

Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (<https://www.ncronline.org>)

April 11, 2011 at 9:50am

Vatican paper praises fertility ethics of films

by Francis X. Rocca by Religion News Service

VATICAN CITY -- The official Vatican newspaper has praised two recent Hollywood movies for showing the ethical downsides of sperm donation.

In the lead article in the Saturday edition of *L'Osservatore Romano*, Carlo Bellieni writes in "When Cinema Tells the Truth" that the movies, both released in 2010, reflect "many doubts and misgivings" about fertility treatments that use sperm or eggs from anyone outside a married couple seeking to conceive. Such techniques are forbidden by the church.

In "The Back-Up Plan," Bellieni writes, Jennifer Lopez plays a woman who resorts to sperm donation "out of rage toward men," but who, "ironically and with great embarrassment, immediately afterwards finds love with the right man."

In "The Switch," starring Jennifer Aniston, a male friend of an expectant mother secretly substitutes his own semen for that of her designated donor.

"The film shows this man's regret for what he has done, not being able to tell the child that he is his father," Bellieni writes, "while the little one sadly collects photos of strangers to imagine a parent he doesn't have."

"This is filmmaking that does not condemn," he writes, "but effectively represents unease on an issue that is typically extolled by the media."

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