

Catholic Courier

1150 Buffalo Road
Rochester, NY 14624
716/328-4340

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The *Catholic Courier* wishes to provide space for readers throughout the diocese to express opinions on all sides of the issues. We welcome original, signed letters about current issues affecting church life.

Although we cannot publish every letter we receive, we seek, insofar as possible, to provide a balanced representation of expressed opinions and a variety of reflections on life in the church. We will choose letters for publication based on likely reader interest, timeliness and a sense of fair play. Our discerning readers may determine whether to agree or disagree with the opinions of the letter writers.

We reserve the right to edit all letters for length as well as legal concerns. With respect to errors in submitted text, we will correct spelling only. Anonymous letters and the use of pseudonyms are unacceptable.

Mail letters to: *Catholic Courier*, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624. Please include your full name, phone number and complete address for verification purposes.

Gov't panel issues ghoulish report

By Kathleen M. Gallagher
Guest contributor

It's that time of year again — ghouls and goblins, blood and body parts. How timely of the federal administration's Human Embryo Research Panel to issue its recommendations to the National Institutes of Health during this season! The panel gives the green light to government funding for all kinds of human experimentation, including creating life — and then destroying it — in the laboratory. Dr. Frankenstein would be proud.

The final report of the blue-ribbon panel is not easy reading. Just-conceived little boys and girls are called "ex utero preimplantation embryos." Mothers are "donor sources of gametes," and Dads are "paternal progenitors." (Tip for reading: Make sure your lunch is well-digested and your dictionary is close at hand.)

Once you get past the jargon, it becomes clear that the report urges the use of donated eggs and sperm for scientists to dabble with the genes and cells and nuclei of artificially produced human embryos. Such research is said to hold great medical promise for treating infertile couples, diagnosing disease, even curing certain illnesses.

The NIH panel lists a variety of experiments it deems "acceptable," i.e. should be approved for federal funding with your tax dollars and mine. "Acceptable" does not imply moral acceptability, for as the NIH panel itself states, it was not called upon to decide the moral status of human embryos.

Most if not all of those experiments require the destruction of human life in the first weeks of growth and development. Here are a few gruesome examples of what's recommended:

- "Preimplantation genetic diagnoses." Simply put, researchers create embryos, then isolate genes within them that might be imperfect. Ultimately, all the embryos are discarded. While such research takes place in petri dishes today, one can assume these procedures will take place in the womb tomorrow. It is frightening to think that one day only "perfect" children — those of the correct sex with straight teeth, slim build and a high I.Q. — will be admitted



into the human family. (You'll recall young Dr. Frankenstein's goal was to create the perfect individual.)

- "Parthenogenesis." This research involves activating female eggs to begin the process of splitting and developing without fertilization by sperm. It's positively eerie to think this may be the first step to making babies without male input! But scientists say this will help create "stem cell lines" to grow various kinds of healthy human tissue to later transplant into adults. There should be no problem in gathering initial eggs; together with those from healthy volunteers and women in in-vitro fertilization programs, the panel suggests collecting eggs from female cadavers. (Ahhh, grave robbing, a perfect Halloween activity and one Dr. Frankenstein used to its fullest advantage.)

These are just the tip of the iceberg. The panel also believes certain types of investigation warrant additional review and will likely be funded in the future. Experiments like cloning to create several genetically identical embryos from one, as long as the embryos are experimented on and discarded, not transplanted into the womb. (Not yet, at least.) Harvesting eggs from the ovaries of aborted fetuses is "another grisly prospect to watch for in the future."

Thank goodness the NIH panel recommends that human embryo research be conducted only under strict guidelines. The most important of these is

GUEST VIEW

that only experiments done before the embryo is 14 days old would be permitted.

Fourteen days supposedly marks the point at which the human nervous system begins to develop.

But there's the rub. Can an embryo be non-human and targeted for destruction at 13 days, but human and worthy of respect at 14? Doesn't the arbitrary selection of the 14th day prove that human life is a continuum from fertilization to death? Could the panel just as easily have chosen the 24th day, when the heart starts beating, or the 42nd day, when the brain waves are measurable? Where will they move the termination point in the future? Where will it end?

