

# Human Cloning

Any treatment which claims to save human lives, yet is based upon the destruction of human life in its embryonic state, is logically and morally contradictory, as is any production of human embryos for the direct or indirect purpose of experimentation or eventual destruction. (*Pope John Paul II, Address to the members of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences*)

## Church teaching

- ★ Cloning is contrary to the dignity of human procreation because it takes place in total absence of an act of personal love between spouses, being agamic and sexual reproduction, In the second place, this type of reproduction represents a form of total domination over the reproduced individual on the part of the one reproducing it. (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 236*)
- ★ Attempts or hypotheses for obtaining a human being without any connection with sexuality through "twin fission", cloning or parthenogenesis are to be considered contrary to the moral law, since they are in opposition to the dignity both of human procreation and of the conjugal union. (*Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, The Gift of Life*)
- ★ The fact that cloning is used to create embryos from which cells can be removed for therapeutic use does not attenuate its moral gravity, because in order that such cells may be removed the embryo must first be created and then destroyed. (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 236*)
- ★ Research [involving the destruction of human embryos]...is not truly at the service of humanity....History itself has condemned such a science in the past and will condemn it in the future, not only because it lacks the light of God but also because it lacks humanity. (*Pope Benedict XVI, Address to the Participants in the Pontifical Academy for Life Symposium on "Stem Cells: What Future for Therapy?"*)
- ★ The law cannot tolerate - indeed it must expressly forbid - that human beings, even at the embryonic stage, should be treated as objects of experimentation, be mutilated or destroyed with the excuse that they are superfluous or incapable of developing normally. (*Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, The Gift of Life*)

## Resources

- ★ **Texas Catholic Conference** Stem Cell Research page ([www.TXcatholic.org/ESCR.asp](http://www.TXcatholic.org/ESCR.asp))
- ★ **US Conference of Catholic Bishops** Cloning page ([www.USCCB.org/prolife/issues/bioethic/](http://www.USCCB.org/prolife/issues/bioethic/))
- ★ **National Catholic Bioethics Center** ([www.NCBCenter.org](http://www.NCBCenter.org))
- ★ **Pontifical Academy for Life** ([www.AcademiaVita.org](http://www.AcademiaVita.org))

(Last updated August 5, 2008)

# Human Cloning<sup>i</sup>

**What is Human Cloning and how is it related to Stem Cell Research?** In human cloning, the DNA from the nucleus of a person's body cell is inserted into an egg whose own genetic material has been removed, and the egg is then stimulated to begin embryonic development. The resulting cloned embryo would genetically be an almost identical twin to the person supplying the body cell. This research overlaps with the stem cell issue. That is, human cloning might be done to create an embryo who will be destroyed to provide stem cells genetically matched to a patient, so the cells will not be rejected as foreign tissue. But some cloning research is done for other purposes—for example, to create embryos with devastating illnesses from the body cells of sick patients, to study the early progress of that disease. Most embryonic stem cell research involves embryos created by in vitro fertilization, not cloning.

**Why does the Church oppose human cloning?** Cloning is a depersonalized way to reproduce, in which human beings are manufactured in the laboratory to preset specifications. It is not a worthy way to bring a new human being into the world. When done for stem cell research, it involves the moral wrong of all embryonic stem cell research (destroying an innocent human life for possible benefit to others) plus an additional wrong: It creates human beings solely in order to kill them for their cells. This is the ultimate reduction of a fellow human being to a mere means, to an instrument of other people's wishes.

**The Catholic Church is not opposed to all stem cell research?** Most stem cell research uses cells obtained from adult tissue, umbilical cord blood, and other sources that pose no moral problem. Useful stem cells have been found in bone marrow, blood, muscle, fat, nerves, and even in the pulp of baby teeth. Some of these cells are already being used to treat people with a wide variety of diseases. The Church *is* opposed to stem cell research using the embryo because harvesting these stem cells kills the living human embryo. The Church opposes the direct destruction of innocent human life for any purpose, including research.

**If some human embryos will remain in frozen storage and ultimately discarded anyway, why is it wrong to try to get some good out of them?** In the end we will all die anyway, but that gives no one a right to kill us. In any case, these embryos will not die because they are inherently unable to survive, but because others are choosing to hand them over for destructive research instead of letting them implant in their mother's womb. One wrong choice does not justify an additional wrong choice to kill them for research, much less a choice to make taxpayers support such destruction. The idea of experimenting on human beings because they may die anyway also poses a grave threat to convicted prisoners, terminally ill patients, and others.

**Does opposition to cloning come only from one theological or political view?** No. Serious moral concerns about these practices have been raised by an array of both religious and secular groups, including some who disagree with the Catholic Church about abortion—Friends of the Earth, the United Methodist Church, etc. The human cloning ban supported by the Church has been approved by the House of Representatives by an overwhelming bipartisan majority. Many other countries (including Canada, France, Australia, Germany and Norway) have passed similar bans. Opposition to the idea of treating early human life as a mere object or commodity in the laboratory transcends religious and political divisions.

---

<sup>i</sup> "Stem Research and Human Cloning: Questions and Answers." [Pro-Life Activities](http://www.usccb.org/prolife/issues/bioethic/). U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. <<http://www.usccb.org/prolife/issues/bioethic/>>.