction. The nature of the problem

The crucial and irreversible moment of the beginning of life is, undoubtedly, the moment of fecundation. The union of two gametes is the irreversible moment that marks the beginning of human existence and it determines the whole evolution of life². The human reproduction act, by artificial fecundation, should not be considered only a simple act of reproduction. It is also a recent form of intervention in God's creation³. Children must be the result of the love and affection of spouses and not the result of a medical intervention, because love is the central principle of life and family. In the act of love I am not simply giving myself bodily, just to produce a child. In this act of creation my whole being is involved, body and soul, feelings and will, not only my body. Therefore, when we speak about infertility and artificial reproduction techniques, as urgent methods of solving this problem, we have to take into consideration the dignity of the human life as a main Christian value. On the other side, we must not forget about the pain of those who cannot have children in a natural way and the fact that these current methods are used to fulfil or to satisfy the wish of having children. "The reproduction through intervention objectifies the privacy or the

² Georgios Mantzaridis, *Morală Creștină*, Ed. Bizantină Publishing House, Bucharest, 2006, p. 456.

At the foundation of human being, Christian theology sets the principle of love. First of all, there is the love of God and second, it is the love between the man and the woman. Nowadays, it is promoted the concepts of having love without children and also having children without love.

³ Georgios Mantzaridis, *Morală Creștină...*, pp. 457-458. Even the term of artificial reproduction means that the process is not a natural one because it introduces, in this equation, the technique and the technology; it intervenes in the natural way of how human life begins. Using those artificial methods means that something in this process it is not natural, it is not normal anymore.

mystery of human life⁴.” It is of great importance that the family who faces these difficulties to give close attention to other Christian purposes of marriage and one of the main purposes is salvation or redemption.

The main concern is that we are playing with the concept of life, using artificial methods, and we also have to consider the fact that we are not the masters of life and creation; we are just participating as co-creators in this world. Doing so, we demonstrate that our desire is stronger than God’s will, so, this is a selfish act. To intervene in the process of creation means forcing things to happen, in one way or another and this fact is not natural. We can become experts in medical and assisted intervention but not experts in creation:

“Despite all of our medical expertise, we still don’t know exactly why and how a new life starts or, in many cases, fails to begin. Nor can we be sure of the result when we seek to assist or even force the process by artificial means. Instead of achieving our desired objective—a healthy baby—by utilizing ART, we could easily wind up worsening our reproductive potential or creating one or more babies with severely compromised health⁵.”

Christianity has always claimed that life is a gift from God and this is the main reason we have to protect and respect it. The human person has been created by God Himself, after His image and every person’s vocation is to become as God⁶. “Orthodoxy affirms that life is a gift, given to us, in a free way, by the God of love. Therefore, human life must be greeted with joy and gratitude. It must be treasured, conserved and protected as an expression of God’s creative will⁷.” God created the human kind by His image and He gave us this status of human person, not only simple beings, like the animals are. We can say that the human being becomes a real person even from the moment of conception, or he is becoming a person from that mass of cells that are starting to unite, divide and to take shape⁸.

⁴ Georgios Mantzaridis, *Morala Creștină...*, p. 466. Through these interventions, the conception and the birth of human life is passed to another impersonal relationship, between the man and technique. By using this process, the child is born not only from parents, but also from specialists.

⁵ Attila Toth, *Fertile vs. Infertile*, Fenestra Books Publishing House, USA, 2004, p. 2.

⁶ This vocation consists of a deep search for truth, wisdom, mercy, inner beauty, love, and other Christian virtues. See Mircea Gelu Buta, *Bioetică și slujire creștină*, Renașterea Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2017, pp. 171-179.

⁷ John Breck, *Darul sacru al vieții*, Patmos Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2001, p.5. It is God that brought us from non-existence to existence and not only for a biological and physical existence. He has chosen us for a much higher spiritual purpose.

