



**Holy Child Church**  
240 S Main St, Mansfield, PA

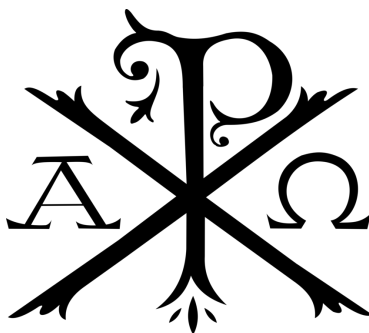


**Reverend Bryan B. Wright**  
Pastor



**Saint Mary of Częstochowa Church**  
144 St Mary's St, Blossburg, PA

# 27TH SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME October 6, 2024



**PARISH OFFICE**  
Mon, Tue, Fri: 9:30am - 2:30pm  
237 S. Main St, Mansfield, PA 16933  
Phone: 570-662-3568  
Email: hlychild@ptd.net  
Web: holychildparish.com

## PARISH MISSION STATEMENT

United with the Pope, we the members of Holy Child Parish seek to be a welcoming church, which fosters spiritual development and expresses charity by living in word and deed the life of Christ. Under the leadership of the bishop, our goals are to implement effective ministries through word, worship, and the sacraments, to enhance the spiritual growth of our parish family, and to encourage, through works of love and faith, the unity of the Church.

## SACRAMENTS

**Baptism:** Please call the Parish Office to schedule a meeting with the Pastor and to schedule the ceremony.

**Reconciliation:** Confessions are heard on:

- Saturdays: 2:15-3:00 pm Holy Child Church
- First Fridays: 9:00-10:00 am Holy Child Church
- First Saturdays: 10:00-11:00 am Saint Mary's Church
- By appointment: please contact the Parish Office.

**Holy Communion:** Those preparing to receive Holy Communion for the first time are asked to call the Parish Office.

**Matrimony:** Couples should contact their Pastor at least six months before the planned wedding date.

**Anointing of the Sick:** For the infirm & homebound. Please contact the Parish Office to arrange a visit.

**New Parishioners:** Welcome to Holy Child Parish! New parishioners are asked to register by contacting the Parish Office. Registration is required for our religious education programs and for the Sacraments of Baptism, First Reconciliation, Confirmation, and Matrimony.

## WEEKEND MASSES

Saturday	4:00 PM	Holy Child
Sunday	9:00 AM	Saint Mary's
Sunday	11:15 AM	Holy Child

## ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Saturday	3:00 PM	Holy Child
Sunday	8:30 AM	Saint Mary's
Sunday	10:45 AM	Holy Child
Monday	11:30 AM	Saint Mary's
Tuesday	11:30 AM	Saint Mary's
Thursday	5:15 PM	Holy Child
Friday	8:00 AM	Holy Child



## DEVOTIONAL PRAYERS

Monday	12:00 PM	Saint Mary's	The Angelus
Monday	12:45 PM	Saint Mary's	Miraculous Medal
Tuesday	12:00 PM	Saint Mary's	The Angelus
Tuesday	12:45 PM	Saint Mary's	Saint Jude
Thursday	6:00 PM	Holy Child	The Angelus

## PARISH CONTACTS

- Financial Secretary: Darlene Buck 570-662-3568
- Secretary: Cara Clementi 570-662-3568
- Director of Religious Education: Darlene Buck 570-540-1332
- Good Samaritans: Parish Office, 570-662-3637
- Health Ministry & Medical Equipment Loaning:  
Dotty Welsh 570-662-2057
- Knights of Columbus:  
Scott DiMarco; srdimarco@hotmail.com
- Ladies Guild: Patty Hutcheson 570-662-2034
- St. Mary's Hall: 638-2783 Holy Child Hall: 662-9996

# Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

~ prior to all Masses ~



## MASS SCHEDULE & INTENTIONS

Saturday, October 5 *St. Faustina Kowalska; Blessed Virgin Mary*  
**9:30 am, Holy Child, First Saturday:**

† People of Poland & the Baltic States (by John F. Frederick)  
**VIGIL, 27TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

4:00 pm, Holy Child:

