



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II

TO THE MEMBERS

OF THE PONTIFICAL ACADEMY FOR LIFE *Saturday, 21 February 2004*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

1. I am pleased to be able to personally meet all of you, members of the Pontifical Academy for Life, on this special occasion when you are celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Academy's foundation. You are commemorating all the people who contributed to its birth, with a special thought for the distinguished and meritorious Prof. Jérôme Lejeune, your first President, whose memory I cherish with gratitude and love.

I thank Prof. Juan de Dios Vial Correa, President, for his kind words, and I also greet the Vice-President, Bishop Elio Sgreccia, and the members of the Administrative Council, expressing to one and all my appreciation for the great dedication with which you support the Academy's activity.

2. You are now taking part in two "Study Days" devoted to the topic of artificial procreation. The subject is proving full of serious problems and implications which deserve careful examination. Essential values are at stake, not only for the Christian faithful but also for human beings as such.

What emerges ever more clearly in the procreation of a new creature is its *indispensable bond* with spousal union, by which the husband becomes a father through the conjugal union with his wife, and the wife becomes a mother through the conjugal union with her husband. The Creator's plan is *engraved in the physical and spiritual nature* of the man and of the woman, and as such has universal value.

The act in which the spouses become parents through the reciprocal and total gift of themselves makes them cooperators with the Creator in bringing into the world a new human being called to eternal life. An act so rich that it transcends even the life of the parents cannot be replaced by a mere technological intervention, depleted of human value and at the mercy of the determinism of technological and instrumental procedures.

3. Rather, it is the scientist's task to *investigate the causes of male and female infertility*, in order to prevent this situation of suffering in spouses who long to find "in their child a confirmation and completion of their reciprocal self-giving" (*Donum Vitae*, II, A, n. 1). Consequently, I would like to *encourage scientific research that seeks a natural way to overcome the infertility of the spouses*, and likewise to urge all specialists to perfect those procedures that can serve this end. I hope that the scientific community - I appeal particularly to those scientists who are believers - may advance reassuringly on the road to true prevention and authentic treatment.

4. The Pontifical Academy for Life will not fail to do everything in its power to encourage every valid initiative which aims to avoid the dangerous manipulation that is part of the processes of artificial procreation.

May the community of the faithful itself strive to support authentic research channels and, when making decisions, resist technological possibilities that replace true parenthood and is therefore harmful to the dignity of both parents and children.

In support of these wishes, I cordially impart my Blessing to you all, which I willingly extend to all your loved ones.