⁸ There are some theories that speak about the moment of becoming a real person and the moments before this, because conception is not a moment, it is a process that can take from 36 to 48 hours. Thus, we can speak about „pre-embryo” – a mass of undetermined cells and „embryo”. It is thought that the pre-embryo does not have soul and so there are no moral implications linked to it. But some say that even in this stage the pre-embryo is an embryo and a human being in potency; a real life is forming and

Nowadays, the medical research and technique is able to control and to sustain life, to discover new possibilities of improving the quality of life, cure some diseases, to remedy infertility and to control fertility by some stimulant drugs. Therefore, we can agree that the confidence in technology is growing nowadays, especially when we are struggling with medical concerns. The following paragraph describes what exactly the medical developments produce:

“These scientific advances also have undesirable consequences and can be misused for undesirable ends. These developments create, as the early theological commentators saw, moral ambiguity. The ethical problem is how to enjoy the benefit without the detriment or how to unravel the ambiguity so that the least detrimental effects flow from the benefits. Bioethics was a needed adjunct to the publicity of the new medicine and science: it was a commitment to take seriously the adverse effects of medical and scientific progress, an acknowledgment that medical “miracles” are indeed marvellous but marred⁹.”

The problem is how infertility is perceived by us¹⁰? As a malady or disorder, a kind of illness that should be immediately treated? Is it God’s punishment for our sins? God’s will or plan with us? Who or what is guilty for my infertility? Where should we go first? What should we do? These are the main questions that one may ask himself when struggling with this problem. We also have to mention about another major ethical concern about those people who want to donate sperm or eggs in order to earn money¹¹. In any particular case, it is very

so we need to treat it with respect. There is also another theory saying that the human being is formed after two weeks, after the first human features start to appear. However, human life must be respected in every stage of its evolution. John Breck, *Darul sacru al vieții...*, pp. 112-118, see also Norman Ford, *When Did I Begin? Conception of the Human Individual in History, Philosophy and Science*, Cambridge University Press, 1988; Thomas A. Shannon and Allan B. Wolter, OFM, “Reflections on the Moral Status of the Pre-Embryo”, *Theological Studies* 51/4, December, 1990, p. 603-625; Roman Tarabrin, *Probleme bioetice referitoare la momentul apariției persoanei umane în decursul dezvoltării embrionare*, in „Mitropolia Ardealului”, Andreiana Publishing House, Sibiu, nr. 3, 2019.

⁹ Albert R. Jonsen, *The Birth of Bioethics*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1998, p.399. Of course, the main issue remains how can we enjoy the benefits from modern medicine but still to remain between the borders of morality and not to deny our Christian values?

¹⁰ If we analyze the definition of infertility we can observe that infertility is the failure to achieve conception after at least one year of unprotected intercourse with reasonable frequency. This is a technical definition that does not include the love and the affection between spouses, only the practical part, the need for having children.

¹¹ We must mention that the procedure of donating eggs can be harmful for a woman and also, the method of obtaining sperm from men is morally unacceptable (masturbation). Also, those who are disposed to donate are not conscious about the fact that they could have many children spread through the world. They think that they help others and also themselves, by earning some extra money, but in fact it increases the possibility of incestuous relationship between two persons born by medical intervention. See Georgios Mantzaridis, *Morala Creștină...*, p.464.

important to take into consideration every moral implication of using medical intervention in procreation. Suitable biological and theological information is absolutely necessary when we approach this kind of issues and also reaffirming our ethical reference point, because otherwise we risk becoming lost into a technical world that is heading to nowhere¹². In this study, we do not insist on the causes¹³ of Infertility, yet we are treating this subject from an ethical and moral point of view.

Fertilization Techniques. Moral and ethical implications

Infertility is a concerning problem for our societies¹⁴. We are already familiar with the definition of infertility as the inability to conceive naturally after one year of regular unprotected intercourse¹⁵.

Nowadays, the medical techniques are improving with a great speed. Modern medicine is capable of helping those couples who are not capable of having children on natural way because of infertility problems. In general, reproductive technologies are defined as technologies designed to intervene in the process of human reproduction, or application of biotechnology to problems of fertility and practices of childbearing. Therefore, Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) is the modern medical technology that allows us to intervene in the reproductive process, but only after establishing the right diagnosis and when that couple decided in what direction that kind of treatment will take.

