

**Interfaith
Religious
Group:
✝ Catholic**

Dear Catholic Stakeholder Group,

We are the National Committee on Embryonic Stem Cell Research. We have been given the responsibility of drafting legislation for our beloved country Adanac. Your group has been identified as having a particular interest in our country's ongoing embryonic stem cell debate, and we would very much like to hear from you.

We invite you to share your opinions on the following four issues:

- The use of embryonic stem cells from existing stem cell lines;
- The use of embryonic stem cells from discarded embryos from *in vitro* fertilization (IVF) clinics;
- The use of embryonic stem cells from embryos created by IVF solely for research; and
- The use of embryonic stem cells from embryos created by therapeutic cloning.

Instead of incorporating the views of four religious perspectives (Catholic, Jewish, Muslim and Protestant) into one position, we suggest that different members present each religion separately.

As you may or may not be aware, there are three legal possibilities for these activities. Under Adanac's constitution, an activity is either unrestricted, controlled (and must fulfill certain criteria in order to occur) or outright prohibited. For activities that you believe should be prohibited or controlled, please suggest an appropriate punishment. For controlled activities, describe the criteria the activity must meet before being granted permission. For example, a common view is that discarded embryos from IVF clinics should be available for embryonic stem cell research only if the donors of the embryos have given their consent. This activity would be classified as "controlled," and the criteria would be "donor consent required". Please provide a rationale for all of your classifications.

TIMELINE

BETWEEN DAY 2 AND 3:

Read this letter and the articles in this package.

DAY 3:

Complete the worksheets and prepare your presentation.

DAY 4:

Present your views to the Committee.

To help you create your presentation, we have compiled a package of documents that represents the views of similar groups in different countries for each of the four religions. These documents include speeches, press releases and articles. The package also contains a worksheet for each religion to help you identify the authors' stance. But be warned: you may run into conflicting views within this package. If this is the case, choose the view that you prefer.

Please begin your presentation by introducing yourself. We encourage you to be as persuasive and creative as possible – remember, your opinions are helping to create legislation we must all abide by.

We very much look forward to seeing you. By sharing your views, you are facilitating Adanac's legislative process and making a valuable contribution to the future of embryonic stem cell research in our country.

Sincerely,

National Committee on Embryonic Stem Cell Research

WORKSHEET: † CATHOLIC

	Statement of Pope to President Bush "Master, Not Product of Technology"	AmericanCatholic.org "Is Stem Cell Research Moral?"
Whose point of view is expressed in this document?		
What is their role in society?		
Position on use of embryonic stem cells from existing cell lines		
Position on use of embryonic stem cells from discarded embryos from IVF clinics		
Position on use of embryonic stem cells from embryos created by IVF for research		
Position on use of embryonic stem cells created by therapeutic cloning		

MASTER, NOT PRODUCT OF TECHNOLOGY

(Transcript of July 23, 2001 Statement of Pope John Paul II to U.S. President George W. Bush)

The text of the statement by Pope John Paul II to U.S. President George W. Bush:

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you on your first visit since you assumed the office of President of the United States. I warmly greet the distinguished first lady and the members of your entourage. I express heartfelt good wishes that your presidency will strengthen your country in its commitment to the principles which inspired American democracy from the beginning, and sustained the nation in its remarkable growth. These principles remain as valid as ever, as you face the challenges of the new century opening up before us.

Your nation's founders, conscious of the immense natural and human resources with which your land had been blessed by the Creator, were guided by a profound sense of responsibility towards the common good, to be pursued in respect for the God-given dignity and inalienable rights of all. America continues to measure herself by the nobility of her founding vision in building a society of liberty, equality and justice under the law. In the century which has just ended, these same ideals inspired the American people to resist two totalitarian systems based on an atheistic vision of man and society.

At the beginning of this new century, which also marks the beginning of the third millennium of Christianity, the world continues to look to America with hope. Yet it does so with an acute awareness of the crisis of values being experienced in Western society, ever more insecure in the face of the ethical decisions indispensable for humanity's future course.

In recent days, the world's attention has been focused on the process of globalisation which has so greatly accelerated in the past decade, and which you and other leaders of the industrialised nations have discussed in Genoa. While appreciating the opportunities for economic growth and material prosperity which this process offers, the Church cannot but express profound concern that our world continues to be divided, no longer by the former political and military blocs, but by a tragic fault line between those who can benefit from these opportunities and those who seem cut off from them. The revolution of freedom of which I spoke at the United Nations in 1995 must now be completed by a revolution of opportunity, in which all the world's peoples actively contribute to economic prosperity and share in its fruits. This requires leadership by those nations whose religious and cultural traditions should make them most attentive to the moral dimension of the issues involved.

Respect for human dignity and belief in the equal dignity of all the members of the human family demand policies aimed at enabling all peoples to have access to the means required to improve their lives, including the technological means and skills needed for development.

