

Pro-life Basics

Is it ethical to promote the adoption of frozen embryonic children?

The Vatican says no! As the Church teaches in *Donum Vitae*, every child has the right "to be conceived, carried in the womb, brought into the world and brought up by his own parents." The new Vatican document, *Dignitas Personae*, Section 19, states in part:

The proposal that these embryos could be put at the disposal of infertile couples as a *treatment for infertility* is not ethically acceptable for the same reasons which make artificial heterologous procreation illicit as well as any form of surrogate motherhood; this practice would also lead to other problems of a medical, psychological and legal nature.

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 world's scientific authorities and in particular to doctors, that the production of human embryos be halted."¹

Each frozen embryo is a person who deserves to be brought to term and loved by their own parents, that is, if they survive the thawing process.

I have been an advocate of embryo adoption, but now I find myself agreeing with this new document. As *Donum Vitae*, now 22 years old, has already made clear, in vitro fertilization is gravely immoral. It has created a mentality of farming children in order to weed out the undesirables, have spares available and so forth.

There will be complaints about what *Dignitas Personae* states regarding the fate of these embryonic children. But the real question is, why were they produced in the first place? The answers to that question support the Church's teaching that IVF should never be practiced.

Each frozen embryo is a person who deserves to be brought to term and loved by their own parents, that is, if they survive the thawing process. It is not the Church's fault that these parents have orphaned their own children because their self-interest has been satisfied. This is the result of a cultural attitude that denigrates the worth and dignity of human beings.

Judie Brown is president of American Life League and a member of the Pontifical Academy for Life. Ask Judie questions at her www.all.org column.

¹ Pope John Paul II, address to participants in the Symposium on "Evangelium Vitae and Law" and the Eleventh International Colloquium on Roman and Canon Law (May 24, 1996).

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