¹² See Irineu Pop Bistrițeanul, *Curs de Bioetică*, Renașterea Publishing House, 2005, pp. 13-39. Some of the Orthodox representative persons do not consider Fertilization techniques a good method of solving the problem of infertility. These techniques are producing a huge violation to the natural laws of reproduction. Procreation is a sacred act and a sacred commandment of God. This act is taking place into the mystery of the family and for this reason it is unacceptable to intervene into this natural process.

¹³ See Tammy J. Lindsay, Kirsten R. Vitrikas, *Evaluation and treatment of Infertility*, in „American Family Physician”, vol. 91, nr. 5, March, 2015. As we can observe, for a better quality of life it is recommended a healthy lifestyle that includes avoiding drugs, healthy food consumption and maintaining a healthy spiritual life. It seems like one of the main causes of infertility is an inappropriate lifestyle.

¹⁴ The World Health Organization believes that between 60 million to 80 million couples in the world are infertile. Those couples that experience infertility have also different problems and feelings linked to this main concern, such as: confusion, frustration, fear, isolation, guilt and shame, anger, sadness and hopelessness etc. See Ferring Pharmaceuticals, *A guide to managing infertility*. Can be accessed at: <https://www.ferring.com/media/2696/aguidetomanaginginfertility.pdf> Accessed in 15.12.2019.

¹⁵ Shahnaz Anwar, Ayesha Anwar, *Infertility: a review on causes, treatment and management*, in “Scient Open Access Journal”, vol. 2, Issue 6, June, 2016.

In vitro fertilization (IVF) is one of the most used techniques of fertilization worldwide¹⁶. Since 1981, approximately 200 000 babies were produced by this method in USA¹⁷. One of the most concerning aspect of IVF intervention is the embryos preservation:

“Most clinics today allow embryos to grow in lab culture for at least three days after the eggs and sperm are mixed. Some even allow development for five days before transfer in order to decipher better which embryos are more likely to survive. The remainder must be disposed of, usually by freezing for later use, using for experimentation, or simply discarding. There are at least 400,000 embryos frozen in US clinics alone, but there may be as many as a half-million¹⁸.”

In this case it is obvious the humiliation of human value¹⁹. The human being is treated and perceived as an object of experiment and this kind of approach is a great disadvantage from an ethical point of view. This is the sad reality we are experiencing nowadays, and this shows exactly what man is capable of. Many embryos are kept frozen for other later interventions and this fact raises many moral implications. There is also a problem of dispersing or changing the value of maternity and paternity, or the entire concept of parenting. Therefore, a child can have, at the same time, a biological mother (the donor of the ovum), another bearing mother (surrogate mother) and also a social mother (who cares for him). At the same time, these children can have a biological father (the donor of the sperm, maybe anonymous), a social father (who grows and cares for him) and the medic that, in one way or another, participated at his conception by using in vitro fertilization or in vivo fertilization²⁰. As we conclude, there are many possible combinations and the results are the multi-parental children and those children may suffer from a

¹⁶ Every country has its own legal aspects about medical assisted procreation procedures and how should they be applied correctly. Cloning, Post-mortem fertilization, choosing the child's sex, the consent of spouses and donors, surrogacy, gametes cryopreservation and many other aspects should be presented and known by every person involved. See Ierotheos Vlahos, *Bioetică și Bioteologie*, Christiana Publishing House, Bucharest, 2013, pp. 247-263.

¹⁷ Vincent Barry, *Bioethics in a cultural context*, Wadsworth Cengage learning, USA, 2012, p. 206.

¹⁸ Vincent Barry, *Bioethics...*, p. 206. Not only the embryos are frozen but even the eggs and sperm, in order to make other attempts of artificial fertilization, for those who have tried and for others that did not try it yet.