† Raymond Lamonski & Florence McNeal (by The Family)

Sunday, October 6 **27TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

9:00 am, St Mary's: † Frank & Helen Dadas  
 (by Marilyn & Gene Kurzejewski)

11:15 am, Holy Child: † Parishioners

Monday, October 7

12:10 pm, St. Mary's: Elizabeth Zilbauer & Family  
 (by Cara Clementi)

Tuesday, October 8

12:10 pm, St. Mary's: † Jerry & Dan Kostovick (by The Family)

Wednesday, October 9

No Mass

Thursday, October 10

6:00 pm, Holy Child: † Glenda Smith (by The Mizdail Family)

Friday, October 11

8:30 am, Holy Child: † Barbara Anne Schwoyer  
 (by Bob & Sophie Schwoyer)

Saturday, October 12 **VIGIL, 28TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

4:00 pm, Holy Child: † Charlene Ploucha (by Paul and Adam)

Sunday, October 13 **28TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

9:00 am, St Mary's: † Parishioners  
 11:15 am, Holy Child: † George Kump (by Anita)

### SANCTUARY LIGHT INTENTIONS: THIS WEEK



Saint Mary's: † Parishioners

Holy Child: † Robert Cook

*The Sanctuary Light burns to remind us of the Real Presence of Christ reserved in the tabernacle.*

### SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

SATURDAYS—2:15 PM—HOLY CHILD CHURCH

FIRST FRIDAYS—9:00 AM—HOLY CHILD CHURCH

FIRST SATURDAYS—10:00 AM—ST. MARY'S CHURCH

~OR BY APPOINTMENT~



### PARISH OFFERINGS RECEIVED 9/23-9/29. THANK YOU!

Sunday Envelopes	\$2,342.00
Loose	373.00
Dues	30.00
Religious Education	50.00
Fuel	135.00
Donation	200.00
<u>Total:</u>	<u>\$3,130.00</u>
Care & Education of Priests	25.00

*Thank you for your generosity!*



### SCAM ALERT

If you receive a text message or phone call from an unknown number claiming to be Father Bryan, possibly asking for help...*disregard*. If Father needs you, he will speak with you directly.

### PRAYER LIST

PLEASE PRAY... We pray, always, for deceased parishioners, family, friends, and benefactors. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace. For those serving our country: Lord, hold our troops in your loving hands. Protect them as they protect us. Bless them and their families in our time of need. Bless those who need special prayers:

*Judi Bonk-Guy ♦ Kirk Euson ♦ Richard Faber ♦ Bernice Frederick ♦ Catherine Gallagher ♦ Lance Hall ♦ Ann King ♦ Tony Lupkowski ♦ Tom MacBlane ♦ Jane Mahonski ♦ Christopher Mortensen ♦ Terri Nash ♦ Richard Niemczyk ♦ Sandy Parker ♦ Ethel Sandstrom ♦ Lori Sherant ♦ Kenneth Simpson ♦ Yolanda Tacka ♦ Jack Watson ♦ Ron Yanuzzi*

We ask this in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Amen.



To request prayer for someone (e.g. due to illness, surgery, hardship, other) please contact the Parish Office. To respect parishioners' privacy, please ask and specify if their names are to be put in the bulletin, added to the Prayer Chain, or both.

### "SPARE A PRAYER" PRAYER CHAIN

Contact: Maryjane Seifried at seifriedmaryjane@gmail.com or 549-7550 or Dotty Welsh at dhjrw@ptd.net or 662-2057.

*The Lord is always listening.*

### VISITS TO THE HOMEBOUND

If you or someone you know would like to receive Holy Communion, a Pastoral visit, or a mailed bulletin, please contact the Parish Office.

Would you or someone you know enjoy a friendly visit, a partner to play cards or games with, someone to read to them, or simply keep company? As an outreach of Marian Ministries, Mary Hohman has offered to visit local residents and nursing homes, to spend time with people who may feel alone. Contact Mary at (717) 203-9090.



