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# Is GIFT Compatible with the Teaching of *Donum Vitae*?

by

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## I. Ten Years After *Donum Vitae*: Gift Reexamined

*Donum Vitae*,<sup>1</sup> released on 22 February 1987, does not judge whether the procedure known as GIFT (Gamete Intra-Fallopian Tube Transfer) can be morally good. The instruction does not even mention the procedure. In a press conference on the day of its release, Bartholomew Kiely, SJ said, "the instruction does not pronounce a judgment of GIFT. It leaves it open to research by biologists and further discussion by theologians."<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, *Donum Vitae* did enunciate moral principles by which GIFT can be judged. Has the discussion of theologians offered any clear moral evaluation of GIFT? Ten years after *Donum Vitae*, I intend to examine in this essay various arguments about GIFT in light of the instruction's teaching to determine whether it can be morally good.

Note clearly, I am asking whether GIFT can be morally good. I cast the question this way to be clear that even actions that may be good or indifferent considered in themselves can be morally bad because of circumstances or the intention of the person. Does not St. Paul consider a similar matter when he considers whether one can eat food offered to idols? (1 Cor 8) Eating such food, considered in itself, is not bad. However, the circumstance of scandal can make that action bad. Jesus speaks of good actions rendered bad by a person's intention. (Mt. 6:1-6) Truly, acts of piety, giving alms, and praying are good actions. But if they are done out of pride for the purpose of being seen and esteemed, these good actions have been rendered bad by the person's intentions. Thus, I will consider whether GIFT can be morally good, considered in itself, apart from circumstances or a person's intentions.

## II. Replacing or Assisting the Marital Act: The Teaching of *Donum Vitae*

The instruction provides the following principles applicable to the moral evaluation of GIFT:

[F]ertilization is licitly sought when it is the result of a "conjugal act which is per se suitable for the generation of children to which marriage is ordered by its nature and by which the spouses become one flesh." But from the moral point of view procreation is deprived of its proper perfection when it is not desired as the fruit of the conjugal act, that is to say of the specific act of the spouses' union.<sup>3</sup>

As a result, a technical procedure to achieve conception

cannot be admitted except for those cases in which the technical means is not a substitute for the conjugal act but serves to facilitate and to help so that the act attains its natural purpose.<sup>4</sup>

When GIFT is used, is the coming to be of a child the fruit of the marital act or is the child produced by the technical procedure? To put the matter succinctly, if GIFT replaces the marital act, it is morally bad. If GIFT facilitates or assists the marital act, it can be morally good. Yet, Donald DeMarco observes that other factors must also be taken into account, too, for a complete moral evaluation of GIFT, since "facilitating" or "helping" the marital act is a necessary but not sufficient condition to judge whether a procedure can be morally licit. One can look to other factors, for example, whether the parties are married, whether the procedure is medically or personally exploitive, and whether the personal union of husband and wife is violated during the act of intercourse.<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless, for the most part, the discussion centers around whether GIFT assists or replaces the marital act. So, the primary question we will consider is whether GIFT assists or replaces the marital act.

Why cannot the marital act be replaced? *Donum Vitae* answers this question by weaving a tapestry with three lines of argument: (1) the inseparability of the unitive and procreative meanings of the marital act, (2) the "language of the body," and (3) the dignity of the child conceived.<sup>6</sup> These three lines of argument intertwine, and, for clarity in presentation, I will examine them in reverse order from the presentation in the instruction.

### A. *The Dignity of the Child Conceived*

Replacing the marital act with a technical means compromises the dignity of the child conceived. "In his unique and unrepeatable origin, the child must be respected and recognized as equal in personal dignity to those who give him life."<sup>7</sup> In short, the child cannot be desired or conceived as a product of a biological or medical technique. If the child is the result of a technical means, he is treated as a product inferior to its makers.

In order to understand this, we must examine the difference between "doing" and "making." "Doing" is an immanent action: it remains in the agent. If it is a good action, it perfects the agent. If it is a bad action it degrades him. In this sense, our actions determine ourselves, whether we are morally good or bad. Common parlance illustrates this truth. How do we describe someone who always tells the

truth? We call him honest. How do we describe someone who never tells the truth? We call him a liar. "Doing," immanent action, affects the person as such and makes him morally good or bad.<sup>8</sup>

When something is made, the focus is on the product. The action proceeds from the maker to something in the external world, something extrinsic to himself. Making is a transitive action. For example, carpenters build houses; cobblers make shoes. In building houses or making shoes, the action proceeds from the person to the house or the shoes that are made. "Making," or transitive action, in itself does not affect the moral quality of the person performing the action. Whether the cobbler makes good or bad shoes in itself does not make him a good or bad person. Someone who makes good shoes could be either a morally good or bad person.<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, in "making," the maker imposes his will upon an object. The object made is passive with respect to the maker. When a carpenter builds a house, he imposes his will on the materials to form them into the house he desires to build. The house is passive with respect to the carpenter. Thus, that which is made is dominated by the maker. That which is made is put into a relationship of being inferior to the maker. A person can never be dominated by parents or technicians as if he were something made. Such domination is contrary to a person's dignity, a dignity equal to his parents.<sup>10</sup>

Note also that there is a sense in which "making" is also a "doing."

