

STATEMENT ON THE **USES OF ASSISTED REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES**

We are young people of diverse ethnic, religious, cultural, and economic backgrounds from all regions of the world. We are a generation which includes persons conceived outside the human sexual act through the use of Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ART), and we are concerned about its implications for the human person and society.

We affirm that each human being possesses intrinsic dignity from conception until natural death, which can neither be granted nor rescinded. It is through the experience of unconditional love and self gift within the family that we begin to understand this intrinsic and inviolable human dignity.

It is the urgent responsibility of society to protect the family and foster the conditions necessary for each child to flourish in accordance with his or her human dignity. Family, with society, must ensure that human beings, from the moment of conception, are not reduced to objects as properties or commodities particularly by prospective parents or the research community.

We affirm the human longing to give oneself as a parent and recognize the suffering that can be caused by infertility. We encourage research and treatment of infertility itself in ways that are consistent with human dignity. We uphold the dignity of human persons conceived through ART and are convinced that society will be less capable of respecting human dignity if the family ceases to be a place within which the intrinsic worth of children is upheld. Therefore, we wish to highlight the uses of ART that harm children, women, men, and persons with disabilities.

The use of ART contributes to the commercializing of reproduction and the human body. It distances mother and father from their roles and responsibilities in the entire reproductive process. The trade in and trafficking of gametes and embryos, as well as the use of women for gestational services as surrogate mothers, amount to the commodification of parenthood and of children. ART can lead to the objectification of woman and the reduction of her reproductive capacities to a service rather than her unique gift, exposing her to personal and economic exploitation. The demand for gametes makes women and men of developing countries especially vulnerable to exploitation.

Testing to screen human beings before birth and eliminate those who possess traits considered undesirable is a problematic use of ART. This practice of eugenics reduces the person to a set of traits and promotes the historically destructive idea within society that a person is valued according to ability or characteristic rather than for whom he or she is: a human being.

Persons conceived by the use of ART may experience unique violations of their dignity. By facilitating the acquisition of gametes and embryos by third parties for reproduction, society becomes complicit in intentionally separating a child from his or her biological parents and from knowledge of his or her ancestry and family relations. Human beings have a deep need to know the fullness of their identity.

The scientific and medical procedures of ART use a large number of embryos, producing many human beings who are frozen, manipulated, discarded, or destroyed. The production and disposal of human life as mere property opposes and undermines human dignity.

Through the modification of the procreative process and the manipulation of reproduction, ART affects the core meaning of human identity and dignity. This is a concern for people of every culture, religion, generation and social and economic background.

We invite persons at all levels of society to reaffirm the intrinsic dignity of every human being and to reaffirm, in particular, respect for the human body and human life. We call for an understanding of children as gifts regardless of their traits or abilities. We call upon the international community to reaffirm this integral understanding of the child and of human life through law and culture.