

*Through the promotion and practice of abortion, IVF, and surrogacy, vulnerable members of society are continually treated as expendable and women are treated as objects.*

## **Silent Sorrows:**

**Let's Talk About Abortion, Reproductive Technologies, and Adoption**

By Katherine Breckenridge

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# SILENT SORROWS

Let's Talk About Abortion,  
Reproductive Technologies, and Adoption



KATHERINE BRECKENRIDGE

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## **Chapter 1: The Intent of “Silent Sorrows”**

This book is partly intended for pro-life advocates who may be apathetic toward reproductive technologies or who simply don't think reproductive technologies involve important issues. In my experience, many people who are against abortion tend not to care about these issues, though they are just as important. This book is mostly aimed at getting pro-lifers to care more deeply about the harms and unethical practices of reproductive technologies, which are often seen through rose-colored glasses.

I am also writing to anyone who cares about the true meaning of marriage, pregnancy, and biological connection. Misunderstandings of these factors are causing our society to manufacture trauma in both adults and children. The common and related tragedies I've found among these areas are the destruction of life, the destruction of motherhood/fatherhood, the destruction of the nuclear family unit, and the breakdown of a functional, healthy society. IVF, surrogacy, abortion, and even adoption (in many circumstances) allow for so much less dignity and respect for women and children than they deserve. By the way, if my words about adoption trouble you—since it's often viewed as a positive thing, and certainly can be—research shows that many struggles that adoptees face are similar to those faced by persons whose biological bonds were in one way or another broken during the surrogacy and gamete-donation processes.

Why have so many societies all over the world collectively decided to keep pushing the belief that it's okay to kill a human being in his or her mother's womb? Why is it okay to play trial and error with human lives through IVF? Why is it okay to act as if the sacred gift of motherhood is relative and interchangeable? In a society so passionate about respecting the dignity of women, why are we okay with reducing women to egg

donors and our own personal incubators? Morality is not subjective. We don't get to manipulate natural law to fulfill our selfish yearnings. We don't get to intentionally cause trauma to fulfill our selfish inclinations. We don't get to use other human beings or kill them to fulfill our selfish desires. We can't claim to be an enlightened society when we view the lives of our most vulnerable members as expendable and continually treat women as objects.

It's now more vital than ever that each of us examine these issues, as the very ideas of "mother" and "father," even of "male" and "female," are quickly being thrown aside. The current world eagerly proclaims, "All kids need is love," and glorifies bodily autonomy over the lives of other human beings. These days, satisfying our own desires at the expense of all others is the name of the game.

This book is intended for everyone. Since I am a Christian, however, I address many of the issues here from a Christian perspective and often write with fellow Christians in mind. Please don't let that concern you if you embrace a different faith tradition, or none at all, as every truth-seeking human being should be able to find relevant truths within this book.

A word to fellow Christians right from the start: many of my citations are drawn from Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic sources, as my personal understanding of Christianity has been deeply and richly influenced by various voices from the Holy Tradition of the Ancient Church. Also, it's important for you to know that my sometimes-awkward theologizing should in no way be taken as "official" teachings of the Ancient Church, either Orthodox or Roman Catholic. However truthful my words about theological things may in fact be, I am a layperson with no official authority to speak on behalf of the Orthodox Church on authoritative doctrines.

Despite that, it's still my hope that all who call themselves Christians will find meaningful truths within this book, and,



above all, will discover convincing, logical, reasonable arguments, and persuasive exhortations to innate common sense—especially the powerful appeals to sound thinking expressed by women educated in the severe school of experience. As an example of an appeal to common sense—and let it underlie your thinking as you read the entire book—consider that when you go to a symphony and hear a sour note played, you don't need a deep understanding of music to know that something is off, and it affects how the whole symphony sounds. When we witness that which is contrary to the natural order—such as same-sex, biologically fruitless “marriage,” surrogacy, divorce, and other such distortions—we are gifted by God to be able to know the truth. As Cardinal John Henry Newman stated, “Conscience is the aboriginal Vicar of Christ.”<sup>1</sup> We innately know that something isn't quite right. Some are so deafened by the distortion that they just don't hear it. Others are too afraid to speak up over the sour music for fear of offending others who seem to be enjoying it. A few get it—that something isn't quite right, that something's out of tune with the melody—but they just don't care. They shrug their shoulders and walk away from the noise.