[E]very act of making is also a doing insofar as it is freely chosen, for the choice to make something is something that we "do," and this choice, as self-determining, abides in us.<sup>11</sup>

The cobbler could choose to make a pair of shoes free of charge for a poor man. His choosing to do so is an act of love for the poor man and so makes him morally good. On the other hand, if someone chose to make "crack" and involve himself in the drug trade, he would be choosing to do something bad for he would be participating in activity destructive of human persons. Similarly, if one chose to make a child, he would be choosing to do something bad for he would be treating the child as a product, something inferior to be dominated, clearly an action contrary to a child's dignity.<sup>12</sup>

When a couple engages in the marital act, they are not "making" anything. Rather, they are "doing" something: they are giving themselves to each other in love, an action which reflects the commitment they made to each other when they were married. The marital act is an immanent action: it remains in and perfects the spouses themselves.

Married love is uniquely expressed and perfected by the exercise of the acts proper to marriage. Hence the acts in marriage by which the intimate and chaste union of the spouses takes place are noble and honorable; the truly human performance of these acts fosters the self-giving they signify and enriches the spouses in joy and gratitude.<sup>13</sup>

When a child comes to be as a result of the marital act, he comes to be as a gift which crowns the self-giving of the spouses. In their mutual self-gift, the spouses are expressing their love for each other. Love is not a product that they make.

Similarly, the child that comes to be is not a product inferior to the parents, but a person equal to them in dignity.<sup>14</sup>

When human life comes to be through the marital act, we can say quite properly that the spouses are "begetting" or "procreating". They are not "making" anything. The life they receive is "begotten, not made".<sup>15</sup>

However, when the marital act is replaced by a technical means, the child is treated as a product. The spouses furnish the raw material, the gametes. The technicians then engage in a process of "making." The technical procedure is a series of transitive actions that proceed from the medical technicians to the "product." As in any act of making, the "product" is dominated by or takes on a passive relationship to the maker. The "product" is thus treated as inferior to the makers. However, this is contrary to human dignity. The child is a person equal in dignity to his parents and the technicians. Even though those who choose to produce a child by a technical means may do so for the further end of loving and nurturing him in a true parent-child relationship, nonetheless, the technical means they choose treats the child as something inferior, an object to be produced and dominated. Thus, we can see that a technical means that replaces the marital act is contrary to the dignity of the child conceived.

### B. *The Language of the Body*

The "language of the body" reveals the truth of the person in human procreation: the child is person, a gift crowning mutual self-gift of the spouses. The "language of the body" reveals the truth of the child as an image of God: as God is a communion of persons, the child is to fulfill his being by entering into a communion of persons. Yet what is meant by "language of the body?" When it introduces this terminology, *Donum Vitae* cites the general audience of John Paul II on 16 January 1980. The Holy Father began a series of papal audiences on 5 September 1979 dedicated to a theme later dubbed "A Catechesis on Human Love."<sup>16</sup> I will look briefly to some themes covered in his addresses: "original solitude," "original unity," "original nakedness," and "the nuptial meaning of the body." This will help uncover the meaning of "the language of the body."

When he begins the general audiences, John Paul II directs his attention to "the beginning," the first chapters of Genesis. Especially in the second creation account, he finds rich soil for cultivating an understanding of man. In this account, fundamental human experiences that shed a light of understanding on the human person come to the fore.

The experience of "original solitude" is denoted with the verse, "It is not good that man should be alone" (Gn 2:18).<sup>17</sup> When John Paul II examines this experience in the text, he concludes that through his body the man discovers that he is different from all the animals, that he is a person. One would think that man would discover that he is like animals through his body since animals, too, have bodies. Yet man's is a personal body through which he discovers his unique subjectivity. In naming the animals and tilling the earth, man performs specifically *personal* actions *through* his body. *Through his body* man discovers that he is different from the animals and thus "alone." Furthermore, in being

"alone" he is constituted in a unique and unrepeatable relationship with God himself.<sup>18</sup>