### SCRIPTURE READINGS

Sun 9/29	Nm 11:25-29 Ps 19:8,10,12-14 Jas 5:1-6 Mk 9:38-43,45,47-48
Mon 9/30	Jb 1:6-22 Ps 17:1-3,6-7 Lk 9:46-50
Tue 10/1	Jb 3:1-3,11-17,20-23 Ps 88:2-8 Lk 9:51-56
Wed 10/2	Jb 9:1-12,14-16 Ps 88:10b-15 Mt 18:1-5,10
Thu 10/3	Jb 19:21-27 Ps 27:7-9,13-14 Lk 10:1-12
Fri 10/4	Jb 38:1,12-21; 40:3-5 Ps 139:1-3,7-10,13-14 Lk 10:13-16
Sat 10/5	Jb 42:1-3,5-6,12-17 Ps 119:66,71,75,91,125,130 Lk 10:17-24
Sun 10/6	Gn 2:18-24 Ps 128:1-6 Heb 2:9-11 Mk 10:2-16

*Pray the Rosary Every Day*





### HEALTH MINISTRY NOTES

Eat your carrots! Remember those words from mom? Besides adding color and a little sweetness, carrots are a powerhouse of nutrients. They convert beta-carotene into Vitamin A, an important part of maintaining eye health. As mom used to say, "Have you ever seen a rabbit wearing glasses?" Carrots also protect against cancers such as colon, prostate, and stomach cancers. Carrots also provide Vitamin C, Potassium, Magnesium, and Calcium, which help strengthen the immune system. Carrots also clear your complexion from the inside and the outside. A mask of carrot juice, egg white and yogurt whipped together and applied to your face for 15 minutes followed by a gentle rinse will leave you with glowing skin. So crunch your carrots and remember Bugs Bunny—"What's up, Doc?"

#### HEALTH MINISTRY—AVAILABLE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT:

- |                        |                                   |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Baskets for walkers    | Transfer Bench                    |
| Canes                  | Toilet Handles                    |
| Crutches               | Transfer Board                    |
| Emesis Basin           | Tub Handle                        |
| Foot Bath              | Tubing                            |
| Hospital Bed           | Walkers                           |
| Hoyer Lift             | Walker with Seat                  |
| Ice Therapy Machine    | Wash Basin                        |
| Knee Crutch            | Wheelchairs                       |
| Knee Scooter           | Wheelchair Cushion                |
| Potty Chairs           | <b>Baby Items</b> at the Welsh's: |
| Raised Toilet Seats    | Bath tub                          |
| Rising Frame for Chair | Booster seat                      |
| Rollator Walker        | Bed rails                         |
| Shower Bench           | Safety gate                       |
| Shower Chair           |                                   |

### SPONSORED BY MARIAN MINISTRIES:



#### Paint and Pray

Saturday, November 9th  
Holy Child Parish Center  
11am-2pm

Get into the Christmas spirit and join us for this engaging event! Seating is limited to 20 participants on a first come, first serve, basis. The cost is \$30/person, which includes all art supplies and a delicious lunch. As a bonus, Fr. Bryan will be painting with us! Call Linda (570-404-2180) or Laurie (703-470-2975) or email [marian-ministries@outlook.com](mailto:marian-ministries@outlook.com). Payment can be made on November 9th.

#### "Sending God's Love"



Marian Ministries' "Sending God's Love" initiative is about remembering people who need a kind word of support, encouragement, or just a friendly hello to let them know they haven't been forgotten. These can be people from our community or from out of state. Let us know who they are, a little bit about their situation, and their address so we can send them a warm greeting through the mail. Please contact Laurie Coffee, Terrie Thomas, or Chris Troncone ([troncy@hotmail.com](mailto:troncy@hotmail.com) or 570-404-7278).

