

Ban on Human Cloning

The Texas Catholic Conference **supports a ban on all forms of human cloning**, while recognizing the life of all human embryos by opposing legislation that would allow cloned embryos to be destroyed.

In vitro fertilization, embryo research, the possibility of manufacturing clones and human hybrids: all this is now emerging and being promoted in today's highly disillusioned culture, which believes it has mastered every mystery, because the origin of life is now within our grasp. Here we see the clearest expression of technology's supremacy. In this type of culture, the conscience is simply invited to take note of technological possibilities. Yet we must not underestimate the disturbing scenarios that threaten our future, or the powerful new instruments that the "culture of death" has at its disposal. (*Pope Benedict XVI, Caritas in Veritate*)

A Texas Bishop Speaks:

"It is imperative that Texans not waver, even for the noblest of goals, from the commitment to protect every innocent human being. To intentionally destroy human life for medical research is ethically unacceptable. We also urge the legislature to pass a law that bans all forms of human cloning. Simply put, the Catholic Church opposes human therapeutic or reproductive cloning for any reason and we will oppose any legislation that would allow any form of human cloning that creates life."



-Bishop David Fellhauer, Diocese of Victoria

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*)
- ★ 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 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*)
- ★ Science and its technical applications offer new and immense possibilities in the construction of such a humanism. Still, as a consequence of political choices that decide the direction of research and its applications, science is often used against its original purpose, which is the advancement of the human person. It becomes necessary, therefore, on the part of all, to recover an awareness of the primacy of moral values, which are the values of the human person as such. The great task that has to be faced today for the renewal of society is that of recapturing the ultimate meaning of life and its fundamental values. Only an awareness of the primacy of these values enables man to use the immense possibilities given him by science in such a way as to bring about the true advancement of the human person in his or her whole truth, in his or her freedom and dignity. Science is called to ally itself with wisdom. (*Pope John Paul II, Familiaris Consortio*)

Resources

- ★ **Texas Catholic Conference** Stem Cell Research page (www.TXcatholic.org/ESCR.asp)
- ★ **US Conference of Catholic Bishops** Cloning page (<http://www.usccb.org/prolife/issues/bioethic/cloning/index.shtml>)
- ★ **National Catholic Bioethics Center** (www.NCBCenter.org)

The Texas Catholic Conference (TCC) is the association of the 15 Roman Catholic dioceses of the State of Texas, and is the Official Public Policy Voice of the Catholic Bishops of Texas.

Andrew Rivas, Executive Director • Jennifer Carr Allmon, Associate Director • Margaret McGettrick, Education Director

Ban on Human Cloningⁱ

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, [in order](#) 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.

(Last updated August 17-5 2010, 82nd Legislative Session)

ⁱ "Stem Research and Human Cloning: Questions and Answers." [Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities](#). U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. <www.usccb.org/prolife/issues/bioethic/stemcell/Q&ABulletinInsert09222004.pdf>.