The experience of "original unity" is denoted with the verse, "A man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh" (Gn 2:24). This experience is logically subsequent to the experience of "original solitude." In the second account of creation, the experience of "original solitude" comes before the creation of woman. That "man is either male or female" presupposes that "man is a body." Thus, "original solitude," in which man experiences that he is a person through his body, is proper to man as such, not to man insofar as he is male or female. In the creation of woman, God uses the "rib" to illustrate that both male and female share the same humanity. In "original unity," the male and female in their sexual duality experience a unity realized *through* the body: the two will become one flesh. The unity realized *through the body* indicates an "incarnate" communion of persons. The experience of "original solitude," that man is alone, a person needing to be fulfilled in relationship, leads to the unity of persons, to a communion of persons: the man is for the woman and the woman is for the man.<sup>19</sup>

God did not create man a solitary being. From the beginning "male and female he created them" (Gen. 1:12). This partnership of man and woman constitutes the first form of communion between persons. For by his innermost nature man is a social being; and if he does not enter into relations with others he can neither live nor develop his gifts.<sup>20</sup>

This communion of persons formed by the man and woman illustrates their creation in the image of God who is the communion of persons.

The narrative of the creation of man, in the first chapter, affirms right from the beginning and directly that man was created in the image of God as male and female. The narrative of the second chapter, on the other hand, does not speak of the "image of God"; but it reveals, in its own way, that the complete and definitive creation of "man" (subjected first to the experience of original solitude) is expressed in giving life to that *communio personarum* that man and woman form. In this way, the Yahwist narrative agrees with the content of the first narrative.<sup>21</sup>

The experience "original nakedness" is denoted with the verse, "The man and his wife were both naked, and they were not ashamed" (Gn 2:25). Shame is an experience of fear, the fear of being diminished by others, of being regarded as an object. In contrast, the man and woman are not ashamed. When the man and woman gaze upon the masculinity or femininity of the other, they see not an object to be taken or used, but rather a subject, a person who exists as a gift for the other. Here the experience of the body, in its masculinity and femininity, discloses man in his subjectivity, as a person, as a gift for the other.<sup>22</sup>

At the basis of "original solitude," "original unity," and "original nakedness," lies the meaning of gift, or as John Paul says, "the hermeneutics of the gift." All of these experiences disclose man as a gift and his fulfillment in being a gift for the other. This is seen in the very notion of creation itself. Man experiences creation as a gift, a radical giving in which the gift comes to be from nothingness. Only Love can explain God's motive in creating. Then, this radical giving in creation discloses Love. If, then, creation is a gift, if man is a gift, inscribed in his very being

is his fulfillment in being a gift in love for the other.<sup>23</sup>

When God Yahweh says that "it is not good that man should be alone" (Gn 2:12), He affirms that "alone," man does not fully realize this essence. He realizes it only by existing "with someone" — and even more deeply and completely: by existing "for someone."<sup>24</sup>

Thus is illustrated the fulfillment of man's original solitude in a communion of persons — a relationship of mutual gift — man's existing in a mutual "for." Remember, man's experience of gift is disclosed through the body.

This brings us to the experience of "the nuptial meaning of the body," in fact, the very experience discussed in the audience that *Donum Vitae* cites. First of all, the "meaning of the body" refers to the way the body is experienced. The "nuptial meaning of the body" refers to the experience of the body's capacity for expressing love in which man becomes a gift. "this is the body: a witness to creation as a fundamental gift, and so a witness to Love as the source from which this same giving springs."<sup>25</sup>

The human body, with its sex, and in its masculinity and femininity seen in the very mystery of creation, is not only a source of fruitfulness and procreation, as in the whole natural order, but includes right "from the beginning" the "nuptial" attribute, that is, the capacity of expressing love: that love precisely in which the man-person becomes a gift and — by means of this gift — fulfills the very meaning of his being and existence.<sup>26</sup>

This does not mean that procreation is cast aside, however. Rather, procreation is caught up in the expression of love and given a personal dimension. Fertility, as a truth of the human body and therefore of the person, is embraced by the man and woman in their mutual self-giving. Just as creation is a gift which can only be explained by God's love, so the coming to be of a new human person flows from the spouses' mutual self-giving in love and from God's giving in creating. Therefore, human procreation in God's plan does not come about by mere instinct as in the animal world, but by the free giving of persons. Here in procreation, the body once again is indicative of man's subjectivity, his personhood, and his self-giving in a communion of persons.<sup>27</sup>

We can now examine the meaning of "the language of the body" and how this language supports the teaching of *Donum Vitae*. John Paul says that the

human body is not merely an organism of sexual relations, but it is, at the same time, the means of expressing the entire man, the person, which reveals itself by means of the "language of the body."<sup>28</sup>

In their conjugal relations, the husband and wife, through their bodies, are to express who they are as persons. The mutual self-gift of their bodies is to "speak" of the mutual self-gift of themselves in love. This "language" indicates the truth of the person, that the person is a gift, that he fulfills himself by giving himself in love. Furthermore, fertility is an integral part of this self-gift. Thus, when a new person comes to be, his truth, as a gift to be fulfilled by self-giving in love, is "spoken" by the "language of the body" in the spouses' mutual self-gift in love. The "language of the body" reveals the dignity and truth of the new person conceived: man is a gift who fulfills himself by self-giving in love. Already the manner in which the child comes to be should illumine his own

fulfillment in this self-giving.