To its credit, the panel does recognize throughout its report that "the embryo merits respect as a developing form of human life." But it is also quick to point out that the embryo "does not have the same moral status as infants and children." Human embryos, they say, are not "human subjects." What kind of subjects are they? Plant subjects; pumpkins perhaps?

As a developing form of human life myself, I'm appalled at the thought that human beings are being created just to undergo lethal experiments. Human lives are being manufactured solely for laboratory experiments, not for reproduction, not for living.

It is our responsibility to ensure that human beings are never a means to an end, because we are an end in and of ourselves, each a unique and irreplaceable gift. By refusing to acknowledge embryos as "human subjects," the NIH panel has indeed made a moral judgment on the status of unborn life. Its status is zilch, zero, nil. It can be artificially produced, perfected, poisoned and put to death.

Like a modern-day Dr. Frankenstein, the NIH panel wants to play God by making man. And if their recommendations are adopted, they will have created an even more horrific monster than that of 19th century fiction.

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Gallagher is associate director of the New York State Catholic Conference.

Christ established priesthood of Gentiles

To the editors:

Recently a writer said he couldn't accept papal teaching on male priesthood. His #1 reason was unlisted by the Pontifical Biblical Commission: that the Church is compelled to ordain women to be consistent or only Jews ought still be our priests.

They recognized the biblical significance of Christ as an Heir having come to lead GENTILES to salvation as the Promised of peace and the UNIVERSAL Kingly priest blessing Israel by gathering-in FOR Jerusalem the nations equally to inherit election WITH her — nation and gender not impeding.

The ingathering the Testaments teach isn't an open acceptance of all the nations' nature gods and priesthoods as equally Him coming, teaching and leading. The gathering was into the one King's Hebrew nation and separated Levitical priestly race opening out somehow so ALL nations could enter and feast as kin with Israel's Royal One. So Christ WOULDN'T proceed racially as "Jewish" priest; nor choose Apostles able racially to be so. Only Judas was even culturally a Jew, but he too was of non-priestly Benjamin race.

Christ's band were to be the FAITHFUL "Galilean" — "GENTILE Circle" — Israelites. Christ also was culturally an un-Jewish un-Levitical Galilean Israelite. But King David rejoices in Psalm 110 that his descendant will be THE King and also "a priest forever of the order of Melchizedec" — the GENTILE priest offering wine and bread blessing the God of Abraham.

Christ could legitimately offer sacrifices in Judah's Temple being the ROYAL male Heir as could Kings David and Solomon (Samuel and Chronicles). But He longed to become EVERY nations Royal Priest by showing that His Line had become the sacrificial Lamb broken and being poured now simply into every nation's wine and daily bread for a GENTILE "order of Melchizedec" blessing the God of Abraham out to the remotest coming nation.

Paul writing a letter to Galatia, that ancient seat and heartland of humanity's Great Mother deity with its female/male nature priests called "Galli," reminds the Church there that they once served such "gods who are not really divine ... can you return to those powerless, worthless, natural elements?"

(Galatians 4:8). Paul perceived the mystery of Christ burgeoning Abraham's election to the One God's salvation into a vast inheritance by bequeathing directly to females and gentiles and Hebrews all.

But it's a foisting upon Paul's thought to now return to the wasting elements of nature represented in a gentile humanly based priesthood through misappropriating Galatians 3:28 "there does not exist among you Jew or Greek ... male or female. Furthermore if you belong to Christ you are descendants of ABRAHAM, WHICH MEANS YOU INHERIT all that was promised."

What inheritance was being promised? Not the gentile's female/male human priesthood but the blessing of UNIVERSAL election to salvation through Abraham's sacrificial One to Whom God will eventually bequeath the victory of peace.

John Paul writing his own Apostolic letter reminds the Church that the matter of male Holy Orders in one not of discipline but of divine plan the Eucharistic Faith is to hold definitively.

Gene Charles
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