¹⁹ Georgios Mantzaridis, *Morala Creștină...*, p. 462.

²⁰ Georgios Mantzaridis, *Morala Creștină...*, p. 463. It is also possible, in some rare cases, that the artificial fecundation is a cause of incest. What if a married couple, both of them made by IVF, discovers that they have a common donor, this means that they are, in fact, brother and sister. This fact may destroy their entire relationship.

genealogical confusion, not knowing who is their real mother or father. At the same time, in these cases, the image and the central value of the family, as a communion of love and affection, is beginning to shatter.

One of the modern techniques is Pre-implantation Genetic Diagnosis (PGD), and it is used to investigate the embryos for genetic defects and disposal for diseases or malfunctions. By analyzing some embryos, we could select only those who are good and the others are eliminated. So, we may speak about discrimination and the inequality in rights of this unnatural selection. To continue the improvement of the technique and to ensure the development, many embryos are used for experiments, other are being destroyed. This fact is immoral because every embryo is a human being, in an incipient state: "Embryos are genetically unique human organisms, fully possessing the integrated biologic function that defines human life at all stages of development, continuing throughout adulthood until death²¹." Destroying other embryos is another form of abortion and abortion is an immoral act and also, it is a sort of genetic manipulation²².

ICSI (intracytoplasmic sperm injection) is another technique that injects sperm cells, using a thin needle, directly into the eggs nucleus. Using this method, some clinics guarantee a 90 percent rate of success. "Such possibilities, in which human freedom intervenes to make choices possible, force us to reflect upon the meaning of the bond between parents and children²³." The human body became an instrument of obtaining a child and those techniques endanger most of our Christian moral values such as: love, intimacy, communion and affection between spouses and their children.

Surrogacy is another opportunity or technique used by those who cannot have their own children. A woman (the surrogate mother) decides to become pregnant for the purpose of gestating and giving birth to a child for others to rise. We can see in this paragraph how complex is this technique and how many implications are involved:

"There are two main types of surrogacy: complete and partial. In a complete (gestational) surrogacy, the commissioning couple undergoes IVF and the resulting pre-embryo is transferred to the surrogate mother, making the biological parents become the secondary or rearing parents. The surrogate

²¹ Maureen L. Condit, *Life: defending the beginning by the end*, in „*First Things*“, May, 2003, p.50.; can be accessed at: <https://www.firstthings.com/article/2003/05/life-defining-the-beginning-by-the-end>, Accessed in 28.11. 2019.

²² See Brad Harrub, *The inherent value of human life*, in „*Reason and Revelation*“, July, 2002, pp.49-56. There are also other social implications involved in this medical process. The costs of transporting embryos and preserving them in a long term centre are very high and not every family can afford this kind of expensive services.

²³ Brad Harrub, *The inherent value of human life...*, p.12. There is a moral meaning of the biological bond between parents and children, but on the other side, there is a spiritual and ontologically bound that is more important than the biological one.

becomes the birth or gestational mother of the child. In a partial (traditional) surrogacy, the surrogate mother agrees to be artificially impregnated by the “husband’s” sperm and she becomes, therefore, both the baby’s biological and birth (gestational) mother, as distinguished from the child’s rearing mother, the wife. In a variation, a donor of the egg may be fertilized in vitro by the husband’s sperm cells, then implanted in another woman who carries the child to birth. In this case, the surrogate is the birth mother, the egg donor and the husband are the biological mother and father, and the husband and wife are the rearing parents. In some rare situations, the surrogate mother is impregnated with donor’s sperm or donor’s embryo, in which cases there will be a rearing couple, biological parents, and a surrogate (birth) mother. If the surrogate (birth) mother is married, her husband also can be considered the father of the child²⁴.”

From the moral and ethical point of view, this practice is not recommended, although the payment for such a method is quite significant, for the surrogate mother. In this case the unity of the family is endangered, by introducing a third part into this equation. Orthodoxy affirms that the Church could not agree with these methods because this is a form of fighting against God²⁵. These artificial methods disrupt the spiritual bond and the connection between spouses and deny their union and the procreative meaning of their conjugal act. Using these unnatural, medical and technical methods we risk becoming dehumanised, shattering the unity of the family. Also, they involve serious psychological and physical risks, especially for women. They involve even the exploitation of persons, commercialization and other risks.