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- Oct 6: Life Chain, 2:20pm, Main & Rt.6 in Mansfield
- Oct 6: KofC Meeting, 6:30pm, Holy Child Hall
- Oct 8: Ladies Guild, 6:00pm, Holy Child Hall
- Oct 10: Pastoral Council starting with 6pm Mass, Holy Child
- Nov 3: KofC Meeting, 6:30pm, Holy Child Hall
- Nov 6: Health Ministry, 10:30 am, Holy Child Hall
- Nov 7: Finance Council, after 6pm Mass, Holy Child
- Nov 12: Ladies Guild, 6:00pm, Holy Child Hall
- Nov 14: Pastoral Council starting with 6pm Mass, Holy Child
- Dec 4: Health Ministry, 10:30 am, Holy Child Hall

### LIFE CHAIN: ANNUAL PUBLIC PRO-LIFE WITNESS SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2:20 PM, MAIN ST. & RT. 6 MANSFIELD

Join us THIS Sunday October 6th. We will gather at 2:20 pm at the intersection of Main Street and Route 6 in Mansfield to proclaim the sanctity of life. Posters will be provided. Bring a chair if you prefer to sit. This is intended to be a prayerful and silent hour of witness. Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend. More information call Dotty Welsh 570-662-2057. Vote PRO-LIFE.

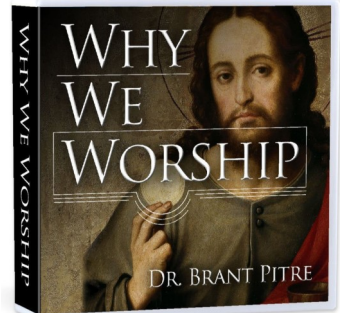


### LECTIO BIBLE STUDY — "WHY WE WORSHIP"

BEGINNING SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6, AFTER 11:15 MASS

*Volunteers are needed to pick up the refreshments - if you are interested, please contact the Parish Office. Thank you!*

Christians today have lots of different opinions about what "worship" should look like. Some think it should be all preaching, others think it should be 'entertaining', still others think it's all about the music. But what does the Bible say about worship? And why do Catholics do what they do at Mass? Why all the standing, sitting, kneeling, and repetition? Where does it all come from? Many non-Catholics are confused by the rituals & words of the Mass; some even think the Mass is just 'made up'--a tradition of men. Nothing could be further from the truth.



Dr. Brant Pitre takes you on a scriptural tour of these topics:

- The Shape of Worship: Who determines how we worship? God or us?
- The Meaning of Sacrifice: Why did God demand animal sacrifice in the Old Testament? What was the meaning of blood sacrifice? Does it play a role in Christian worship?
- The Tabernacle of Moses: What did worship look like in the Old Testament? How does it parallel the Mass today?
- The Book of Revelation: What does worship look like in Heaven? How does Revelation reveal the Mass?
- The Jewish Passover: What was Passover worship like at the time of Jesus? Why was it so important, and how does it parallel Catholic worship today?
- The Last Supper and the Death of Christ: Why did Jesus choose to die during the Passover? How did his death fulfill the Jewish sacrifices in the Temple?

Why We Worship is perfect for anyone who wants to understand what the Bible really says about the mystery of worship.



## GUIDANCE FOR CATHOLIC VOTERS

### Your Role as a Catholic Voter

*Refusing to choose is a choice unto itself.* Catholics have a moral obligation to promote the common good through the exercise of their voting privileges (CCC 2240). "Service of the common good requires citizens to fulfill their roles in the life of the political community" (CCC 2239). Citizens should participate in the political process at the ballot box. (CA)

*Truth is something we receive, not something we make.* With so much good at risk and so much evil, it is a great challenge to avoid fear and anger. As St. Paul says, put on the "mind of Christ" (1 Cor 2:16). Take time away from television and social media, and spend time with the Blessed Sacrament, Holy Scripture, and Church teaching, which provide wisdom to form our consciences—to discern true hope, justice, and mercy, rather than our opinions & feelings. (FCFC)

Voting cannot be arbitrary. To the greatest extent possible, Catholics must avoid voting for any candidate who intends to support programs or laws that are intrinsically evil. *When all of the candidates endorse morally harmful policies, citizens must vote in a way that will limit the harm likely to be done, mindful of what follows, below.* (EV 73; CPL4; CA)

### Foundational, Preeminent Moral Principles

When political activity comes up against moral principles that do not admit of exception, compromise, or derogation, the Catholic commitment becomes more evident and laden with responsibility (CPL). In the public arena, the Church's principal focus is the protection and promotion of the dignity of the person, and she thereby consciously draws particular attention to non-negotiable principles (B):