In the various fundamental experiences that we have just briefly examined, we note the importance of the body. In fact, man experiences all these truths *through the body*. In this way the body has a "language;" it "speaks." The "language of the body" has revealed to us man and woman as communion of persons in love. Furthermore, the "language of the body" has revealed to us man and woman as an image of God precisely in this dimension of being a communion of persons. As God exists as a communion of persons, our coming to be in his image should flow from a communion of persons, the self-giving of the man and woman in love. Thus, the "language of the body" speaks the truth of man as an image of God, that he is to come to be from a communion of persons and that he fulfills himself in love by entering into a communion of persons.

Therefore, we can see that replacing the marital act with a technical means violates the truth of man spoken by the "language of the body." A technical means cannot speak man's truth as a person, as a gift to be fulfilled by self-giving in love. A technical means cannot speak man's truth as an image of God insofar as he is a person who is to fulfill himself by entering into a communion of persons. Instead, the interior logic of a technical means, as we have already seen, considers man as something to be produced, an object of domination.

### *C. The Inseparability of the Two Meanings of the Marital Act*

This last line of argument sums up and draws together the first two. Because the two meanings of the marital act are inseparable, if one meaning is suppressed, the other is deformed.<sup>29</sup> An act of contraception suppresses the procreative meaning and thus deforms the unitive meaning. Procreation apart from the marital act suppresses the unitive meaning and thus deforms the meaning of procreation.

[F]rom the moral point of view procreation is deprived of its proper perfection when it is not desired as the fruit of the conjugal act, that is to say of the specific act of the spouses' union.<sup>30</sup>

In an act of contraception the procreative meaning is denied. An act of contraception is

any action, which either before, at the moment of, or after sexual intercourse, is specifically intended to prevent procreation - whether as an end or as a means.<sup>31</sup>

Nonetheless, such an action also deforms the unitive meaning of the marital act,<sup>32</sup> even though the man and woman may not be conscious of deforming the unitive meaning. We can see how the unitive meaning is deformed in a contraceptive act by noting three truths. (1) One of the meanings of the marital act is an expression of marital love (the unitive meaning). (2) Marital love is meant to be total and unconditional. This is seen even in the consent the parties express when contracting marriage: "I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life."<sup>33</sup> (3) Our bodies are an integral part of who we are. Just ask someone if there is a difference between cutting off a sleeve of his sweater and cutting off his arm. "Of course there is a difference, my arm is a part of me!" When a couple decides to



contracept, they have the direct intention to suppress their fertility. Yet if their body is a part of who they are, so is their fertility. By suppressing their fertility they suppress part of who they are. They fail to give and accept that part of oneself and the other. This then, distorts the unitive meaning of the marital act, which is meant to be expressive of a total and unconditional love. By refusing to give part of oneself or refusing to accept part of the other, they undermine a total and unconditional love. Therefore, by suppressing the procreative meaning of the marital act, the unitive meaning is deformed.

Similarly, by suppressing the unitive meaning or excluding the marital act altogether, the meaning of procreation is deformed. We can see how procreation is deformed when it occurs apart from the unitive meaning of the marital act by noting several truths of procreation that we have examined already. (1) The child who comes to be is a person equal in dignity to his parents. (2) A new human life is a gift from God that crowns the sexual self-gift of the spouses. (3) A human person exists for his own sake; he is not a product made for the sake of his parents. (4) The marital act discloses the truth of the human person as an image of God, as a gift who fulfills himself by self-giving in love in a communion of persons. Thus, the child should come to be in a manner that illustrates this truth.