Infertility has always been a challenge for scientists that tried to find some methods to come in aid of any patient and any possible case, to offer them what it could not be done naturally. Instead, they omitted the moral aspects of these methods and, inevitably, we have reached to a sexual cells and embryo manipulation, fact that cannot be accepted by Church’s canons or rules²⁶.

²⁴ Vincent Barry, *Bioethics...*, p. 207. In these cases, things are getting complicated, many psychological, social, moral and legal problems are involved and in parallel, there are serious causes of disorder in the cohesion of the family. The surrogate mother may ask her rights for giving birth of that baby and also, by pregnancy and giving birth she can become sentimentally attached with that child.

²⁵ Hiding under the pretext of human rights, human autonomy, false and misunderstood freedom, we are turning our back to God and fighting against His will. See the official document of the Orthodox Russian Church, Sinodul Episcopal Jubiliar al Bisericii Ortodoxe Ruse, *Fundamentele concepției sociale a Bisericii Ortodoxe Ruse*, Moscow, 13-16 August, 2000, in Ioan I. Ică Jr., Germano Marani, *Gândirea socială a Bisericii*, Deisis Publishing House, Sibiu, 2002, pp. 243-246.

²⁶ Christa Todea-Gross, Ilie Moldovan, *Îndrumarul medical și creștin despre viață al Federației Organizațiilor Pro-vita din România*, Renașterea Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2008, p.262. Having a child born using these methods is not normal because when we speak about embryos culture is the same like we are speaking about microorganism’s culture or plant cultures with no soul, not about real

Possible solutions to infertility

First of all, we have to mention that giving a cure for infertility is a great provocation because we have to take into consideration every socio-cultural and religious aspect of the environment where the issue appears. Every case is special because of its particularities; therefore we cannot apply the same method for every single case. Also, the legal and cultural spectrum of the world is very different²⁷, although we are living in the context of globalization.

For a couple, the problem of not having children, by natural means, is a serious one and it can be a cause of real suffering for them. Instead, having children is not the only purpose of our life²⁸. Some authors make a clear distinction between reproduction and procreation²⁹, because our goal is not to reproduce and to keep the human kind alive. One of our goals is procreation, to be co-creators of life, co-workers with God in the process of creating life. If one cannot have children, there is a reason why they cannot make children and they must understand this fact. If we look into the Holy Bible we can see many examples of infertility and how this problem was solved. For example, Isaac prayed to God for her wife, Rebeca, because she cannot have children and God listened to his pray and gave him a child³⁰. Probably, some couples do not trust or they do not try this method, but praying and having faith in God means having a positive attitude. Therefore, a positive way of thinking brings a positive way of living, without stress, frustrations, other negative feelings and psychological obstacles. For others, the method of praying to God did not had any result and they realize that God's plan is different with them, so there should be another way of manifesting the love for children.

human persons created as the image of God. Therefore, this is a shameful and improper act to give birth to a human person. „We must respect and maintain the sanctity of mother's womb if we want to keep our humanity.” Stanley Harakas, *Contemporary Moral Issues Facing the Orthodox Christian*, Minneapolis, 1982, p. 88-92, in Irineu Pop Bistrițeanul, *Curs de Bioetică*, Renașterea Publishing House, 2005, p. 25.

²⁷ For example, in India, adoption is not a solution because of the ideology of life and family. Also, in Islam adoption is prohibited because there are no blood ties with the father and no maternal bond of that child. Arthur L. Greil, Kathleen Slauson, Julia McQuillan, *The experience of infertility: a review of recent literature*, in „*Sociology of Health and Illness*, January, 2010, 32(1), pp. 140-162.

