

BULLETIN NOTICES

RESPECT LIFE SUNDAY

Respect Life Sunday, 1st of October 2006

Today we are celebrating Respect Life Sunday. This is an opportunity to pray for greater love and respect for human life at every stage and in every condition. This year we are focusing upon the dignity of the human embryo, especially as Federal Parliament prepares to debate human cloning legislation.

A brochure, **THE HUMAN EMBRYO; someone or something?** has been distributed to Sydney parishes. Please take one home.

NOTICE ABOUT THE SISTERS OF LIFE

Building a Culture of Life

The Sisters of Life are a contemplative/ active religious community founded by John Cardinal O'Connor for the protection and enhancement of the sacredness of every human life. Their work includes practical assistance and spiritual and emotional support to pregnant women in crisis, a healing ministry to men and women who suffer after abortion, and education about life issues.

They will be speaking at:
St Benedict's Hall, University of Notre Dame
Wednesday, 27th of September, 7.30pm.

All are welcome. Suggested donation: \$5. For further information contact the LIFE OFFICE: 9390 5290 or go to www.lifeoffice.org.au

SERIES OF BULLETIN NOTICES FOR HUMAN CLONING

Resources on Human Cloning

Want to know more about the issue of human cloning?

www.lifeoffice.org.au the website of the Sydney Life Office

www.cloning.org.au the website of Do No Harm Australia.

www.stemcellresearch.org the website of Do No Harm USA.

Protect life, all human life!

Even though an embryo is smaller than the full stop at the end of this sentence, it is still a member of the human family. We were all once this small and, though incredibly vulnerable, protected in our mother's womb until we were born.

Human embryos, no matter how they came into being, are still human. Their age and size do not diminish their humanity in the same way that neither advanced age nor infirmity changes a person's dignity.

"The human being is to be respected and treated as a person from the moment of conception; and therefore from that same moment his rights as a person must be recognized, among which in the first place is the inviolable right of every innocent human being to life." [The Gift of Life. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith]

A cloned embryo is a human embryo

Whether beginning by fertilisation or by cloning, the single-cell human embryo has all the genetic material and power to direct its *own* growth and development *as a living human being*. Once formed, nothing other than nutrition, good health, the nurture of a woman's womb and time is needed for a human embryo to become a foetus, an infant, a child, and eventually an adult human being.

All human beings, from their mothers' womb, belong to God who searches them and knows them, who forms them and knits them together with his own hands, who gazes on them when they are tiny shapeless embryos and already sees in them the adults of tomorrow whose days are numbered and whose vocation is even now written in the "book of life" (cf. Ps 139: 1, 13-16). [John Paul II, The Gospel of Life]

Therapeutic or Reproductive cloning: Is there a difference?

Human cloning involves taking the nucleus of a human body cell, introducing it into an egg which has its own nucleus removed, and triggering it to develop as an embryo. This cloned embryo will be the genetic copy or twin of the person who provided the human body cell.

All human cloning is, by its nature, reproductive. 'Therapeutic' cloning (so-called) would see the embryo dismembered for its stem cells. 'Reproductive' cloning would see the embryo implanted into a woman's womb.

"Respect for the dignity of the human being excludes all experimental manipulation or exploitation of the human embryo". (Charter of the Rights of the Family 1983. Pontifical Council for the Family)

Adult stem cells: an effective and ethical alternative to human embryo cloning.

Many people are surprised when they learn that NO therapies in humans have ever been successfully carried out using embryonic stem cells. It's still not safe to even trial them in humans! However, there is an ethical alternative that *does* work and holds great promise.

Adult Stem Cells can be sourced from the tissues and organs of children and adults, placentas and umbilical cord blood. These ethical stem cells have already been shown to help more than 70 medical conditions, including Parkinson's disease, spinal cord injury, blood diseases and heart damage.

Adult stem cell research has demonstrated that science does not have to kill in order to cure. Let's encourage Australian to pursue promising adult stem cell research and to find cures we can ALL live with.

Is the Catholic Church 'anti-science'?

Occasionally we will hear people claim, because the Catholic Church opposes human embryo cloning and research involving human embryos, that the Church is somehow 'anti-science' or 'anti-progress'. This is not the case.

In recent years, the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney has actively supported ethical research using adult stem cells through financial grants to researchers totaling \$150,000.

The Church rejects the 'ends-justifies-the-means' approach to embryo research precisely because it results in the death of a human life. There are some things we should never do!

Science should be at the service of human life and dignity. Human life and dignity should not be sacrificed for science.