What happens to the meaning of procreation when it is separated from the marital act? In such a separation, the meaning of procreation is deformed in several ways which have already been alluded to above. (1) The child is not viewed as a person equal in dignity to his parents: procreation becomes a process of domination in which the child is placed in a position inferior to his parents. (2) Instead of viewing new life as a gift from God, procreation becomes a manufacturing process. What may be produced for the couple by a technical means is not a gift. If a couple hires a carpenter to build a house for them, is the house a gift? (3) Instead of upholding the dignity of a child who exists for his own sake, the child exists for the sake of the parents. What is produced by a technical means is dominated by its producer and does not exist for its own sake but for the sake of the producer. (4) The manner in which the child comes to be does not disclose the truth of his being. Instead of viewing procreation as a gift crowning the irreplaceable personal self-gift of the spouses to one another, procreation becomes an impersonal process. It does not matter who employs the technical process, provided that he has the requisite skills. Therefore, such a procedure cannot be the expression of the unique truth about man. Such a procedure cannot disclose the truth of the human person as an image of God, as a gift who fulfills himself by self-giving in love in a communion of persons. As we saw in the discussion of the "language of the body," a child should come to be in a manner that discloses the truth of his being.

### III. GIFT: The Procedure

Because the acronym GIFT has been used to describe many procedures,<sup>34</sup> the procedure in question must be specified before an evaluation can be offered. I outline here basic elements of GIFT as considered in this essay. (1) Ova are collected from the wife through laparoscopy after ovarian hyperstimulation. (2)

Semen is collected from the husband by using a perforated condom or silastic sheath during intercourse, or it is collected from the vagina or cervix after intercourse. (3) The sperm are processed by "washing" to remove prostaglandins and antibodies and by centrifugation and dilution so that there are 100,000 in 25 ul of fluid. (4) The ova and processed sperm are placed in a catheter separated by an air bubble or culture medium. (5) The catheter is inserted into the fimbriated end of the fallopian tube of the wife and the contents deposited there. (6) If successful, conception will then take place in the fallopian tube.<sup>35</sup> This is meant to be a general, not a detailed description of the procedure.

#### IV. Does GIFT Assist or Replace the Marital Act?

##### A. GIFT assists the marital act.

Some argue that GIFT assists the marital act.<sup>36</sup> One primary element in their argument is that GIFT employed as described above involves a marital act open to life.

What is ethically essential, then, is that between the two spouses there be a true and proper conjugal act . . .

From the ethical point of view, once *this act* has been posited, *nothing else is required of the two spouses*. Any subsequent recourse they may have to some artificial intervention amounts, therefore, to giving assistance to *the procreative act* which, insofar as it is a human act, *has already in itself been completed*.<sup>37</sup>

Therefore, any other technical procedure such as GIFT assists the marital act. GIFT would replace the marital act when masturbation is used to retrieve sperm to be used. However, when a perforated condom or silastic sheath is used to retrieve the sperm, there remains a marital act open to life. GIFT serves only to assist that act.<sup>38</sup>

Furthermore, because fertilization occurs in the normal place, that is, within the woman's body in the fallopian tube, GIFT helps the marital act to reach its natural outcome. All that is involved is a repositioning of the gametes so that conception can occur where it normally does, in the fallopian tube. When GIFT is employed, there is usually some obstacle which makes it difficult for the gametes to meet and thus for fertilization to occur. Repositioning the gametes simply helps the true and proper marital act to overcome that obstacle and reach its natural outcome. The natural process of the marital act is aimed at bringing about the conditions in which fertilization can occur by bringing the gametes together in the fallopian tube. GIFT aims at the same outcome. In fact, it helps the marital act to attain it. Repositioning the gametes helps the marital act overcome the obstacles that stand in the way of this natural process.<sup>39</sup> As we saw above in our discussion of *Donum Vitae*, a technical means can be good if it helps the marital act achieve its natural purpose. GIFT does just that.

An objection has been raised that the number of interventions involved in GIFT breaks the link between procreation and the marital act.

With all the procedures which intervene between intercourse and conception in GIFT an integral link between the marital act and procreation is lost. In other words, there is no

longer an inherent, necessary and intelligible link between the marriage act and procreation.<sup>40</sup>

There are several interventions in GIFT: collecting the sperm in a perforated condom or silastic sheath, collecting the ova, placing the gametes in a catheter, etc. However, the number of interventions is irrelevant. There are no objective criteria by which one can determine what can be the maximum number of interventions without breaking the unity between the marital act and procreation. What is important, though, is that the interventions, no matter how many, do not replace the marital act.<sup>41</sup>

### *B. GIFT replaces the marital act.*

Though the arguments that GIFT assists the marital act are not without merit, a further examination shows that GIFT does indeed replace the marital act. If GIFT can be performed without the marital act when sperm is collected in another way, for example through masturbation, it seems that the marital act is really not necessary for GIFT.<sup>42</sup>

It is true that conjugal intercourse is performed by husband and wife in GIFT. However, the marital act seems principally the means for gathering or harvesting gametes rather than engendering new life.<sup>43</sup>

One could then say that GIFT replaces the marital act and that the marital act assists GIFT insofar as it is simply a way of supplying sperm. However, when performed with a marital act open to the possibility of new life, the matter is more confused. In order to show that GIFT replaces the marital act, one must show that any child conceived is the fruit of the technical procedure more than the marital act.

