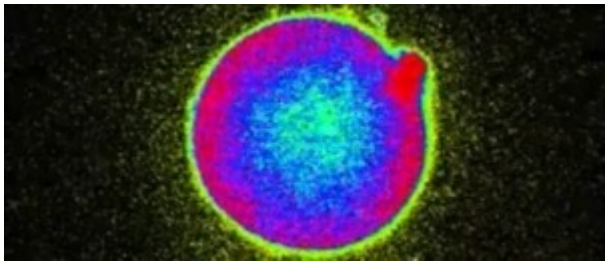
SPARKS EVIDENT AT FERTILIZATION



Bill Donohue comments on a new study by researchers at Northwestern University on what happens at conception:

The results of this study, published in *Scientific Reports,* are encouraging, but they are also cause for concern.

The researchers found that the moment the sperm and egg meet, they give off a bright flash of light. The microscopic zinc sparks are captured on video, providing graphic evidence of the beginning of human life. Due to legal restrictions, eggs were not fertilized with sperm; instead, they were injected with sperm enzyme.

This study is encouraging because it offers a birds-eye view of the "fireworks" that are emitted at the first stage of life, thus undercutting the pro-abortion position. After all, if conception is nothing more than the existence of "blobs," or "material," then how do the abortion-rights enthusiasts account for the light-emitting molecule probes that occur when the sperm and egg meet? Magic?

The researchers also found that the brighter the spark, the better the quality of the egg. This is cause for concern. As one of the senior researchers told the press, "This means if you can look at the zinc spark at the time of fertilization, you will know immediately which eggs are the good ones to transfer to in vitro fertilization."

So what are we going to do with the eggs that emit a low-intensity light? Discard them (the way we do now)? What if the spark is a false alarm? In other words, what if the bright

flash proves deceiving, and the parents subsequently learn that their baby is not Olympic healthy?

Science tells us what we can do—it does not tell us what to do. That’s where ethical guidelines are needed, and no institution has thought this issue through better than the Catholic Church. Embryos are not “stuff”—they are how we all began.