

March 11, 2009

To the Editor:

I respectfully disagree with your editorial applauding the president's decision to allow embryonic stem-cell research. You may call opposition to his decision "ideology." I call it use of ethical judgment, which should be applied to every human endeavor, including science.

Each of us was once an embryo, the size of the period at the end of this sentence. Based on the natural law, the Catholic Church teaches that one person - even one so tiny - cannot be mutilated or used to benefit another, making the use of human embryos for research immoral.

The president's rationale is that science should have free reign. But as the behavior of the "free market" shows, every human enterprise requires oversight and regulation. Do we want to repeat, for instance, the "science" of Nazi human experimentation?

The Catholic Church supports ethically sound science which seeks cures for illnesses such as diabetes and Alzheimer's and repairs spinal cords and human hearts. Startling advances have been made in reprogramming adult cells into embryonic-like stem cells, hailed by the journal Science as the scientific breakthrough of the year. Adult and cord-blood stem cells are now known to have great versatility, and are increasingly used to reverse serious illnesses and help rebuild damaged organs.

If we want progress toward the goal of true respect for each other, today's leaders must promote a culture that is committed to the dignity of each human person.

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