*Donum Vitae* says that the child conceived must be the fruit of the marital act.

Only respect for the link between the meanings of the conjugal act and respect for the unity of the human being make possible procreation in conformity with the dignity of the person. In his unique and unrepeatable origin, the child must be respected and recognized as equal in personal dignity to those who give him life. The human person must be accepted in his parents' act of union and love; the generation of a child *must therefore be the fruit of that mutual giving* which is realized in the conjugal act wherein the spouses cooperate as servants and not as masters in the work of the Creator who is love.<sup>44</sup>

When Caffarra sets forth his criterion to determine whether a technical means assists or replaces the marital act, he overlooks this requirement. It is not simply enough that there be a proper and true marital act open to life, a child conceived must also be the fruit of that act. Therefore, if there is a true and proper marital act open to life, and if a child conceived is the fruit of the marital act, then the technical means assists the marital act.<sup>45</sup>

To determine, then, whether GIFT assists or replaces the marital act, we must turn our attention to causality, namely efficient causality. Both the natural process of the marital act and GIFT aim at the same effect: to bring about the conditions in which a new human life can come to be. *Donum Vitae* speaks of the child as the fruit of the marital act. Truly, a child conceived is not caused by the marital act. As mentioned above, the child is a gift that crowns the self-giving of

the husband and wife. Thus, the efficient causality of the marital act with respect to conception is best described as bringing about the conditions in which a new human life can come to be.

When GIFT is used, both the marital act and the technical means are efficient causes of bringing about the conditions in which a new human life can come to be. So how do we determine whether GIFT assists or replaces marital act? We must distinguish between an assisting cause and a principal cause. An assisting cause plays a subordinate role in bringing about the effect.<sup>46</sup> Of course, the principal cause plays the primary role in bringing about the effect. Let us take an example from sports. Soccer player "A" kicks the ball down field, and then the ball comes to a standstill on the field. Soccer player "B" then takes the ball and kicks it toward the goal and scores. Who is the primary cause of the goal and who assisted? In this case we can see clearly that player "B" scored the goal. He is the principal cause. Player "A" assisted him by placing the ball in a place on the field from which player "B" could score.<sup>47</sup>

In a way analogous to this soccer example, the technical means of GIFT takes on the role of the principal cause of bringing about the conditions in which a new human life can come to be. Just as the last player who kicked the ball scored the goal, "it is the intervention and activity of the medical staff alone which initiates anew, and from itself, the process that leads to fertilization."<sup>48</sup> The marital act plays a subordinate role. It merely provides the sperm, material for the medical staff to carry out the procedure. The technical procedure plays the primary role. It supplies the causal action which brings about the conditions in which a new human life can come to be. Though both the marital act and GIFT serve to bring about the conditions in which a new human life can come to be, the technical intervention is primarily responsible. In this way, GIFT *replaces* the marital act. A child who may come to be is more the fruit of the technical intervention than the marital act.

### V. Conclusion: "GIFT" is not a Gift.

Because GIFT replaces the marital act, it cannot be good. If spouses were to choose this procedure, they would be choosing to "produce" a child by a technical means that treats the child as an object to be produced, inferior to and dominated by its makers. Such a procedure is contrary the child's dignity. Furthermore, unlike the marital act, GIFT cannot disclose the unique truth of the child conceived. Because GIFT is a series of transitive actions performed by technicians, it cannot reveal that the child is person in the image of God. It cannot reveal that the child fulfills himself by self-giving in a communion of persons. It cannot reveal that the child is a gift from God. GIFT cannot reveal the truth of the child as a gift. GIFT is not a gift.

For those who may long for a child and have difficulty conceiving, it is important to surrender to the Loving Providence of our Father. When I was a high school student, I had the privilege of meeting many fine people through youth retreats. I think now of two such people who eventually married. Children

had always been the great joy of the woman's life, and she and her husband longed for children of their own. Great was their angst when they had difficulty conceiving. They underwent surgeries to help, all to no avail. However, two precious boys have become the joy of their life. They adopted two handicapped boys that others did not want. I have often been inspired by the love and sacrifice they offer their children, truly a blessing, but a blessing that probably never would have happened had they children of their own. How great is Providence that this opportunity has been provided to this couple. Truly they welcome their children as a gift.