²⁸ In some cases, the relationship and the love between spouses still retains its character, despite the intense desire of having children. They still remain in communion of love, preserving the Christian values and following God's will in life, so that they grow together in the communion of marriage.

²⁹ Gilbert Meilaender, *Bioethics: a Primer for Christians*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, USA, 2005², pp. 10-12.

³⁰ Genesis 25, 21. Praying to God can be a solution for this concern and the examples from the Bible are eloquent in this sense. Nowadays, there are some special cases when people tried several methods of assisted conception without any positive result and after praying to God, they succeeded on a natural way.

One of the most common solutions for this problem is adoption. Adopting a child is a way to improve your life, as Pope Francis describes in “*Amoris Laetitia*”; a simple and a generous way to become parents:

“The choice of adoption and foster care expresses a particular kind of fruitfulness in the marriage experience, and not only in cases of infertility. In the light of those situations where a child is desired at any cost, as a right for one’s self-fulfilment, adoption and foster care, correctly understood, manifests an important aspect of parenting and the raising of children. They make people aware that children, whether natural, adoptive or taken in foster care, are persons in their own right who need to be accepted, loved and cared for, and not just brought into this world³¹.”

Adoption can be a real chance to expand the marital love and it is a true act of love³², offering the gift of a family to someone who has none. Although, for some persons it is hard to take care for a child that is not their own, but doing so, they make themselves channels of God’s love for those who need care and attention.

Fostering is another well known method of taking care of children, given up for adoption, or those children that come from poor families, for a determined period of time. Educating and helping those without possibilities is a good method of expressing parental love and care. When the spouses are not able to bring into the world a child, the holy Tradition of the Church teaches them that they are not completely unable to apply and manifest their parent vocation and they can always reach to adoption or fostering, trying to take care of that child, with love and offering, as it is their own³³. Therefore, the main purpose of marriage is not only to give birth to children, because marriage has also a spiritual meaning, not only a physical one. By taking care of other children we fulfil the spiritual meaning of family, sharing the marital love with them.

Conclusions

Although there are several points of view about the moment of the beginning of life, it is naturally that human life begins when the process of fertilization takes place. For this reason, every artificial intervention is an attempt to deny the value

³¹ Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, Vatican Press, 2016, p. 137.

³² Ierotheos Vlahos, *Bioetică și Bioteologie*, Christiana Publishing House, Bucharest, 2013, p.259-261.

³³ Iuvenalie Ionașcu, *Teroriștii uterului: Terorism științific și etica începuturilor vieții. Eșeu de Bioetică a gestației*, Anastasia Publishing House, Bucharest, 2002, p. 180.

of the human life. As we mentioned, human life is a generous gift from God and we have the moral responsibility to protect and to respect this gift.

Infertility has been known as a problem and not always the solutions to this issue are solved morally and ethically correct. Some people are tempted to try out every single method that modern medicine is able to offer them, but they do not understand the fact that, probably, their infertility is not a true reason to try these methods. Having children is not the only reason of our existence; spouses can live in harmony and communion of love even without children. Every person that is dealing with this issue must know the positive and the negative aspects of these interventions, the moral and ethical implications and the risks. Even if they deal with in vitro/vivo fertilization, surrogacy and any other type of medical intervention, the moral implications are the same for each method. Even if the Church does not prohibit these techniques, the advice is not to use them because we should not intervene into the natural process of procreation.

The assisted procreation techniques are unnatural ways of procreation; they dehumanize and they do not respect the value of life, therefore, every kind of intervention is a humiliation and disrespect for human life and the value of the human person.

Couples should understand that they are not left alone to handle with those situations, because in every society the help comes not only from medics, it also comes from Church, our relatives, friends, psychologists, that should work together to understand every case in part, and to let the couple decide what is the correct answer to their problems. As we described, there are some possible solutions to the problem of infertility, other ways to express the need of love, and the special need for parenthood.

Adoption and foster parenting are the most used and recommended methods for expression of love and care for abandoned children, in case of infertility. In every country the legal support helps families to adopt or to take care of children and to give them a better chance of a normal life.

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