

# Cloning conference slated

Mike Latona/Catholic Courier

As the author of more than 20 books on bioethics and Catholic social ethics, Thomas A. Shannon had delved into issues related to cloning and stem-cell research long before they reached the general public.

"There was a whole set of cloning literature that most people don't know about in the 1970s. They thought this sort of sprang up fresh with 'Dolly' in 1998," said Shannon, a religious and social ethics professor since 1973 at Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts.

Dolly the cloned sheep and baby Eve, reportedly born last year amid allegations that she was the first cloned human, are examples of genetics making headlines. And yet,



Martin Lueders/CNS

A worker handles test tubes used in research at Osiris Therapeutics in Baltimore. The company conducts research using adult mesenchymal stem cells, hoping to develop therapies for a variety of medical problems.

Shannon said, there is still a vital lack of knowledge — not just among the general public, but also among lawmakers who influence bills on cloning and stem-cell research.

"This does need to be debated, but part of the problem is that the debate is conducted with misinformation, misapplication and fantasies about what you might be able to do," Shannon said in a telephone interview.

Shannon will be among the guest speakers for the conference "Human Cloning and Stem Cell Research: A Catholic Approach," which is scheduled for Saturday, March 22, at Nazareth College. The all-day con-

ference will explore theological, moral, social and ethical issues related to cloning and stem-cell research.

Also giving presentations that day will be two other nationally known experts: David Adams, also of Worcester Polytechnic Institute, where he is an associate professor of biology and biotechnology; and Leslie Griffin, holder of the Larry and Joanne Doherty Chair in Legal Ethics at the University of Houston Law Center.

Shannon said his talk will focus mainly on embryonic stem-cell research, a genetic process many scientists say could be used to test new drugs and gain valuable information about serious diseases. Opponents claim this method's effectiveness is unproven, while the Catholic Church opposes embryonic stem-cell research because it teaches that human life begins at conception. Pope John Paul II made the latter point during a 2001 meeting with President George W. Bush.

In order to reach some consensus on this delicate subject, Shannon advocates that the religious, political and scientific communities all take a close look at each other's priorities. For instance, he said, Catholics could stand to gain better knowledge of the clinical ramifications of embryonic stem-cell research.

"How you can speak of the moral status of the embryo without understanding what it is?" he asked rhetorically. "What I'm trying to do is frame a moral understanding of the early embryo within the context of modern science. Part of what needs to be done is get really good scientific discussion going on in the ethical discussion."

The conference will run from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Shults Center Forum at Nazareth, 4245 East Ave., Rochester. It is free and open to the public. For details, call 585/389-2667.

## German Month

at the Lamplighter Restaurant

Every March, June and September the Lamplighter Restaurant features German specialties for lunch and dinner. This is a list of specials the restaurant will be offering for March 2003.

**Potato Pancakes**  
Served with sour cream and applesauce

**Cabbage Soup**  
Made the old fashion way.

**Sauerbraten**  
Choice marinated beef, slow roasted and served in its own natural au jus

**Knockwurst**  
Spicy German sausage.

**Rouladen**  
Choice rolled beef stuffed with bacon, pickles and onions

**Weiner Schnitzel**  
Lightly breaded choice veal

Regular continental menu also available including Angus Beef, Fresh Seafood and Italian Specialties.

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Dinner: Monday-Saturday 4:30pm to 10:00pm

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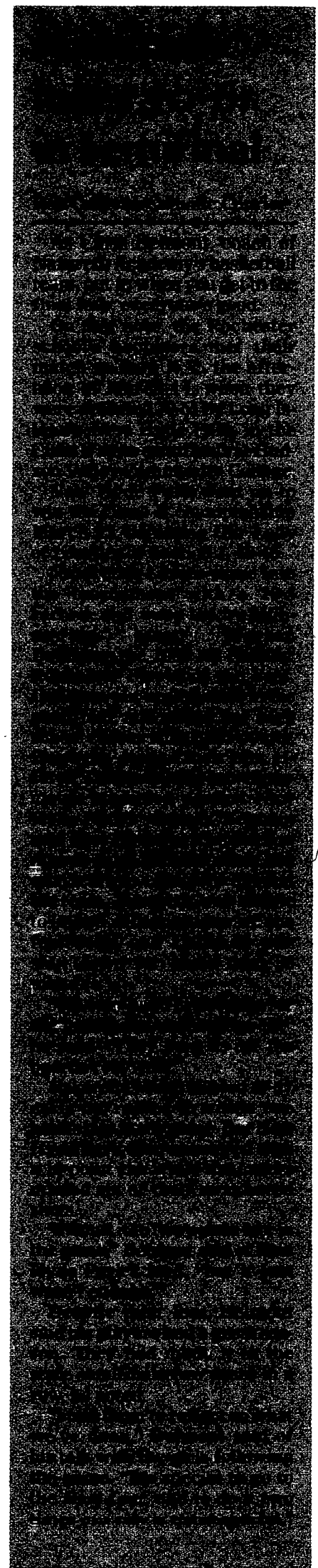
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