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2. Bartholomew Kiely, Press conference, in *Origins* 16, no. 40 (1986-1987) marginal notes, 699-700.
3. *Donum Vitae*, II, B., no. 4: AAS 80 (1988) 91. "[E]afecundation licite appetitur, quare manat ex actu coniugali qui natura sua aptus sit 'ad prolis generationem, as quem natura sua ordinator matrimonium, et quo coniuges fiunt una caro'. Eadem vero procreatio tunc debita perfectione destituitur sub aspectu morali, cum animo non intenditur ut fructus coniugalis actus seu illius gestus qui est proprius unionis coniugum." Translation from *Origins* 16, no. 40 (1986-1987) 706. The internal citation is to the *Code of Canon Law*, c. 1061.
4. *Ibid.*, II, B., no. 6: AAS 80 (1988) 94. "admitti neguit, excepto casu in quo apparatus technicus non sit substitutivus actus coniugalis, sed se praebeat ut adiumentum ad naturalem eius finem facilius assequendum." Translation from *Origins* 16, no. 40 (1986-1987) 707.
5. Donald T. DeMarco, "Catholic Moral Teaching and TOT/GIFT," in *Reproductive Technologies, Marriage and the Church* (Braintree, MA: The Pope John XXIII Medical-Moral Research Center, 1988) 124.
6. *Donum Vitae*, II, B., no. 4: AAS 80 (1988) 90-92; and William E. May, "Begotten Not Made": Catholic Teaching on the Laboratory Generation of Human Life," Chap. in *Marriage: The Rock on Which the Family is Built* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995) 89-90.
7. *Donum Vitae*, II., B., no. 4: AAS 80 (1988) 91. "In sus origine, quae unica est atque iterari nequit, filius, quoad dignitatem personae, oportet honoretur et agnoscatur aequalis iis, qui ei vitam largiuntur." Translation from *Origins* 16, no. 40 (1986-1987) 706.
8. May, 95-96.
9. *Ibid.*, 95.
10. Bartolomew Kiely, SJ, "Contraception, In Vitro Fertilization and the Principle of Inseparability," in "*Humanae Vitae*": 20 Anni Dopo: Atti del Congresso Internazionale di Teologia Morale (Roma, 9-12 novembre 1988) (Milan: Edizioni Ares, 1989) 330.
11. May, 96.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world *Gaudium et spes*, 7 December 1965, no. 49: AAS 58 (1966) 1070. "Haec dilectio proprio matrimonii opere singulariter exprimitur et perficitur. Actus proinde, quibus coniuges intime et caste inter se uniuntur, honesti ac digni sunt et, modo vere humano exerciti, donationem mutuam significant et fovent, qua sese invicem laeto gratoque animo locupletant." Translation from Austin Flannery, OP, ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1980) 1: 952.
14. May, 95.
15. *Ibid.*, 96.
16. The audiences dedicated to these themes spanned several years: from 5 September 1979 to 28 November 1984. They are published in English in four volumes: *Original Unity of Man and Woman: Catechesis on the Book of Genesis* (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1981); *Blessed Are the Pure of Heart: Catechesis on the Sermon on the Mount and Writings of St. Paul* (Boston: St. Paul

Editions, 1983); *The Theology of Marriage and Celibacy: Catechesis on Marriage and Celibacy in Light of the Resurrection of the Body* (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1986); and *Reflections on Humanae Vitae: Conjugal Morality and Spirituality* (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1984). For a more thorough presentation of the anthropology of these catecheses, see Lorenzo Albacete, "Younger than sin," *Communio* 22 (1995) 593-612.

17. All Scripture passages are quoted from *The Revised Standard Version: Catholic Edition*.

18. John Paul II, General audience, 10 October 1979 and 24 October 1979: in *Original Unity*, 43-54.

19. John Paul II, General audience, 7 November 1979 and 14 November 1979, in *Original Unity*, 61-77.

20. *Gaudium Et Spes*, no. 12: AAS 58 (1966) 1034. "At Deus non creavit hominem solum: nam inde a primordiis "masculum et feminam creavit eos" (Gen. 1, 27), quorum consociatio primam formam efficit communionis personarum. Homo etenim ex intima sua natura ens sociale est, atque sine relationibus cum aliis nec vivere nec sua dotes expandere potest." Translation from Flannery, 1:913-114.

21. John Paul II, General audience, 14 November 1979, in *Original Unity*, 73.

22. John Paul II, General audience, 12 December 1979, 19 December 1979, and 2 January 1980, in *Original Unity*, 85-105.

23. John Paul II, General audience, 2 January 1980, in *Original Unity*, 102-105.

24. John Paul II, General audience, 9 January 1980, in *Original Unity*, 107. Emphasis original.

25. *Ibid.*, 110.

