



The Suffering Caused by Infertility in Marriage - The suffering of spouses who cannot have children or who are afraid of bringing a handicapped child into the world is a suffering that everyone must understand and properly evaluate. On the part of the spouses, the desire for a child is natural: it expresses the vocation to fatherhood and motherhood inscribed in conjugal love. This desire can be even stronger if the couple is affected by sterility which appears incurable. Nevertheless, marriage does not confer upon the spouses the right to have a child, but only the right to perform those natural acts which are per se ordered to procreation. A true and proper right to a child would be contrary to the child's dignity and nature. The child is not an object to which one has a right, nor can he be considered as an object of ownership: rather, a child is a gift, "the supreme gift" and the most gratuitous gift of marriage, and is a living testimony of the mutual giving of his parents. For this reason, the child has the right, as already mentioned, to be the fruit of the specific act of the conjugal love of his parents; and he also has the right to be respected as a person from the moment of his conception. Nevertheless, whatever its cause or prognosis, sterility is certainly a difficult trial. The community of believers is called to shed light upon and support the suffering of those who are unable to fulfill their legitimate aspiration to motherhood and fatherhood. Spouses who find themselves in this sad situation are called to find in it an opportunity for sharing in a particular way in the Lord's cross, the source of spiritual fruitfulness. Sterile couples must not forget that "even when procreation is not possible, conjugal life does not for this reason lose its value. Physical sterility in fact can be for spouses the occasion for other important services in the life of the human person, for example adoption, various forms of educational work, and assistance to other families and to poor or handicapped children." (cin.org/vatcong/donumvit.html)

Natural Family Planning (NFP) is fertility awareness that is simple, scientific, and reliable. It is basic knowledge that can be used either to achieve a pregnancy or to avoid a pregnancy when there are serious reasons for doing so. Many people don't realize, however, that there are different methods of NFP—all of which are in harmony with Church teaching. The most widely used methods include the Sympto-Thermal Method, Creighton Model, Ovulation Method, and Marquette Model. Each has different levels of instruction and different physical observations. Please refer to archindy.org/prolife/ministry-nfp.html for additional information.

In order to understand Catholic teaching on infertility, please read the following sections of the Catechism:

2366-2372 - the fruitfulness of marriage

2373-2379 - the gift of the child

2375-2377 - the subject of infertility & medical techniques

2376 - a discussion on the immorality of artificial insemination

2374 - the suffering of infertility

Suggested Monthly Penance

Turn off the radio while driving & pray the rosary for those suffering from infertility during your drive time.

Patron Saints of Infertility

St. Colette - Was baptized Nicolette because her mother prayed to St. Nicholas and gave birth to Colette at the age of 60. She is also patron saint to expectant mothers and sick children because of miracles credited to her.

St. Philomena - Her mother was barren until her parents became Christian and were baptized. They named her Filumena, meaning "Daughter of Light" because she was "born to the Faith".

St. Felicity of Rome - Because she had 7 sons and watched them all being martyred. She also was martyred.

Infertility in Scripture

1 Samuel - Hannah's prayers are answered with a son whom she gives to the Lord

Judges 13 - Manoah's wife though barren conceives and bears a son who will deliver Israel from the Philistines

Genesis 17 - Abraham and Sarah are promised a son whom God will maintain His covenant

Luke 1 - Elizabeth, barren and advanced in years, will bear a son

Monthly Prayer

Blessed Mother,

For reasons unknown to them, many married couples suffer from infertility. Guide them to seek help according to Catholic teachings.

Grant them strength of mind, body, and spirit to endure the trials before them. Comfort them that they may accept the reality of their situation. Open their hearts to adoption and service to children who need a loving mother, a loving father, and a stable home. And through it all, may they feel your loving arms wrapped around them.

Through the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, we pray.

Amen.

Our Lady, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, pray for us.