

# Michigan Catholic Conference



510 South Capitol Avenue  
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October 1, 2007

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

Stem cell research has become a source of intense controversy in our state and throughout our nation. Two types of stem cells are at the core of this controversy: adult and embryonic. As you know, the debate has focused on finding treatments, even cures, for a variety of diseases and chronic ailments. While the debate plays out in media sound-bites, scientific and theological distinctions are not always made; it appears that one is either in favor of or totally opposed to any and all stem cell research. The Catholic Church holds a reasoned and carefully articulated moral perspective on the question:

Adult stem cell research, which does not harm the embryo, is morally permissible and is providing treatments for over 70 different medical conditions. Embryonic stem cell research, which involves the direct killing of human embryos and leads to human cloning, is morally unacceptable and is providing no treatments.

Through this letter and the enclosed resources, we, the Roman Catholic bishops of Michigan, wish to communicate the Church's teaching on stem cell research within the context of our commitment to the dignity of human life from the first moment of conception until natural death. Enclosed you will find a 12-minute DVD, *The Science of Stem Cells: Finding Cures AND Protecting Life*, which explains the different forms of stem cell research and advances the Church's support for research using adult stem cells. Also included is a brochure with a series of questions and answers regarding stem cell research, along with a list of more than 70 medical conditions currently being treated with adult stem cells. Both the disc and brochure convey the reasoning behind the Church's firm opposition to embryonic stem cell research, which is a direct assault on innocent human life.

Catholics have the right and duty to assist all who are suffering, and medical science, through adult stem cell research and its proven track record of success, has opened a door of hope. We urge you and your family to spend a few moments reviewing the enclosed material and learning more about the ways by which we can find cures and protect life.

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Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and in union with countless dedicated Catholics and people of good will, let us continue to pray for the spiritual and moral conversion of all people everywhere: may we work for liberty and justice for all – even and especially the unborn.

Sincerely in the Lord,

His Eminence Adam Cardinal Maida  
Archbishop of Detroit  
Chairman, Board of Directors

Most Reverend Patrick R. Cooney  
Bishop of Gaylord

Most Reverend Walter A. Hurley  
Bishop of Grand Rapids

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