26. John Paul II, General audience, 16 January 1980, in *Original Unity*, 114.

27. John Paul II, General audience, 9 January 1980, in *Original Unity*, 111-112.

28. John Paul II, General audience, 22 August 1984, in *Reflections on Humanae Vitae*, 30.

29. Kiely, "Principle of Inseparability," 329-330.

30. *Donum Vitae*, ii., B., no. 4: AAS 80 (1988) 91. "Eadem vero procreatio tunc debita sua perfectione destituitur sub aspectu morali, cum animo non intenditur ut fructus coniugalis actus seu illius gestus qui est proprius unionis coniugum." Translation from *Origins* 16, no. 40 (1986-1987) 706.

31. Paul VI, encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, 25 July 1968, no. 14: AAS 60 (1968) 490. "actus, qui, cum coniugale commercium vel praevidetur vel efficitur vel as suos naturales exitus ducit, id tamquam finem obtinendum aut viam adhibendum intendat, ut procreatio impeditur." Translation from Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II: More Post Conciliar Documents* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1982) 2: 404.

32. John Paul II, apostolic exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*, 22 November 1981, no. 32: AAS 74 (1982) 119.

33. Sacred Congregation of Rites, Ordo Celebrandi Matrimonium, 19 March 1969, Editio Typica (Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1972) no. 25. "promitto me tibi fidem servaturum, inter prospera et adversa, in aegra et in sana valetudine, ut te diligam et honorem omnibus diebus vitae meae." Translation from *The Rites of the Catholic Church* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1990) 1:727.

34. Nicholas Tonti-Filippini, "'Donum Vitae' and Gamete Intra-Fallopian Tube Transfer," in "Humanae Vitae": 20 Anni Dopo: *Atti del Congresso Internazionale di Teologia Morale (Roma, 9-12 novembre 1988)* (Milan: Edizioni Ares, 1989) 791-793.

35. Tonti-Filippini, 791; and John M. Haas, "GIFT? No!" *Ethics and Medics* 18, no. 9 (1993) 1.

36. Peter J. Cataldo, "Reproductive Technologies," *Ethics and Medics* 21, no. 1 (1996) 1-3; Lloyd W. Hess, "Assisting the Infertile Couple," *Ethics and Medics* 11, no. 2 (1986) 2-4; Donald McCarthy, "Gift? Yes!!" *Ethics and Medics* 18, no. 9 (1993) 3-4; *idem.*, "Response," in *Reproductive Technologies, Marriage and the Church* (Braintree, MA: The Pope John XXIII Medical-Moral Research Center, 1988) 140-145; *idem.*, "TOTS is for Kids," *Ethics and Medics* 13, no. 12 (1988) 1-2.

37. Carlo Caffarra, "The Moral Problem of Artificial Insemination," *Linacre Quarterly* 55, no. 1 (1988) 42. Emphasis original. I should note that Caffarra does not discuss GIFT in this article. His concern here is artificial insemination. Nonetheless, he sets forth a criterion for judging whether a procedure assists or replaces the marital act. Applying this criterion, namely that there be a true and proper marital act, to GIFT, one draws the conclusion that GIFT assists and does not replace the

marital act. Employing GIFT is a subsequent recourse to an artificial intervention that, judging by Caffarra's criterion, would assist the already posited marital act.

38. McCarthy, "TOTS is for Kids," 2; idem., "Gift? Yes!," 3-4; Cataldo, 2; Hess, 3-4.
  39. McCarthy, "Response," 142; idem., "GIFT? Yes!," 4; Hess, 4.
  40. Haas, 2.
  41. Cataldo, 2-3.
  42. DeMarco, 133.
  43. Haas, 2.
  44. *Donum Vitae*, II., B., no. 4: AAS 80 (1988) 91-92. Emphasis mine. "praeterea solummodo observantia erga vinculum quod inter significationes actus coniugalis intercedit, et observantia erga viventis humani unitatem id efficiunt, ut procreatio habeatur, quae unica est atque iterari nequit, filius, quoad dignitatem personae, oportet honoretur et agnoscatur aequalis ei, qui ei vitam largiuntur. Persona humana excipienda est per gestum unionis et amoris suorum parentum; ac proinde filii generation oportet sit mutuae donationis fructus, quae comitatur actum coniugalem, in quo quidem coniuges non tamquam domini, sed servorum instar operi Amoris Creatoris sociantur." Translation from *Origins* 16, no. 40 (1986-1987) 706.
  45. Tonti-Filippini, 797-798.
  46. Josef Seifert, "Substitution of the Conjugal Act or Assistance to It? IVF, GIFT, and Some Other Medical Interventions. Philosophical Reflections on the Vatican Declaration "Donum Vitae"," *Anthropotes* 4 (1988) 279.
  47. *Ibid.*, 285.
  48. *Ibid.*
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