

湯漢樞機
香港宗座署理



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A Message for Pro-Life Day 2019

We celebrate our third Pro-Life Day on the Feast of the Visitation at the end of May. The choice of this Feast to promote the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death is particularly appropriate, in that the reality of the unborn Word of God having been brought to visit and to bless his cousin John the Baptist, causing the latter to leap in the womb for joy, to emphasise the human dignity and rights of the unborn, which we can now visualise with 4D ultrasound technology from early pregnancy.

Yet nowadays, the assault on the dignity and rights of unborn children continues unabated and with increasing ferocity. Within modern marriages, children have become less of a precious gift from God and more of an object of desire. Like other objects of desire, they must be at least in fair to good condition; otherwise the desire for it wanes. This leads to the unacceptable practice of pre-implantation genetic diagnosis as well as other prenatal diagnosis. People also talk of a right to having a child. “A true and proper right to a child would be contrary to the child’s dignity and nature. ... Rather ... the child has 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.”¹

This is not to downplay the suffering caused by infertility or that associated with the caring for a child with disabilities. Dealing with the latter first, a disabled child should not be viewed as a lesser being because “the intrinsic value and personal dignity of every human being do not change, no matter what the concrete circumstances of his or her life. A [child], even if seriously ... disabled ... is and always will be a [human being], ... [and] retain[s] [his/her] human dignity in all its fullness.”²

The answer to the suffering caused by infertility is not necessarily a child born of oneself. “It must not be forgotten however that, even when procreation is not possible, conjugal life does not for this reason lose its value.”³ There are methods to treat infertility which “respect ... a) the right to life ... of every human being from conception to natural death; b) the unity of marriage, ... [and] c) the specifically human values of sexuality which require “that the procreation of a human person be brought about as the fruit of the conjugal act specific to the love between spouses”.⁴ “[Such] techniques which act as an aid to the conjugal act and its fertility are permitted.”⁵ Such a service is now starting up here in Hong Kong

and it is hoped that the faithful will be afforded a choice of using services in trying to bring forth their own children into this world.

+ *John Card. Tong*
John Card. TONG

11 May 2019

Memorial of Our Lady of China

- 1) *Donum Vitae* (AAS 80 (1988) 70-102), Section II, No.8
- 2) Speech Of John Paul II To The International Congress on Life Sustaining Treatments And Vegetative State, Saturday 20 March 2004, No.3
- 3) *Familiaris Consortio*, No. 14 (AAS 74 (1982) 96)
- 4) *Dignitas Personae*, no.12
- 5) Ibid.