- **Protection of life in all its stages**, from the first moment of conception until natural death;
- **Recognition and promotion of the natural structure of the family – as a union between a man and a woman based on marriage** – and its defense from attempts to make it juridically equivalent to radically different forms of union which in reality harm it and contribute to its destabilization, obscuring its particular character & irreplaceable social role;
- **Protection of the right of parents to educate their children.**

The Church advances these natural law principles to save pluralistic society from its own ruin. Or as Benedict XVI put it—to neglect these minimal contributions of the Christian tradition is to threaten "democracy itself, whose strength depends of the values that it promotes." *This is what's really at the heart of non-negotiable principles and why they're worth preserving with your prayers & votes.* (A)

### Do All Issues Carry the Same Weight?

"Not all moral issues have the same moral weight. For example, if a Catholic were to be at odds with the Holy Father on the application of capital punishment or on the decision to wage war, he would not for that reason be considered unworthy to present himself to receive Holy Communion. While the Church exhorts civil authorities to seek peace, not war, and to exercise discretion and mercy in imposing punishment on criminals, it may still be permissible to take up arms to repel an aggressor or to have recourse to capital punishment. There may be a legitimate diversity of opinion even among Catholics about waging war and applying the death penalty, but not however with regard to abortion and euthanasia" (WRHC3; CCC 2309, 2267).

The same is true of many other issues that are the subject of political debate: the best way to help the poor, to manage the economy, to protect the environment, to handle immigration, and to provide education, health care, and retirement security. Catholics may legitimately take different approaches to these issues, as they admit of many options.

## Intrinsically Evil Actions of Preeminent Importance

Preeminent threats to human life and dignity directly attack life itself—the most fundamental good, and the condition for all others. A person's value does not change based on their abilities or who wants or desires them because human beings have intrinsic value and dignity that no one can take away. (FCFC)

Intrinsically evil actions are those that fundamentally conflict with life and the natural moral law and can never be deliberately performed under any circumstances. It is a serious sin to deliberately endorse or promote any of these actions, either directly or indirectly (by voting in favor of candidates who propose to advance them; choose the candidate likely to do the least harm) (CCC, Encyclicals):

**Abortion**—Abortion is the intentional, direct killing of an innocent human being, and therefore it is a form of homicide. The unborn child is always an innocent party. Even when a child is conceived through rape or incest, the fault is not the child's, who should not suffer death for others' sins. Abortion is never medically necessary (see insert). (EV 73)

"Abortion is the Antichrist's demonic parody of the Eucharist. That's why it uses the same holy words, 'This is my body', with the blasphemous opposite meaning." - Peter Kreeft. Advocacy for abortion is incompatible with Catholicism.

**Euthanasia, Assisted Suicide, Medical Aid in Dying**—These are forms of homicide or hastening death, by action or omission, often out of a misplaced sense of compassion. They also create a sinful social pressure for people to choose it so they won't be a burden to their friends and family. The end of life is as sacred as the beginning. No one must deny available medical care or pain relief, or suffer "heroically", but no person has a right to deliberately hasten or take their own or another's life. (EV 73)

**Manipulation, Exploitation, and Destruction of Human Embryos**—Human embryos are human beings. Manipulation, exploitation, and destruction of human embryos—for the creation of children, for research, or even for potential cures—are always wrong. **In Vitro Fertilization** (see IVF insert), **Embryonic Research**, and **Human Cloning** each result in the destruction of embryonic humans, and each opposes the dignity both of human procreation and of the conjugal union (RHL I:6, CRF 4b, USCCB). They are also invariably tied to many other ethical problems (see IVF insert).

