

# Vatican to Issue Guidelines on Sex Education

Vatican City (NC) -- The Vatican plans to issue guidelines soon on sex education and on what it means to be a Catholic school.

"Educational Guidance on Human Love" and "The Religious Dimension of Education in the Catholic School" are among documents being prepared for Catholic educators by the Vatican's Congregation for Catholic Education, said Cardinal William Baum, prefect of that congregation, in a report to the world Synod of Bishops. Although he delivered the report in October, the full text was not made available until after the

synod ended.

"For a long time the congregation has been receiving requests for advice, and also protests, on the delicate problem of sexual education in Catholic schools," the American-born cardinal said.

He said his congregation was about to issue its guidelines on the topic "after long and well considered consultations."

"The document will be of a pedagogical and pastoral character. Pastors will be asked to make use of it as a means of reflection for those responsible for the education of youth," Cardinal Baum said.

Sources at the Congregation for Catholic Education indicated that the sex education guidelines will be available at the end of December.

The guidelines on Catholic schools will define "Catholic" in the full meaning of the term as it applies to Catholic schools, Cardinal Baum told the synod.

"The aim is to contribute to improving the quality of proper Christian education in institutes which honor themselves with the name 'Catholic,'" he said.

"Account will be taken of the duty not to violate the rights of the consciences of

non-Catholic pupils, whom parents send to Catholic schools by reason of the prestige which they enjoy," he added.

Cardinal Baum also reported on other concerns of his congregation, including education in seminaries.

Reflecting the contemporary world for which seminarians are being trained, he said, the congregation is preparing an instruction on "training of future priests in cultural and pastoral problems connected with the social communications media."

He also noted that seminaries must prepare future

priests for the family apostolate and for their role as confessors.

In his report Cardinal Baum stressed the need to support Catholic schools.

"The congregation is aware that a certain hostility toward the Catholic schools exists on the part of some Catholics," he said.

"Even certain persons who were consecrated to the educational mission have abandoned that mission and sought other fields of labor," he added.

He emphasized "the right of the Catholic school to exist and operate," fulfilling a mission of service to both the

church and society.

He also stressed "the freedom of parents to choose this school" and "the duties of the state" to guarantee that right of choice, including equitable financial assistance.

"The Catholic school constitutes a service to the whole of civil society," Cardinal Baum commented. He called on civil society "to act according to justice," saying it is unjust for the state to subject parents to double taxation, "one for state schools and the other for the education which they freely choose for their children."

## Genetic Manipulation Must Respect Dignity Of Life -- John Paul II

Vatican City (NC) -- Pope John Paul II told a group of medical experts that genetic manipulation is morally acceptable only when the dignity of human life is respected.

The pope spoke during an audience Oct. 29 with 160 delegates to the recent meeting in Venice of the World Medical Association.

The pope called the term "genetic manipulation" ambiguous. He said it can be used both to describe extraordinary attempts to promote a kind of "superman" and to describe desirable operations that aim to cure.

In judging whether non-therapeutic genetic intervention is morally acceptable, the pope said that certain conditions must be respected, and certain premises accepted.

"In particular, this kind of intervention must not infringe on the origin of the human life," he said. He defined that origin as procreation within the spiritual and biological union of parents united in matrimony.

"Consequently, this intervention must respect the fundamental dignity of human beings," the pope said.

Genetic engineering or "surgery" must avoid "manipulations that tend to modify the genetic heritage and create different human groups, with the risk of giving rise to new social outcasts," he said.

Pope John Paul rejected "racial or materialistic" motivations for genetic engineering, saying that man's dignity transcends his biological condition.

"Genetic manipulation becomes arbitrary and unjust when it reduces the life to an object, when it forgets that it has to do with a human subject, capable of intelligence and freedom, that should be respected whatever its limitations," the pope said.

The pope last year said therapeutic genetic manipulation was admissible in particular cases of genetic illness. He has condemned the experimental manipulation of human embryos, saying that the "whole man" must be the final concern of scientific experimentation.

The search for ethical grounds in medicine, the pope told the group, depends on whether medicine is seen "in the service of the human being" or in the service of collective health interests to which the curing of the sick can be subordinated.

## Baby Jane Doe Sacredness of Life at Stake, Says Surgeon General of U.S.

By NC News Service  
The federal government is fighting for the sacredness of life by intervening in the case of Baby Jane Doe, a severely deformed Long Island baby girl, said Dr. C. Everett Koop, surgeon general of the United States.

"We're not just fighting for this baby," Koop said in an interview on CBS television's "Face the Nation." "We're fighting for the principle of this country that every life is individually and uniquely sacred," he said.

But the child's parents, who say they are Catholics, called the government's Nov. 2 attempt to get their daughter's medical records an undue "intrusion."

They decided not to allow major surgery on their baby girl who was born Oct. 11 with an incomplete closure of the spinal cord (spina bifida), an abnormally small head and a build-up of fluid within the cranial cavity that exerts pressure on the brain.

The combination of defects is life-threatening and usually results in mental retardation even if corrective

surgery is performed.

The parents signed a consent form to allow surgeons to perform minor surgery on Nov. 6 to insert a tube carrying antibiotics into the baby's skull.

After the parents had declined the major surgery to close the baby's spinal cord and relieve pressure on her brain, Lawrence Washburn, a Vermont attorney and pro-life activist, filed suit in a New York state court to force the surgery.

On Oct. 20 a state judge ordered the surgery, but an appeals court reversed that ruling and the State Court of Appeals, New York's highest court, upheld the reversal saying Washburn had no legal standing to sue.

On Nov. 2 the Justice Department asked the federal district court to order the Stony Brook Hospital to release the baby's records. The Justice Department wants to see the records to determine if she has been discriminated against because she is handicapped -- a violation that would cost the hospital about \$20 million in federal funding.

Koop said the request for records was not unusual.

"This is not the first time this has happened," he said. "We have asked for records from 48 other institutions since April of this year and not one institution has failed to give us the records," he said.

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