Tragically, we as human beings are easily misled, and many like to quiet their consciences until they're silent. As a result, these days too little of what really matters is obvious to too few. But speaking the truth, if one knows it, is usually preferable to silence, and doing so often takes courage. Our not speaking the truth and keeping quiet only because we don't want people thinking badly of us is seldom admirable, and it's often simply cowardly. Of course, there's a time and place for speaking the truth, but if your friends or coworkers are discussing how “pro-choice” they are, keeping silent will often look like acceptance of

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<sup>1</sup> John Henry Newman, *Letter to the Duke of Norfolk* (New York: The Catholic Publications Society, 1875), 73.

their views. As Martin Luther King Jr. said, “He who passively accepts evil is as much involved in it as he who helps to perpetrate it.”

Even more damaging than apathy is outright resistance to the reality that traditional mothers and fathers, joined in mutually self-giving love, are the foundation of the fully functional family unit. Acts which ignore this fact or seek to abolish it altogether, whether we care to admit it or not, are simply regressions of society—not progressions. Many in society forget our innate ability to discover, just by being human, how the world is supposed to be.

Before I go further, it’s important that I point out that this book focuses on *ideals*. There will always be departures from any ideal, but that does not diminish the validity of the ideal. We must always ask ourselves if what we are aiming to achieve is flowing toward God’s ideal. However, we must remember not to condemn people who fall short of any ideal, as we all fall short of ideals in some way every day of our lives. Of course, God can make good out of any situation, and with God, it’s always a matter of where we are right now, not where we’ve been. God’s right ordering of our lives, then, is always what we should be aiming to achieve. Therefore, please don’t take any of my words as condemnations of anyone, but as examples of ways in which we fall short, and as encouragement towards reaching more ideal solutions.

I’ve never experienced, as some of you may have, the extreme heartache of infertility, the crushing loss of miscarriage, the realization that I may never feel my baby kick inside of me, the reality that I will never get to develop that bond with my baby that begins *in utero*, or the feeling that I’m a broken man or woman because I can’t bear children. To those who have, please know that every single one of us as human beings is broken due to our fallen nature. But, we also all have immeasurable value and worth as human beings made in the image of God.

Certainly, the ability to carry and birth a child and the ability to father a child are traits specific to women and men. However, if it weren't for your suffering from some infertility issue, you *would* be able to reproduce, as you're still men and women by virtue of your biological makeup. You're no less of a man or a woman because of any disability you face. Your reproductive difficulty can no more stop you from being a man or woman than could diabetes or any other physically challenging condition.

Anyway, I know that it can be argued that since I've never actually experienced infertility, I have no idea how it feels, and that would be correct. I don't. That said, just as it's a false notion that men should have no opinion on abortion, it's equally false to say that any woman who hasn't faced reproductive tragedies and difficulties has no ability to notice—or any right to say—that certain reproductive technologies are inherently immoral. I've actually been fascinated by pregnancy ever since I was young. If someday I found out that I could never experience the maternal bond formed while conceiving, growing, and giving birth to a child who would be a totally unique combination of me and the man that I love, that would be heartbreaking. However, it's because I'm so fascinated by pregnancy, in fact, that I'm so incredibly disturbed by its misuse. Because of my own innate, maternal desire as a woman, I understand any woman's wanting to carry and give birth to her own child, and I understand her desire to see traits of herself and her husband in their children. But, because I love children so much, and because being a mother and father is so beautiful and important, I believe that those who are parents need to hold themselves to the highest standard for their children, and parenthood itself needs to be held to the highest standard for the good of children, and ultimately for the good of society. As Pope John Paul II stated in his "Letter to Families," "...If the family is so important for the civilization of love, it is because of the particular *closeness and intensity of the bonds* which come to be between persons and

generations within the family. However, the family remains *vulnerable* and can easily fall prey to dangers which weaken it or actually destroy its unity and stability. As a result of these dangers, families cease to be witnesses of the civilization of love and can even become a negation of it, a kind of *counter-sign*. A broken family can, for its part, consolidate a specific form of "anti-civilization", destroying love in its various expressions, with inevitable consequences for the whole of life in society."<sup>2</sup>

The stability of a society depends on a secure, solid, ideal moral foundation for the sake of all human beings, especially our children. Without a stable moral foundation, society falls apart. Morals exist to keep society functioning; they are the immune system that weeds out and prevents anarchy. If we don't uphold our morals, we maintain no sense of proper family dynamics at all, which, in turn, keeps our focus off of the family and the societal issues caused by familial breakdown. And from where do our morals come? Our tendency toward moral behaviors is largely intrinsic to us, a reflection of our creator's image on the mirror of our human nature. Our consciences are only in small part products of society, in great measure innate to all human beings, and our consciences exist regardless of whether or not we follow a religion, or even believe in God. We innately know that we should be respectful to others and help them. We know that it's wrong to kill another person. We know that it's wrong to intentionally cause harm to others.

