

# OPINIONS

## Racists, Nazis and ...

### EDITORIAL

The National Bioethics Advisory Commission plans to recommend that the federal government begin funding some research on human embryos.

According to news accounts, the presidentially appointed ethics committee wants to permit federally funded researchers "to conduct studies on leftover embryos from fertility clinics if the embryos were no longer wanted by the parents who made them." The committee finds such studies acceptable because of the possibility "that embryo cells would have the potential to grow into replacement tissue to treat a wide variety of chronic diseases."

The commission determined that the "moral cost of destroying embryos in research is outweighed by the social good that could come from the work," news accounts report.

There is plenty of precedent for conducting such research. From 1932-72, the United States Public Health Service supported the Tuskegee Syphilis Study, aimed at determining the effects of untreated syphilis. Approximately 400 poor and poorly educated African-American men who had the venereal disease were left untreated — even though such effective treatments as penicillin became available during the course of the 40-year study.

During the 1930s and 1940s, Nazi doctors used prisoners in

concentration camps for a number of experiments. One investigation sought to determine how low a person's body temperature could go before the subject died, and what treatments best enabled victims of lowered body temperatures to recover. The goal was to improve the survival chances of sailors and airplane crews forced into the frigid waters of the North Sea and the North Atlantic.

Of course, it helped that the objects of these experiments — African-Americans and Jews — were regarded in their respective societies as somehow less than human, as embryos are today.

And these experiments show that the risks of medical experimentation too often have been borne by those least able to protect themselves.

Like Jews in concentration camps, African-Americans in the segregated South and, now, embryos.

Ironically, many of these experiments were conducted by rational, reasonable men and women — often pillars of their churches and communities — who claimed to seek some kind of greater good.

Yet today we call them racists, Nazis and morally deficient.

If the bioethics committee's suggestions become reality, what name will we eventually use for scientists who experiment on embryos?

### Catholic Courier

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### Letters Policy

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 letter writers' opinions.

Letters must not exceed 500 words. Anonymous letters and the use of pseudonyms are unacceptable. We reserve the right to edit letters for legal and other concerns. With respect to errors in submitted text, we will correct spelling only.

Mail letters to: Catholic Courier, P.O. Box 24379, Rochester, N.Y. 14624. Please include your full name, phone number and complete address for purposes of verification.

## Column a poor way to mark Mary's month

#### To the editors:

Even as a young girl growing up in Elmira, I knew that the month of May was a special month to honor Mary. Maybe it was the fact that each May my mother prepared a May shrine in our home, or maybe it was our family rosaries. It could have been the fact that I was a parishioner of "Our Lady of Lourdes," a place that we honored Mary every Monday night with Her Miraculous Medal Novena. I also was very well aware that when I came into the world on the first Sunday of May, 1963, my parents in the blink of an eye named me, a faithful servant, Mary Rita, in honor of Our Blessed Mother.

I read aloud in shock and disbelief the (column) by Father McBrien in your May 6 publication. How is it that a Catholic newspaper could print such a disrespectful essay about the Mother of God, in the very month we are called to honor Her?

The Blessed Virgin Mary is a gift of grace, given to us, as our Lord and Savior hung in agony on the cross. Jesus continues His mercy by allowing His Mother to appear to us, to help remind us, what it is God expects of us.

It is out of LOVE that Mary appears on our earth.

However, it is very apparent that Father McBrien, who may know a great deal about religion, possesses very little Faith. I too am very well aware of the Catholic Church's policies on Marian Apparitions. It's very evident that Father McBrien will only believe if things are done his way — man's way — not God's. Father would like Mary to appear to scare the "hell" out of leaders in Yugoslavia. She has appeared, Father, and has even shown people hell — Fatima and Medjugorje — but people still don't believe. Mary said at Medjugorje, "souls are falling into hell, as snowflakes fall to the Earth" yet Father McBrien and others still continue to discard and disgrace Her message and Her. Father's favorite word "alleged" appears several times in his essay. "Blessed are they that have not seen but still believe." 70,000 witnessed the miracle of the sun at Fatima, millions have been cured at Lourdes, and Juan Diego's tilma is still with us after centuries.

Our Lady is the Queen of Peace. I was reminded by our Lady of Medjugorje not to be brought to the sin of anger after reading this article. Yes, anger is a sin for all those who remember. I choose to pray for Father McBrien and for all the Catholics he led astray with his essay.

Someday may he know the love that the Blessed Mother has for him and for all Her children. I would have much rather read an article about how the different parishes were honoring Mary this May.

**Mary Rita Whitcomb**  
Fisher Road, Ontario



## Do not read a negative meaning into wording of Scripture stories

#### To the editors:

This is in response to Gloria Uterino's letter of May 13 regarding Clopas' companion. I'm really annoyed by the continuing subject of women in the world — earlier, today, tomorrow.

I too am a woman and also consider myself a lady. But I perceive this subject differently. To me, any reference in the Bible referring to men, also means women are included. There are other words in the Bible that have dual meanings. Can't you see this? No question about it. God includes EVERYONE, no matter what the vocabulary. And I do not feel belittled or insulted by the wording in a sentence. I know what God means. OK, maybe it was Clopas' wife. What's the issue here? Is it wording or the lesson Jesus is teaching? Don't you think Jesus would want you to spend your time on this earth doing something more constructive than harping over some wording that you feel is inappropriate?

Eve was a woman and she committed the first sin on earth. How do you feel about that? Maybe we should all spend more time trying to give our children and grandchildren more good example by what they hear and see instead of wanting recognition for me, me, and me. That makes one so selfish. Perhaps our children and grandchildren would act more positively instead of negatively and there would be a much needed closer family life. There would be more togetherness, thereby creating a more peaceful home life and environment. Children of all ages learn from what they hear and see.

Yes, I agree, women are equally as im-

portant as men. But let us be a little more humble. Whatever happened to the virtue of humility? Keep in mind vocabulary does not belittle or insult. It's how one perceives and reads into it. Don't read into it negatively and surprisingly, you won't receive negative responses.

God loves us all. Pray a little more and I'll do the same. He listens. God bless you!

**Shirley Shwamle Kobisch**  
Delamaine Drive  
Rochester

## Doubts woman was Emmaus companion

#### To the editors:

In reference to Gloria Uterino's letter in your May 13 edition, questioning whether or not Clopas' wife had accompanied him on the road to Emmaus, the following is stated in St. Mark's Gospel (Mark 16:12-13): "Later on, as two of them were walking on their way to the country, He was revealed to them completely changed in appearance. These men retraced their steps and announced the good news to the others..."

There were many faith-filled women in the early church who sacrificed a great deal for love of God and continue to do so into the present, but I don't believe Clopas' companion was one of them.

**Lee Burns**  
Triton Court, Fairport

EDITORS' NOTE: Many translations of this passage — such as that in the New American Bible — render "These men" as just "they."