

# Surrogacy is an Injustice to All Involved, Bishop Barron Says in Support of Pope Francis

Bishop Robert Barron of Winona-Rochester, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth, issued this reflection in support of the Holy Father's recent remarks to the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See, which included a specific mention of the harms of surrogacy.

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“Pope Francis strongly condemned the practice of surrogacy calling it ‘a grave violation of the dignity of the woman and the child.’ He emphasized that a child is a gift and as such can ‘never (be) the basis of a commercial

contract.’ Surrogacy represents the commodification and instrumentalization of a woman’s body, treating her as a ‘carrier’ rather than a human person. And just as troubling is the fact that the child is reduced to terms of buying and selling as an object of human trafficking.

“The commercialization of women and children in surrogacy is underlined by the belief that there is a right to have a child. The child becomes an object for the fulfillment of one’s desires instead of a person to be cherished. In this way, the genuine right of the child to be conceived through the love of his or her parents is overlooked in favor of ‘the right to have a child by any means necessary.’ We must avoid this way of thinking and answer the call to respect human life, beginning with the unborn child.

“It might be the case that couples earnestly want to have children without resorting to surrogacy, but painful and even life-threatening medical obstacles make childbirth hazardous or impossible. The serious prospect of a life without biological children has been dismissed by some, but we have a responsibility to accompany these couples in their suffering. The Church teaches that married couples are not obliged to actually have children, but to be open to any life that might be the fruit of their union. The desire to utilize surrogacy might feel like the desire to form a family naturally, but no matter how well-intentioned, surrogacy always does grave injustice to the child, any discarded embryos (who are our fellow human beings), the commodified birth mother, and the loving union of the spouses.”

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