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My family and I went to Mass while staying with my extended family in Santa Barbara. We were expecting nothing out of the ordinary, nothing different from the Masses we attended back home. Only when we sat down at a pew did we notice them. They stood in front of us – parents, a daughter, two older sons, and a baby. The children were all as beautiful and blonde as their parents, standing side-by-side. We noticed nothing different about any of them – until the mother turned around, her baby in her arms. It was instantly apparent that the little girl had Down's Syndrome. She was still adorable, of course, but it made me consider what an effort it must have been to take care of her.

As Mass went on, the family did something that in hindsight seems incredible. The mother passed the baby to the father, and he held her for a while. Next, the oldest boy did the same, and then passed her to his brother. Finally, the daughter held her baby sister, just as everyone else had, with the same utter patience and responsibility. That scene has stuck with not only me but my entire family. Those people were so selfless to take care of that baby – especially the children. The baby must have taken up countless hours of their time, but none of them minded. They took her selflessly into their lives because she was their responsibility. They never considered the idea that they could not care for her, because to them, it *wasn't* an option.

How can anyone see their baby, living with a health problem or not, as an inconvenience? When people use abortion or birth control as an escape route for what they consider a 'mistake,' they are disrespecting the understanding between God and His people. Even if a baby is aborted after the emergence of a medical condition, it is not in the baby's best interest. We are created to live, for however long or short a time God plans. No matter who we are or what we do, we are all His creatures, and we deserve the life He gave us.

God created us to care for the Earth. By using abortion and birth control, we disregard His plan for the world, simply for our own convenience. How can we claim to teach the new generation respect for the Earth if we do not first respect ourselves, the Earth's guardians, not to mention the most helpless of citizens? Just because God *created* the world first does not mean that we must take care of it before we take care of ourselves. If He had thought humans would cause a problem environmentally, He would have warned us. Perhaps He would have refrained from creating us at all.

As a race, humans *do* need to come together to stop the destruction of the environment. That destruction, however, has nothing to do with the number of humans in the world. We are all God's creations, each and every one of us. *Nothing* about us makes us a mistake - not our beliefs, our gender, or any other excuse we attempt to use to distinguish the 'differences' between us. In God's eyes, we are all individuals, perfect as we are. If, after we are born, we do things that harm the Earth, we must work to fix those problems. We need to find a way to preserve the rainforests, to preserve wildlife, and to reduce our carbon footprint. None of those things should depend on a smaller population - or worse, thinning the population before birth. God sees what we do to the environment, and He is disappointed. When he sees us interfering with the creation of human beings, He must be horrified.