**"Marriage" & "Gender" Ideology**—The family founded upon marriage is the basic cell of human society. Marriage must be defined, recognized, and protected as a lifelong exclusive commitment between a man and a woman, as the source of the next generation, and as the protective haven for children. Legal recognition of any other union as "marriage" undermines true marriage and encourages persons to persist in objectively immoral arrangements, harmful to them and the common good. "Gender" ideology undermines marriage and family by dismissing sexual difference and the complementarity of the sexes, and by falsely presenting "gender" as a social construct or psychological reality that a person may choose at variance with his or her biological reality. (UHP10; FCFC)

References: (CCC) Catechism of the Catholic Church; (FCFC) USCCB Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship; (EV) Evangelium Vitae; (CPL) Doctrinal Notes on Some Questions Regarding the Participation of Catholics in Political Life; (B) Benedict XVI Address to European Parliament; (WRHC) Worthiness to Receive Holy Communion; (RHL) Instruction on Respect for Human Life in its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation; (UHP) Considerations Regarding [...] Unions Between Homosexual Persons. Additional References: [usccb.org/resources/Women's%20Health%20Infographic.pdf](https://usccb.org/resources/Women's%20Health%20Infographic.pdf); [usccb.org/resources/IVF\\_Human\\_Cost\\_2024.pdf](https://usccb.org/resources/IVF_Human_Cost_2024.pdf); (A) [aleteia.org/2014/10/30/do-catholic-voters-have-non-negotiable-issues](https://aleteia.org/2014/10/30/do-catholic-voters-have-non-negotiable-issues); (CA) [stbern-bv.org/Voters-Guide-Catholic-English-1p.pdf](https://stbern-bv.org/Voters-Guide-Catholic-English-1p.pdf)

# The Truth About **Abortion** & **Women's Health**

## Abortion does not save women's lives.

**Abortion** is the **direct** and **intentional** killing of a child in the womb.

**Abortion is never medically necessary.** It does not treat or solve any pregnancy-related complication.

## Outlawing abortion will not affect treatment for miscarriage.

### Treatment for miscarriage and abortion is not the same thing.

There is a complete moral and legal difference between losing a child through miscarriage and intentionally taking the life of a child.

In the tragic case of miscarriage, surgery may be necessary—and is an ethical treatment—to remove the remains of an unborn child who has *already died*.

While the same surgery is done to perform an abortion, abortions impose this procedure on a **living child** with the **intention** of ending his or her life.

## Women can get the lifesaving treatments they need—without abortion.

In rare cases, and in the absence of better alternatives, life-threatening maternal health conditions may require interventions that **indirectly** and **unintentionally** lead to the death of an unborn child. **Abortion restrictions will not prevent women from receiving these treatments.**

When the lives of mother and child are in immediate danger, the goal is to fight to save both patients. **Effective treatments exist that seek to save the life of the mother and never to intentionally harm her unborn child.**

When a woman's life is at risk in pregnancy, preterm delivery may be used as a lifesaving medical intervention to preserve the life of both mother and child.<sup>1</sup>

**Ectopic pregnancies** result when an embryo implants outside the uterus—often in the fallopian tube. Sadly, such embryos cannot survive and this condition can pose serious risks to the mother. While ectopic pregnancies sometimes resolve naturally, interventions are often necessary.

**When done ethically, treatment for an ectopic pregnancy is not abortion.** Ethical interventions include the removal of the damaged fallopian tube containing the embryo or, if embryo death has already occurred, medication can be used to resolve the ectopic pregnancy.

## Bottom line: **Abortion restrictions never prevent women from receiving life-saving treatment.**<sup>2</sup>

*If you or someone you know is struggling after involvement in an abortion, the Church offers confidential, compassionate help through Project Rachel Ministry. Visit [www.hopeafterabortion.org](http://www.hopeafterabortion.org) for more information.*

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<sup>1</sup> Busk Miller, C. 2018. "The ethics of interstitial and cesarean scar ectopic pregnancies: four case studies and a review of the literature". The Linacre Quarterly 85(3): 252-269.  
<sup>2</sup> For further information on these topics, reference: [1] National Catholic Bioethics Center, "Medical Interventions During Pregnancy in Light of Dobbs," <https://www.ncbcenter.org/nchc-news/bioethics-public-policy-report-august-12-2022-gzqx2>. [2] American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists, "Myth vs. Fact: Correcting Misinformation on Maternal Medical Care," [https://aaplog.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/AAPLOG-Myth-vs-Fact\\_v5.pdf](https://aaplog.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/AAPLOG-Myth-vs-Fact_v5.pdf).