Respect for nature by everyone, a policy of openness to immigrants, the cancellation or significant reduction of the debt of poorer nations, the promotion of peace through dialogue and negotiation, the primacy of the rule of law: these are the priorities which the leaders of the developed nations cannot disregard.

A global world is essentially a world of solidarity! From this point of view, America, because of her many resources, cultural traditions and religious values, has a special responsibility. Respect for human dignity finds one of its highest expressions in religious freedom. This right is the first listed in your nation's Bill of Rights, and it is significant that the promotion of religious freedom continues to be an important goal of American policy in the international community. I gladly express the appreciation of the whole Catholic Church for America's commitment in this regard.

Another area in which political and moral choices have the gravest consequences for the future of civilization concerns the most fundamental of human rights, the right to life itself.

Experience is already showing how a tragic coarsening of consciences accompanies the assault on innocent human life in the womb, leading to accommodation and acquiescence in the face of other related evils such as euthanasia, infanticide and, most recently, proposals for the creation for research purposes of human embryos, destined to destruction in the process. A free and virtuous society, which America aspires to be, must reject practices that devalue and violate human life at any stage from conception until natural death.

In defending the right to life, in law and through a vibrant culture of life, America can show the world the path to a truly humane future, in which man remains the master, not the product, of his technology.

Mr. President, as you carry out the tasks of the high office which the American people have entrusted to you, I assure you of a remembrance in my prayers. I am confident that under your leadership your nation will continue to draw on its heritage and resources to help build a world in which each member of the human family can flourish and live in a manner worthy of his or her innate dignity.

With these sentiments I cordially invoke upon you and the beloved American people God's blessings of wisdom, strength and peace.

IS STEM-CELL RESEARCH MORAL?

By Patrick McCloskey, O.F.M

What is the Catholic Church's position on stem-cell research? How did the Church arrive at that position?

The current debate over federal funding for stem-cell research involves in vitro fertilization (in a petri dish) to create embryos from which stem cells can be extracted. This debate includes research on "leftover" embryos, those created in a petri dish but not used for implantation in a woman's uterus.

The Catholic Church's objection is to creating life this way—whether the embryo is successfully implanted or used only for research. In either case, a human life is created but deliberately prevented from reaching its full potential.

In his 1995 encyclical *The Gospel of Life*, Pope John Paul II wrote: "Human embryos obtained in vitro are human beings and are subjects with rights; their dignity and right to life must be respected from the first moment of their existence. It is immoral to produce human embryos destined to be exploited as disposable 'biological material'" (1,5).

In vitro fertilization is not the only way to obtain stem cells. They can be extracted from adults (not as usable for research) or from an umbilical cord after a child is born. The Catholic Church has no objection to research using stem cells in those ways. The use of that research is a separate, but related, moral issue.

A moral theologian whom I consulted said that opposition to federal funding on stem cells from embryos created expressly for this purpose also reflects fear that such approval may lead to direct federal funding for abortion (currently not allowed) because this authorization could be used as an argument that embryos are not human persons. Aborted fetuses are also a source of stem cells. That, of course, emphasizes that these are human lives.

On June 29, 2001, Bishop Joseph A. Fiorenza, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, wrote on behalf of the nation's Catholic bishops to President George W. Bush, urging him not to authorize federal funding for embryonic stem-cell research. "Government must not treat any living human being as research material, as a mere means for benefit to others," wrote Bishop Fiorenza. Pope John Paul II made the same request during a private meeting with President Bush on July 23, 2001.

On August 23, 2000, the National Institutes of Health issued guidelines on stem-cell research. That same day, Richard Doerflinger, associate director of the Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities at the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops (headquartered in Washington, D.C.), issued a strong critique of those guidelines. Both documents can be found in the September 7, 2000, issue of *Origins*, a newsletter published by Catholic News Service. Your parish or local library may have a subscription.

The theologian whom I consulted wrote, "While much good may come from the proposed research, we must not lose sight of the fact that the means used to reach that good end must also be moral. The end does not justify the means. In this case, curing even thousands of persons does not justify the destruction of others, even though they are still in the embryonic state of development."

Source: AmericanCatholic.org

http://www.americancatholic.org/News/StemCell/ask_stemcell.asp

PRESENTATION GUIDE: †CATHOLIC

This table contains all of the topics that must be included in your presentation to the Committee. Use this table to record your proposals.

When presenting your proposals to the committee be as creative as possible. In other words, do not simply present this table.

ACTIVITY	LEGAL STATUS (prohibited, controlled or unrestricted)	CRITERIA (only for controlled activities)	PUNISHMENT (only for prohibited or controlled activities)	REASON (for all)
Use of embryonic stem cells from existing cell lines				
Use of embryonic stem cells from discarded embryos from IVF clinics				
Use of embryonic stem cells from embryos created by IVF for research				
Use of embryonic stem cells from embryos created by therapeutic cloning				