We know that anything that purposely breaks down and distorts morals in our society makes the world extra hellish for us. This is partly why we're so driven to voluntary charity. Dark and light constantly feud in this world. Some believe in a struggle of good and evil, and that human sins cause a domino

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<sup>2</sup> Pope John Paul II. "Letter To Families." Libreria Editrice Vaticana. 1994. [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/1994/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_let\\_02021994\\_families.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/1994/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_02021994_families.html)

effect of increasing evil in the world; some would express it as something like what's called "Karma" in Far Eastern philosophies ("what you put out into the world will come back to you"). But human beings just know, deep down, that any disorientation of our innate moral compass inevitably shipwrecks us, or, if you like, always comes back to smack us right in the face. In the situations discussed in this book, we see that the consequences of bad decisions not only affect the adults but come back most severely on the children, which distorts society for generation after generation.

We often see phrases such as: "If you believe abortions are wrong, don't get one," and "If you believe gay marriage is unnatural, don't get gay-married." But preserving healthy moral order in society requires more of us than simply "not believing" in something.

Also, I don't in this book label same-sex-attracted persons by the titles "homosexual" or "gay/lesbian," for to do that defines same-sex-attracted people by only one of many inclinations. To identify a person's essence in this manner is too narrow a designation that does not totally describe his or her personhood. We are not our passions, afflictions, or inclinations, and they are not our essential identities. God loves us as we are, of course, however flawed, but in the abundance of that love He sees us always as the most fully perfected, Christ-like persons we could ever become, by His grace.

We must not distort our moral foundation or attempt to normalize distortion. This is exactly why children have begun to be treated as "things" instead of as human beings. This is how evil begins—when people start to be viewed as "things," which leads to the commodification, disposal, and objectification of humans.

When we don't have an ideal for the family structure, and when we have no moral consensus anymore, we have no idea of what's right or wrong and what affects children for good or for

ill. We get rid of everything that contributes to the development of well-balanced, functioning members of society. We simply become confused, as Christopher West illustrates:

*If I offered you a million-dollar bill and a counterfeit million-dollar bill, which would you prefer? Dumb question, I know. But what if you were raised in a culture that incessantly bombarded you with propaganda convincing you that counterfeit was the real thing and the real thing was a counterfeit? Might you be a little confused?<sup>3</sup>*

While there are routes other than the natural, conjugal way to parenthood that can be honorable, most cannot. We can only push against reality so much until it pushes back, and the world gives us many examples of why we need to *stop pushing it*.

This book heavily features the first-hand perspectives of the victims of these non-ideal situations. Some I received from people who wanted to express their pain; others I culled from various websites and social media. Many are cited anonymously as “Katie’s Quotes Project,” or “KQP” for short. These quotes are reproduced faithfully, with no corrections to spelling or grammar. Here’s a sneak peek of such stories:

*Amazing how genetics only matters one way. Adults are allowed to care very very much about genetics ...IVF users are allowed to sue over it and get news articles written about them when they're denied their rightful genetic heirs. But adopted and*

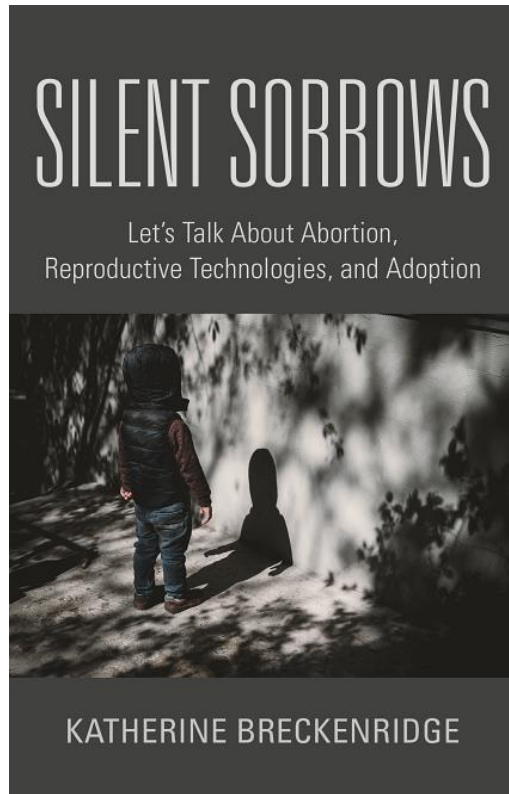
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<sup>3</sup> Christopher West, “What is the Theology of the Body?” The Crossroads Initiative website, February 9, 2016, <https://www.crossroadsinitiative.com/media/articles/what-is-the-theology-of-the-body-christopher-west/>.

*IVF children are \*expected\* to not care about genetics at all, ever, and told that we're selfish ungrateful little brats if we do care.<sup>4</sup>*

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<sup>4</sup> KQP.



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