## IN VITRO FERTILIZATION (IVF)



There are other Catholic moral teachings that radically contradict the spirit of the age: for example, the prohibition of abortion and contraception, or the insistence on a natural definition of marriage that includes sexual complementarity, fidelity, and permanence.

But although those teachings have their dissenters, most Catholics can at least see in them a basic reasonableness. They denounce things that violate life, or that offend our natural sense that human love should be generous, self-giving, and ordered to the family. Not everyone may agree with such teachings or succeed in living up to them at all times, but they still get it.

The teaching on IVF is more difficult to grasp. It creates human life. It makes babies for people who want to love and care for them. How can this be bad? Isn't the Church, after all, in favor of life?

So, how can we explain this teaching to others—Catholic and non-Catholic—in a way that speaks to the reasons why so many people refuse to accept it, and that shows compassion for the painful burden of infertility? I'll offer four points to keep in mind.

### 1. Life is a gift

Children are a lot of work. But they're also wonderful. They can bring spiritual, emotional, and biological fulfillment. And sometimes we can fall into a trap of thinking that we're due such fulfillment because we want it so badly, or because we have so much love to give, or because we faithfully followed God's rulebook by getting married and opening ourselves to life.

But no one is ever due another human person. God gives life as a pure gift, not as something owed. Indeed, as the CDF instruction *Donum Vitae* put it, it's not parents who have rights here, but the child: specifically, the right "to be the fruit of the specific act of the conjugal love of his parents" and the "right to be respected as a person from the moment of his conception." Once we understand this, we see some of the justification for IVF vanish.

### 2. Doing justice to the Creator

God does not owe us children; but we do owe him something: obedience to his moral law, which, as Catholics, we believe the Church communicates without error. It is God's right to require that the transmission of life be the natural consequence of the conjugal act. Or to put it another way, that it flow naturally from the love between husband and wife, who cooperate with God as co-creators by calling into existence new persons with immortal souls and eternal destinies.

IVF, which substitutes the clinical collection of sperm and eggs for the marital act, and technological intervention for the natural cooperation between God and couples, fails to give God his due. This is the essence of what we call sin. (*Donum Vitae*, particularly 4-6.)

Some people argue that God nonetheless gives the gift of life to persons created through artificial means. They're not zombies or robots—they're full human beings with immortal souls that God specially created. Doesn't that mean he approves?

It's true that God has chosen to bind himself to holding up his end of creating new human life whenever the bare biological conditions are met—whether through natural intercourse or through IVF, whether through a selfless act of married love or an act of fornication or even rape. Unless you want to say that God also approves of fornication or rape, though, it doesn't follow that he approves of every act that results in new life.

## 3. Unintended consequences

The Church's teaching on IVF is based first and foremost on the immorality of the act itself. But in many cases there are side issues that would make it problematic even if it were not itself immoral:

In most cases, the sperm is obtained via masturbation, which is itself immoral and thus not permissible even to achieve a good end.

IVF technology is not accessible only to married couples, but is also put to the service of deliberate single parenthood, surrogacy, same-sex and polyamorous parenting experiments, embryonic stem-cell research, human cloning and eugenics, and other arrangements that offend basic human rights and dignity. It allows for the complete divorce of love and procreation, using technology to make human life an owned commodity, resulting in legal and social problems.

IVF procedures often result in the creation of multiple embryos, of which only a portion survive, and of those, multiple embryos are transferred to the uterus; it's an expensive process, after all, and doctors want to maximize its potential for success. In many cases, multiple embryos survive in the mother's womb, after which the woman (or her spouse or doctor) may request "selective reduction": the lethal injection of implanted embryos that are unwanted.

Surviving embryos that are not transferred are often frozen for future attempts or donated for research. In the U.S. alone there are many hundreds of thousands, and potentially more than a million, such tiny human persons, consigned to frozen storage as owned commodities or set aside for experimentation, radically against their innate dignity.

### 4. Know the alternatives

Just as any answer to doubts about Church teaching on contraception must include positive mention of morally licit means of spacing birth, such as Natural Family Planning (NFP), answering doubts about Church teaching on IVF must positively and pastorally address the plight of couples who have difficulty conceiving.

