

The Pope

Advances in Tissue Culture Hold Great Promise

Following is excerpted from the English language address given by Pope John Paul II to a group of biologists studying at the Rome headquarters of the International Pontifical Academy of Sciences.

Science and wisdom, which in their truest and most varied expressions constitute a most precious heritage of humanity, are at the service of man. The church is called, in her essential vocation, to foster the progress of man, since, as I wrote in my first encyclical: "Man is the primary route that the church must travel in fulfilling her mission: He is the primary and fundamental way for the church, the way traced out by Christ himself." Man is also for you the ultimate term of scientific research, the whole man, spirit and body, even if the immediate object of the sciences that you profess is the body with all its organs and tissues. The human body is not independent of the spirit, just as the spirit is not independent of the body, because of the deep unity and mutual connection that exists between one and the other.



The substantial unity between spirit and body, and indirectly with the cosmos, is so essential that every human activity, even the most spiritual one, is in some way permeated and colored by the bodily condition; at the same time the body must in turn be directed and guided to its final end by the Spirit. There is no doubt that the spiritual activities of the human person proceed from the personal center of the individual, who is predisposed by the body to which the spirit is substantially united. Hence the great importance, for the life of the spirit, of the sciences that promote the knowledge of corporeal reality and activity.

Consequently, I have no reason to be apprehensive for those experiments in biology that are performed by scientists who, like you, have a profound respect for the human person, since I am sure that they will contribute to the integral well-being of man.

On the other hand, I condemn, in the most explicit and formal way, experimental manipulations of the human embryo, since the human being, from conception to death, cannot be exploited for any purpose whatsoever. Indeed, as the Second Vatican Council teaches, man is "the only creature on earth which God willed for itself." Worthy of esteem is the initiative of those scientists who have expressed their disapproval of experiments that violate human freedom, and I praise those who have endeavored to establish, with full respect for man's dignity and freedom, guidelines and limits for experiments concerning man.

The experimentation that you have been discussing is directed to a greater knowledge of the most intimate mechanisms of life, by means of artificial models, such as the cultivation of tissues, and experimentation on some species of animals genetically selected. Moreover, you have indicated some experiments to be accomplished on animal embryos, which will permit you to know better how cellular differences are determined.

It must be emphasized that new techniques, such as the cultivation of cells and tissues, have had a notable development which permits very important progress in biological sciences, and they are also complementary to experimentation done on animals. It is certain that animals are at the service of man and can hence be the object of experimentation. Nevertheless, they must be treated as creatures of God which are destined to serve man's good, but not to be abused by him. Hence the diminution of experimentation on animals, which has progressively been made ever less necessary, corresponds to the plan and well-being of all creation.

I have learned with satisfaction that among the themes discussed during your study you have focused attention on "in vitro" experiments which have yielded results in the care of diseases related to chromosome defects.

It is also to be hoped, with reference to your activities, that the new techniques of modification of the genetic code, in particular cases of genetic or chromosomal diseases, will be a motive of hope for the greater number of people affected by these maladies.

It can also be thought that, through the transfer of genes, certain specific diseases can be cured such as sickle-cell anemia, which in many countries affect individuals of the same ethnic origin. It should likewise be recalled that some hereditary diseases can be avoided through progress in biological experimentation.

The research of modern biology gives hope that the transfer and mutations of genes can ameliorate the condition of those who are affected by chromosomal diseases; in this way the smallest and weakest of human beings can be cured during their intrauterine life or in the period immediately after birth.

Finally, I wish to recall, along with the few cases which I have cited that benefit from biological experimentation, the important advantages that come from the increase of food products and from the formation of new vegetal species for the benefit of all, especially people most in need.

In terminating these reflections of mine, which show how much I approve and support your worthy researches, I reaffirm that they must all be subject to moral principles and values which respect and realize in its fullness the dignity of man. I express the hope that the scientists of those countries

CHD Gives \$30,000 To Area Hispanics

The Spanish Action Coalition (SAC) has been named as the recipient of a \$30,000 grant from the national Campaign for Human Development (CHD).

According to Francine Patella, coordinator of the local CHD, said that SAC is "a community-based membership organization which works for the advancement of the Hispanic people in Rochester."

She said, "The CHD grant provides funds for a community organizer who, with area residents, is forming a neighborhood association to address issues of education, housing and economic opportunity for Hispanics."

Miss Patella also said that Luz Martinez has been hired as the organizer.

"Since receiving the first of the quarterly installments in October," she said, "SAC has formed a parents' group in City School 9 to monitor the bi-lingual curriculum. With the occurrence of three fires in School 9 last year, this group will also work with school officials to improve safety measures within the schools. As a response to housing deterioration and excessive rents in the Hispanic community, SAC has met with Los Flamboyanes, an Hispanic housing corporation, to form a tenants' association which will address the problems."

She also noted that the coalition received a similar grant of \$30,000 from Self Development of the People of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.

Father Hoffman to Speak At Regional Meeting

The Tompkins County Regional Assembly is scheduled from 3 to 5 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 21, at Immaculate Conception Church hall here.

The topic will be "Ministry in the Church" with the speaker, Father Douglas Hoffman, former director of the diocesan Office of Pastoral Ministry. He is doing graduate work at Catholic University.

All interested from the parishes and institutions are invited and urged to attend.

according to Fathers Albert Gason and Thomas Clear, co-coordinators of the region. They said the invitation especially applies to those involved in ministry — parish councils, lectors, eucharistic ministers, music, ushers and so on.

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... the increase of food products and the formation of new vegetal species for the benefit of all, especially people most in need.

which have developed the most advanced modern techniques will take into sufficient account the problems of developing nations and that, outside of every economic or political opportunism which reproduces the schemes of an old colonialism in a new scientific and technical edition, there can be had a fruitful and disinterested exchange.

This exchange must be that of culture in general and of science in particular, among scientists of nations of different degrees of development, and may there thus be formed, by every country, a nucleus of scholars of high scientific value.

I ask God, who is the merciful father of all, but especially of the most abandoned and of those who have neither the means nor the power to defend themselves, to direct the application of scientific research to the production of new food supplies, since one of the greatest challenges humanity must face, together with the danger of nuclear holocaust, is the hunger of the poor of this world.

For this intention and for the overall genuine progress of man, created in the image and likeness of God, I invoke on you and on your scientific activities abundant divine blessings.

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The Open Window

The Question Of Friday Abstinence

Don't you think the Church made a very bad mistake in removing the law of Friday abstinence? People simply don't do anything at all and the net result is that whatever good we got out of that sacrifice is no longer existent and we become more and more attuned toward self gratification.

I think the Church made a mistake in the removal of the law of Friday abstinence but not because it removed the law. I think the mistake lay in not having a proper catechesis which would train people to understand that self denial is absolutely essential to their development as Christians and that it was up to them to determine modes of self denial which were not simply self serving. There are innumerable forms of self denial which serve great purposes and help us grow

for example, exercising for better health, spending extra time in prayer, making oneself read more difficult kinds of things, as a way of growing, getting involved in the visitation of the sick, taking people to places they couldn't otherwise get (through F.I.S.H.), waiting patiently, etc.

The problem with the Friday abstinence was that like all kinds of legalism it tends to draw minimal boundaries and to live by them. What is the least that I have to do or the most that I can get away with is the question that was constantly being asked. So many, for many people there was no virtue at all in switching from meat to delicious alternatives to meat.

Just a final remark which has nothing to do with anything. I am totally fascinated by the popularity of Friday fish fries and the huge numbers of people who attend them. Is it a way of getting out for a meal rather inexpensively or is it another form of human perversity?