First, by educating them on the healthy, effective, and moral pro-fertility options. Many doctors may quickly press women and couples towards IVF, but there are other and better choices. Our understanding of human fertility expands continually, as does the list of therapies, treatments, and interventions to heal and enhance it. The work of the Pope Paul VI Institute, whose NaPro Technology revolutionized holistic reproductive health, is a prime example of *restorative reproductive medicine*. Others include FEMM and NeoFertility.

But even the best health care will not always remedy infertility. In such cases, women and couples must be reassured that they're not failures, that they're not being cursed or punished by God. In fact, He likely has special plans for them. We believe that God permits both moral and physical evils in order to accomplish a greater good. In my own life, I have seen His providence take the heartbreak of infertility and turn it into the great good of adoption, or foster parenting, or zealous work in missions, schools, and ministry.

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When Jesus told his followers that they had to eat his body, many abandoned him. "This is a hard saying," they complained; "who can listen to it?" (John 6:60). Today, when the Church presents its received teaching on the transmission of life, many in the flock may likewise stumble. But that teaching, though hard like many of Christ's truths, is also—like all of Christ's truths—coherent, reasonable, beautiful, and ordered to our final happiness.

\*\*\*

<https://www.catholic.com/magazine/online-edition/the-hardest-teaching-of-them-all>

# CONSECRATION OF THE ELECTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

*Composed by Fr. Chad Ripperger to consecrate the upcoming U.S. election to the Blessed Virgin Mary, invoking her intercession for the moral and spiritual well-being of the United States and its leaders.*

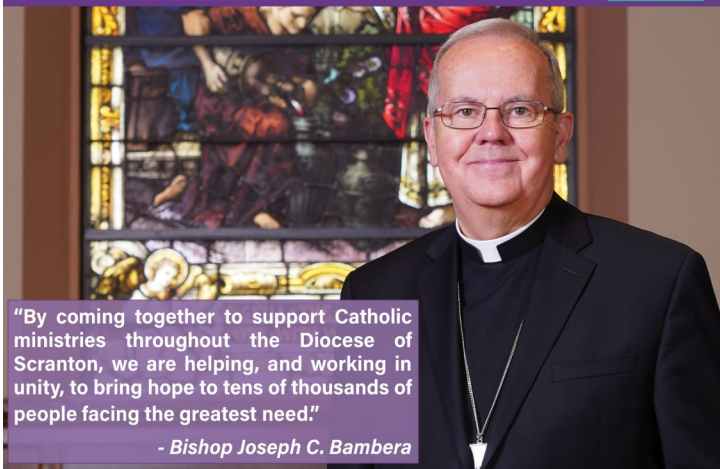
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Mary Immaculate, living tabernacle of the Divinity, where the eternal Wisdom lies hidden to be adored and served by angels and men, Queen of Heaven and Earth, beneath whose sway are subject all things that lower than God, Patroness of the United States of America, sorrowful and mind of our own sinfulness and the sins of our nation, we come to thee, our refuge and hope.

Knowing that our country cannot be saved by our own works, and mindful of how much our nation has departed from the ways of thy Son, we humbly ask that thou wouldst turn thine eyes upon our country to bring about its conversion. We consecrate to thee the integrity of the upcoming election and its outcome, so that what is spiritually and morally best for the citizens of our country may be accomplished, and that all of those who are elected would govern according to the spiritual and moral principles which will bring our nation into conformity with the teachings of thy Son.

Give grace to the citizens of this land so that they will choose leaders according to the Sacred Heart of thy Son, that His glory may be made manifest, lest we be given the leaders we deserve. Trusting in the providential care of God the Father and thy maternal care, we have perfect confidence that thou wilt take care of us and will not leave us forsaken. O Mary Immaculate, pray for us. Amen.



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**Binding Prayer for Fair & Moral Elections by Father Chad Ripperger**  
By the Power of the Precious Blood, with the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, I petition Our Lord Jesus Christ, to bind any spirit that interferes with fair and moral elections in the United States, to go to the foot of the Cross and receive their sentence. Amen. †